

HOLY APOSTLES PARISH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

4/10/25 @ 7:30 PM

1. **Call to Order:** James Maragos at 7:32 PM
2. **Opening Prayer:** Father Dokos
3. **Recite Mission Statement:** “The mission of Holy Apostles Greek Orthodox Church is to proclaim and live our Orthodox faith as One Church and One Body of Christ through worship, ministries, education, and youth guidance. *FOR WE WALK BY FAITH, NOT BY SIGHT*” (II Corinthians 5:7). Read by Patty Pappas.
4. **Approval of Minutes:**
 - a. Patty Pappas presented the Minutes of the March 20, 2025 Parish Council meeting. She moved that the Parish Council approve the March Minutes; Steve Milak seconded the motion. Unanimously approved.
5. **Correspondence:** Patty Pappas notified the Council of the following correspondence received: Invitation from St. Iakovos Greek Orthodox Church of Valparaiso, IN for their Thyranoxia/Opening on 6/14/25; Save the Date for the Sparta Society 90th Dinner Dance on 11/29/25.
6. **Ecclesiastical Report:** Father Dokos shared details about his upcoming sabbatical, including a letter with additional information. His sabbatical will take place from June 1 through August 31, during which time Father Dokos will be translating the book *New Ladder* by St. Nikodemos, taking a four week Byzantine Greek class, and making a pilgrimage to Essex, England to venerate St. Sophrony at the Monastery of St. John the Baptist. During his absence, Father Georgiou will be assuming his duties.

7. Ministries:

a. Finance: Report by George Antonopoulos

- i. We conducted a comparative analysis of first quarter 2024 versus first quarter 2025. The results indicate we are ahead of schedule, with \$35,000 greater revenue. However, expenses are also higher by \$27,000. Overall, this results in a net positive cash position compared to the same period last year.
- ii. The recent air duct cleaning project was initially funded from the operating account but should have been charged to the capital account. This will be corrected, and \$20,000 will be transferred back into the operating account.
- iii. Currently, the capital account holds approximately \$2,500 designated for the Altar Fund. These funds are reserved specifically for ecclesiastical expenses and are typically sourced from memorial donations.
- iv. For the upcoming Spring Parish Assembly, we will present financial results through March, as April's data will not be available in time.
- v. Regarding the ongoing audit by Weiss (our accounting firm), we have successfully fulfilled eight out of the ten audit requests. Upon completion, the Audit Committee will review the findings and provide a summary report.

b. Stewardship: Sandra Pihos provided a report on stewardship pledges.

METRIC	MARCH 2025 YTD	MARCH 2024 YTD	% CHANGE
Number of Pledges	466	482	-3%
Total Pledged	\$685,382	\$651,968	5%
Amount Collected	\$476,740	\$476,927	0%
Median Pledge	\$700	\$600	17%
Average Pledge	\$1,471	\$1,353	9%

c. Building and Grounds: Report by Chris Pepke

- i. **2025 Exterior Projects:** Plans for the new monument sign and the AC mechanical enclosure have been submitted to the Metropolis for approval. Once approved, we will move forward with obtaining bids, followed by final design

approval. These projects are scheduled for late summer to early fall. We are deeply grateful to a generous benefactor who has committed to funding these improvements.

ii. 2026 Capital Projects: Looking ahead to 2026, we are planning a full replacement of the parking lot, which includes removing existing wheel stops and installing curbs. Additionally, we aim to upgrade both the lighting structures and their placement throughout the lot. The estimated cost for the parking lot project alone is approximately \$550,000.

iii. Funding of Future Capital Projects: According to the reserve study we commissioned, maintaining and repairing our church facilities will require an annual investment of \$300,000 to \$400,000 over the next 30 years. Current funding levels are insufficient to meet these long-term needs. As a result, a capital campaign will be necessary to raise the funds required to support these critical infrastructure projects.

d. Technology: Report by Steve Milak

i. Livestream schedule for Holy Week (this will be published in the weekly liturgical email):

1. Palm Sunday	Orthros and Liturgy	8:15 AM
2. Monday	Bridegroom Service	7:00 PM
3. Tuesday	No Coverage	
4. Wednesday	Afternoon Holy Unction	3:30 PM
5. Thursday	12 Gospels	6:30 PM
6. Friday	Taking Christ Down from the Cross	3:00 PM
7. Saturday AM	First Resurrection Liturgy	9:00 AM
8. Saturday PM	Resurrection Service only, not liturgy	11:00 PM

ii. Paperwork has been submitted for a \$10,000 technology grant.

iii. Investigated wiring issue with microphone adjuster in nave (on choir loft wall). Working to understand how to make the repair ourselves to save the church money.

iv. Printing is still an issue for people connecting to the WiFi network; needs further investigation.

e. Ushering: Report by Ted Dres

i. A day-by-day review of the Holy Week was conducted.

