

# **ST. ALEXIS ORTHODOX CHURCH**

**Clinton, Connecticut**

**Diocese of New England, of the Orthodox Church in America**

## **PARISH BY-LAWS**

**Originally adopted March 27, 1997**

**Amended October 2000, June 2003, November 2006, November 2012, November 2017, November 2018**

## Document Revisions

Date	Section	Changes
10/2000	Article IV Section 1	Revise Paragraph a Add phrase: “And at least one, but not more than three, At-large member(s).” Add Paragraph E
10/2000	Article IV Section 4	Revise Paragraph 5 From: “To purchase all necessities for the Parish properties, not exceeding the amount of one thousand dollars (\$1,000) per item. When possible, the
10/2000	Article IV Section 6	Correct Paragraph lettering
10/2000	Article IV Section 7	Revise Paragraph d; item 8 From: “Countersign all checks disbursing Parish funds” To: Current Form
6/2003	Article IV Section 1	Add new item d Role of Bookkeeper Renumbered rest of items
6/2003	Article IV Section 7	Revised item a.3 To read “in the absence of the Treasurer...”
6/2003	Article IV Section 7	Revised duties of Treasurer to include Bookkeeper responsibilities
6/2003	Article IV Section 7	Add Section 8 to define Bookkeeper responsibilities Renumbered Auditor’s Section as 9
6/2003	Article IV Section 7	Section 10 Renumbered Parish Administration as Section 10 Revised item d From:

11/2006	Article III Section 2	Revised Section 2 paragraph From: (51%) To: (33%)
11/2006	Article III Section 4	Revised item d From: “within no more than 21 days of such meeting” To: “in a timely manner”
11/2006	Article IV Section 1	Revised item b Deleted: “Four voting Council member shall be elected.”
11/2006	Article IV Section 6	Revised item b From: “While the Rector is the head of the parish, the President of the Council of Stewards shall act as chairperson of the Council meetings.” To: “The Rector is head of the parish, and shall either act as chairperson of the Council meetings or ask the President of the Council of Stewards to serve as chairperson.”
11/2006	Article IV Section 6	Revised item c Deleted: “to the President”
11/2006	Article IV Section 7	Revised item a Added phrase: “as requested by pastor”
11/2006	Article IV Section 7	Revised item b-3c Added: “In coordination with the Rector,” Deleted: “making”
11/2006	Article V Section 1	Revised item b Deleted: “Mission” Added: “Church”

11/2006	Article V Section 3	Revised paragraph Deleted: “along with the simple majority vote of the” Added: “acting on behalf of”
11/2012	Through-out	Sundry grammar and “typos” corrected
11/2012	Through-out	“Mission” updated to “Church” to reflect current Parish status
11/2012	Article I Section 1.c	Revised sentence Deleted: “regularly, but”
11/2012	Article I Section 1.d	Revised sentence Added: “annual”
11/2012	Article I Section 3.b	Revised sentence Deleted: “on a regular basis”
11/2012	Article III Section 1.c	Revised sentence Deleted: “nave of the”
11/2012	Article III Section 1.d	Revised sentence Delete: “at the Divine Liturgy” Added: “and electronically as feasible”
11/2012	Article III Section 2	Revised sentence Deleted: “be the majority”
11/2012	Article III Section 3	Revised sentence Added: “in attendance”
11/2012	Article IV Section 1.a	Revised sentence Deleted: “at least one, but not more than three” Added: “and two (2)”
11/2012	Article IV Section 1.a	Revised sentence Deleted: “six” Added: “seven”
11/2012	Article IV Section 1.b	Section added The Council of Stewards shall appoint a three member nominating committee, the purpose of which will be to identify and put forth nominations for parishioners to serve on the Council of Stewards. The nominating committee shall consist of one member of the Council of Stewards and 2 other parishioners. The nominating committee shall present the list of nominees to the Council of Stewards
11/2012	Article IV Sections 1b-1f	Revision Original Sections 1b-1f now renamed as Sections 1c-1g

11/2012	Article IV Section 2.a	Revision Deleted: “one year” Deleted: “The term for members of the Council of Stewards and the auditors shall be three (3) years and such terms shall be staggered so that no more than three (3) members will be replaced at any one election.” Added: “The term for members of the Council of Stewards and the auditors shall be three (3) years. Such terms for the Council of Stewards shall be staggered so that no more than three (3) members of the Council of Stewards will be replaced at any one election.
11/2012	Article IV Section 2.b	Revised sentence Deleted: “terms” Added: “years”
11/2012	Article IV Section 5	Revised sentence Deleted: “confirmation” Added: “installation”
11/2012	Article IV Section 6.i	Revised Deleted: “IV, Section 9(b)” Added: “III and Article IV Section 10b”
11/2012	Article IV Section 7.a.1	Revised Added: “in accordance with Article IV Section 6.b.
11/2012	Article IV Section 7.b.6	Revised Deleted: “in the absence of a deacon” Deleted: “Vice President is responsible for” Amended: “Oversees...”
11/2012	Article IV Section 7.c.3	Revised Added: “Jointly with the Treasurer and” Added: “This membership list shall also be shared with the Council of Stewards.”
11/2012	Article IV Section 7.d.6.b	Revision Deleted: “parish” Added: “the”

