

**(Draft) Minutes of the 49th Assembly of the Diocese of New England
St. Nicholas Church, Salem, MA
October 26-27, 2012**

The Assembly opened with a Service of Prayer celebrated by His Eminence, Archbishop NIKON at 10:00 AM on Friday morning, October 26, 2012 and the singing of “O Heavenly King” at 10:30 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 – Robert Popadic, nominated by the Diocesan Council. Fr. John Kreta closed nominations. Motion passed.

Secretariat – Fr. David Koles (the Diocesan Secretary) and Dn. Christopher Westrate were nominated by the Diocesan Council. Nominated from the floor was Mat. Cindy Voytovich volunteered. Fr. John Kreta closed nominations. Motion passed.

Credentials & Tellers Committee – Alexia Tassmer and John Barone, nominated by the Diocesan Council, Fr. Steven Belonick, nominated from the floor by John Skrobat. Mat. Cindy Voytovich moved, seconded by Fr. Sergius Gerkin. Fr. John Kreta closed nominations. Motion passed.

Nominations and Resolutions Committee – Fr. Patrick Burns and Prdn. Paul Nimchek, nominated by the Diocesan Council. Timothy Tassmer volunteered, seconded by Fr. Joshua Mosher. 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.

Council of Canonical Bishops in America

This year has seen some changes on both national and international levels.

A few weeks ago I participated in the third Annual Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in America, which is one of many regional gatherings that are being held in anticipation of the next Great Council which will include all Orthodox Christians in the world.

The purpose for the regional meetings is to tackle the local issues that may be inconsistent with the Canons. For many years, the Standing Council of Orthodox Bishops in America (SCOBA) served as a way for jurisdictional hierarchs to coordinate activities such as campus ministry (OCF), mission (OCMC), Scouting, international charity (IOCC), as well as many others that SCOBA endorsed. However, SCOBA only consisted of the ruling hierarchs in the US whereas the new Council of Canonical Bishops includes all 56 Orthodox bishops in the United States, Canada, Mexico and Central America. To put it simply, the Annual Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in America is much more significant than was SCOBA.

Last year the Assembly requested some regional reorganization, namely that Canada be given the blessing to hold its’ own assembly and that Mexico, Central and South America also be given a blessing to meet separately from us.

To modify the structure of the Council of Canonical Bishops in America, it is necessary for all of the Orthodox Patriarchs to agree on a proposed change such as this. Presently not all of

the Patriarchs have given their blessing to proceed on these two issues, although the Canadian bishops do gather together informally.

Committee work was the focus of the latest gathering as smaller groups met to address issues such as: campus ministry; endorsing an agency for military and other chaplaincies; theological education; monastic communities; the canonical issue of multiple bishops in one city; possibilities for redistribution of responsibilities for the Church in America; and possibilities for greater administrative cooperation.

Drafting and acceptance of the by-laws for the Assembly of Bishops were also adjusted and accepted by the gathering. The draft was sent to the Holy Synod of the OCA and we had our attorney help us make recommendations during our Synodal retreat at the Monastery of the Dormition of the Theotokos in Rives Junction, Michigan following the consecration of Bishop Alexander. It is important to note that all of us received the draft copy of the by-laws and sent in our suggestions and changes.

One major point of discussion at our assembly was the use of the word “diaspora” within the text of our by-laws. After discussion and consultation with the attorneys diaspora was removed from the text of our by-laws.

(His Eminence gave a short explanation of Diaspora relative Orthodox Christian Theology in his oral comments) *there is no such thing as an Orthodox diaspora it referred to the temple in Jerusalem.*

Politics

It has not been my policy to comment on politics or endorse any particular political candidate for office or speak about political issues. Our responsibility is to cast ballots for individuals who uphold the same morals and values that are given to us in the never changing truth of the gospel. However, I feel that it is necessary to say a word about a ballot proposal that will affect the Boston deanery clergy and faithful.

Proposition 2, on the Massachusetts, ballot asks voters to endorse and approve what is called “physician assisted suicide.”

