

**(Draft) Minutes of the 48th Assembly of the Diocese of New England
Three Saints Church, Ansonia, CT
October 21-22, 2011**

The Assembly opened with a Service of Prayer celebrated by Archpriest Michael Westerberg at 10:15 AM on Friday morning, October 21, 2011.

I. ELECTION OF ASSEMBLY OFFICERS

Fr. Michael Westerberg, in the absence of His Grace, Bishop NIKON and Fr. John Kreta, Chancellor of the Diocese of New England, chaired the election of Assembly Officers, as follows:

Clergy Vice Chair – Fr. Joshua Mosher, nominated by the Diocesan Council. Rdr. Daniel Bacon moved, seconded by Prdn. Paul Nimchek to close nominations. Motion passed.

Lay Vice Chair – Rdr. Daniel Bacon, nominated by the Diocesan Council. Mat. Ann Sovyrda moved, seconded by Fr. Steven Hosking to close nominations. Motion passed.

Secretariat – Fr. David Koles (the Diocesan Secretary) and Dn. Christopher Westrate were nominated by the Diocesan Council. Dn. Christopher Westrate was not able to attend so nominated from the floor was David Zavednak by Victor Kuziak and Matilda Hungerford by Fr. Vladimir Aleandro. Fr. Joshua Mosher moved, seconded by Diane Dounouk to close nominations. Motion passed.

Credentials Committee – Mat. Cindy Voytovich and Alexia Tassmer, nominated by the Diocesan Council, Rosemary Delaney, nominated from the floor by John Skrobat. Mat. Ann Sovyrda moved, seconded by Fr. Joshua Mosher to close nominations. Motion passed.

Nominations and Resolutions Committee – Fr. John Hopko and Gregory Shesko, nominated by the Diocesan Council. Prdn. Paul Nimchek was nominated from the floor by Greg Shesko. Fr. Joshua Mosher moved, seconded by John Barone to close nominations. Motion passed.

Fr. John Kreta called for a voice vote for the slate. Passed unanimously. He then turned the meeting over to Fr. Joshua Mosher.

II. HIERARCH'S REPORT

His Grace, Bishop NIKON presented the following written report and Fr. Sergius Halvorsen read the report.

During this past year God has continued to pour out His grace upon His Church. We witnessed exciting developments on international, national and the local diocesan level. Programs have been initiated on the diocesan and parish level to help us focus more clearly on the health and life of our parishes. Most importantly, our communities of faith continue to live and grow in our life as the Holy Church, the Body of Jesus Christ.

First, let me thank each of you for your prayers, cards and letters over the past year as I addressed personal medical issues, and let me thank you again and for your ongoing prayer and support. While these medical concerns are important, I have continued to visit parishes, and only recently have I had to scale back somewhat. On some occasions I decided it best to preside rather than celebrate a full hierarchal Liturgy.

I had a very full schedule this year that included my duties as Episcopal moderator of the OCA's Pension Board, my participation as a member of the Lesser Synod, and my responsibilities for the Diocese of New England, the Albanian Archdiocese and the Diocese of the South which I serve as locum tenens.

Collectively, these responsibilities required a significant amount of travel, including visitations to the New England Cathedral in Boston, the Albanian Cathedral in Boston, and both the Miami Cathedral and Dallas Cathedral in the Diocese of the South. Someone mentioned that I am collecting cathedrals like kids collect bottle caps.

My primary role as locum tenens is to facilitate the process of nominating a candidate to serve as Diocesan Hierarch for the Diocese of the South. This included travel to Dallas on several occasions, in addition to meetings with the Deans and faithful in Miami, Tampa, Orlando, Florida, Columbia, SC and Charleston SC. We anticipate that at the earliest, a candidate may be presented in February of 2012 but more likely in July of 2012. The Diocese of the South is very large and mission oriented. It spans a territory equal to the area of Portugal, Spain, France, Italy and Germany combined.

I am most fortunate that in all three dioceses I have dedicated and competent chancellors to support the work of the bishop and I am in computer and phone contact with all three on almost a daily basis.

Archbishop Dmitri

Archbishop Dmitri, of the Diocese of the South, fell asleep in the Lord on August 28. He was actually the founder of that missionary diocese, and his departure from this life has had a profound impact on the faithful there. We have fond memories of his oversight of our diocese for a number of years. Reflecting on Archbishop Dimitri's life's work, it is remarkable to recall that his initial archpastoral responsibilities included the Exarchate of Mexico, which is now a diocese with its own hierarch.

I had the opportunity to meet with Archbishop Dmitri during several visits to Dallas and he had fond remembrances of his work within our diocese. The same holds true with the Albanian Archdiocese which he also oversaw while taking care of our diocese.

May Archbishop Dimitri's memory be eternal.

