

HOLY APOSTLES GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Date: Thursday, September 18, 2025

Time: 7:30 PM

Location: Holy Apostles Greek Orthodox Church

1. Call to Order

- a. The meeting was called to order by President James Maragos at 7:34 PM.

2. Opening Prayer

- a. Prayer offered by Father George Dokos.

3. Recitation of Mission Statement

- a. Read aloud by Michael Thiakos:

“The mission of the 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).”

4. Approval of Previous Minutes

- a. A motion to approve the August 21, 2025 Parish Council Meeting Minutes was made by Patty Pappas and seconded by Sandra Pihos. The motion was approved unanimously.

5. Correspondence - Report by Patty Pappas

- a. Postcard announcement for the 19th Annual Walk the Walk for IOCC. Location: St. Andrews Greek Orthodox Church, Chicago, IL. Date: Saturday, October 4th. Register or sponsor online at ioccc.org/chicago.
- b. Thank you letter from the 2024-2025 YAL Chicago Conference Board for our donation in support of the 2025 Young Adult League Chicago Conference.
- c. Donation request letter from the National Forum of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians.
 - i. Motion by Peter Bell to donate \$250 to the National Forum of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians; seconded by Ted Dres. Motion passed by majority.
- d. Donation request letter from Hellenic College Holy Cross.
 - i. Motion by Peter Bell to donate \$1000 to Hellenic College Holy Cross; seconded by Ted Dres. Motion passed by majority.
- e. Donation request letter from Assumption Greek Orthodox Church for their 100th Anniversary Centennial Celebration.
 - i. Motion by Peter Bell to donate \$1000 to Assumption Greek Orthodox Church for their 100th Anniversary Centennial Celebration; seconded by Ted Dres. Motion passed by majority.

6. Ecclesiastical Report – Father Dokos and Father Georgiou

- a. Father Dokos presented a Patristix video regarding the Feast of the Holy Cross, followed by a group discussion reflecting on its significance.
- b. Father Georgiou provided an update regarding our catechumens. There are 7 catechumens at Holy Apostles currently studying to become Orthodox Christians.
- c. Discussion of a proposal to host an open house in 2026 for our neighbors in the community of Westchester.

7. Ministry Reports

a. **Financial** – Report by Lou Kafkes

- i. Cash position as of 8/31/25 is \$1.46 million. This is a slight decrease from last month primarily due to: front door project completion; cash depletion caused by slowed stewardship giving and therefore lower revenues.
- ii. Operating account income for the month of August is \$78,000.
- iii. The year to date total is \$907,000, which is approximately 12% ahead of budget.
- iv. Total expenditures for the month of August were \$98,000, resulting in a \$20,000 monthly deficit.
- v. However, the year to date net income stands at \$122,000, which is ahead of budget expectations.
- vi. There are no extraordinary or unexpected expenses to report.
- vii. The financial report includes a breakdown by category.

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

- i. August stewardship total pledged has increased by 3% compared to last year.
- ii. There are fewer stewards (635 v. 646) but the total amount collected is up by 1%.
- iii. The average pledge is \$1,277 per family - up \$64 from last year.

August Stewardship Report 2025

Metric	Aug 2025 YTD	Aug 2024 YTD	% Change
Number of Pledges	635	646	- 2%
Total Pledged	\$810,812	\$783,435	3%
Amount Collected	\$713,341	\$704,597	1%
Median Pledge	\$600	\$600	0%
Average Pledge	\$1,277	\$1,213	5%

c. **Building & Grounds** – No Report

d. **Technology** - Report by Steven Milak

- i. Livestream issues have been taken care of.

e. **Ushering** - Report by Ted Dres

- i. Usher in Charge is responsible for taking collection baskets behind the altar. This is a change from the prior assignment of responsibility to the Officer in Charge.
- ii. Guidelines for basket collections: 1-30 people, no basket; 30-60 people, usher is to hold a basket at the back or place the basket on a podium; 60 people and greater, baskets to be brought behind the altar by the usher in charge. There should be at least two ushers and two baskets distributed.
- iii. Ushers are to notify the clergy of the intended basket collection method.

iv. There are to be no collection baskets for solemn services (e.g., Forgiveness Vespers, Holy Thursday, PreSanctified Liturgies).

v. Candles: be respectful and use discretion when extinguishing candles, especially when ropes are in place. Extinguish candles as needed to maintain safety and to avoid a fire hazard.

8. Old Business

a. **Golf Outing** - Report by James Maragos

i. The final net proceeds from the Golf Outing are \$24,000.

b. **Metropolis of Chicago Clergy/Laity Assembly in Rolling Meadows, IL (November 5-6)** - Report by James Maragos

i. The Parish is to elect two delegates for the Clergy/Laity at the Holy Apostles Fall Parish Assembly.

ii. An announcement regarding the elections will be placed in church communications to Holy Apostles stewards.

c. **Greek School** - Report by Nicole Ostendorf

i. Motion by Nicole Ostendorf regarding the hiring of a teacher aide is withdrawn, due to the fact that the proposed aide accepted a teaching position elsewhere.

ii. Director Zoe Koultourides has requested a Zoom license and access to the Canva and Microsoft accounts. Lou Kafkes will assist with the setup for access to these accounts.

iii. The Ellinomatheia program is anticipated to begin in the month of October, with the aim of offering a one hour class each Wednesday.

iv. To date, 90 students have registered for the Holy Apostles Hellenic Academy program.

