

**(Draft) Minutes of the 46th Assembly of the Diocese of New England
Nativity of the Holy Virgin Mary Church, Waterbury, CT –
October 23-24, 2009**

The Assembly opened with a Service of Prayer celebrated by His Grace Bishop NIKON of Boston at 10:10 AM on Friday morning, October 23, 2009.

I. ELECTION OF ASSEMBLY OFFICERS

With the blessing of His Grace, Bishop NIKON, Fr. John Kreta, Chancellor of the Diocese of New England, chaired the election of Assembly Officers, as follows:

Clergy Vice Chair – Fr. Sergius Halvorsen, nominated by the Diocesan Council. Fr. Dennis Rhodes closed nominations.

Lay Vice Chair – George Ludko, nominated by the Diocesan Council. Fr. Dennis Rhodes closed nominations.

Secretariat – Fr. David Koles (the Diocesan Secretary) and Fr. Steven Voytovich were nominated by the Diocesan Council. No one was nominated from the floor. George Ludko moved to have only two members of the Secretariat, seconded by Fr. Vasily Lickwar. Motion passed.

Credentials Committee – Timothy Tassmer and Alexia Tassmer, nominated by the Diocesan Council, Robert Maskevich, nominated from the floor. Fr. Sergius Halvorsen closed nominations.

Nominations and Resolutions Committee – Fr. John Hopko and Greg Shesko, nominated by the Diocesan Council. Greg Shesko could not be with us so two people needed to be nominated from the floor. Fr. Mark Sherman & Dn. Gregory Uhrin were nominated from the floor. Fr. Sergius Halvorsen closed nominations.

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

II. HIERARCH'S REPORT

His Grace, Bishop NIKON presented the following written report and talked about not looking to the past or dreaming about the future.

Over the past two years the Church has faced some remarkable challenges. Last year, I left our Diocesan Assembly, strengthened with the love, care and support of my brother clergy and the faithful of our diocese. We met, as you may remember just prior to our All American Council. I do not think that I would have been able to weather the storm without you, without your love and support. And for that I am truly grateful. My diocesan family was there to support me spiritually as well as physically. There was a tangible spirit of care and love for each other during that assembly.

The national issues most certainly affected us, but they did not deter us from our primary responsibility of preaching the Gospel and spreading the good news of Christ's never ending love for us.

As you may remember two years ago I began our assembly by giving our clergy chairperson a timer, so that all who wanted to speak would have that opportunity. And last year I began by wearing a gift that I had received from one of our parishes. The gift was a pair of "retro glasses," these were glasses that permitted one to look back or behind oneself and I remarked then that many would be happy to look back at happier times in the OCA.

This year I received a gift that I do not have with me since I did not believe that our hotel would permit them nor would they be appropriate in church. The gift was a box of “sparklers”. The type usually lit at Fourth of July celebrations that you hold in your hand and wave around. I was going to hold them up in a celebratory stance.

Why the celebration? Because of our courage. It is said that courage is fear, fear that has said its prayers.

Today we can celebrate and rejoice because we have emerged from the gloom of crisis, a gloom that gave the devil reason to rejoice. But today, everything is different, and I feel as if we have given the angels cause to rejoice. Or rather, Christ in us has given us all cause to rejoice.

After our Assembly last year, the Church met at the All American Council, a Council that softened our hearts and strengthened the Church. Where anger reigned, love triumphed; from the darkness of despair, hope shined forth, where defeat was predicted, victory emerged. All this gave us renewed hope and vision. And all rejoiced.

I stated then that I was not ready to give up on our responsibility to evangelize this land. That I was not ready to give up on autocephaly granted to us as the OCA. Spreading the good news of the Gospel is our responsibility, this is our charge, and this is our destiny. Even when it may have seemed impossible “with God all things are possible” MT 19:26

Of course we are not out of the woods yet, but our concentration is now centered on renewal, growth, and mission. The Holy Synod is leading the Church in Strategic Planning that will refocus our mission on evangelization and Christian witness. Every aspect of our apostolic vocation was renewed, revitalized, invigorated.