Episcopal Assembly

Last year I reported on the first episcopal assembly and the responsibilities and issues that faced us as 56 bishops throughout the US, Canada and South America met. I told you about our request for redistricting of the Assemblies in this hemisphere which would include one for the American churches, one for the Canadian Churches and to separate, Mexico, Central and South America into their own assemblies.

Not all of the requests were granted in as much as every patriarch must agree when a change such as we requested can be granted. Canada already has its own assembly but the request to have Mexico, Central and South America meet as a separate assembly was not granted.

Some of the items that were discussed were efforts to streamline the activities of the Assembly as each of the bishops were assigned to working committees. These committees covered areas such as: Theological Education; Canon Law; Christian Education, and Pastoral Chaplaincies.

I am, by my request, on the military chaplaincy committee which is chaired by Bishop Isaiah of Denver, who, by the way is a retired US Marine. It is an important committee that works with the chaplain endorsing agencies for both the military and institutional chaplaincy. We did note that the OCA should be the endorsing agency for military chaplains in as much as most military chaplains are OCA clergy. Furthermore, we noted that the OCA has a Dean of chaplains which is essential to maintaining proper pastoral discipline within the military.

No decision was made on any of the chaplaincies issues at this last meeting and Bp. Isaiah has sent several suggestions for our committee to consider. I have shared these suggestions with Fr. Joseph Gallick who is the OCA Deputy Dean of Military Chaplains, so that I will have the benefit of his input at the next assembly.

New Bishop

On April 30, Bishop Matthias was consecrated for the Diocese of the Mid-West.; I was privileged to participate in his consecration the week following Pascha.

At the recent meeting of the Holy Synod, Fr. Golitzin was elected for the Bulgarian Diocese. The dates of his consecration have yet to be announced.

Pastoral and Parish Changes

Holy Ghost in Bridgeport, CT and St Mary's in Waterbury, CT did not have full time pastors during this past year. Filling these vacancies has been a difficult task since both communities have specific needs and finding the right person to fill them takes time and careful consideration.

It appeared that a candidate to serve in Waterbury had been found, however that pastor had recently opted to stay in his present position, it is my hope that St. Mary's will soon have a full time pastor.

Holy Ghost in Bridgeport is still in the process of finding a suitable pastor as well. Because the parish has not had to go through this process for many years, there was some resistance to the pastoral search process that has been in effect in our diocese for decades.

The process is rather simple. I interview prospective candidates for any position along with the Dean and Chancellor. If I feel that a candidate is suitable then he is then sent to a community to be interviewed by the parish council. If it appears that the priest and the parish faithful can work well together, then he is assigned by the bishop.

Several wonderful celebrations have occurred in a few of our parishes during this past year. Most recently was the centennial celebration at Ss. Peter and Paul in Meriden, CT. His Beatitude was present as well as Bishop Melchezidek, who served as pastor of Ss. Peter and Paul for many years.

In addition was the ground breaking ceremony in Pittsfield, MA as that community is now in the process of building a new church for its growing community. Our Prayers and Blessings for both celebrations was a highlight of the past year's activities.

Our mission station in Maine has enjoyed regular pastoral services and reader services during this past year giving it a solid foundation to build upon. Our thanks to Fr. Kreta for maintaining this and providing this schedule of services for that budding community.

Inter Diocesan Relationships

A close working relationship has developed between the two cathedrals in Boston which works well especially during major feast day celebrations when I make every effort to be at both Cathedrals. Serving at both cathedrals can at times become a bit taxing, but is still workable.

All clergy in both our Diocese and the Albanian Archdiocese annually update our joint diptychs.

This year it was gratifying to see that several parishioners from St George in Trumbull, CT participated in the Diocese of New England Youth Rally. This is the one week Summer Camp sponsored by the diocese of New England and Fr. John Hopko as youth director has done a marvelous job.

Annunciation parish in Maynard and Annunciation parish in Natick continue to have a good working relationship in scheduling my visitations as both parishes share the same Patronal Feast Day. Fr. Robert Dick and Fr Joseph Gallick seem to always work out a reasonable and workable schedule.

Now serving as a priest in the Albanian Archdiocese Fr Dennis Rhodes is a welcome guest in the CT Deanery meetings of the Diocese of New England.

I am blessed to work with three extraordinarily competent chancellors, Fr. John Kreta in the Diocese of New England, Fr Arthur Liolin in the Albanian Archdiocese, and Fr. Marcus Burch the chancellor I appointed in the Diocese of the South.

Youth Ministry

The Diocesan Youth Rally (or youth camp); my regular meetings with Orthodox students at the University of CT; and the annual visitation of participants in the Crossroads youth program to our cathedrals in Boston are just some of the youth activities in the Diocese. This past year while visiting one of my parishes in the Northern Deanery, I had the opportunity to meet with our Orthodox youth at Dartmouth as well.

COLA

The US Bureau of Labor Statistics issued the New England Consumer Price Index card recently.