ii. A SignUpGenius link was sent out to recruit additional ushers for Holy Week. Thank you to all who have already volunteered.

iii. Once the Nave reaches full capacity, signage will be posted and parishioners will be directed to the Multi-Purpose Room (MPR). Parish Council members will assist with managing this transition.

iv. A table will be set up in the MPR for candle lighting and sale of Easter lambades.

v. Safety procedures were reviewed, including the locations of fire extinguishers, first aid kits, defibrillators and bottled water.

vi. Cleaning service needs for Holy Week were discussed and confirmed.

vii. The availability of Westchester police for traffic guidance during Holy Week was also reviewed.

viii. Please submit your ushering availability for the next four months. The updated ushering schedule will be released over Easter weekend.

8. Old Business:

a. Office Associate Position: Report by Sandra Pihos

Four candidates have been interviewed for the Office Associate position. One candidate was removed from consideration due to not meeting the requirement of being an Orthodox Christian. The next step in the hiring process is for the remaining candidates to meet with Lou Kafkes, our Parish Administrator. This meeting will provide an opportunity for mutual introduction, discussion of daily office operations, and clarification of any questions regarding the role.

b. Greek School: Report by Nicole Ostendorf

This year, the Greek School serves 52 families, with a total enrollment of 88 students. Our program continues to offer one of the most affordable tuition rates in the area, with no additional fees. The current tuition structure is as follows: \$900 for one student, \$1,800 for two students, and \$2,500 for families with three children enrolled.

i. Motion made by Nicole Ostendorf for the 2025-2026 school year that the tuition rates for the Holy Apostles Greek School be set at \$1,050 for one student, \$2,050 for two students, and \$3,050 for three students. Seconded by Sandra Pihos. Unanimously approved.

(Note: This is a \$50.00 savings for 2 children and a \$100.00 savings for three children; the savings will follow this structure for additional children of the same family.)

ii. Motion made by Nicole Ostendorf that the late fee of \$100.00 be increased to \$150.00 for non payment to the Holy Apostles Greek School effective for the 2025-2026 school year when the final remittance due by the December payment date is not made. Seconded by Patty Pappas. Unanimously approved.

(Note: We currently charge a \$100.00 late fee. In this current year we still have \$5700.00 left to collect which includes late fees and tuition.)

iii. Motion made by Nicole Ostendorf that we approve contracts for the following full time teachers for the 2025-2026 Holy Apostles Greek School year: Fotini Karalis, Georgia Alikakos, Kyriaki Kladdes, Ioanna Papadakis, Sotiria Boubouekas, Anastasia Kinnas, Gigi Trulis as a permanent substitute one day a week, and for Zoe Koultourides as a full time teacher and principal of the Holy Apostles Greek School. Seconded by Sandra Pihos. Unanimously approved.

(Note: The teacher contracts are reviewed by Vanessa Clohessy.)

c. Metropolis Special Clergy/Laity Meeting: Report by James Maragos

The Metropolis of Chicago has announced that, on April 1, 2025, delegates representing the 58 parishes of the Metropolis voted in favor of authorizing the Metropolis to proceed with negotiations and finalize the purchase of a new Metropolis Center, located at 1015 North LaSalle Drive in Chicago, Illinois.

d. Youth Worker Training: Report by Patty Pappas

i. In the last report to the Parish Council, it was noted that 15 out of 88 Youth Workers at Holy Apostles were not in compliance with the Metropolis Youth Safety requirements. Upon further review, and with the assistance of Fr. George, it was determined that 9 of these individuals are no longer active in youth ministry and have been removed from the list.

ii. Fr. George reached out directly to the remaining individuals regarding their noncompliant status. As of April 9, 2025, the Archdiocesan database reflects 5 individuals who remain noncompliant.

iii. Additionally, Alexa identified two new youth volunteers who still need to register. Once their registration is complete, their names will appear in the Archdiocese database, allowing us to monitor their compliance status. Lou Kafkes has provided them with the necessary registration instructions.

iv. We will continue to follow up with these individuals and have asked all ministry leaders to strictly enforce the “no contact” policy for any youth workers who are not yet fully compliant.

e. Chapel Hill Cemetery Plots: Report by Patty Pappas

i. The plot exchange contracts between Holy Apostles and Chapel Hill were signed by both parties; however, the initial submission from Chapel Hill was not fully or properly executed. We requested corrected documentation, and the fully signed contracts were received on March 24, 2025.

ii. Announcements regarding plot availability have been published in *The Mosaic*, the weekly bulletin, and the Weekly News email. To ensure ongoing visibility, we will request that this announcement be included in weekly communications moving forward.

iii. Lou Kafkes has reported that one individual has recently expressed interest in purchasing one or more plots.