I don’t believe it is necessary to reiterate at this assembly our commitment to the sanctity of life as the Lord knows us even from our mother’s womb.

The very disturbing aspects of this proposition if it becomes law are:

- An individual requesting “physician assisted suicide” would not be required to undergo psychological examination;
- There is no requirement that family members be notified that the patient has requested suicide;
- Although it is called “physician assisted suicide” no doctor is required to be present at the time of the death
- There are insufficient safeguards to avoid abuse, and there is no provision for oversight or data verification. For example, an heir can serve as witness to a patient’s signature, which is clearly a conflict of interest.

It is no surprise that Orthodox and Roman Catholic clergy unequivocally oppose this proposition in addition to many in the medical profession.

I mention this here since there are already states that have passed similar resolutions and in all probability there will be additional states considering similar proposals.

As Orthodox Christians we respect the right of every person to die with dignity, however, suicide is not a viable means to a blessed repose, nor is it a way to a painless, blameless and peaceful death.

National Church

It has been a difficult year for our national church and especially for the work of the Holy Synod. Some of the most demanding work that we face is addressing potential litigation that

occurs regarding sexual misconduct or sexual harassment. Addressing these issues takes up so much time, yet it is absolutely essential that it be handled properly. All incidents must be thoroughly investigated and brought to a resolution that is in compliance with state laws which are not always the same from state to state.

(His Eminence gave an example in his oral comments) *if someone overhears a private conversation and believes it is sexual harassment a charge can be brought against a person.*

Even though it is difficult and time consuming, complaints or allegations must be investigated. Basic Christian morality and local law require that we practice due diligence in every single case, whether or not they appear to have merit. Not only are we caring for the “least of the brethren” but we are also working to protect the Church and the Holy Synod when and if cases lead to litigation.

Addressing Misconduct

When entering the priesthood, I never imagined that I would have to investigate my brother clergy or brother bishops nor did I ever think that I would be investigated myself. The initial "accusations" or "charges" in every case of misconduct are just as deeply troubling to us on the Synod as they are to the clergy and faithful. I can tell you that every issue and every accusation is addressed as quickly as possible with our limited personnel and resources. However, an immediate public response from the Synod is neither possible nor prudent. The Internet is filled with mis-information about church related matters. Sometimes I feel that things are posted simply to "bait" us for answers or statements that we cannot morally proclaim in either a public or private arena. Unlike Internet bloggers who have almost unlimited freedom to say anything they want about any topic whether true or imagined, the Holy Synod has the moral and legal responsibility to protect accusers, victims and the accused in every case. We take this responsibility extremely seriously.

The Synod is a true brotherhood. Like any brothers, we often disagree, and sometimes we disagree strongly. However, the care of the Church is one area in which there is no disagreement. The Synod unequivocally affirms that the wellbeing, safety and integrity of the Church is our first priority. Like everyone who works to build up the Body of Christ, we too are often beaten down and discouraged yet every Christian is called to overcome temptation, and by God’s grace, manifest the love of Christ in the face of every attack on us personally or on the Church as a whole.

Holy Synod

In addition to these issues, the Holy Synod has faced the challenge of the Metropolitan’s resignation. Transitioning from his role as abbot of a monastery to hierarch and then quickly to the head of an autocephalous church was very difficult for His Beatitude JONAH. This also led to certain challenges with the others on the synod. His Beatitude, in his own words felt that he had neither the experience nor temperament to guide the Church and tendered his resignation as Primate of the Orthodox Church in America.

Whoever succeeds Metropolitan JONAH will have a difficult task: one of healing and rebuilding trust and confidence, and it will take time. While these challenges are difficult, our work and our calling remains the same. Our call to take up the Cross and follow Christ does not take a leave of absence; our work in all of our parishes continues, our responsibilities have not changed. More importantly, in challenging times God always strengthens His people to “run with perseverance the race that is set before us.” (Heb 12:1)

It is so easy to lose sight of our mission and how important it is. In a world with shifting and corruptible mores and morals, the sanctifying and life-giving presence of Christ in our lives is more important now than at any time in the history of the Orthodox Church in America.

