

**(Draft) Minutes of the 50th Assembly of the Diocese of New England
Holy Ghost Church, Bridgeport, CT
October 25-26, 2013**

The Assembly opened with a Service of Prayer celebrated by His Eminence, Archbishop NIKON at 10:10 AM on Friday morning, October 25, 2013 and the singing of “O Heavenly King” at 10:45 AM.

I. ELECTION OF ASSEMBLY OFFICERS

His Eminence, Archbishop NIKON and Fr. John Kreta, Chancellor of the Diocese of New England, chaired the election of Assembly Officers, as follows:

Clergy Vice Chair – Fr. John Hopko, nominated by the Diocesan Council. Fr. John Kreta closed nominations. Motion passed.

Lay Vice Chair – Rdr. Daniel Bacon, nominated by the Diocesan Council. Fr. John Kreta closed nominations. Motion passed.

Secretariat – Alexia Tassmer (the Diocesan Secretary) and Fr. David Koles were nominated by the Diocesan Council. Nominated from the floor was Fr. Theophan Whitfield was nominated. Fr. John Kreta closed nominations. Motion passed.

Credentials & Tellers Committee – Timothy Tassmer and Mat. Cindy Voytovich, nominated by the Diocesan Council, Cory Medeiros of Cumberland, nominated from the floor. Fr. John Kreta closed nominations. Motion passed.

Nominations and Resolutions Committee – David Zavednak and Prdn. Paul Nimchek, nominated by the Diocesan Council. Fr. James Parnell volunteered. Fr. John Kreta closed nominations. Motion passed.

Fr. John Kreta then turned the meeting over to Fr. John Hopko.

II. HIERARCH’S REPORT

His Eminence, Archbishop NIKON presented the following written report.

Opening

“Christianity can be reduced neither to moral teaching, nor to theology, nor to church canons, nor to liturgical services. It is also not the sum of these parts. Christianity is the personal revelation of the *theantropos* (God-Man), Christ, through His Church. The Church preserves and imparts its teaching and the ‘divine dogmas’; it proposes the ‘rule of faith,’ the order and statutes of piety. But the Church is something immeasurably greater. Christianity is not only the teaching on salvation but salvation itself, accomplished once and for all by the *theantropos*” (God-Man)

From Orthodox Christianity Vol. 1

Welcome

We welcome His Beatitude, Metropolitan TIKHON, Archbishop of Washington Metropolitan of All America and Canada to our assembly. I have worked with His Beatitude for a short while and he is most definitely a team player, conferring with his brother bishops and weighing their comments prior to making a final decision. It is a pleasure to work with him and he makes it most difficult to say no to him. Welcome, Your Beatitude.

Deaths

Three of our brothers, Fr Valentine Chepeleff, Fr William DuBovik and Protodeacon Basil Andrewchow fell asleep in the Lord during this past year and we keep them in our prayers.

Metropolitan Jonah

As many of you already know, during the pilgrimage to St. Tikhon's Monastery this past Memorial Day Weekend, the Holy Synod and Metropolitan Jonah signed mutual agreements regularizing his status and all of the hierarchs present celebrated the Divine Liturgy together.

Council of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in America

The Council of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in America formally known as the Episcopal Assembly held its fourth meeting in September in Chicago. I feel that last year's meeting was most fruitful as we had the opportunity to break up into small groups to discuss issues and programs for the Council to consider. The same procedure took place at this gathering as well.

Many of you may not know that the Council has a website so that anyone can access the site to learn of the activities of the Council. Perhaps we should add a link to the website from our own diocesan website, as well as our individual parish websites. Last year the by-laws were discussed and approved so that the Council would have a 501c3 tax exempt status.

There are a number of active and working committees as part of the Council, namely the Committees for:

- Canonical Affairs
- Canonical Regional Planning
- This committee made several presentations during our meeting last month.
- Church and Society
- Clergy matters
- Ecumenical Relations
- Financial Affairs
- Legal Affairs
- Liturgy
- Military Chaplaincy –of which I am a member and Bishop Isaiah is the chairman of this committee, a former Marine himself
- Monastic Communities
- Pastoral Practice
- Theological Education
- Youth

A bishop chairs each of these committees, and committee members are drawn from the ranks of the clergy and, when appropriate, from the laity as well. The members of each committee represent multiple jurisdictions, and they all bring unique expertise and experience. The committees meet during the year and share their thoughts or reports between the formal sessions of the Council. The pastoral practice committee recently sent the member hierarchs a 164 page summary of the work they

accomplished during this past year. One of the topics on our agenda a few weeks ago was the planning and discussion for a national Youth Conference.