The percent change from July 2010 for the US City average is 3.6% and the increase for the Boston-Brocton-Nashua region is 3.4%.

By vote of the 2007 Diocesan Assembly the cost of living increase will be the highest of three, therefore the 2012 COLA for clergy in New England will be 3.6%

Health

Early last year there was a tumor discovered on my vocal cords. It was removed and then I received radiation treatments. As you may remember I had one of our clergy read my report at our last assembly.

However, a recent PET scan revealed that some issues related to the cancer were affecting the voice box and lymph nodes. This required surgery that was completed just a few weeks ago. As of this date, the healing process has begun and I anticipate a full recovery over the next few months.

My voice may not be very strong until the healing is complete, but I place the highest priority upon parish visitation and providing archpastoral guidance. Pastors must be present for their flock, in the liturgical services, in meetings, and through various forms of communication. Yet, pastors must also maintain their physical health so that they can continue to serve in these various capacities. Balancing these two priorities can be difficult, and over the past year I have attempted to walk this narrow path. By your prayers, I shall continue to do so.

Recently some other medical issues, unrelated to my earlier cancer treatment, have arisen which require medical intervention. Although I am by nature a private person I felt that you were entitled to know the issues facing your hierarch so I sent our clergy an update. My desire is to maintain some personal privacy while also keeping you informed of how I am doing. Should you have any specific questions regarding these matters, I would ask you to speak directly with your parish priest so that we can avoid rumor and speculation.

The medical issues are being addressed and I anticipate full recovery in a relatively short time although the voice issues will take a little more time to heal.

I am keenly aware that my wellbeing directly affects the ongoing life of the Diocese, and I know that illness can evoke anxiety and fear. Illness is a serious challenge that we face as individuals, as communities, and as the Body of Christ. In his book *On the Priesthood* St. John Chrysostom reminds us that the Body of Christ is more susceptible to illness, and slower to heal than our physical bodies. This resonates in our Diocese, for many of our parishes are suffering in different ways. Yet, when we struggle with illness of any kind—physical or spiritual—we place these struggles at the foot of the Cross of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, firm in the faith that the Hand of God is at work in every aspect of our lives, both in sickness and in health. We stand firm in our faith that God's grace is sufficient for us, and that His power is made perfect in our weakness. (2 Cor 12:9) On a diocesan level, on a parish

level, and on an individual level we face our illness and we look to Christ the Physician of our Souls, so that in Him, we may find true and lasting health.

Thanks and Recognition

I wish to express my thanks to all of you for the commitment and dedication that you have exhibited in all of the areas for which you have accepted responsibility. I would especially like to thank those who work with the Parish Grant program, O-N-E stewards; our Treasurer and our Youth Director; Fr. Robert Dick and Dn John Zarras our representatives to the Metropolitan Council; and the members of the Diocesan Council. Particular thanks are due to all of the Deans in light of all the issues that I have placed in their laps and Fr David Koles for his excellent handling of our web site.

Again our thanks go to Fr John Kreta for his extraordinary help with our mission station in Maine.

Allow me to close with these thoughts from the Elder Philotheos Zervakos:

“The work that you do is spiritual, but force yourself to study one or two chapters from Holy Scripture, the lives of the saints, the writings of the fathers, and other teachers of the church.

Also do not neglect the duty of prayer and as much as possible fast and be temperate, but above all, have forcefulness, for the kingdom of Heaven is gained by force and given to those who have forced themselves upon it.....”

In other words, it is our task, by God's grace and through our diligence, to BE the voice, the hands and the feet of Christ in this world. As Christ comes more fully alive in us, we bring Christ to others, and bring others to Christ.

May the Blessings of the Lord be with all of you.

Credential's Report presented by Alexia Tassmer: as of 11:30 AM

<u>Voting Attendees</u>		<u>Non-Voting Attendees</u>	
Hierarchs	0	Observers, Guests, Alternates	5 (4 observers, 1 guests.)
Clergy Delegates	20		
Lay Delegates	19		
Diocesan Council	<u>9</u>		
Subtotal	48	Subtotal	5
Grand Total Voting and Non-Voting		53	

III. **2010 ASSEMBLY MINUTES**

A motion to accept the 2010 Diocesan Assembly Minutes, as presented, was made by Inga Leonova seconded by Gregory Shesko. The motion carried.

IV. **PRESENTATION BY FR. MARCUS BURCH:**

Speaking on the missionary efforts in the DOS. Convert to Orthodoxy from South Carolina. Attended SVS in the 90's. Several classmates are members of the DNE. Interned with Fr. MW. Served with Fr. AT in Claremont. Shares a lot with the DNE including a bishop. Bp. Nikon was a breath of fresh air for the DOS. Not sure why Bp N appointed him Chancellor. Was grateful that he can stay in his parish.

