



**ORTHODOX  
CHURCH in  
AMERICA**

**Metropolitan Council Meeting**

**Fall 2020**

**Reports**



## **Meeting of the Metropolitan Council of the Orthodox Church in America**

**Thursday, August 27, 2020**  
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conducted by video conference

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**FALL SESSION OF THE METROPOLITAN COUNCIL**  
*August 27, 2020*

The Metropolitan Council of the Orthodox Church in America will begin meeting in its Fall Session, presided by His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon, on Tuesday, August 27, 2020, via teleconference. It is expected that the Fall Session will continue with at least two, maybe three more meetings later this fall.

This first part of the Fall Session will have three matters to consider: 1. Mr. Andrew Smith, Treasurer of the Orthodox Church in America, will provide an update on the financial situation of the Church. He will also introduce a candidate to fill a vacancy on the Auditing Committee. After this introduction, the Metropolitan Council will be asked to appoint the candidate to the Auditing Committee. 2. Mr. Gregory Honshul and Mr. Ray Steeb will update the members of the Metropolitan Council on the work of the Property Committee and introduce a motion to engage a realtor (Please see the resolution from the February 2020 Session of the Metropolitan Council Below). 3. The Reverend Deacon Peter Ilchuk, All-American Council Manager, will update the Metropolitan Council on possibility of holding the All-American Council in Baltimore, MD, in July 2021, as has been previously announced and scheduled. A motion will be proposed to postpone the All-American Council to 2022 due to the present public health crisis, which, if adopted, will be present to the Holy Synod for their approval.

**Agenda**

1. Opening Prayer
2. Call to Order
3. Review of Agenda
4. Roll Call
5. Metropolitan's Report
6. Treasurer's Report: Current financial situation of the Church; appointment of Ms. Maha Adranly to the auditing committee
7. A report from Gregory Honshul and Ray Steeb from the Property Committee of the Metropolitan Council and introduction of motion to engage realtor
8. A report from Dn. Peter Ilchuk on the status of the upcoming All-American Council in July 2021 in Baltimore, MD; introduction of motion to postpone All-

American Council until Summer 2022, subject to further approval by the Holy Synod

9. Closing Prayer

*Resolution of the Metropolitan Council adopted at its Spring 2020 Session:*

Whereas:

- 1) It is not financially feasible for the necessary repairs and maintenance to be made to the current OCA Chancery building; and,
- 2) It is not possible for the OCA Archives to be properly preserved for the long-term if they remain in this building;

Therefore, be it resolved that:

- 1) Efforts shall be made immediately towards the sale of the Chancery property;
- 2) Efforts shall be made immediately to determine a location to house the offices of the OCA Chancery administration;
- 3) Efforts shall be made immediately to determine a location for the residence of the Metropolitan; and
- 4) Efforts shall be made immediately to determine a location to house the OCA Archives. CARRIED.

# METROPOLITAN COUNCIL MEETING

## AUTUMN 2020

### AUGUST 27, 2020

*Due to the ongoing Covid-19 restrictions, this meeting is being convened electronically via Zoom and is not taking place in person. At least two more sessions of the Autumn meeting are scheduled (September 16 and 17, 2020) with a fourth under consideration.*

#### REPORT OF THE METROPOLITAN

- 1. Welcome.* I welcome all of you to the first session of the Autumn Meeting of the Metropolitan Council. After having worked diligently to reduce the number of days we allow for our meetings, we now find ourselves expanding that number again to accommodate our current coronavirus restrictions. In addition to the benefits and cost-savings associated with virtual meetings, we have also become more than familiar with the drawbacks of such meetings, which are often tiring and perhaps put into perspective the obstacles of the days of old, when traffic, expenses, and travel time were a real consideration. If you are like me, you are finding that these previous inconveniences are looking more attractive since they allowed us to physically get somewhere and to interact personally with the same people that, at present, we can only see and interact with on a screen. In any case, I am grateful for your presence on my screen this evening and for your patience and perseverance in all that each of you, your dioceses, your parish communities, and your families has been enduring during these challenging times.
- 2. In Memoriam.* We gather just a few days shy of the one-year anniversary of the falling asleep in the Lord of Archbishop Nikon of blessed memory. Like most everything in our present Coronavirus circumstances, his death seems like something that happened just recently but, at the same time, very long ago. I continue to miss him, as I am sure we all do, and I pray daily for the repose of his soul. I will be marking this one-year anniversary with two memorial services, the first this coming Sunday at St Nicholas Albanian Orthodox Church in Jamaica, New York, and the second next Tuesday, September 1, on the actual date of his repose, at an outdoor pavilion close to Three Saints Church in Ansonia,