The fundamental objective of the Council is to work toward a more united church in America. No small task, to be sure. This year's session focused on possibilities for regularizing the anomalies that the Church faces in America. Here is a sampling of some of the thoughts that were expressed in some of small group meetings that I attended:

- We face differences in church calendars, and in some cases, there are different calendars in use within one jurisdiction. For some the calendar is simply not a major issue.
- One of the advantages of a unified church would be unifying our human and financial resources. Individually, being separated, we are too small to serve our people.
- In some jurisdictions, there is great geographic distance between parishes and their bishop. A unified church would help to have more frequent relations between hierarchs and their people in the pews. It would also foster stronger regional unity between parish clergy and the faithful.
- Currently there are dramatic differences in diocesan size and membership: some bishops have extremely large dioceses, and others have much smaller dioceses. How would we balance their responsibilities in a unified church?
- We are at the beginning of the coming of age of Orthodoxy in America.
- Comments on the possible dangers of abandoning the structures that currently exist, which meet the need of various ethnic and cultural backgrounds.
- How could bishops serve flocks to whom they cannot speak, whose cultures they do not know?
- The ultimate question is how we SERVE together, not necessarily how we are organized.
- But there are some practical problems exacerbated by the current situation, such as some leaving jurisdictions and 'taking refuge' in others.
- Perhaps there are workable models, such as metropolitanates with ethnic auxiliaries.
- We must be very careful not to lose our ethnic children
- The current situation is not necessarily 'non canonical,' if we see it as diaspora children being cared for in some cases by their mother church.
- We need to ascertain what is canonically desirable.
- There is no consensus on the definition of the Church in the USA today: is it 'local'?
- The main focus we should have is common work and mission, to which the administration must be subservient.
- One arrangement to accommodate this would be a single Metropolitan/Metropolis with Vicars for the pastoral needs of specific communities.

As you can see from comments like these, the hierarchs in America are most certainly concerned, and are serious about and working toward a reasonable system for the church in America.

Local Activities

On a more local note the OCA departments of Youth and Young Adults, Christian Services, Humanitarian Aid, Sacred Music and Christian Education, recently sponsored the parish ministries Conference in Virginia. One hundred and twenty individuals participated, both clergy and lay church workers.

There were back-to-back workshops and presentations sponsored by the various departments. The workshops were not only educational but provided the means for networking and fellowship for those with similar interests in Church service.

The participants in the conference came from numerous diocese of the OCA: Alaska, Seattle WA, Washington DC, Eastern Pennsylvania and others.

An Evangelization Summit was recently held in Charleston, SC organized by Fr. John Parker, the Chairman of the Department of Evangelization.

PSP's

PSP's stand for the OCA Policies, Standards and Procedures dealing with sexual misconduct. This is a serious matter. Every member of the community, our parishes and our Diocese must be protected and we do that by practicing due diligence in this area. It is imperative that each parish council read and know these policies. The best way to do this is have each parish council member read the policy at your first council meeting. Each member must attest that he or she has read and accepts the policies. This must be reflected in the minutes of that meeting and a copy of those minutes should be sent to me and the central office of the OCA. These policies are in place to protect the children, and the most vulnerable members of our community, and from a legal standpoint it is also essential for our protection should any incident occur. The laws are so varied these days that the simplest word or infraction may result in some sort of litigation whether that occurs in one of our parishes or even if something occurs with one of our members in another parish. Primarily, we do this work in order to be diligent in protecting the vulnerable in our communities. Then, an important, but secondary, objective is to provide legal protection where necessary.

This procedure must be done annually with the change of parish council membership.

COLA

According to a vote of our Diocesan Assembly the COLA adjustment for 2014 would be the highest of three indexes from the Board of Labor Statistics for September 2013 to September 2014.

Boston, Brockton, Nashua, NH is 1.9

Northeastern Urban average is 1.5

US City average is 1.5

Therefore our 2014 COLA adjustment would be the highest of the three which is 1.9 Percent.

Highlights

We have been working diligently to help establish a mission in Maine and this year much work has been done to help reach that goal but there is still much to do.

Several of our parishes celebrated anniversaries this past year:

- St Mary's in Stamford, CT,

- St. Mark of Ephesus in Kinston, MA,
- And recently the 100th Anniversary of the laying of the cornerstone at Holy Trinity in New Britain, CT.

But the highlight of the year was the consecration of the new St Nicholas Church in Pittsfield, MA. In addition, the Northern Deanery hosted a seminar on Marriage and Sexuality as part of the OCA strategic plan.

We again reached our goal for the Bishop's Circle contributions.