9. New Business:

a. IOCC May 8, 2025 Dinner: Report by Sandra Pihos

- i. Motion by Sandra Pihos to approve the expenditure of \$1,250 to purchase a table for the 33rd annual International Orthodox Christian Charities Chicago Grant Banquet on May 8, 2025. Seconded by Terry Chiganos. Motion passes by majority.
- ii. Two Parish Council members, along with two to three parishioners, are planning to attend the event.
- iii. We will promote Holy Apostles' participation by announcing that a table has been purchased in support of the event. This announcement will be included in the Weekly News emails, Sunday Bulletins, and through flyer distribution to encourage broader parish involvement.

b. Father Ted Poteres Retirement Dinner May 18, 2025: Report by Sandra Pihos

- i. We have purchased a table for Father Ted Poteres' Retirement Dinner and will promote Holy Apostles' participation in the next two Sunday Bulletins and the upcoming two editions of the Wednesday Weekly newsletter.
- ii. As someone who was both raised and ordained at Holy Apostles, Father Poteres holds a special place in our parish's history. We encourage a strong turnout to honor his service and show our support for this meaningful occasion.

c. Church Picnic Sunday June 1, 2025: Report by Mike Thiakos

i. Grill & Food Prep:

Nick Kirkeles. has agreed to manage grilling for the event, preparing a total of 750 kabobs—split evenly between pork and chicken.

Protein items (hamburgers, hot dogs, and kabobs) will be sourced from a single vendor for simplicity and consistency. Rice was previously sourced from Greek Islands; we may continue that or consider ordering from Brookhaven. All other food items were cooked in-house during the last event.

Bread will again be sourced from Greek Islands.

Sides will include salad and rice.

ii. Supplies & Donations:

Mike Thiakos will handle purchasing supplies. A special thank-you to Mike for his generous donations.

We will send an email requesting donations and volunteers for specific areas, including food sponsorships, clean-up crew, and general event support.

Volunteers will also be solicited via *The Mosaic* and the Sunday Bulletin.

Parish Council members are encouraged to personally reach out to recruit help and promote engagement.

An email will be sent listing sponsorship opportunities for specific food items and supplies.

iii. Reservations:

Alexa Kakis will manage reservations and compile the responses in a spreadsheet. Reservations can also be made in person at church.

iv. Logistics:

Tent has been secured. We are awaiting a contract for tables, chairs, and setup.

Valentia Vourlos has offered her husband Mark's help for support. It was suggested to increase quantities by 10–20% over previous estimates.

v. Budget & Funding:

The projected budget is between \$5,000 and \$10,000.

Less than \$1,000 has been collected to date.

We will continue encouraging both monetary and in-kind donations to help offset costs.

d. Finance and Bylaws Committee Activation: Report by James Maragos

- i. George Antonopoulos will serve as Chair of the Finance Committee. He will lead the preparation of the Archdiocesan assessment, which is due by 5/15/25.

- ii. The Bylaws Committee will begin meeting after Easter. Any proposed amendments to the Bylaws should be finalized by August or September, allowing time for the Parish Council to review and vote on them at its September meeting. Once approved, the proposed changes must then be submitted to the Metropolis and presented to the Parish Assembly for final approval.

e. Parish Assembly May 4th Planning: Report by James Maragos

- i. A request was made for written reports from certain church ministries to be included in the Parish Assembly materials. The Agenda will be compiled and we will provide the proper 10 day notice of the Parish Assembly to the Parish. Steve Milak will create a slideshow presentation, and Alexa Kakis will produce a printed brochure to accompany the meeting. In addition, there will be a motion on the Agenda to elect delegates to represent Holy Apostles at the upcoming Metropolis of Chicago Clergy/Laity Assembly.

f. Parish Council Contact List:

- i. Nicole Ostendorf and Mike Thiakos have email addresses that must be updated. The Contact List will be updated and distributed.

10. Next Regular Meeting: May 15, 2025 @ 7:30 PM

11. Key Dates:

- a. Holy Week: 4/13/25-4/20/25
- b. Holy Apostles Spring Parish Assembly: 5/4/25 after Divine Liturgy (All of Parish Council to attend)
- c. IOCC Dinner: 5/8/25
- d. Fr. Bill Chiganos Memorial Service and Coffee Hour, hosted by Parish Council: 5/11/25
- e. Fr. Ted Poteres Retirement Dinner: 5/18/25
- f. Graduate Sunday and Holy Apostles Picnic : 6/1/25
- g. Church Golf Outing: 7/7/25 at NEW LOCATION: Willow Crest Golf Club at the Oak Brook Hills Hilton

12. Closing Prayer: Father Georgiou

13. Adjourn:

- a. Motion to adjourn by James Maragos. Seconded by Fr. Georgiou. Unanimously approved.
- b. James Maragos officially adjourned the meeting at 9:22 PM.

All Parish Council Members Present.

Adjourned to Executive Session.