Much good work has been accomplished since our last assembly, both on our own Diocesan level and the national level as well; a number of our clergy were recognized for their dedicated service to their local communities and to the church at large. Over the past year, our Diocese and our individual parishes continued our ministry of the Gospel of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Youth

We had record participation at youth rally. So many of our youth gathered together to learn about their church and enjoy Christian fellowship with one another.

I always enjoy my time with the youth attending rally. This year we had time to talk with the bishop, and exchange ideas and thoughts and as usual it was most enjoyable and gratifying. Since there were so many attending Rally this year, Fr John Hopko reminds us that we are in dire need of additional counselors. Honestly, it was a bit difficult with so many campers with so few adult counselors. If you, or anyone you know, are interested in being a counselor at Youth Rally, I heartily encourage you to contact Fr. John.

The OCF at UCONN continues to be very active and the group has grown this year to about 20 participants. I continue to visit with students on a regular basis and their dedication is indicative of what we can look forward to as they move to take on the responsibilities of parish life.

Recognizing how important the OCF is, the collection from our CT Deanery mission service in Hartford, CT was shared with the OCF chapters at UCONN and Yale.

The UCONN OCF has started a new annual program called, “Grill the Christian” where a panel of clergy from several denominations are grilled with the toughest questions that the students can ask. Last year Fr John Hopko was the Orthodox clergy participant and we hope to sponsor another such function on campus this year and Fr. Sergius Halvorsen will be grilled.

The Crossroads program begun under SCOBA is a summer program where college and high school students from around the country spend several weeks at Holy Cross Seminary participating in Orthodox programs as well as visit churches of several denominations and who visit Holy Trinity Cathedral and St George cathedral in Boston. Both visits are highlights of my time with our orthodox youth.

Highlights

Recently we celebrated family day with the clergy of the Connecticut Deanery and this was a most joyful event as we gathered to spend some time together. We also welcomed the newest pastor to the Connecticut deanery, Fr. Nicholas Dellermann and his family. He was ordained to the holy diaconate at Holy Resurrection in Claremont, NH earlier this year, and was ordained to the priesthood on October 10th, at St. Nicholas Church in Norwich.

Another joy to see is the inter parish cooperation between parishes of our Diocese and the Albanian Archdiocese. This is especially evident in the relationship between Holy Annunciation Parish in Maynard, MA and Holy Annunciation in Natick, MA. The same is evident between the two cathedrals in Boston as servers and deacons from Holy Trinity Cathedral have participated in important events during this past year at St. George Cathedral.

The second session of a Bio-Ethics seminar was sponsored by St. Nicholas in Salem, MA shortly following our last assembly.

Holy Trinity Cathedral celebrated the 25th year of pastoral service to that community and honored Fr. Robert Arida and his family. Earlier this month, the cathedral celebrated the “kick off” celebration of their centennial year with a vesper service, a lecture on sacred space followed by an open house.

Clergy and faithful from both the Diocese of NE and the Albanian Archdiocese, gathered to honor my 40th Anniversary of ordination to the holy priesthood. Although it was gratifying to celebrate, one member noticed my photo in the ONE newspaper and remarked, and using his words said “you used to be a good looking guy”, the words “used to be” still haunt me.

Nativity of the Virgin Mary in Chelsea celebrated their 85th anniversary just this past week and they still sponsor and celebrate with the Romanian community’s mission in that city.

All Saints Church in Hartford celebrated their 95th Anniversary and hosted this year’s National FOCA convention.

Holy Assumption in Stamford, CT also celebrated 95 years of ministry to the faithful.

Our mission in Rockport, Maine did not materialize and we are still looking to establish a mission in that state.

At one of our diocesan council meetings our parish in Berlin, NH asked for a loan of \$10K, which we could not supply, but through the discretionary fund, with the blessing of the Diocesan council I authorized a \$3000, grant. This inspired the community so much that they raised \$ 45K to redesign the rectory there. Fr. Andrew has stated that now it is probably the most beautiful and up to date rectory in our diocese.

A celebratory Liturgy was held in Clinton, CT. in honor of the 100th Anniversary of the repose of St. Alexis.