Evangelization

Our responsibility is to spread the good news of the Gospel. We are a diverse diocese where we have parishes of larger populations of immigrants and parishes that are located where there are large numbers of unchurched. Our responsibility is not limited, our responsibility and charge is to serve and minister to all people. This is not easy whether we are ministering to new or older immigrants or the unchurched and it is even more difficult in New England.

A recent article by Rob Wier in the September 17th issue of the *Valley Advocate* addressed this phenomenon. Although it dealt with New England specifically, it most certainly applies to many communities. I'd like to share with you some large excerpts from this article:

“About Those Irreligious New Englanders: Gallup Poll results deserve a closer look” by Rob Wier (<http://www.valleyadvocate.com/article.cfm?aid=17184>)

A 2012 Gallup Poll purported to reveal that New Englanders are the least religious of all Americans. This data has been endlessly recycled, including a recent Boston Globe column. It's also been, red meat for conservative evangelicals, who have flooded talk shows, editorial pages and the blogosphere with comments suggesting that New England is Sodom and the West Coast is Gomorrah.

...

Gallup is many years removed from conducting truly scientific polling. ... There is no way of knowing from the Gallup data whether the same individuals attend regularly or randomly, nor can we infer anything about what attendees believe or practice.

To paraphrase a youth minister...the idea that attending services makes you religious is like spending time in a garage and thinking you're an automobile.

Still, questions remain: Do New England religious practices depart from the norm? Are we really irreligious? Does any of it matter? The short answers are yes, no, and perhaps.

...

According to pew numbers, 75.8 % of all Americans consider themselves to be some variety of Protestant or Catholic, and fewer than 6 % combined are Jewish, Mormon, Buddhist, Jehovah's Witnesses, Muslim, or Hindu, 16.1 % of Americans are classified as “unaffiliated.”

...

Those in the Bay State identify with Christianity, but they don't exactly wear out the pews. So-called “Bible Belt” states such as Mississippi and Alabama reportedly have

twice as many attending church in a given week as Massachusetts, whose attendance rate is far below the national average - that is, if we believe the numbers. Not everyone does. One Episcopal priest, who originally came from the South and served in Georgia, calls Bible Belt attendance “dramatically overstated.” He notes, “Church is such a part of the culture there that people will just flat out lie about how often they go.”

There are regional differences: in the South a stranger is first asked his or her name and then, “What church do you attend?”

...

According to a New England youth minister, Aaron Minton who grew up in fundamentalist churches “Church simply isn’t the center of life here like it is in the South, where religious institutions also run most of the social activities.” That doesn’t work up here.

One reason, Minton notes, is money. “People in Massachusetts complain about money all the time,” but there is a lot more money here, and the need for a safety net is far less significant. Affluence does not breed religion in the same way that poverty does.” Connecticut is the third richest state in the Union; Massachusetts the fourth. Six of the 10 poorest states are in the Deep South, where folks might be attending church more, but aren’t exactly exemplars of religious rectitude.

Nine Southern states rank in the top 14 for heaviest users of Internet porn; New Englanders rank near the bottom. Six of the 10 states with the highest murder rates are in the Bible belt; four of the eight lowest are in New England. The Center for Disease Control shows that Massachusetts has the fourth lowest divorce rate in America; four of the highest are in the South.

Evangelical churches have made small inroads in Massachusetts and there are even a few “mega churches,” but fewer than 10 percent of New Englanders assume that affiliation.

New England once had the reputation for serious faith now associated with the South. It is, after all, a place settled by very serious Protestants: Separatist Pilgrims, Puritans and Anabaptists. You want religious fervor? Colonial New England offered banishments, witch-hunts, Quaker hangings and schisms. Religion was such a life-and-death matter that many of the men who shaped the United States Constitution associated New England with dangerous levels of intolerance and insisted that the First Amendment ban official religions. They also laid down the principles of church/state separation.

One may say that was a long time ago. ... New Englanders maintained a reputation for upright piety, dourness and discomfort with modernism into the mid-20th century. It took a 1953 Supreme Court decision for the phrase “Banned in Boston” to begin to atrophy. It took another Supreme Court decision in 1965 for Connecticut to allow even

married couples to buy condoms. Within living memory, New England was the “Bible Belt.”

...

New England was the cradle of the 19th-century Industrial Revolution. Millions of European immigrants poured in until World War I and a restrictive 1924 immigration bill froze them out, but by then, parish churches, cathedrals, and parochial schools were as much a part of the New England landscape as red brick factories and dairy herds.... Church sex scandals notwithstanding, the Roman Catholic Church retains the loyalties of 43 % of the region’s church service attendees, ...

But one should not soft-sell the problems. ... Even though church attendance has been dropping since the 1950s, sex abuse sent confidence in the church to historic lows; Ron Story, a UMass emeritus history professor notes “The scandals have had a terrible effect that shook people’s very trust in the institution and made them question church teachings and doctrine and other things as well.”