Connecticut. In addition, we note with sorrow the recent falling asleep of two clergy wives: Matushka Janet Mihalick from the Diocese of Western Pennsylvania and Matushka Anastasia Karlgut from the Diocese of New York and New Jersey. May all of them, and all those whom we have lost to the coronavirus and other causes, find rest in the mansions of heaven and may their memories be eternal!

3. *Prayers for health.* I should also report that Fr Antonio Perdomo is unable to join us this evening because of some health concerns for which he has taken a medical leave of absence. In addition, Gregory Nescott, a former member of the Metropolitan Council, continues to recover from a car accident this past summer. Just this afternoon, we also were informed that Fr Daniel Andrejuk, the Dean of St. Catherine's, the Orthodox Church in America's representation Church in Moscow, was hospitalized for an emergency appendectomy. The initial report from Matushka Vera is that the surgery was successful and that he is recovering. I ask you to keep all of them, and anyone else who might be suffering physically, emotionally, or spiritually, in your prayers at this time. The burdens and difficulties of illness have certainly been increased by the additional burdens of isolation and loneliness during these times, so we must correspondingly increase our prayers, as well as our effort to assist in material ways.
  
4. *The Chancery.* Because of our focused agenda this evening, I will not speak much about the ongoing work of the Chancery. I will simply note that I have been back in residence here since the 22<sup>nd</sup> of June and to date have travelled only once to the Monastery of the Holy Transfiguration in Ellwood City for the ordination of Deacon John Thetford, who has assumed the role of my personal secretary. As you know, he replaces Archdeacon Joseph Matusiak in that position following his resignation and departure to Poland with his family for the next 6 months. Father Joseph has been faithfully serving as my Archdeacon and Personal Secretary for many years and his departure is a great loss for me personally and for my office. However, I have honored his request for him and his family to move to Poland for personal reasons related to the recent death of Nina's father. I am grateful for his service and look forward to his return in 6 months so that he can resume some

form of service to the Church. I also want to express my thanks to my Chancellor , Fr. Alexander Rentel, for his extraordinary support and work during these past months of the pandemic. I will say more about his contributions and the work of the Chancery staff during these covid-19 times at our next session in September. I nevertheless did not want to neglect mentioning Fr Alexander's excellent contributions along with those of Archdeacon Joseph, Barry Migyanko and Deacon John, which have allowed this office to function smoothly and effectively in spite of the challenges. Working remotely most of the time, we have maintained a solid and consistent approach to the complexities of the primatial office, including the planning of numerous meetings such as this one.

5. *Agenda.* As you know from the agenda sent out by the Chancellor, tonight's meeting is limited, beyond the regular procedural matters, to three substantive items: a) an update on the finances of the Church and the election of a member of the auditing committee, b) an update on the work of the Property Committee and the consideration of a motion to engage a realtor, and c) an update on the All-American Council planning process and the consideration of a motion to postpone it until the year 2022. As a reminder, we are no longer considering tonight's meeting to be simply informational (as originally announced), but rather to be the first part of the regular Autumn Session of the Metropolitan Council which had been scheduled to be held on September 16 and 17. Those dates remain on the calendar and we may need to add a further meeting beyond them. I mention this to echo what Fr Alexander reminded us of in his communication today: we will have more time to consider the "traditional" subjects of the Metropolitan Council meeting (fuller reports from me and the Chancellor, actions following on some of the financial updates that will be presented this evening, the Pension Board, etc). Tonight our agenda is focused and our intention is to allow a full discussion on all three of the important decisions on the table. If necessary, we can defer any final decision until the next sessions in order to allow everyone to have an opportunity to express their thoughts and have their questions answered.