I happen to be friends with His Beatitude's sister, a friendship that began when we met at the enthronement. When she was visiting in NY I invited her to dinner, and His Beatitude decided to tag along, which turned out to be a blessing for the Connecticut Deanery. Following dinner Metropolitan Jonah made a surprise visit to our meeting and shared some of his hopes for the church with the clergy present.

Fr. Nicholas Timpko has recovered well and has been serving in our Connecticut parishes and the Albanian parishes as often as he is called upon.

Synod and Synod related items.

As a member of the Holy Synod, travel this year was extensive.

I represented His Beatitude and our diocese at the dedication of the new facilities for OCMC in St. Augustine Florida that honored both Archbishop Demetrius of the GOA and Archbishop Anastasios of the Church of Albania. It was there I was able to arrange a private breakfast meeting between His Beatitude Jonah and Archbishop Anastasios, thus fostering better relationships between the OCA and the church of Albania.

The Holy Synod also met in Dallas, Texas as we gathered to honor His Eminence Dmitri on the occasion of his retirement. It was good for us to be there in as much as his eminence served as administrator of both the Diocese of New England and the Albanian Archdiocese for a number of years. He is remembered fondly by both dioceses.

I should have stayed away from the St. Tikhon's Pilgrimage this year; only because it was on this occasion that His Beatitude decided that I was the right person to Chair the Synodal investigation committee of St Tikhon's after allegations of mismanagement were brought before the synod and metropolitan council. This work continues slowly, but steadily.

The Saint Vladimir's Institute was also the occasion for the gathering of the Holy Synod which I attended. Shortly following that, the newest hierarch, His Grace Melcezidek was consecrated as bishop of Pittsburgh where the Holy Synod gathered once again for that joyous occasion.

I continue to meet with Bishop Katre of the other Albanian diocese, thus fostering a brotherly relationship with him as well. Unfortunately, our relationship with Metropolitan Methodius of Boston has not been entirely restored. When His eminence is serving our clergy are invited to receive the Eucharist but, the prohibition on serving together with the Greek clergy of the Boston Metropolis is still in force.

The Holy Synod also met in Colorado Springs for a synodal retreat and we had numerous conference calls during the past year. A similar retreat is planned for the coming year.

During our retreat in Colorado we met with a group known as “The Navigators.” It is an international group that works to share the Gospel, or rather help to introduce people to the Bible. We all felt that this is a group that we possibly could work with and may even help us in our campus ministries since they are located on virtually every campus in the US. Further study and conferences are necessary before this can happen, but for most of the synod members, the feeling was that it appeared promising.

There is a greater camaraderie between the brothers on the synod, though we may disagree on some issues.

His Beatitude recently returned from a visit to the church of Georgia, there appears to be some discussion of possibly establishing a Georgian Diocese within the OCA, but His Beatitude may address that with the synod in the near future or perhaps later during his dinner address.

The church of Guatemala has also petitioned to become a part of the OCA and these possibilities are being studied at this time.

Because of scheduling conflicts I was unable to participate fully in the joint meeting of the Holy Synod and Metropolitan council. On the old schedule I had the Albanian Assembly, the Holy Synod (and sometimes joint with the MC) followed by the NE Assembly. The Albanians, considerate of this schedule, moved their assembly to September and this year His Beatitude moved the joint meetings to September as well. But I was able to participate in the joint meetings for most of the week. The schedule for next year has rectified this situation.

I did not have the time to go to Canada for the consecration of Bp. Ireney, auxiliary to Archbishop Seraphim.

Synod and Ministry

The older I get and the more things change, the more they stay the same. Orthodox coffee houses appear to be gaining popularity in several areas of the US. The synod visited one of these coffee/reading houses in Colorado Springs sponsored by the Diocese of the West. Similar ministries exist in the Diocese of the South where there are coffee/reading houses that also serve as chapels for new missions. There is even a coffee area at St Tikhon’s bookstore.

I remember my grandfather and father talking about the coffee houses in the old country where the men would gather every day, drinking Turkish coffee, smoking unfiltered cigarettes and talking about the church. Even though unfiltered cigarettes are no longer in fashion, coffee and good conversation seems to be making a comeback.