According to the *National Catholic Reporter*, one of every 10 Americans is an ex--Catholic. If you collected them, they would constitute the third largest denomination in the country. Seventy-four percent of Catholics attended weekly mass in 1958; the figure is now around 24 %. These numbers alone explain the bulk of New England’s declining church attendance levels. More people have left the Catholic Church since the 1990s than attend Protestant services.

Many Americans are, according to Harvey Hill, an Episcopal priest “happily unchurched.” According to Jennifer Walters, Smith College’s dean of religious life, “Students are curious, but affiliation is another matter.” Michael Corrigan, the chaplain at Northfield Mount Hermon adds that many students “simply don’t know much about religion. They’re not rebelling against anything because religion was never anything their families were invested in.”

...

In Massachusetts, 23 % of the population list their religious identity as “none” or “unaffiliated”—a percentage equal to the national average...unaffiliated does not mean non-believer. ...New Englanders actually have the lowest percentage of self-described atheists and agnostics in the country. Roughly 90 % of Americans profess a belief in a higher power,... more than one in three Americans call themselves “spiritual, but not religious,”...According to Corrigan, younger Americans, “have no real understanding” of the specifics of any religion.

New England was an epicenter of the 1960s counterculture. Dozens of communes popped up.... A sizable number of New Englanders retain at least remnants of the 1960s drive toward questioning authority including religious leaders, alternative lifestyles and mind expansion. ...Small wonder that the region’s students insist, as Walters notes, “You can’t think of your own religion as the only way.”

Education changes perspectives in lots of ways. ...As Story...observes...“One of the fun things about being a college student is that you don’t have to go to church. You get to explore and cast off restraints, even if you return to them later in your life.”

Today’s college students “were affected by the late 1990s and by 9/11. Muslim students grew up blaming themselves and feeling they needed to prove, ‘I’m not a Muslim like that.’ Christians offended by evangelicals felt they had to say, “I’m not a Christian like that,’ and Jewish kids uncertain about Israeli politics felt compelled to announce, ‘I’m not Jewish like that.’”

There is little doubt that evangelical politics such as those espoused by the infamous Westboro Baptist Church have turned off legions. The “post-evangelical” label grew from discomfort with the idea that a Christian had to hold extremely narrow political views.

Contrary to what popular media might imply 38% of all Democrats consider themselves religious, while just 28 % of Republicans make such a claim; that is, unless one is a white male.... Those in the Bay State are routinely more liberal than the national average on issues such as the death penalty, immigration reform, abortion and a host of other social issues.

Corrigan bluntly notes, “There is huge distrust of organized religion.”...“Christianity is associated in many minds with right-wing beliefs and tenets. Young people see it as stuffy, exclusive, not gay-friendly and not relevant.”...But Corrigan also adds, “Being a Christian means a commitment to service, being generous, working with poor people, giving hospitality. It’s a tall order. Jesus Christ did his ministry in a community.”

Although everyone I interviewed thought it possible to find meaning outside of a formal religious body, each felt that a spiritual community was far more likely to foster patterns and habits conducive to a meaningful religious life. Walters notes that one “could attend service online from Chicago” but is unlikely to develop a spiritual life from doing so. Corrigan says that when someone tells him they can find meaning by communing with nature, we have to ask, “Do you? How often? How do you stay fit in your faith?”...Hill estimates that the number of people who can “sustain a deep and meaningful religious life on their own is about the same percentage as those who can become saints.”

“We must ask: What is it we are supposed to be doing? Are we spreading the Good News in a way that matters?” And wouldn’t it be great if this much-needed dialogue began in skeptical New England?

I would add, wouldn’t be wonderful if this much needed work is fulfilled within our diocese?

The harvest is ripe whether it be new immigrants, old immigrants or the unchurched throughout our diocese.

Thanks and Recognition

Our Diocese is fortunate and blessed with dedicated clergy and laity who continue to till the soil in this vineyard which God has planted with His right hand.

I speak of all of you, dedicated clergy and laity in the diocese. Parish Councils, members of the diocesan Council and I especially wish to thank the work of our seemingly tireless chancellor, Fr. John Kreta, our Deans and Secretary Alexia Tassmer, Fr John Hopko for the work with Youth Rally, and Frs Mosher and Hoskings in keeping our newspaper and website up to date and for their dedication to me, the diocese and their own parishes and responsibilities.

Conclusion

We are the Church, in the world, but not of the world. Allow me to conclude with a few items to ponder, from the Prologue from Ochrid.