6. *Stewardship.* For this reason, I will limit my opening remarks to offering my general thoughts on each of the topics at hand. I do so with the expectation that the members of the Metropolitan Council will provide their input and also share the perspective of the respective dioceses they represent (or, in the case of the at-large delegates, the All-American Council) on each of these topics. My understanding of this body is that, while it does have clearly enumerated competencies in the Statute of the Orthodox Church in America, each of those can be subsumed under one overarching concept, which is that of stewardship. You are here to offer counsel to the Metropolitan and to share with him the concerns, needs, and support of the dioceses and the wider Church. I welcome that input and consider it an important and crucial component of the fulfillment of my responsibilities as the Primate of the autocephalous Orthodox Church in America. If you recall, stewardship is also one of the four pillars that I suggest contributes to the Apostolic work of the Church. It seems to me that the three matters we will consider this evening are precisely areas in which we are called to exercise good stewardship and I am grateful to have your counsel in this.
7. *Finances.* We will first hear this evening from our Treasurer, Andrew Smith, who will give us an update on the finances of the Church, especially as they have been impacted by the Covid-19 circumstances. From the outbreak of the coronavirus, Andrew took the initiative to begin assessing the potential financial impact with respect to the central administration, the dioceses, and the parishes. This body has participated in that process, particularly through the adoption of the resolution allowing for dioceses to proportionately delay the remittance of their financial contributions. In many cases, dioceses have engaged in a similar approach with respect to their parishes, and even parishes have had to take unique approaches when considering the financial stability of their community and their parishioners. To me, this is a wonderful example of shared stewardship and of an effort to arrive, not at a single, unified approach, but to move organically as a church, as a community which is composed of varied people and circumstances but is united in Christ. It is our Lord who most clearly reveals to us how the many parts of the body can work together in harmony and who shows us the way forward. I am confident

that Andrew and Susan, together with the Finance and Investment Committee, working with the treasurers and leadership of the dioceses, will continue to maintain the steady and sober approach already taken with respect to our church finances.

8. *Property Committee.* The second focused topic for this evening relates to the ongoing work of the Property Committee. I want to thank our two co-chairs, Greg Honshul and Ray Steeb, for their professional and committed leadership of this committee. I am also grateful to the other members of the committee, Fr Joseph Ciarcigliano, who connected us with the present realtor we will be considering, Fr Michael Anderson, Christopher Lewis, and Bogdan Popescu for their equally professional and energetic contributions to this committee. The Committee has a full presentation to make so I will not go into any detail here. However, I do feel it important to state that I truly see this process as an exercise in stewardship and I have personally been approaching it with an attitude of gratitude, discernment, and hope. The gratitude I have is for the present Chancery property, which is not just a building but must continue to be acknowledged as a significant historical and spiritual part of the life of the Orthodox Church in America. It has witnessed its share of ecclesiastical drama but it has also been the location of momentous ecclesiastical actions, decision, and visions. It has been blessed by the presence of significant figures such as Metropolitan Leonty and others. The discernment I hope to maintain is in reference to the process of following-up on the resolutions adopted by this Council, resolutions which I personally recommended and which I continue to support. Nevertheless, I am not prepared to act impulsively or carelessly. In this, I have been greatly assisted by the members of the Property Committee, who in many ways have helped me to refine my own thoughts about a potential relocation. That potential relocation comes with the related concern, which is the identification of new locations for the chancery, for my residence, and for the archives. This is where an attitude of hope is required. In spite of the complexities of this second stage of the process (and the first stage, which we are in now, is already complex enough), I remain hopeful that the end result of the process is one that will be spiritually, emotionally, and physically beneficial for the Orthodox Church in America. Anything less than a glorious, honorable, and

dignified solution in every aspect of this transition, anything that is not worthy of the founders, builders, and saints of the autocephalous Orthodox Church in America, should not be considered. If the current proposal that is under consideration is not able to provide this, either financially, or in terms of the dignity of the Church, or in the eyes of the clergy and faithful, then we should not pursue it. I say this, not because I am opposed to the present trajectory, but precisely because I support it, but I feel it important to share with you the inspiration behind my support.