There are many forces which want to divide members of the church. The great divider is the Devil. As church we are not divided or different from those in the north or mid-west. There is a constant movement of people from all around our country. Not

everything that is being done or has been tried in the DOS may work in the DNE. But the basic framework can be taken and adapted for use in New England.

In the south there were no English speaking churches in the 50's. The DOS was formed as a missionary diocese, and English speaking diocese. The mix of cradle and convert Orthodox has been good for the DOS. Mission work forces people to take their faith more seriously. When you don't have a magnificent building as many northern parishes have and you must "assembly" the church each weekend ones faith is put to the test.

Being a visiting priest at West Point helped in the missionary experience.

Need to establish singers.

Each parish must reach out beyond the borders of their local parish. By 2000 there were about 40 places in the DOS but not all of them were thriving. There were very few full time clergy. This problem, that the clergy were doing more to keep themselves alive than growing the parish was discovered.

Traveling choir to teach newly formed mission stations how to sing services.

The position of the Dean became very important in assisting the clergy and newly formed missions. He was the lynch-pin holding the groups of faithful spread around the region together.

Tithe and Fair Share.

Today the DOS 70 parishes & missions. Growth of 30 in the past decade. Many parishes that were established in the early years of the DOS have been revitalized. The "planting grants" from the OCA and within the DOS helped with getting full time clergy into these older churches which had been struggling for such a long time.

The DOS guideline for assisting clergy was very instrumental in bringing mission stations to mission & parish status.

Each parish within the deanery would contribute to a "mission fund" to assist in establishing a mission in a designated empty area. This was instrumental in bringing newly graduated priests to these designated areas so that they would be able to focus completely on "church work".

Diocese must support the local churches and missions. 25% of the diocesan income goes back into mission work and mission development. Between 99-01 nine parishes were revitalized by these forms of assistance. Those 30 new missions were those that didn't just pop-up here or there but were ones that were "planted" by the DOS.

Reach outside your local parish. In the DOS there are 50 or 60 places where missions can be established.

Tithing = OT image of the NT standard. We either tithe or we give everything. Look at the life of St. Anthony. Abp. Dmitri preached this everywhere. The tithe is a way of committing all of your resources to the growth of your diocese. In the DOS before the tithe 60-70% was going to the National Church. In 96-97 the entire diocese "bit the bullet" and went on this tithe. The DOS budget took a big hit but everyone was committed to this process. Now 40% DOS admin, 25% missions, 35% for the balance including 25% to the OCA.

Priests must be remunerated fully in order to give them the opportunity to direct all their energies to missionizing. Also, building funds are supported. Assisting missions in purchasing or saving money to be spent later on the purchase of land or buildings.

Loans via the diocese vs. the bank giving the mission a better interest rate than the banker. You spend money to make money.

All politics is local and all mission work is local also. In the DOS we have tried to do everything to build up, to advance the spread of the faith throughout the entire region.

In the DNE you have to look at a systematic plan for revitalization of parishes and a plan for "planting" parishes.

Question - Where did your growth come from?

Although there was migration from the North, people also left the area. Majority of the increase came from the Baptist Church with people looking for a more authentic Christian worship. Outreach through OCF also provided a way to make people aware a parish is open. These folks are searching for a more authentic faith.

Question - What is demographic?

At St. John of the Ladder, the median age is about 40. Sunday attendance is 90 to 150 people. With 80 adult members and 50 children.

Question - With tithing are you running a deficit in the DOS budget?

Yes, the DOS will run a \$60K deficit as to the OCA assessment, but will not be behind in its payments.

Question - Spirit of mission is in the DNA of those in the DOS. Explain this spirit?

It comes from our founder, Abp. Dmitri. His spirit, drive is the guiding force behind everything in the DOS. Growth also came through conversion by the non-Orthodox spouse who never went to church in their former place but now want to be full participants in the life of the mission.

Question - Why do the converts come?

People aren't coming because they are disenchanting with their current faith but are looking for a more authentic, deeper faith. Abp. Dmitri wanted new comers to be present for a full liturgical year before being accepted into Orthodoxy.

Question - What is it like to live in a missionary environment?

- Fellowship among clergy
- People looking for direction
- People are rediscovering their faith
- Non-Orthodox spouses are taking more interest in the faith.

Question - What is the ratio of cradle Orthodox to converts?

40% cradle Orthodox, 40% converts, and 20% immigrants. There are 1 to 2 black families and 0 Spanish.

Question - Do you have any contact with the black community?

Black community has very strong churches. Most are very strong in faith or very political.

The session ended at 1:20 PM to break for Lunch.

Session II Began at 2:30 PM

V. **REPORTS**

Fr. Joshua Mosher, Clergy Vice Chair, asked for brief comments from those presenting reports.

BOSTON DEANERY:

Fr. Robert Arida, Holy Trinity Cathedral, Boston and Dean of the Boston Deanery presented a written report on the activities of the deanery. New dean was elected at the beginning of this month, Fr. Vasily Lickwar. The bells of Cumberland are being recast and will be consecrated in December.