- How the Lord fed the five thousand people with the five blessed loaves.
- How He is that living bread which alone can mysteriously feed the many hungry souls which the whole of the rest of the world put together cannot feed.
- How the Apostles, led by the Holy Spirit, travelled throughout the world, without means and without friends.
- How they brought both rich and poor to the Christian faith by their words, lives and miracles alone.

O Lord, help us, that we may remain faithful children of light to the end.
To Thee be glory and praise forever.

III. PRESENTATION BY HIS BEATITUDE, METROPOLITAN TIKHON:

Glory to Jesus Christ. Thank you for the invitation to attend and join in the Assembly. There were no questions for His Eminence, so that means everything is going well in the Diocese of New England. Let's see if you have any for me. Please remember the newly departed servant Gregory Sulich who died yesterday and was a classmate of Met Tikhon. He was a quiet, faithful, dedicated servant of Christ who worked tirelessly at Syosset.

Tragedy happens to all of us but we keep our faith in the Our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ. We are called to hear the word of God and act upon it. During this century the OCA has had many changes especially in our hierarchy; 3 elections of Mets, 4 deaths of bishops, requests of retirement of others, deposition of 1 chancellor, resignation of another and appointment of the third.

Holy Synod continues to work together and it is a strength of the OCA and the participation in the EA has been positive.

This past year has been a calming time in the church but I have seen a zeal by the clergy and faithful for the church and our Lord.

Last week we finished our fall session of the Holy Synod. Highlights of the actions are: the election of Fr. David Mahaffey as Bishop of Sitka and Alaska, consecration date to come. Other dioceses still need to be filled. Bishop Michael is "Rector" of St. Tikhons Seminary and joins Fr. Steven Voytovich as Dean. The Holy Synod has reviewed documents on ordination, transfers of clergy, etc. and they will be published soon. Also approved was a service for women who have suffered a miscarriage. We are hopeful that the "troubles" of our past are done and the Holy Synod can focus on these spiritual areas that need attention.

Another area His Beatitude wants to focus on is Evangelization and Fr. Parker who is here and will speak with you and was at the Holy Synod meeting made a presentation on this important subject and calling of the church. Also our humanitarian aid, reaching out to those who are in need is an area that needs attention.

A final area is that of Sexual Misconduct. Now the new Policies Standards and Procedures have been approved and posted on the OCA web and need to be put into place in our parishes and diocese. Cindy Davis, who is a licensed councilor, has been approved to a full time position handling these cases. All of these are for the protection of children first and foremost but also the protection of our parishes as a place of safety a place of paradise on earth. Anything that brings darkness to anyone must be removed.

My final thoughts, on November 13th will be the 1st anniversary..... Firstly, prayer must be important in our lives, not just talk but do. Secondly, action whatever is needed to the building up of the body of Jesus Christ. Thirdly, slow down. In the past we have needed to act speedily but now we need to slow down. His Grandmother stated that farmers worked hard but also knew when to take a break and rest under the apple tree. Today we seem not to take a rest from our labors. If we are not rested we will have a harder time to "do" those things that our Lord is calling us to do through prayer and action.

Question from Fr. Robert Arida; with the cooperation of the hierarchs at the EA has there been any movement on the problem between the Bishops of Boston and the Diocese of New England and the Metropolis of Boston. His Eminence stated no change, status quo. His Beatitude talked about overlapping jurisdictions so even if you change titles or no longer have multiple bishops in one city there problem still exists.

Fr. Denis Lajoie had a problem serving in Maine and requested assistance from a Greek brother who assisted. He said that local cooperation, quietly will go a long way.

Fr. Vasily Lickwar said that in Rhode Island, where they had a wonderful clergy association, now there is no “mixing” of the clergy; no preaching, no con-celebrating, etc. It is hard to ask your parishioners to visit or attend “joint” services when the visiting rector will be humiliated by standing outside the altar.

IV. 2012 ASSEMBLY MINUTES:

On page 9 under Metropolitan Council 2nd paragraph change “members we also in their first year” to “members were also in their first year”. Also “There is a team that goes out within two days to investigate” to “If there is an accusation made a response team goes out within two days to investigate.”

A motion to accept the 2012 Diocesan Assembly Minutes, as corrected, was made by David Zavednak, seconded by John Barone. The motion carried.

V. REPORTS

Fr. John Hopko, Clergy Vice Chair, asked for brief comments from those presenting reports.

BOSTON DEANERY:

Fr. Vasily Lickwar, Dormition of the Theotokos, Cumberland and Dean of the Boston Deanery presented a written report on the activities of the deanery.

CONNECTICUT DEANERY:

Fr. David Koles, Holy Trinity, New Britain and Dean of the Connecticut Deanery presented a written report about the activities of the 17 parishes in the deanery. He especially noted that as of November 1st Fr. James Parnell will be the new pastor at All Saints, Hartford.