We are the Church, the Body of Christ, and the Church is in the world, but not of the world. The temptations to abandon our mission attack us from every side. Challenges come in every shape and size: administrative and legal challenges on the national and local level; financial challenges at home and in the parish; challenging relationships among family members whether at home or in the Church; not to mention the continuous and insidious challenge we face from a culture that glorifies self-gratification at the expense of others. Following Christ, being a Christian in the twenty first century in New England is not easy.

We find ourselves vulnerable, yet this is not cause for despair. God Himself became vulnerable in the Crucifixion, and in our vulnerability Christ has the opportunity to work through us. As we recently heard from the Apostle Paul, God's power is made perfect in our weakness. (2Cor 12:9) So we stand firm in the holy, eternal and divine, strengthened by the same Holy Spirit that led the Apostles. We share the Gospel of Jesus Christ without exception to all who seek and thirst, for in Christ we find perfect love and perfect peace.

The AAC

On November 13, 2012 the 17th All American Council will elect a new Metropolitan. The new Metropolitan, the Holy Synod, the clergy, monastics and every last member of the faithful face a challenge: to live in such a way that the moral authority, integrity, confidence and trust in our Church is restored. While much focus has been placed on the Holy Synod, the Metropolitan and the officers of the OCA, the entire Church faces this challenge. The danger is that we think of the Church as "us and them," that we draw lines in the sand and take sides as we point fingers and lay blame. I have experienced this within one of my dioceses before where there was discord and distrust, priest against priest, parish against priests. The solution only came through love, understanding, and most importantly, listening to one another. This is what restored a truly conciliar spirit in the Church. Transformation takes time, but in Christ all things are possible.

St. Paul reminds us that "by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body" (1Cor12:13) the Body of Christ. In Christ, there is no "us and them" for we confess in the Creed that we believe in one Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. Today, the Church, like any other time is in need of renewal and revitalization. I love my brothers on the Holy Synod and the new Metropolitan will not shoulder his responsibility alone, but as a member of a brotherhood. I am confident that any one of the members of the Holy Synod can serve as Metropolitan, working with his brother bishops, and working with the entire church as we seek restoration in Christ. No matter who is elected to serve as Metropolitan healing will take time, but Christ the physician of souls will bring new life and health.

Dioceses

On a more personal note, my health is greatly improved. I still don't have as much energy as I'd like but maybe that is simply age. Regaining strength, however, still takes time. In no way has my recovery deterred me from fulfilling my responsibility to our diocese as well as my duties as a member of the Holy Synod. I continue to be the episcopal moderator for the OCA Pension Plan as well as a member of the lesser synod that meets every other month.

We have several widowed diocese, namely the Diocese of Alaska and the Diocese of the South as well as the vacant Primatial See. The Diocese of Alaska held their nomination assembly and have chosen Fr. David Mahaffey. While we look forward to the election of the new Metropolitan in November, this will leave another diocese widowed.

I continue to serve the Diocese of the South as their locum tenens. We are in the process of planning for a special assembly to nominate a possible candidate to fill the void left by the death of Archbishop Dmitri, of blessed memory. The Diocese of the South is a very active, mission-oriented diocese that keeps me very busy. We recently had our annual assembly at Christ the Savior Cathedral in Miami in July. It is my hope that we will have a viable

candidate for Diocesan Hierarchy so that I can call a special assembly to be convened by the end of February. The most likely location for this special assembly would be Atlanta.

Although this will be a big step in filling the shoes and work left by Archbishop Dmitri, the individual, if nominated by the diocese and elected by the Synod, will serve for at least one year as my auxiliary in the South, which means that my responsibilities there will continue for at least another year. This same protocol will be followed for the diocese of Alaska.

The Bulgarian Diocese concluded its search with the election of their new bishop Alexander Golitzin. I participated in his consecration in Toledo, Ohio in May.