At any rate, these newer establishments appear to be a good means of introducing people to Orthodoxy. Preliminary inquiries are now being studied so that similar houses may be established in the Diocese of Eastern PA.

In our Diocese, the data is quite clear: we continue to slowly lose members. To date, we have lost more than 40% of our membership in the past two decades. Our Task force on Evangelization and Revitalization has been evaluating Natural Church Development in

several parishes, and this may turn out to be a viable means for revitalization and growth. Perhaps the model of a “coffee house” ministry would be viable in the Diocese? Perhaps God is calling us to do something else? However, it is absolutely clear that now is the time for every member of the Diocese to pray earnestly and ask God to guide us in discerning new ways to minister the Gospel. To put it bluntly, if we keep doing exactly what we have been doing, we can only expect more decline. That is not an option for me, and that is not an option for us. In the coming year I look forward to renewed discussion about mission, evangelization and renewal in the Diocese.

I participated in three strategic planning committees during this past year. The reports given to the Holy Synod for the national church strategic objectives, the Albanian strategic planning committee and our own through Natural Church Development. Fortunately ours had as its’ foundation the Gospel, this was not clearly evident with the other strategic objectives.

Our own Fr. Robert Arida is chair of the OCA’s committee and is ably assisted by Dn. John Zarras.

COLA

As you all know our diocese has adopted a COLA obligation in reference to clergy compensation and it is usually Greg Sheshko who brings us up to date as to the percentage requirements for the coming year. If you remember last year there was quite a discussion relative the COLA due to the high cost of living changes required. This year there is no recommended COLA adjustment since all three categories or adjustment ended up in the negative. (US City Average -2.1, Northeast Region -1.9, Boston/Brocton/Nashua -3.4)

This does not preclude any parish council from offering a merit increase to the current pastor’s compensation.

Communication

Communication between our parishes has become more regular with the publication of ONE Newspaper and I am most appreciative to the work and dedication of Fr. Halvorsen for taking on this responsibility. Unfortunately his personal work load will not permit him to continue in this capacity. We are happy to announce that Fr. Joshua Mosher has graciously accepted this responsibility for the coming year.

It is absolutely necessary for our parishes to inform father of significant events in the life of our parishes, because they serve us not only as information but serve as inspiration and the exchange of ideas are beneficial to our respective ministries. I am also grateful to all of those who submitted address corrections to update our diocesan mailing list.

Fr. David Koles has been diligent in keeping our website up to date as an added aspect of our diocesan communications.

O-N-E Stewards

We are most grateful for all who participated in this year’s O-N-E Stewards program. Parishes as well as individuals have participated again this year. With the new contribution level of the “Bishop’s Circle” we are nearing our goals for this Diocesan Program. I will once

again be having dinner with the members of the Bishop’s Circle as a way to thank them for their additional level of participation. And no, I am not doing the cooking.

It was a bit disconcerting that a number of our parishes were so far behind in their assessments that payment was not received from some parishes until earlier this week. The assessment is not new, the amounts are not unknown and the diocese suffers when these assessments are not remitted in a timely manner. This responsibility falls within the prevue of the pastor and parish council. Late or non remittance puts a strain on the operating budget of the whole diocese.

Pastoral Changes

Deacon Anthony Kruge, at his request was released to the Carpatho-Russian Diocese.

Fr. Jason Vansuch was released from the pastorate of St Nicholas in Norwich to the Omophorion of His Beatitude and the diocese of New York and New Jersey

Fr. Nicholas Dellermann was ordained to the Holy Diaconate and Priesthood and assigned as rector of St Nicholas in Norwich.

Fr. John Konkle was ordained to the Holy Priesthood at SVS and went to Holy Dormition Monastery in Rives Junction, Michigan.

I am most grateful for the dedicated work of the clergy and laity of our diocese who offer their time and talent to us as a diocese and to the church at large.

We are thankful and fortunate to have them. I especially want to thank our chancellor Fr. John Kreta, who keeps me, informed of the many activities in our diocese as well as his consideration of the work of the hierarch. And yes, for his advice and council as well.

We have much talent in our diocese and we work together to ascertain, the best ways those talents can be used to serve Christ and His Holy church.