NORTHERN DEANERY:

Fr. Peter Carmichael, Holy Trinity, Springfield, VT and Dean of the Northern Deanery gave a verbal report. Fr Mark Korban is attached to St Jacob. Last May Fr. Caleb was granted a medical leave of absence which he is still on. Fr Mark Korban has blessing to serve on weekends. This is great for the scattered communities served there.

In Mine Fr. Dennis now services the mission, centered in Bangor but also on Deer Isle.

Similar in Berlin: some travel great distances.

Written reports included from Springfield and Claremont.

METROPOLITAN COUNCIL:

Fr. Robert Dick, Clergy Representative and David Zavednak, Lay Representative presented a two written reports. Fr. Robert stated that the tenor of the meetings was wonderful. In the area of Sexual Misconduct the OCA seems to be the only church with a published policy, with procedures, investigators, etc. Thirdly, is the relationship between the diocese vs the national church. How to combine what is given by the Diocese of the South vs. “older” diocese, ie. Head tax vs. proportional giving. The staff of Syosset has been greatly reduced and the work of the Central Administration is working harder with fewer people at less cost. Money is the root of all evil but we must do the work of the Central Administration and diocese and this

takes money. This needs to be talked at the next All American Council in Atlanta in July 2015.

David Zavednak also stated that the meetings are something to look forward to rather than dreading as much as one can look toward meetings. Sexual Misconduct: team – social worker, investigator and a priest who hopefully gets to the problem quickly and do their work because it places a burden on the accused, the victim and the parish. Cindy Davis is looking for diocesan volunteers to join this team. The Assessment has become a burden and strain to the Central Administration and this must be discussed at the 18th All American Council. FOS over the past year has been re-invigorated and the Diocese of New England has been a big part in that process. Bishop Michael requested a FOS appeal go out to everyone to help bolster this department. Question: Do members of the “response team” need to be Orthodox. No, anyone can submit their information. Question: Has there ever been a query about why those who were baptized in the church have left and how to get them back. No.

ONE / COMMUNICATIONS:

Fr. Joshua Mosher thanked everyone who has contributed to the paper in the past and mentioned how he edits a lot but writes very little. Again he appealed to everyone to PLEASE send things; articles, pictures, news, etc. to Fr. Joshua. He also asked that all clergy or parish reps visit with Alexia Tassmer before going home to talk about addresses and additions and corrections.

ONE STEWARDS:

Protodeacon Paul Nimchek on behalf of the ONE Stewards Committee stated that for the second time we have exceeded our budgeted amount of \$20,000. The biggest thanks go to His Eminence for contributing \$500/month to ONE Stewards. He also thanked all who contributed especially the members of the Bishop’s Circle (six years) for multiple consecutive years (see written report). During the Divine Liturgy those contributions made in memory of departed loved ones will be remembered.

Credential’s Report presented by Mat. Cindy Voytovich: as of 12:40 PM

<u>Voting Attendees</u>		<u>Non-Voting Attendees</u>	
Hierarchs	2	Observers, Guests, Alternates (12 observers,	
Clergy Delegates	24	6 guests and 1 baby)	
Lay Delegates	23		
Diocesan Council	<u>10</u>		
Subtotal	59	Subtotal	19
Grand Total Voting and Non-Voting		78	

PARISH GRANT INITIATIVE:

Protodeacon Paul Nimchek on behalf of the Parish Grant Initiative thanked the other members for their help. Recipients are:

Christ the Savior, Southbury received a grant for the Connecticut Bible Lecture Series. Fr. Vladimir Aleandro spoke about the program. This will be the 14th series in November and most of the participants are not from Orthodox churches;

St. Alexis, Clinton received a grant for a community garden “Food for all Garden” to supply the local food pantry. The grant went to supply an irrigation system for the two acre farm. 180 lbs of vegetables were harvested last week and the garden was honored by the Chamber

of Commerce. The garden yielded over 3300 pounds of vegetables. All 5 communities involved installed a greenhouse;

Three Saints, Ansonia received a grant for Vacation Church School which is a week long day school at the Three Saints Park in Bethany. This past year there were 33 children who attended and the theme was Heroes of the Old Testament. The week ends with Vespers sung by the children and a Lenten meal. The PowerPoint presentation will be posted on the diocesan website.

The new form for next year's Grant will be posted on the web.

The session ended at 12:55 PM to break for Lunch.

Session II Began at 2:10 PM

SCHOLARSHIP:

John Skrobat stated that the scholarship is open to any male or female going to the seminaries \$1500 per person per semester. Total expense of \$6000, for three people.