Following the consecration, our Holy Synod met and convened at the Monastery of The Dormition of the Theotokos in Rives Junction, Michigan. It was a special treat to be at this monastery where we were privileged to participate in the daily cycle of services as well as have the opportunity to gather as Synod following the consecration.

Following our meetings I was able to serve at St. Thomas Church in Farmington Michigan where I served as pastor for many years.

Another meeting of our Synod was held at St. Andrews Center for Orthodox Studies in Michigan during the second week in August.

Albania

Shortly after I completed my treatments in January of this year, I received an invitation from Archbishop Anastasios to participate in the inauguration of the new Cathedral in Tirana, and the celebration of the 20th Anniversary of the election of Archbishop Anastasios as Primate of the Autocephalous Church of Albania. The last time I visited about six years ago only the foundation of the Cathedral was completed and I most certainly felt that it was my responsibility to represent the OCA at this most historic event in the life of the Church of Albania, indeed in the life of a resurrected Church in Albania. I flew to Rome where, surprisingly and joyfully, I met Archbishop Demetrios of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese and we traveled together from Rome to Tirana, the capital of Albania. This was a special blessing as his schedule is very busy and one does not always have an hour or so to talk one on one with Archbishop Demetrios.

Archbishop Anastasios and Archbishop Demetrios were classmates in seminary so it was a joyous reunion for them and this presented an opportunity for demonstrating what has been achieved in the last twenty years in the restoration of the Church. We visited many of the places that I had visited before, as well as new projects and churches in the construction stages, but it was all new and exciting especially for Archbishop Demetrios.

I cannot express how important it was for us to be represented there as very few were invited, by this I mean that no heads of autocephalous churches were invited. Invitations were issued only to Archbishop Demetrios, Bishop Militos, representative of the Ecumenical Patriarch, Bishop Katre and me. (Bishop Katre did not attend.) Serving with Archbishop Demetrios, Archbishop Anastasios and Bishop Militos together with the hierarchs of the Holy Synod of Albania was important for us, and for our relationship with the Church of Albania.

I was and am awed and inspired by the accomplishments of Archbishop Anastasios and the work achieved in a short span of twenty years. It is interesting though that nobody is without critics. I heard criticisms of Archbishop Anastasios. One was from Albanians stating that he is not Albanian. The other criticism I heard from the Greek element is that he is Albanianizing the Church. The fact is, he is fulfilling his apostolic mission and I am inspired by his commitment to Christ and His Church.

Pastoral and Parish Changes

Fr. Steven Belonick was assigned as rector of Holy Ghost Church in Bridgeport, CT.

Fr. Nicholas Hubbard was assigned as rector of St Mary's in Waterbury, CT.

Dn. Jeffrey Frate was ordained to the Holy Priesthood and is attached to Holy Trinity Cathedral in Boston. On the same day Michael Arida was ordained to the Sub-Diaconate. Several wonderful celebrations have occurred in a few of our parishes during this past year. Most recently was the centennial celebration at Sts Cyril and Methodius in Terryville with a number of distinguished guests in attendance.

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 and providing this schedule of services for that budding community. I recently elevated this mission station to mission status with the name of Christ the Savior, Mission. Fr. John Kreta is Priest-in-Charge of this community and Fr. John Pawelchak has ministered to this community on many occasions. According to our diocesan treasurer the success in Maine enabled our diocese to have an overall increase in membership for the first time in many years.

Fr. Michael Westerberg hosted a Connecticut Deanery meeting so all of the clergy would have had the opportunity to see the new cupola that adorns Holy Transfiguration in New Haven, CT.

We also celebrated a gala festivity marking the 50th Anniversary of Fr. Nicholas Timko's ordination to the Holy Priesthood.

COLA

According to a vote of our Diocesan Assembly the COLA adjustment for 2013 would be the highest of three indexes from the Board of Labor Statistics for September 2011 to September 2012.

US City average is 2.0, Northeastern Urban average is 1.7, Boston, Brockton, Nashua, NH is 1.7.