9. *The All-American Council.* Finally, we will hear a report from Deacon Peter Ilchuk and consider a motion to postpone the All-American Council. Here again, we must have care for the stewardship, not only of a specific element of our ecclesiastical life, one which is enshrined in our Statute, and one which represents one unique aspect of our mission as the Church in North America. Not only for these things, but for the sense of community and unity that we share as the dioceses and parishes of the Orthodox Church in America. There is no question about the importance and need for the All-American Council to be convened. What is in question is the relative value of maintaining course and holding the All-American Council as schedule in Baltimore in July of 2021 in all its fullness and complexity or to defer it to the following year (2022) when it may be more likely that that fullness and complexity can be organized. A modified Council next year might be considered, for example a reduction in the number of delegates or a fully virtual reality event. To me, that option would only be warranted in the case of extreme need or to consider significant actions. While the vision and mission of the Church is always significant, they are not fully dependent on the gathering of the church in July of next year. The mission and vision of the Church will remain a priority in 2022. In addition, the All-American Council has been postponed in the past for less weighty reasons than the current pandemic and so we must be mindful of these very real and serious challenges that confront us now, and may confront us for months to come. Is the promise of a vaccine enough to allay the fears and hesitations of our clergy and faithful? Is the hope that things will be back to normal by January enough to invest the effort and financial commitment in the

preparations and hotel negotiations for a council that might not be allowed to take place?

10. *Final notes:* We will be recording this meeting so that Alex can take minutes more carefully. In addition, everyone is blessed to speak so you don't have to ask me each time for a blessing

11. *Final Word.* As a final pastoral word, I would simply note that, during the past several months, there has been a lot of pressure to "do more" because of a false sense that, during this quarantine, no one is doing anything and we have lots of free time. I believe that all of us have felt this sense of pressure to do more and at the same time the anxiety of feeling that we have not done anything. So I would simply recommend that all of us make a conscious effort not to do too much. In many ways, the stress of dealing with the pandemic requires enough effort and energy to qualify as extraordinary work. Don't try to fix or resolve everything; don't try to accomplish remarkable feats. Just take your time: set a goal to read one paragraph rather than an entire book; go for a walk when you feel the weight of things; talk to your relatives on the phone when you are tired of zoom meetings. Above all, try to remember to rest. As the psalmist says: "I laid down and I slept, I awoke, for the Lord will help me." Sometimes the greatest spiritual nourishment comes when we recognize that we are tired and we allow God to refresh us through sleep.

## Orthodox Church in America

Metropolitan Council Meeting – August 27, 2020

### Finance Matters

- \* FY 19 Audit – **Attachment A**  
*For information, brief discussion, to be formally received in September*
- \* FY 20 financial performance (Treasurer’s Q2 2020 report) – **Attachment B**  
*For information & brief discussion*
- \* CARES Act/Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) – **Attachment C**  
*For information & brief discussion*
- \* FY20 surplus use – **Attachment C**  
*For discussion with potential action in September*
- \* Internal Audit Committee appointment & plan for virtual audit – **Attachments D & E**  
*For discussion & action*

***Suggested Motion:*** *To appoint Maha Adranly to the Internal Audit Committee and allow staff to work with the Internal Audit Committee to conduct an audit in the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter of 2020 virtually, due to the coronavirus pandemic.*

- \* Preliminary FY21 Budget – **Attachment F**  
*Brief discussion with action to adopt in September*