Credential’s Report presented by Alexia Tassmer: as of 11:25pm

<u>Voting Attendees</u>		<u>Non-Voting Attendees</u>	
Hierarchs	1	Observers, Guests, Alternates	7 (6 observers, 1 guests.)
Clergy Delegates	23		
Lay Delegates	17		
Diocesan Council	<u>9</u>		
Subtotal	50	Subtotal	7

Grand Total Voting and Non-Voting **57**

III. 2008 ASSEMBLY MINUTES

Peter Kopcha asked that we turn page 13. Under Section X, the year needs to be changed from 2007 to **2009**; The increase in the Fair Share needs to be changed from \$11,000 to **\$25,000**; the stipend for the Youth Rally staff was increased **by** \$300 not to \$300; also, the budget increase for ONE Stewards was not in the goal but an expense, therefore the line ‘The budget increases the ONE Stewards goal to \$5300’ needs to be changed to ‘The budget increases the ONE Stewards **disbursement by** \$5300’.

A motion to accept the 2008 Diocesan Assembly Minutes, as corrected, was made by Fr. Dennis Rhodes seconded by Joan Skrobat. The motion carried.

IV. PRESENTATION BY ARCHIMANDRITE MELETIOS (WEBBER):

He offered a bit of background, including being a spiritual son of Metropolitan KALISTOS (Ware). He grew up in England, of Scottish heritage. He was received into Orthodoxy while studying at Oxford. Metropolitan KALISTOS was there but he also met Metropolitan ANTHONY (Bloom) who he stated has been most influential in his life. He met Fr. Lev Gillett (Aka A Monk of the Eastern Church). Fr. Meletios has also spent significant time in the Netherlands. Currently he is Abbot of The Monastery of St. John of San Francisco. He has had several books published as well.

Archimandrite Meletios shared a reflection on Images of Prayer

He began by comparing differing portions of Scripture and where they are found in the church:

OT – largely in the nave found in liturgical music

NT Epistles – brought to altar from the nave.

Gospels -- on the altar

These locations offer direction in terms of their importance, with Jesus' own words being first and foremost.

Arch. Meletios then turned to Genesis, to a “time when things were okay.”

Adam and Eve walked intimately with God in the cool of the evening. *Walking with God* is the first image of prayer.

The Prodigal Son offers another vantage point relating to only being able to *meet God in the present moment*. From this story, when we lose our life in Christ, we get it back, receiving more than we had before. Concerning the older son, if you keep tight hold of your spiritual life, it diminishes.

Arch. Meletios then turned to Scriptural images of the Temple and Synagogue. The temple has one location only, with rooms that are beyond regular access (e.g. the Holy of Holies). The Synagogue, however, is a place of gathering anywhere.

Eucharistic imagery also shared: The Eucharist pierces into this world; after receiving communion we are sent out, bearing God anew. We have to pass the flame on.

Concerning prayer “in our closet:” we do not follow the Western model of thought about God, these being a form of brokenness through both fear and desire. We are called to push thoughts away toward *silence of the heart* that literally lead us to the gates of the Kingdom of Heaven. Toward that end, Arch. Meletios ended his presentation by inviting all gathered to five minutes of silent prayer with the Jesus Prayer: O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, Have Mercy on me a sinner.”

V. REPORTS

Fr. Sergius Halvorsen, 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. He added that Fr. Mark Sherman will be retiring in February 2010.

CT DEANERY:

Fr. Vladimir Aleandro, Christ the Savior, Southbury 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.

NORTHERN DEANERY:

Fr. Andrew Tregubov, Holy Resurrection, Claremont and Dean of the Northern Deanery presented a written report. He mentioned about Holy Resurrection, Berlin, NH and their dedication.

METROPOLITAN COUNCIL:

Fr. Robert Arida and Dn John Zarras made additional comments to their written report about the slide presentation that will take place after lunch.

ONE / COMMUNICATIONS:

Fr. Sergius Halverson thanked everyone who has contributed to the paper in the past, this being his last report. PLEASE send things to the new editor Fr. Joshua Mosher especially address changes and additions.