Therefore our COLA adjustment is the highest of the three which is 2.0

Inter Diocesan Cooperation and Participation

We continue to have good inter-diocesan cooperation between parishes in the Diocese of New England and the Albanian Archdiocese.

The parishes under my omophorion in Natick, Mass and Maynard, Mass have always worked out a reasonable visitation schedule for me as both share the same Patronal Feast Day of Holy Annunciation.

I might also note that both Fr. Joseph Gallick and Fr. Robert Dick and I have travelled together to the Metropolitan Council Meetings held in New York.

Holy Trinity Cathedral in Boston and St George Cathedral have shared deacons and sometimes sub-deacons on occasion as well as sharing pastors when needed. I know that Fr Mark Doku of the Albanian Archdiocese has served several times at Holy Trinity Cathedral when available and called upon.

The New England Diocese Youth Rally for the past several years has had participation of parishioners from the Albanian parish of St George in Trumbull. In addition, Fr Dennis Rhodes, now serving as pastor of St. George parish also participates during the Youth Rally.

This year's Youth Rally was well attended and expertly guided by our youth director Fr. John Hopko.

Three Diocese and Three Chancellors

I rely heavily on my chancellors in the three dioceses that I serve as they work to keep them in good order. I am in constant contact with all three via telephone, text and email.

Fr. Arthur Liolin in the Albanian Archdiocese, Fr. Marcus Burch in the Diocese of the South and our own Fr. John Kreta in the Diocese of New England all do tremendous work as chancellors.

The OCA as a whole

All of us are members of the OCA by choice, though one cannot be a member of the OCA alone; we are and have to be united to each other. What do we get by being a member of the OCA? We get an identity of being part of the Orthodox Church in America. If the EA is fulfilled our identity is fulfilled. We are not a hyphenated Orthodox Church. We will minister to everyone no matter where they are from. We will bring Jesus Christ to everyone in this nation. We identify with this country. Orthodoxy has not been good at looking at its self, finding its faults and making the change needed to correct itself. Fr. Alexander Schmemmann said “Orthodoxy lacks the capacity to be self-critical, but it has found a growing capacity for this in North America.” Metropolitan Anthony Bloom made it a point not to speak about “Orthodoxy” but to speak about “Christ” and in making his point about Christianity people would see where he learned about this Jesus Christ and that is in the Orthodox Church. The identity of the OCA has to be sobornost. It brings together clergy & laity, Bishops & clergy, etc. to work together, talk together, have coffee hour together. Nicholas Zerno said that North America has a unique gift for living in a pluralistic world. We are forced to deal with things that most of the Orthodox world does not and cannot deal with at this time.

We are a small group as the OCA. There are many bigger Orthodox Churches in the USA and some say that we should join together with them. But we have an identity and a vision that we want everyone to participate in.

My vision of administration at the OCA is to work together with the new Metropolitan, the Holy Synod, diocese and parishes. The Mysteries celebrated, Christ preached, parishes alive, etc. etc. to hammer out the sexual misconduct issues, to reduce the assessment on the members, etc. It is not an “us” or “them” vision but rather all together as part of this identity that we all have for a united Orthodox faith on North America.

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. Thanks to Fr. Robert Arida, former dean for his leadership.

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 and the strong bond of “brotherhood”. Our joy this year is that all parishes have a rector. The biggest sadness is that we lost our dear Deacon John Zarras. Memory Eternal!

NORTHERN DEANERY:

Fr. Peter Carmichael, Holy Trinity, Springfield, VT and Dean of the Northern Deanery gave a verbal report and mentioned that there are written parish reports in the binder for all to read. The northern deanery has 4 parishes and one mission. Fr. John Kreta thanked Fr. John Pawelchak for doing all the back breaking work. Also he asked the delegate from the mission to say a few words about the Mission in Maine.