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 at Deanery Meetings it is extremely fulfilling to hear from every member of the deanery about what is happening in their particular parish. The greatest joy this past year was the groundbreaking at St. Nicholas, Pittsfield, MA. The biggest sadness is that we still have two parishes that are in need of a pastor.

NORTHERN DEANERY:

Fr. Peter Carmichael, Holy Trinity, Springfield, VT and Dean of the Northern Deanery presented a written report. He mentioned that now the clergy have been gathering every two months. St. Jacob's has been host of a number of guest speakers including Fr. Thomas Hopko. OCF activity coordinated by Dn. Ambrose at Dartmouth College. Holy Resurrection, Berlin, NH is very happy to have Fr. Sergious Gerken as their new pastor.

METROPOLITAN COUNCIL:

Fr. Robert Dick, Clergy Representative presented an oral report. He stated that our Bishop Nikon is one of the only bishops who “speaks-up” at the HS & MC meetings. We need to pray for his quick return to health and attendance at the meetings. Dn. John Zarras who has been the Lay Representative will be leaving this position at this assembly. The person taking his place will need to step up.

There is great confusion between the Met & the HS, the Met and the MC, the Met and other Orthodox Churches, etc. Problems stem from this and the major problem is between primacy and conciliarity. There is conflict between the SMPAC and the Met. In sexual abuse cases there seems to be more concern about the cleric rather than the victim. On the national level, if we do not follow our guidelines we are subject possible legal action. Fr. Robert is filled with hope, not depressed about the troubling actions, the mixed messages from the Met & the HS, but that there will be resolution to this difference.

Question - With regard to sexual misconduct, is there any way to screen candidates?

Father Robert identified that the OCA has written procedures but they are not always followed. Father Kreta added that Bishop Nikon has instituted a screening process for seminary candidates.

Dn. John Zarras, Lay Representative, has been part of the MC for the last 5 years. He too has hope and great expectations for the future. The MC has the strongest membership and composition in many years. As for the Strategic Plan which will be presented at the AAC the debate has been about the differences between the diocese vs. the central church and how to finance both. We need to transition to more administrative work being done on the diocesan level. Those things that must be handled on a national level will remain with the central administration. Sexual misconduct cases are those that will need to be handled on this national level. The CA cost in 2006 was budgeted about \$1.9M with 35 people. After the reorganization, which Dn. John was a major participant, the CA was to be reduced by \$500K and a drop to 23 people. By the end of 2007 the count went to 18 people and the budget was \$1.2M. Today at the 16th AAC the budget will be around \$1M and the staff is now 14 people. The process of trimming the CA has been an ongoing process and will continue to be looked at for the next three years.

The assessment for the next three years is on everyone’s mind. The DNY-NJ has proposed to move the CAA (Fair Share) to \$50/ person. The MC has suggested that we keep the CAA at the current level of \$105/ person. We have 22,000 members in the OCA. The current financial assessment is equivalent to \$2.02/person/wk. This will be a 6 year run for this level of finance.

What would happen if it goes to \$50? Deacon John expressed concern that reducing assessment to \$50 would decimate the programs established by the OCA.

The Strategic Plan will be discussed at the AAC. The work began three years ago. After much feedback from all diocese the consensus was don’t get into the organization of the church but rather deal with where do our priorities lie as a church. What direction are we going, what are our priorities? Ten goals were set for discussion and workshops at the AAC. The SP committee wants 4 initiatives for each of the ten goals to come out of these workshops. The number one topic of these ten goals is Parish Development, then Evangelization and youth.

Questions: Can the HS veto the reduction of the CAA from \$105 to \$50? - We are a hierarchal church but we believe that the HS will not go against the will of the AAC.

Which departments had their budgets reduced? – Most departments were reduced but in the past we ran in the red so now it would be good to restore some of these funds. A lot of the

departments are running without getting paid. This will be the first year with a truthful audit with all funds accounted for. If we drop to \$50 CAA, this will decimate the operation of the CA. Some have said to get rid of the expense of Syosset. The property at Syosset was evaluated at 9mil in 2006 and today it is worth 3mil.

The proposed budget for next year for the OCA is \$2.2M. Court cases are \$150K. etc. The MC thought the court cases were finished but they still crop up and we must have funds to deal with this situation.

The major problem is the 22,000 population not the \$105/person assessment.

Again, the real stumbling block is between the Met and the HS. When this is resolved the level of tension will fade away. The bishops of the HS get along with each other.

Credential's Report presented by Rosemary Delaney: as of 3:55 PM

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Diocesan Council	<u>8</u>		
Subtotal	49	Subtotal	3
Grand Total Voting and Non-Voting		52	

ONE / COMMUNICATIONS:

Fr. Joshua Mosher thanked everyone who has contributed to the paper in the past and apologizes for not being able to stick to the schedule in the second half of the year due to his own parishes 100th Anniversary. He added, PLEASE send things; articles, pictures, news, etc. to Fr. Joshua. Also, we need someone to step-up and take the position of Diocesan Webmaster to relieve Fr. David Koles from the multiple jobs that he is doing. Please pass the word to those in your parish who are technologically inclined.