d. **Front Office Associate** - Report by Sandra Pihos

i. Welcome to Andrea Zuales San Luis, our new Front Office Associate, who began her role on August 25th.

ii. Andrea brings strong technical skills and has already proven to be an excellent fit for the parish office. Her responsibilities include client service, project management, and bookkeeping.

iii. Andrea will be featured in an upcoming church bulletin along with her photo to formally introduce her to the parish community.

e. **Chapel Hill Cemetery Plots** – Report by Patty Pappas

i. Since last month's Parish Council meeting, three additional cemetery plots are in the closing process.

ii. Once those sales close, 28 plots remain available.

iii. Lou Kafkes and Patty Pappas intend to meet with Chapel Hill representatives again in order to streamline and organize the sales process.

iv. We continue to advertise the sale of plots in the church website and emails.

v. 2025 Year to Date: 9 plots sold or in process.

vi. 2026 Budget: At least five plot sales anticipated, totaling \$22,500 in revenue.

f. **Youth Worker Protection Training** – Report by Patty Pappas

i. Our new front office associate, Andrea Zuales San Luis, will be assisting with the management of the youth worker protection program at Holy Apostles.

ii. She has developed a compliance spreadsheet to organize our workers by youth ministry through a color-coded system: Green is fully compliant, Yellow indicates an upcoming expiration, and Red indicates the individual is out of compliance.

iii. At least once per month, Andrea will update the spreadsheet and share it with the ministry leaders, so they can track the compliance status of their volunteers.

iv. Volunteers that are out of compliance have been flagged and notified.

v. Noncompliant individuals may not serve until fully compliant.

9. New Business

a. **Bylaws Review** - Report by Sandra Pihos

- i. Modifications to the Bylaws are underway to align pronoun usage with the designations outlined in the Uniform Parish Regulations.
- ii. Updates are also being made to clarify the meeting date requirements for Parish Assemblies.
- iii. The Bylaws Committee will continue to meet and conduct a thorough review, making additional amendments as needed.
- iv. Once finalized, the proposed modifications will be presented to the Parish Council with the intent of bringing them forward for approval at the Spring Parish Assembly.

b. **2026 Budget Approval** - Report by Lou Kafkes

- i. Key Assumptions:
 - The Metropolis assessment has been reduced from \$129,000 to \$114,000 annually.
 - The Golf Outing remains the only annual fundraiser for Holy Apostles. All other fundraising activities are passthrough.
 - A 4% increase will be applied to operating expenses due to projected inflation.
- ii. Budget Summary:
 - The proposed 2026 budget is \$1.374 million, up from \$1.307 million in 2025.
 - The new budget will be presented to the Parish Assembly in October for approval.
- iii. Motion: Steven Milak moved to accept the 2026 Budget as presented, in accordance with the assumptions outlined on the first page of the budget document reviewed during the meeting. Seconded by Nicole Ostendorf. Motion approved by majority vote.

c. **Parish Directory** - Report by Sandra Pihos

- i. The Family Ministry has initiated the process of collecting data for the upcoming parish directory.
- ii. Two printing quotes have been received so far, with an estimated cost of \$8 per directory.
- iii. There was discussion regarding the funding model, including the possibility of subsidizing the production costs.
- iv. Family Ministry will gather additional information to determine the most effective and financially sustainable approach for both the photography process and directory production.

d. **Fundraising Committee Formation**- Report by James Maragos

- i. A discussion was held regarding new fundraising ideas and the potential overlap of interests among various initiatives, including stewardship, the capital campaign, the St. Iakovos Retreat Center (SIRC), and the Foundation.
- ii. A proposal was made to hire a professional fundraiser or consultant to help coordinate and maximize fundraising effectiveness.
- iii. It was suggested to form a Strategic Fundraising Planning Committee consisting of representatives from the Executive Council, Capital Team, Stewardship Team, Finance Committee, and Foundation Committee, in order to ensure alignment and collaboration across all fundraising efforts.

e. **New Funeral Procedure Proposal** - Peter Bell

- i. A suggestion was made to extend the funeral wake time at the church from 30 minutes to 1 hour, allowing for greater procedural ease and flexibility.
- ii. The proposal will be taken under consideration for potential implementation.

f. **Facility Request** - Lou Kafkes

- i. A request was made to host a private reception in the Multi-Purpose Room (MPR) following a scheduled Sunday coffee hour.
- ii. It was reiterated that church policy does not permit private events to be held in the MPR, in order to maintain its intended communal and parish-wide use.

10. Next Regular Meeting

- a. Thursday, October 16, 2025 at 7:30 PM

11. Key Upcoming Dates

- a. **Tuesday, September 30:** Metropolis Town Hall Meeting (6:30-8:30 PM via TEAMS), regarding the St. Iakovos Retreat Center
- b. **Saturday, October 18:** Philoptochos Annual Fashion Show and Luncheon
- c. **Sunday, October 19:** Fall Parish Assembly after Divine Liturgy. All Parish Council members must attend.
- d. **Sunday, October 26:** Chicago Bears Watch Party & Youth Flag Football
- e. **Wednesday–Thursday, November 5–6** – Metropolis of Chicago Clergy-Laity Conference (Rolling Meadows, IL)

12. Closing Prayer

- a. Offered by Father Georgiou.

13. Adjournment

- a. President James Maragos officially adjourned the meeting at 10:34 PM.

Absent:

George Antonopoulos, Terry Chiganos, Norman Pomrening

Signed:

Fr. George Dokos

James Maragos, Parish Council President

Patty Pappas, Parish Council Secretary