ONE STEWARDS – Protodeacon Paul Nimchek thanked all who contributed especially the members of the Bishop’s Circle. He listed every member’s name. He stated that His Grace starts the giving every year with a \$500 donation. He will be taking the members of the Bishop’s Circle to lunch next week at The Public House in Sturbridge, MA. Again, HTOC New Britain was the parish that responded the most with over \$3800 to ONE Stewards. St. Alexis Church, Clinton showed the greatest increase in membership.

SCHOLARSHIP:

Peter Kopcha 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 five seminarians at St. Vladimir’s and one 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 years rally.

COMMITTEE FOR EVANGELIZATION AND REVITALIZATION:

Fr. Sergius Halvorsen presented the report. Bp NIKON, Dn. John Zarras & Fr. Mark Sherman are the members of the committee. Anyone can be added!!

PENSION BOARD:

Bp. NIKON commented about the pension board. Changes were made to the way compensation was distributed to take into account years of service.

DEAN OF MISSIONS:

Fr. Mark Sherman introduced Oleg Yemelyanov, a member of the US Census Bureau and observer, will have a table with information and will speak to everyone during lunch break. Fr. Mark presented a written report.

CHOIR DIRECTIONG PROGRAM:

Fr. Steven Voytovich asked for questions on his written report. He stated that those enrolled in the program last met on Saturday, October 17th.

COLA for 2010

Bp. NIKON again mentioned that there is NO recommended Cost of Living increase this year since all areas are in the negative. The three figures used for calculating the COLA are Boston CPI at -3.4%, Northeast Region CPI at -1.9%, US city average at -2.1%.

Fr. William DuBovik moved, Fr. Robert Arida seconded, to accept the written reports as presented. Motion passed.

VI. TREASURER'S REPORT

Peter Kopcha, Diocesan Treasurer, presented the Treasurer's Report

STATEMENT OF ASSETS:

Checkbook balance (8/31/2009):	\$ 19,471.00
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BUDGET REPORT:

Total Actual Income for 2008-2009 fiscal year ending 08/31/09:	\$368,482.68
Total Actual Expense	<u>\$363,620.75</u>
Total Actual Expenses over Income	\$ 4,861.93

A complete, detailed breakdown of the Treasurer's Report was distributed to those in attendance and copies are on file with the Diocesan Secretary. Peter reviewed orally all the reports he distributed, explaining the facts and figures presented in the printed information. On the income side of the ledger we had to dip into savings because Fair Share income from the parishes was behind. On the expense side travel was higher than budgeted and our insurance has increased because we were mistakenly categorized and under charged. ONE newspaper expenses are down because we published fewer issues than anticipated. Rally expenses are up again and scholarship applications have increased.

Tim Tassmer moved and Fr. Robert Dick seconded the acceptance of the Treasurer's report.

VII. AUDITOR'S REPORT

Marion Gulash presented the findings of the Auditing Committee. There was a small problem in the auditing committee. One of the elected members was inadvertently not asked to addend and a different person, who was not elected, was asked to attend did so. George Ludko asked if two of the three elected members were present for the audit. Marion responded to the affirmative. A motion was made by George Ludko, seconded by Dn. Gregory Uhrin, that the Auditor's Report be accepted. The motion passed unanimously.

The session ended at 1:10 pm to break for Lunch.

Session II Began at 2:35pm

Credential's Report presented by Alexia Tassmer: as of 2:40pm

<u>Voting Attendees</u>		<u>Non-Voting Attendees</u>	
Hierarchs	1	Observers, Guests, Alternates	5 (4 observers)
Clergy Delegates	21		
Lay Delegates	17		
Diocesan Council	<u>9</u>		
Subtotal	48	Subtotal	5
Grand Total Voting and Non-Voting		53	

Reports continued with a Power Point / Slide presentation by Fr. Robert Arida & Dn. John Zarras about the Strategic Planning Committee of the Metropolitan Council. Fr. Robert introduced the subject with background information. Discussion with questions and answers followed.

VIII. PRESENTATION: VISITATION MINISTRIES; FR. STEVEN VOYTOVICH

Fr. Steven Voytovich, pastor of St. Alexis Orthodox Church, offered a presentation in the afternoon on Visitation Ministry representing a collaborative effort of the OCA Departments of Institutional Chaplaincy, of which he is the director, and the Department of Christian Service and Humanitarian Aid (CSHA), currently led by Donna Karabin as director. He shared a letter from Donna to those gathered at this assembly.