METROPOLITAN COUNCIL:

Fr. Robert Dick, Clergy Representative and David Zavednak, Lay Representative presented an oral report. Fr. Robert stated that his thoughts about the future of our OCA are tempered. He spoke about Dn. John Zarras' reorganizational work and how many criticized the work before it had a chance to take effect. If we downsize any further we will cease to exist as a central administration and then may lose our identity. He asked the questions: As the Diocesan Assembly of the Diocese of New England, what do we see as the role of the Central Administration? How do we relate to each other, as diocese to diocese, as diocese to the Central Administration??

David Zavednak, who has completed his first year, noticed how many members we also in their first year. He was thankful for the orientation session to bring the rookies up to speed about events of the past. He was surprised and impressed about the openness of the meetings and the frankness of the discussion. He volunteered for three sub committees of the Metropolitan Council. Under the direction of Fr. John Vitko the Metropolitan Council is working on implementing the suggestions and the Strategic Plan. Sexual & Clergy Misconduct: We spend almost 30% of the time on these issues. There is a team that goes out within two days to investigate the accusation. Hopeful going forward into next year this system will become more efficient.

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. Fr. John Jillions also stated to send things to Fr. John Matusiak for the TOC.

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 \$20K. 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 for multiple consecutive years (see written report). Again, Holy Trinity Orthodox Church New Britain was the parish that responded with the most people, the most dollars and the greatest number of Bishop's Circle members.

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 Bible Lecture; Holy Ghost, Bridgeport to expand Feeding the Homeless; SS. Peter & Paul, Meriden for The Way, a 10 week program on Christian Education. Holy Trinity, Willimantic was also granted but their reason for requesting has been put on hold and they asked for their portion of the grant to be put on hold for the time being. Again for 2013 \$10,000 is budgeted. If any parish has questions about the program, those participating will be happy to answer any questions.

SCHOLARSHIP:

John Skrobat stated that the scholarship is open to any male or female going to the seminaries \$1500 per person per semester. Andrew Boyd at St. Vladimir's and John Taylor Carr at Holy Cross were past recipients.

YOUTH RALLY:

Fr. John Hopko presented a written report. He stated that this was our 26th year. He thanked Fr. Dennis Rhodes & Fr. Sergius Halvorsen for their assistance. One major question that the clergy attending had, of great concern, was that our kids have a great ability to seek out and view pornography on the internet. They see this not as a prurient interest but that they see it and deal with it because it is what is happening as normal in our daily life. Even to the point of watching what they are wearing at Rally. We need to find a way to address this area with our kids, many of whom are kids who serve in the altar, sing in the choir, attend church school, etc. Fr. Sergious Gerken asked if they are allowed to have their cell phones? Fr. John Kreta said that the parents complained about that because they want to be able to contact them at any time. Fr. Steven Belonick said that he has only 3 teens in his church, and that they really need to have interaction with other teens in the deanery. Fr. John Hopko agreed but hoped that someone would attempt to coordinate that effort.

PENSION BOARD:

Abp. NIKON spoke about the pension board. There have been a few changes to the pension and all changes have to be approved by the Metropolitan Council. At this time is \$22 million and we are 86% vested. Questions about when we will be getting "a statement of benefit" for our own account would be coming? His Eminence said that with the change of computer system the report should be coming soon but does not have the exact date. Another question was is this "a qualified plan" by IRS definition? Also will we get statements about the investments? Fr. John said that he will enquire, as a past member of the board, about these questions and report to the Diocesan Council. Paul Culton, also a past board member mentioned that investments were published many years ago and it lead to a multitude of complaints so the practice was stopped.

The session ended at 1:15 PM to break for Lunch.

Session II Began at 2:15 PM

CHOIR DIRECTING PROGRAM:

Fr. Steven Voytovich stated that the program is in transition at this time. He gave a brief explanation of the history of the program. At this time there is a national program being "tested" under the guidance of Prof. David Drillock. Hopefully we will be able to link with this national program. Within our diocese it would also be good to have a gathering of choir directors where they could share ideas and have a guest speaker. Our program will come to an end but those interested can go to OCA.org and enroll.