ONE STEWARDS:

Protodeacon Paul Nimchek on behalf of the ONE Stewards Committee stated that for the first time we have exceeded our budgeted amount of \$20K for a total of \$24,000. This was done by an anonymous gift of \$7000. He thanked all who contributed especially the members of the Bishop's Circle. He stated that His Grace starts the giving every year with a \$500 donation. Special mention, by name and parish, of those who participated in the Bishop's Circle and a gift was presented to those who participated. Again, HTOC New Britain was the parish that responded with the most people. Ss. Cyril & Methodius, Terryville gave the most dollars.

SCHOLARSHIP:

John Skrobat stated that the scholarship is open to any male or female going to the seminaries. \$15,000 total was given out this past year with Andrew Boyd at St. Vladimir's and John Taylor Carr at Holy Cross.

YOUTH & CAMPUS MINISTRY:

Fr. John Hopko presented a written report. He again re-iterated that counselors are needed and extremely important for next year's rally. Youth Rally costs \$20K. Forty seven youth and 13 staff members attended this year. Father Hopko commented on the excellent group of youth and the committed staff that have volunteered. Father also noted preparing for Youth

Rally requires a back ground check be conducted every year for all volunteers and the staff receives training every year. He thanked Fr. John Bacon who comes and trains the counselors in Child Protection. Rally dates are not picked by us but are given the week by the Greek Metropolis of Boston camp coordinators. Also, please contact Fr. Peter Paproski, who is the regional coordinator of OCF, about where your college aged youths are going to school in order to establish OCF chapters on their respective campuses.

PENSION BOARD:

Gregory Shesko presented his final pension board report since his term will expire at the AAC. The Board has been constituted since 1966 and Bishop Nikon is the Episcopal moderator. Funds are invested under the financial guidance of Smith Barney. Value of the plan at this time is \$22.5 million. There are 313 active members of the plan, 142 inactive members, and 136 retired members. These are the ones who are receiving benefits. There is a wonderful administrator and secretary who keeps things moving.

CHOIR DIRECTING PROGRAM:

Fr. Steven Voytovich stated that this will be the third graduating class. Soon they will be completing their studies. This year's future graduates are Tim Tassmer, William Kopcha and Ann Wilkenson. When they finish it will make 14 who have completed the classes. Next two year class has a number of participants.

SCOUTING:

Fr. John Bacon presented a written report. He spoke about scouting programs for both boys and girls. Also, that he is the trainer of our Rally Counselors about Sexual misconduct.

COLA for 2012:

Greg Shesko noted that the recommended Cost of Living increase this year will be 3.6%. The three figures used for calculating the COLA are Boston CPI at 3.4%, Northeast Region CPI at 3.6%, US city average at 3.6%.

Fr. Nina Kosowsky moved, John Barone seconded, to accept the written reports as presented. Motion passed.

VI. TREASURER'S REPORT

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

STATEMENT OF ASSETS:

Checkbook balance (8/31/2011): \$ 46,135.04

BUDGET REPORT:

Total Actual Income for 2011 (fiscal year ending 08/31/11):	\$350,060.44
Total Actual Expense	<u>\$326,592.23</u>
Total Actual Expenses over Income	\$ 23,468.21

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. He noted that three parishes have made NO payments for this past year and two are behind from the previous year.

Fr. Sergious Gerken moved and SubDn. Larry Johnson seconded the acceptance of the Treasurer's report. Motion passed.

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 Stephanie Kennedy, seconded by Marion Gulash, that the Auditor's Report be accepted. The motion passed unanimously.

VIII. PARISH GRANT PROGRAM

Prdn. Paul Nimchek presented finding about the Parish Grant Program acting on a resolution from the 47th Diocesan Assembly. Prdn. Paul read the opening paragraph from the printed proposal. The committee included Father Robert Dick, Father Caleb Abetti, and Matushka Cindy Voytovich. Budget includes \$10,000 for the Diocesan Grant Initiative and will be taken from savings. Applications will be reviewed by a committee appointed by Bishop Nikon and approved by the Diocesan Council. Each grant would be targeted at \$2,000 to \$3,000. He stated that by passing the 2012 budget tomorrow you accept this program as presented in the written proposal. The DC with His Grace will establish the committee to review applications and grant approval of funds.

The session closed with prayer at 5:15 PM. All gathered at Three Saints Church to celebrate Vespers and then traveled to John J. Sullivan's Restaurant for dinner and fellowship.