YOUTH RALLY:

Fr. John Hopko presented a written report. He stated that he is actually the Youth Rally Director only not the Diocesan Youth Director. Possibly at the next assembly we split the duties to two people. Rally again was held again at the St. Methodius Metropolis Faith & Heritage Center in Contoocook, New Hampshire. The troubles being felt within the Boston Metropolis area are not spilling over to happenings at the camp. Relations could not be better with the staff of the camp. Rally had a strange mix with many, many more boys than girls. Again the Rally Staff was outstanding. He thanked Fr. Dennis Rhodes & Fr. Sergius Halvorsen for their assistance.

CHOIR DIRECTING PROGRAM:

Mat. Cindy Voytovich passed out a written report and noted that her husband's status has changed and trying to find a time to gather all participants has been extremely hard. The OCA has a program "online" and this will suffice for now until our diocesan program can reorganize. Mat. Cindy would like to start a "visiting choir director lecture/discussion" program in the future. Plans on the burner for a possible program in the spring.

Bob Popadic moved and Nina Kosowsky moved to accept all report. Motion carried.

VI. TREASURER'S REPORT

John Skrobat, Diocesan Treasurer, presented the Treasurer's Report

STATEMENT OF ASSETS:

Checkbook balance (8/31/2012):	\$ 37,006.63
Checkbook balance (8/31/2013):	\$ 5,139.03
Transfer from checking to money market	\$ 32,838.43

BUDGET REPORT:

Total Actual Income for 2012 (fiscal year ending 08/31/12):	\$306,353.26
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Total Actual Expense	<u>\$338,220.86</u>
Total Actual Income and Transfers over Expenses	\$ (31,867.60)

A complete, detailed breakdown of the Treasurer’s Report was distributed to those in attendance and copies are on file with the Diocesan Secretary. John reviewed orally all the reports he distributed, explaining the facts and figures presented in the printed information. As you can see we are somewhat ahead of budget because parishes are up to date with their assessments.

Reader Dan Bacon moved and Fr. Robert Arida seconded the acceptance of the Treasurer’s report. Motion passed.

Credential’s Report presented by Reader Timothy Tassmer: as of 2:45 PM

<u>Voting Attendees</u>		<u>Non-Voting Attendees</u>	
Hierarchs	2	Observers, Guests, Alternates	16 (12 observers, 4 guests)
Clergy Delegates	21		
Lay Delegates	20		
Diocesan Council	<u>10</u>		
Subtotal	53	Subtotal	16
Grand Total Voting and Non-Voting		69	

CHANGE IN AGENDA ORDER

VII. AUDITOR’S REPORT

Mat. Cindy Voytovich presented the findings of the Auditing Committee. The committee found the books of the diocese and of ONE Stewards to be in order. A motion was made by Irene Zavednak, seconded by Fr. Michael Korolev, that the Auditor’s Report be accepted. The motion passed unanimously.

VIII. 2014 DIOCESAN BUDGET AND ASSESSMENT

John Skrobat, Diocesan Treasurer, presented the complete budget and assessment package for the upcoming financial year. Copies of the material distributed are on file with the Diocesan Secretary. John explained the Fare Share distribution for 2014. Figures have been finalized since ALL parishes have submitted their numbers at this time. Our actual numbers has decreased by 44 members. He reviewed the increase and decrease line items explaining how the finance committee arrived at these figures. The proposed budget is slightly lower than last year’s budget. Fr. Michael Westerberg questioned the Fair Share line item as to actual income verses proposed budget and how the national church has to do more with less. It was stated that we collected more because of parishes “catching up” from the past. We have never sent less to the national church than what was required of us regardless of how much we collected from all the parishes. Fr. Michael suggested that we could send to overage to the national church to assist them in doing “more with less”. The allocation of Fair Share dollars was distributed to everyone at this time

Motion: To amend the proposed budget so that the Fair Share expense line item would reflect \$95 per person to the national church while the income line would reflect \$92 per person. The

deficit would be taken from our surplus and would not be passed on to the parishes. Motion failed.

Brett Knolte moved, Sub Deacon Joseph Brubaker seconded, to accept the 2014 Budget as presented. Motion passed.

John reminded us that the COLA for the 2014 Budget Year, as mentioned in Archbishop Nikon's report, would be 1.9%.

The session closed with prayer at 3:40 PM. and divided into two gatherings with the His Beatitude & His Eminence first with the Clergy Delegates and then the Lay Delegates. Following all gathered at Holy Ghost Church to celebrate Vespers and then traveled to the Oronoque Country Club for dinner and fellowship.

***** Overnight Break *****

After the celebration of the Divine Liturgy on Saturday morning, October 26, 2013, at Holy Ghost Church, Bridgeport, CT followed by a brunch in the parish social hall, the Diocesan Assembly reconvened for Session III in the church at 11:45 AM with the singing of "O Heavenly King."