SCOUTING:

Fr. John Bacon, who was not present, but has a written report on file with the Secretary.

COLA for 2013:

Fr. John Hopko noted that the required Cost of Living increase this year will be 2.0%.

Credential's Report presented by John Barone: as of 2:25 PM

<u>Voting Attendees</u>		<u>Non-Voting Attendees</u>	
Hierarchs	1	Observers, Guests, Alternates	12 (11 observers, 1 guest)
Clergy Delegates	22		
Lay Delegates	21		
Diocesan Council	<u>9</u>		
Subtotal	54	Subtotal	12
Grand Total Voting and Non-Voting		66	

Pamela Parsons moved, Robert Popadic 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 (8/31/2012): \$ 37,006.63

BUDGET REPORT:

Total Actual Income for 2012 (fiscal year ending 08/31/12):	\$347,663.68
Total Actual Expense	<u>\$328,898.45</u>
Total Actual Income over Expenses	\$ 18,765.23

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. We have cash on hand around \$350,000 most of which is the remainder of the funds from the sale of the Bishop's residence in Rhode Island from a few years ago.

David Zavednak moved and Sbdn Lawrence Johnson seconded the acceptance of the Treasurer's report. Motion passed.

VII. **AUDITOR'S REPORT**

Fr. Michael Korolev 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 Marion Gulash, seconded by Robert Popadic, that the Auditor's Report be accepted. The motion passed unanimously.

VIII. **OLD BUSINESS**

Hearing none we moved on to the budget.

IX. **2013 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 2013. Figures have been finalized since ALL parishes have submitted their numbers at this time. Our actual numbers has increased by 49 members. There is a small increase to His Grace's stipend and to other diocesan officers and deans. We have included for the first time for His Eminence to have an Assistant. This position would be shared with the Albanian Archdiocese. Again 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. The 17th AAC is not budgeted because it was paid for under last year's budget at a cost of \$4000. This is the first time that we have had an accurate head count and the dollar figure from the OCA for the Fair Share for next year. Scholarships for 2013 are going to Dn. James Parnell at St. Vladimir's and Michael Andrzejewski at Holy Cross.

A question about why there are two line items for FOS (Fellowship of Orthodox Stewards)? Prdn. Paul Nimchek explained that one is for contributions and the other is for the Endowment Fund. Fr. John Jillions said the both funds are still active within the OCA and their accounting is posted by the national treasurer on OCA.org. Another question about the expenses for the Youth Rally, that it might be too low? Fr. John Hopko stated that the Youth line item is only for the Rally. If we are going to do more within the diocese that should be taken up under the direction of His Eminence, the Chancellor and the Diocesan Council.

The allocation of Fair Share dollars was distributed to everyone at this time

Inga Leonova moved, Alexia Tassmer seconded, to accept the 2013 Budget as presented. Motion passed.

The session closed with prayer at 3:25 PM. All gathered at St. Nicholas Church to celebrate Vespers and then traveled to the Boston Marriott Peabody for dinner and fellowship.

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

After the celebration of the Divine Liturgy on Saturday morning, October 27, 2012, at St. Nicholas Church, Salem, MA followed by a brunch in the parish social hall, the Diocesan Assembly reconvened for Session III in the church at 11:30 AM with the singing of "O Heavenly King."

Robert Popadic, Lay Vice Chair, opened Session III.

X. PRESENTATION BY FR. JOHN BACON: Youth Protection Training

Father John Bacon provided a presentation from the Boy Scouts of America on Youth Protection Training. Fr. John offered preliminary comments on the training; how have the training recognized. Scouting terms. Stressed that no place is perfectly safe. We must use best practices. Main rule: no meetings/counseling sessions that are one on one. Buddy system; ask parents to come; chaperones.

(Video)

Fr. John shared example; importance of teaching kids to recognize, resist, report; *We* are the most important barriers to abuse; opened the floor for questions.