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

After the celebration of the Divine Liturgy on Saturday morning, October 22, 2011, at Three Saints Church, Ansonia, CT followed by a brunch in the parish social hall, the Diocesan Assembly reconvened for Session III in the church at 11:20 AM with the singing of "O Heavenly King."

Rdr. Daniel Bacon, Lay vice Chair, opened Session III.

IX. PRESENTATION BY FR. LUKE VERONIS: BUILDING UP FAITHFUL, VIBRANT CHURCHES

Father Luke Veronis provided a presentation titled "Building Up the Body of Christ: Living as a Vibrant, Healthy Church". Father Veronis explained he was a missionary in African and spent 12 years in Albania. He is Rector at Saints Constantine and Helen Greek Orthodox Church in Webster, Mass.

He began by asking a few questions: Where are we as a Church? How do our parishioners understand "Church?" In what direction are we going as a church? How can our churches become more vibrant, dynamic & healthy?

He explained our society has influenced our religiosity. Secular mentality has compartmentalized religious life into a few hours on Sunday morning. In Albania, churches are open every day for people to come and worship. Prosperity and comfort have made us spiritually lazy. 'Busyness' and constant activity leave little time for prayer and contemplation. We have a 'supermarket of churches' and people feel if a Church isn't meaningful, they will go elsewhere.

Survey has identified issues - Church is not helpful, meaningful or relevant; Church has a 'museum mentality' and isn't ready to accept new realities; people are dissatisfied with preaching, education, and youth programs; some family members feel unwelcome; ethnicity erects language barriers; parochialism results in limited vision; and pettiness of church politics.

People want to identify with a Church but have fallen away. Being an Orthodox Christian cannot be taken for granted. Orthodoxy cannot be maintained by inertia.

Despite the fact that more and more Americans are unchurched and are falling away, statistics in American society constantly reveal the thirst for spirituality remains high.

55% of adult Americans say "religion is very important in my life" and 28% say "religion is fairly important" stats haven't changes since 1978

65% identify themselves as connected to a church, 84% call themselves Christians

"We must recognize that some have left the church because they have not found Christ & His Church"

Focus must be on healing people. Like a hospital that contains doctors, nurses, sick people, critically ill people, and also the dead, a church contains the pastor, teachers, sinners, and even the dead.

Cultivating a vibrant Church requires:

- Openness to God's spirit will bring about renewal and change. Otherwise, maintaining 'we've always done it this way' mentality is a sign of death.
- Developing bonds of trust and love.
- Creating a vision to provide focus on a direction.
- Cultivating spiritual discipline - raise up a core group of believers
- Equipping and utilizing the entire body of parishioners - there is a large talent pool within the parish
- Creating an atmosphere where people expect God to do great things.

Father Luke identified he regularly explains how to participate in worship. At least once a year he has a 'teaching Sunday' where he provides a list describing the liturgy and then stops during the liturgy to explain what is happening.

To create a vibrant Church, we must focus simultaneously on:

1. Educating, revitalizing, training & equipping our faith
2. Reaching out to the lapsed Orthodox & unchurched
3. Offering a witness to non-orthodox Christians
4. Fulfilling our apostolic identity by reaching out the world and becoming global Christians

Developed a strong mission statement - Support/proclaim mission through worship, Christ-centered fellowship, spiritual growth/education (rote learning of transformational), witness, service/outreach to others. Sure steps to building a strong, vibrant church.

Test for Every Church:

How much of budget goes towards ministry?

How much goes to philanthropy, outreach & mission?

How much of budget, time & activities go outwards, outside our boundaries?

Witnessing to the “unchurched” - Unchurched people have increased 95% over past 15 years, 160 million unchurched in America today, 57% of our country. Who are they?

Antagonistic 5%

Resistant 21%

Neutral 36%

Friendly 27%

Very friendly 11%

For outreach, parishes must act locally, nationally, and globally.

We took a short break at 12:45 and reconvened at 12:55.

X. OLD BUSINESS

Clarification about last year’s ONE Stewards contributions, the donation of \$7000 came from Bishop Nikon.

Hearing none we moved on to the budget.

XI. 2012 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 2012. Figures have not been finalized since 6 parishes have not submitted their numbers so we are going on the figures we

have on file at this time. The OCA Fair Share for the year 2012, at its current level \$105/member, is listed with the “count” for 2010 since the final numbers have not been received. After the AAC the actual dollars will reflect the current 2011 count. There was discussion on the proper procedure for recording the Parish Grant Program in the budget.

There is a small increase to His Grace’s stipend, but no change to other diocesan officers and deans. Diocesan Administration is remaining the same as the prior year, except for OCA Personal Assistance program which has been discontinued and there is no amount budgeted for 2012. Also noted that Parish Grant Initiative is a new budgeted item (\$10,000), which will be funded from the prior year’s surplus. The budget actually shows a loss of \$10,000 due to the Parish Grant Initiative. Diocesan activities and ONE Stewards are slightly less than the current year.