Reader Daniel Bacon, Lay Vice Chair, opened Session III.

CHANGE IN AGENDA ORDER

Fr Hopko apologized to any and all of those he offended yesterday.

IX. RESOLUTIONS

Having none we moved on to Elections.

Credential's Report presented by Corey Medeiros at 12:00 PM

<u>Voting Attendees</u>		<u>Non-Voting Attendees</u>	
Hierarchs	1	Observers, Guests, Alternates	(10 observers, 3 Guests)
Clergy Delegates	18		
Lay Delegates	21		
Diocesan Council	<u>10</u>		
Subtotal	50	Subtotal	13
Grand Total Voting and Non	63		

X. ELECTIONS TO THE DIOCESAN COUNCIL

Protodeacon Paul Nimchek, presented the following ballot of candidates from the Nominations and Resolutions Committee, listed below:

Open Position: One (1) Clergy-at-Large Representatives to Diocesan Council

Nominated Candidate from the Nominations Committee: Fr. Steven Belonick. Fr. John Hopko moved, seconded by Reader Steven Bradford to elect by acclamation. Motion passed.

Open Position: One (1) Diocesan Auditor [non-voting]

Nominated Candidate from the Nominations Committee: Fr. James Parnell. Fr. Michael Westerberg moved, seconded by Larry Johnson to by acclamation. Motion passed.

Open Position: One (1) Clergy Representatives to the Metropolitan Council Nominated Candidates are Fr. Robert Dick and Fr. Joshua Mosher. Ballots were passed out for voting.

Open Positions: Three (3) Laity-at-Large Representatives to Diocesan Council Nominated Candidates from the Nominations Committee: Reader Daniel Bacon, Brett Nolte, Katherine Johnson & Mat. Cindy Voytovich. Ballots were passed out for voting.

Following the presentation the results will be published.

XI. **PRESENTATION BY FR. JOHN PARKER: Chairman of the Department of Evangelization for the OCA**

We have the lamp. As Orthodox we drive around in our boats expecting fish to jump in, but we are called to fish, not wait on the fish.

Be Grateful for the labors which have come before us, for the gift of heaven itself which comes to us each and every Liturgy. As Metropolitan Tikhon said “We must DO.”

Rick Warren: Nothing to eat from that table Dogmatically. But it gives us a powerful image of Doing. In our church we also have to say “We should do that.”

“How can we do that?” emphasize the “how” in the question, not the “that”.

This honors god’s commands and promises. We should start by just letting people know we are here... and here for them.

We need to break down barriers to let people in...there are plenty of barriers in the church to contend with, so we should at least breakdown the barriers out there, so we can let them in to deal with the barriers in here.

We have an evangelism problem; most people don’t know who we are. The sign that says “Russian Orthodox Church” tells those outside that this place is only for Russians and not for the people of the neighborhood.

Rick Warren: The great commitment, to the great commandments, and the great commission will build the great church.

Results of the Elections:

Clergy Representatives to the Metropolitan Council: Fr. Robert Dick

Three (3) Laity-at-Large Representatives to Diocesan Council: Reader Daniel Bacon, Brett Nolte & Mat. Cindy Voytovich.

At the first Diocesan Council meeting the exact length of term will be decided for these representatives.

XII. **OLD BUSINESS**

Hearing none we moved on to new business.

XIII. NEW BUSINESS

1. Mat. Cindy Voytovich moved to thanked Fr. Steven and the faithful of Holy Ghost Church, Bridgeport, CT for their tireless efforts to arrange and coordinate the 50th Diocesan Assembly.
2. Fr. Steven requested that the Diocesan Assembly information could go out beforehand so that the delegates could read them ahead of time. His Eminence said that this will be taken up the next DC meeting.

XIV. NEXT DIOCESAN ASSEMBLY

2014 Diocesan Assembly: Boston Deanery – Cumberland, RI

2015 Diocesan Assembly: Connecticut Deanery – Willimantic, CT with Norwich, CT

2016 Diocesan Assembly: Connecticut Deanery – Springfield, MA

XV. ASSEMBLY ADJOURNMENT

Prayer Service for the blessing and installation of the new Diocesan Council was held presided by His Eminence, Archbishop Nikon.

A motion to adjourn the assembly was made at 1:20 pm by David Zavednak, seconded by Reader Bradford. All in favor rose and sang, “It is Truly Meet.”

Respectfully submitted,

The 2013 Diocesan Assembly Secretariat:

Alexia Tassmer, Diocesan Secretary

Fr. David Koles

Fr. Theophan Whitfield