He began with some preliminary comments on two topics. He called attention to our church's current dialogue on whether departments should remain at the national church level or be driven largely through the dioceses. If this occurs, our diocese would need to develop a response plan. The second preliminary topic relates to another CSHA initiative concerning handicap access. He shared a listing of our diocesan parishes that have responded, and invited those with no listing to fill out a form in order to be added. The handicap accessibility notation can be found right on the OCA website page for each parish.

Fr. Steven's presentation on Visitation Ministries was first shared at this past year's All-American Council, though due to lack of communication, only about 10 participants came. This program, collaboratively developed, is designed to assist parishes interested in developing Visitation Ministries with a step-wise process on how to undertake this effort. Visitation ministries represent a very real way to focus our energy between "Let us Depart in Peace," at the end of the Liturgy, with Blessed is the Kingdom, the next time we gather. Related to Arch. Meletios' point of being sent out after receiving communion, we leave the church to engage in ministry appropriate to our gifts and talents, and then bring the fruit of this ministry back to the Divine Liturgy.

The developmental process of establishing Visitation Ministries was covered in a series of handouts that includes pre-ministry preparation and engagement, launching (with assistance of our Visitation Ministry Team from the national church), developing supervision/mentoring of faithful engaged in ministry, and adjustments made to ministry through feedback. Among those engaged in this journey are but not limited to: pastor, champion(s), the faithful engaging in ministry, town leaders, those who are the focus of ministry, and skeptics. Also

committee information was also discussed. The lay delegates felt that their meetings at future assemblies be more structured with someone to be the facilitator.

X. **2010 DIOCESAN BUDGET AND ASSESSMENT**

Peter Kopcha, Diocesan Treasurer, presented the complete budget and assessment package for the upcoming financial year. Peter commented especially on the changes and adjustments from last year's budget. Copies of the material distributed are on file with the Diocesan Secretary. His Grace will send out the census forms to be returned by early December in order to calculate the Fair Share amount.

Motion Dn. John Zarras, second by John Barone to accept the 2010 budget as presented. Motion passed.

Fr. John Kreta thanked Peter Kopcha for his service as Diocesan treasurer.

XI. **ELECTIONS TO THE DIOCESAN COUNCIL**

Nominations and Resolutions Committee presented the following ballot of candidates, as listed below:

Open Position: Diocesan Secretary

Nominated candidate from the Nominations Committee: Fr. David Koles

Open Position: Diocesan Treasurer

There was no candidate from the Nominations Committee. Fr. John Hopko asked for nominations from the floor. Fr. John Kreta nominated John Skrobat. Mr. Skrobat accepted the nomination.

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

Nominated Candidates from the Nominations Committee: Fr. Robert Dick.

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

Nominated Candidates from the Nominations Committee: Marian Gulash and Inga Leonova.

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

Nominated Candidate from the Nominations Committee: Fr. Michael Korolev.

George Ludko moved Marion Gulash seconded that the Secretary cast one ballot. Motion passed unanimously.

XII. **NEW BUSINESS**

1) Prdn. Paul Nimchek made an appeal for ONE Stewards. The committee has asked that every parish add ONE Stewards to you annual budget. Secondly, those who are representing your parish at the assembly should be members of ONE Stewards

XIII. **NEXT DIOCESAN ASSEMBLY**

2010 Diocesan Assembly: Northern Deanery
(Springfield, VT / Claremont, NH) October 29 – 30.

2011 Diocesan Assembly: Ansonia, CT
2012

XIV. ASSEMBLY ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn the assembly was made at 12:55pm by Marion Gulash. All in favor rose and sang, "It is Truly Meet." With a benediction given by His Grace, Bishop NIKON, accompanied by prayerful best wishes for safe travel home on the part of all gathered for the Assembly, the proceedings came to a close.

Respectfully submitted,

The 2008 Diocesan Assembly Secretariat:

Fr. David Koles, Diocesan Secretary

Fr. Steven Voytovich