Fr. John Bacon moved, Fr. William DuBovik seconded, to accept the 2012 Budget as presented. Motion passed.

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

<u>Voting Attendees</u>		<u>Non-Voting Attendees</u>	
Hierarchs	0	Observers, Guests, Alternates 2 (1 observers, 1 Guest)	
Clergy Delegates	18		
Lay Delegates	14		
Diocesan Council	<u>9</u>		
Subtotal	41	Subtotal	2
Grand Total Voting and Non-Voting			43

XII. ELECTIONS TO THE DIOCESAN COUNCIL

Fr. John Hopko, Nominations and Resolutions Committee presented the following ballot of candidates, as listed below:

Open Position: Lay Representative to the Metropolitan Council

Nominated candidate from the Nominations Committee: David Zavednak.

SudDn. Lawrence Johnson moved Dn. John Zarras seconded to close nominations. Motion passed.

Open Position: Three yr Clergy-at-Large Representative to Diocesan Council

Nominated Candidates from the Nominations Committee: Fr. Patrick Burns.

Joseph Boruch moved John Barone seconded to close nominations. Motion passed.

Open Positions: Two (2) Laity-at-Large Representatives to Diocesan Council

Nominated Candidates from the Nominations Committee: Robert Popadic & John Barone.

SudDn. Lawrence Johnson moved Alexia Tassmer seconded to close nominations. Motion passed.

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

Nominated Candidate from the Nominations Committee: SubDn. Lawrence Johnson.

Marian Gulash moved Prdn. Paul Nimchek seconded to close nominations. Motion passed.

Fr. John Hopko requests that the Secretary cast one ballot. Motion by Fr. Robert Dick, seconded by Greg Shesko. Motion passed.

XIII. Resolutions [Full text of resolution see Appendix I]

1. To invite Father John Bacon to provide sexual misconduct training at the next Diocesan Assembly. Motion was made by Anthony Bernardi and seconded by Robert Popadic. Motion passed.
2. To request Fr. John Hopko to arrange for sexual misconduct training in each Deanery. Motion was made by Stephanie Kennedy and seconded by Greg Shesko. Motion passed.
3. To thank our host parish and all their workers. Motion was made by Fr. Michael Westerberg and seconded by SubDn. Lawrence Johnson. Motion passed.

Fr. Patrick Burns, Rector of Three Saints, thanked Nina Kosowsky for her tireless efforts to arrange and coordinate the 48th Diocesan Assembly. He presented her with a bouquet of roses.

XIV. NEW BUSINESS

1. Fr. John Kreta reported that the Weeping Icon of Hawaii and having it travel to the different deaneries or parishes within the DNE. He asked for a coordinator to do this and Fr. Patrick Burns volunteered to be this person.
2. Victor Kuziak asked if The Orthodox Church (TOC) magazine could be revitalized and sent to members of the diocese. It was noted that the TOC is in print but only published twice a year and sent directly to parish churches for distribution.

XV. NEXT DIOCESAN ASSEMBLY

2012 Diocesan Assembly: Boston Deanery – Salem, MA October 26-27
2013 Diocesan Assembly: Connecticut Deanery – Bridgeport, CT
2014 Diocesan Assembly: Northern Deanery – Northfield Falls, VT

XVI. ASSEMBLY ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn the assembly was made at 1:33 pm by Marion Gulash. All in favor rose and sang, “It is Truly Meet.”

Respectfully submitted,

The 2011 Diocesan Assembly Secretariat:

Fr. David Koles, Diocesan Secretary
David Zavednak
Matilda Hungerford

APPENDIX I

RESOLUTIONS BY THE RESOLUTION COMMITTEE
48th NEW ENGLAND DIOCESAN ASSEMBLY
October 22, 2011

Resolution No.1

BE IT RESOLVED: that this 48th New England Diocesan Assembly requests that the New England Diocesan Council invite Archpriest John Bacon, in his capacity as a Youth Protection trainer certified by the Boy Scouts of America, to provide Youth Protection Training to the gathered clergy and lay delegates as one of the presenters at the 49th New England Diocesan Assembly.

Resolution No.2

BE IT RESOLVED: that this 48th New England Diocesan Assembly requests that Priest John Hopko, in his capacity as Diocesan Youth Director, arrange for Youth Protection Training sessions to be provided in each of the three deaneries of the Diocese of New England during the upcoming year for persons working with the youth of the Diocese of New England. These sessions are to be provided at Diocesan expense with the goal of reaching and training all those working with young people at events and in the parishes of the Diocese of New England.

Resolution No.3

BE IT RESOLVED: that this 48th New England Diocesan Assembly does hereby express gratitude and prayerful best wishes to all those involved with preparing for and hosting this 48th New England Diocesan Assembly, especially the clergy and faithful of Three Saints Church, Ansonia, Connecticut, our host parish. God grant you many and blessed years!