

Department of Stewardship
Report to the General Assembly
50th Antiochian Archdiocese Convention
July 24 - 31, 2011
Chicago, Illinois

The Department of Stewardship, in concert with the Department of Lay Ministries, has worked on these projects and initiatives since the 2009 Archdiocese Convention in Palm Springs.

The Fifty-Two Week Member Giving Campaign ... This material is designed to be used by parishes in helping their congregations move toward tithing. The parishes in our Archdiocese whose members practice tithing are already following the practices outlined in the campaign's materials, but now that the archdiocese assessment system for all parishes is based on the ten percent tithe, we hope to see more progress toward individual parishioners giving based on an identified percentage of their weekly, monthly, or yearly income. Recognizing that each parish has its unique traditions when it comes to building its budget and to organizing its member giving program, the Fifty-Two Week Member Giving Campaign is designed to be flexible and adaptable given the uniqueness of individual communities. While there is room for individualization of this member giving campaign, there are also givens that cannot be ignored or compromised. First and foremost among them is that scriptural teachings and ancient traditions demand certain practices which must be studied, learned, and ultimately adopted. As we profess our Orthodox Christian faith, giving in a manner which reflects the teachings of our faith must be a behavior that becomes as common place as regularly receiving Confession and the Holy Eucharist. **This Member Giving Campaign can be accessed from the Archdiocese website.**

The Parish Council Guidebook ... The parish councils in our communities are made up of hard working Orthodox Christians. Just like with member giving practices, however, there is diversity when it comes to how our parish councils operate. And just like with member giving practices, there are church traditions and scriptural teachings that provide basic guidelines which explain parish governance in the context of the Orthodox Church. All too often, these scriptural foundations for parish councils go unnoticed in many of our communities. The goal of the Parish Council Guidebook is to provide articles on a variety of subjects typically faced by parish councils. By reading and discussing the materials included in this guidebook, parish council members, under the leadership of the parish priest, have the opportunity to learn, grow, and mature in their understanding of what it means to serve on a parish council in an Orthodox Church. **The Parish Council Guidebook can be accessed from the Archdiocese website.**

During the Department of Stewardship meeting at this convention, these new sections to the Parish Council Guidebook were made available. They will be added to the online Parish Council Guidebook in the coming weeks.

- Who is entitled to vote during parish council meetings?
- Guidelines for preparing for and conducting the Annual Parish Meeting
- Cultivating and recruiting candidates for the Parish Council
- Peacemaking and Reconciliation within the Parish Council and within the Parish

Communications with Parishes ... On an ongoing basis, the Department of Stewardship receives and responds to inquiries from parishes throughout the Archdiocese requesting information relating to stewardship and to parish council operations.

OVER ...

The Parish Council Symposium ... The Biennial Parish Council Symposium was held in conjunction with the Orthodox Institute, sponsored by the Department of Christian Education, on November 4 to 7, 2010 at the Heritage and Learning Center at Antiochian Village. The Parish Council Symposium attracted twenty participants representing the following parishes ...

Antiochian Orthodox Church of the Annunciation ... Calgary, Alberta

Christ the Savior Mission ... Waterloo, Ontario

St. George Church ... West Roxbury, MA

Orthodox Church of the Redeemer ... Los Altos, CA

*St. George Church ... Cleveland, OH

St. Mary Church ... Johnstown, PA

St. John Church ... Orinda, CA

St. Nicholas Cathedral ... Brooklyn, NY

*Of special note was the attendance of the entire parish council from St. George, Cleveland

The Symposium Agenda featured productive sessions which focused on presentations related, in various, ways to these two questions ...

- What can be done to enhance member giving in Antiochian parishes and missions?
- What can enhance the effectiveness of parish councils in Antiochian parishes?

Ron Nicola and Anthony Bashir facilitated the sessions at the Parish Council Symposium.

Northern California Deanery Parish Council Retreat ... On Saturday, March 19, 2011, thirty-nine Parish Council members representing the following parishes gathered at the Orthodox Church of the Redeemer in Los Altos Hills, California.

St. Stephen Church, Campbell, CA

St. Athanasius Church, Sacramento, CA

St. John Church, Orinda CA

St. Timothy Church, Fairfield, CA

Orthodox Church of the Redeemer, Los Altos Hills, CA

St. James Mission, Modesto, CA

Holy Virgin Mary Church, West Sacramento, CA

The day-long session, facilitated by Ron Nicola, engaged the participants in discussions related to the topics addressed at the November 2010 Parish Council Symposium. V. Rev. Fr. Silas Ruark, the Northern California Dean, and V. Rev. Fr. Samer Youssef, pastor of the Orthodox Church of the Redeemer, provided the leadership in organizing this retreat.

The Departments of Stewardship and Lay Ministries will meet together during this convention, as we have for the past four conventions. The outcomes of this meeting will be summarized during the Convention's General Assembly.

We thank Metropolitan PHILIP for his guidance, leadership, and support. The work the Department of Stewardship has undertaken is enhanced by his encouragement, along with that provided by each of our Auxiliary Bishops; Bishop ANTOUN, Bishop JOSEPH, Bishop BASIL, Bishop THOMAS, Bishop ALEXANDER. We pray for their good health and for their continued leadership of our beloved Archdiocese. God Grant Them Many Years.

Respectfully Submitted ... Ron Nicola, Chairperson, Department of Stewardship