Fr. John Jillions offered an example of the DOW, requiring all clergy to be trained; encouraged looking at the Faith Trust Institute (lots of material there).

Fr. John Hopko: thanked Fr. John Bacon for participating in Youth Rally; mentioned youth protection training before the Rally; stressed communicating with the kids the expectations of adults; adult volunteers who cause the most problems: clergy who believe themselves above the law. Set up lots of hurdles to leaders, then invite them to “get sick” and leave.

Fr. Sergious Gerkin questioned: Do Boy Scouts have an “identification system”? In answer to a question: Fr. John Bacon stated that all accusations are sent to the bishop.

Fr. John Jillions: clergy still must report to the OCA office; if a minor is involved, we should report to the police/protective services; sometimes someone is exonerated by a criminal court but is still dismissed from ministry.

Credential’s Report presented by Alexia Tassmer at 12:45 PM

<u>Voting Attendees</u>		<u>Non-Voting Attendees</u>	
Hierarchs	1	Observers, Guests, Alternates	9 (8 observers, 1 Guest)
Clergy Delegates	23		
Lay Delegates	21		
Diocesan Council	<u>9</u>		
Subtotal	54	Subtotal	9
Grand Total Voting and Non-Voting			63

XI. ELECTIONS TO THE DIOCESAN COUNCIL

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

Open Position: Diocesan Secretary

Nominated candidate from the Nominations Committee: Alexia Tassmer.

John Barone moved to close nominations. Motion passed.

Open Position: Diocesan Treasurer

Nominated Candidates from the Nominations Committee: John Skrobat. Fr. Steven Hosking moved to close nominations. Motion passed.

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

Nominated Candidates from the Nominations Committee: Fr. Michael Korolev. Larry Johnson moved to close nominations. Motion passed.

Open Positions: Three (3) Laity-at-Large Representatives to Diocesan Council [two for three years and one for one year replacement]

Nominated Candidates from the Nominations Committee: Timothy Tassmer & Pamela Parsons for the three year terms and Patricia Egan for the one year term. Alexia Tassmer moved to close nominations. Motion passed.

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

Nominated Candidate from the Nominations Committee: Marian Gulash. Rdr. Daniel Bacon moved to close nominations. Motion passed.

Motion by SubDn. Larwrence Johnson to requests that the Secretary cast one ballot, seconded by Rdr. Daniel Bacon. Motion passed.

XII. RESOLUTIONS

Having none we moved on to New Business.

XIII. NEW BUSINESS

1. Fr. John Kreta moved that we donate \$500 to support travel expenses of Alaskan & Mexican Clergy to go to the 17th AAC, second by Fr. Patrick Burns. Motion passed.
2. Fr. Steven Voytovich said that there is interest in the diocesan choir director program and that information will be forthcoming.
3. Mat. Cindy Voytovich moved to thanked Fr. Theophan and the faithful of St. Nicholas Church, Salem, MA for their tireless efforts to arrange and coordinate the 49th Diocesan Assembly. Second by Fr. John Hopko. Motion passed.
4. Fr. Theophan then thanked the local chair women and presented flowers to Suzanne & Diane for their efforts. Prdn. Paul Nimchek intoned many years!

XIV. NEXT DIOCESAN ASSEMBLY

2013 Diocesan Assembly: Connecticut Deanery – Bridgeport, CT
2014 Diocesan Assembly: Northern Deanery – Northfield Falls, VT

Normally the assembly would be held in the Connecticut Deanery in 2015 but Holy Resurrection Church, Berlin, NH requested to host in 2015 because it is their 100th anniversary year. Ss. Peter & Paul Church, Springfield, MA also requested to host that year. The Diocesan Council will take up this matter at its next meeting.

XV. ASSEMBLY ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn the assembly was made at 1:00 pm by Paul Culton. All in favor rose and sang, "It is Truly Meet."

Respectfully submitted,

The 2012 Diocesan Assembly Secretariat:

Fr. David Koles, Diocesan Secretary

Dn. Christopher Westrate

Mat. Cindy Voytovich