11/2012	Article IV Section 7.d.7-8	<p>Addition</p> <p>“Jointly with the Secretary and together with the Rector, maintain a membership list of the Parish which shall contain the address and voting qualifications of each member, and shall record there in the fact and date of termination of voting membership. This membership information shall also be shared with the Council of Stewards.”</p> <p>Revision</p> <p>Section 7 is renumber as Section 8</p>
11/2012	Through-out	<p>Correction</p> <p>“rector” is changed to “Rector”</p>
11/2017	Article II Section 2	Subsections a,b,c & d added from current OCA Statutes
11/2017	Article II Section 3 subsection n	<p>Add “Head and administer the parish consistent with the provisions of this Statute, the governing documents of the Diocese and parish, and the directives of the Diocesan Authority in cooperation with the Parish Council.</p> <p>No activities in the parish can be initiated without his knowledge, approval, and blessing; neither should he do anything pertaining to the parish without the knowledge of the appropriate parish bodies, so that always and everywhere there may be mutual trust, cooperation, unity, and love.”</p>
11/2017	Article V Section 2	<p>Replaced with the following subsections from the OCA Statutes</p> <p>Subsection A: All parish property, assets and funds are and shall be owned and held by the parish or parish corporation in trust for the use, purpose, and benefit of the Diocese of The Orthodox Church in America of which it is a part. This provision shall not limit the authority of the parish or parish corporation in its administration of such property, assets, and funds in accord with the faith, governance, and discipline of The Orthodox Church in America.</p> <p>Subsection B: The Parish may purchase real property, or sell, mortgage, lease or otherwise encumber its real property, upon approval of a simple majority vote of the voting members of the Parish in attendance at an Annual Parish meeting or Special meeting called for that specific purpose, at which a quorum is present, due notice having been given, on a resolution presented by the Council of Stewards and Rector, and subject to final approval of the Diocesan Bishop.</p>

11/2017	Section 5	<p>Text: After all encumbrances have been satisfied, all the remaining property, whether real, personal, or mixed, or the proceeds from the sale thereof, shall be distributed by a majority vote of those voting members present at said Parish meeting to institutions or charities of the Orthodox Church in America, preferably within the local Deanery.</p> <p>Replaced with text: If the parish is canonically suppressed or otherwise ceases to exist, its real and personal property is disposed of in accord with Article V, Section 2, Subsection A, above. In all cases, the sacred and untouchable items, viz. the Holy Antimension, the Tabernacle, and the Sacred Vessels, as well as all parish records, shall be surrendered to the Diocesan Bishop or his designee.</p>
11/2018	Preamble	<p>Wording compliance with the OCA Statutes: Section 1 Definition - addition</p> <p>The Parish is a local Orthodox Eucharistic community canonically established by and subject to the authority of the Diocesan Bishop.</p>
11/2018	Article 1 Section 1 subsection a	<p>Compliance with the OCA Statutes - addition</p> <p>By virtue of their Baptism and Chrismation, the parishioners (OCA Statutes; Section 5, subsection a) are members of the Body of Christ and must strive to live in accordance with their high calling (Ephesians 4:1). No one can be a member of the Parish if he openly betrays the teaching of the Orthodox Church, or if he leads a life or acts in a manner condemned by the Holy Canons as incompatible with the name Orthodox Christian (OCA Statutes; Section 5, subsection b, c);</p>
11/2018	Article II Section 2	<p>Compliance with the OCA Statutes - addition</p> <p>The Parish Priest, also referred to as rector or priest-in-charge, by virtue of his ordination and canonical appointment, serves as the spiritual father and teacher of that portion of the flock of Christ entrusted to him, the first among the parish clergy, and presides over liturgical worship in accordance with the tradition and the norms of the Church.</p>

11/2018	Article II Section 5	Compliance with the OCA Statutes - addition and reformatting  As defined and described in the OCA Statutes (Section 4, subsections a through e), additional clergy as appointed by the Diocesan Bishop shall assist the Rector.
11/2018	Article V	“S 1” changed to “Section 1”  “voter” change to “vote” (in Section 5)

### **PREAMBLE**

Saint Alexis Toth of Wilkes Barre Orthodox Christian Church located in Clinton, Connecticut, is a Parish in the autocephalous Orthodox Church in America, and is incorporated as a non-profit religious corporation in the State of Connecticut, as of January 27, 1998, and is duly recognized by the laws and statutes of the government of the United States.

The Parish is a local Orthodox Eucharistic community canonically established by and subject to the authority of the Diocesan Bishop. As the local community of the Church, the Parish exists for the purpose of worshipping God according to the Holy Scriptures and Tradition of the Holy Orthodox Church, to encourage union with God among the members of the Parish, to provide religious education and charitable aid for its members and the community, and to defend, promote and be a witness to the Orthodox Faith in America. Our Church statement is as follows:

**Saint Alexis Toth of Wilkes-Barre Orthodox Christian Church is a local English speaking community of the Orthodox Church in America (OCA) on the shoreline of Connecticut.**

**The Saint Alexis Church exists to:**

- **Call all people to Christ**
- **Worship as a community**
- **Experience the joy of Christ in our lives**
- **Share this joy with those around us**
- **Educate people about the truth and presence of orthodoxy**

**We offer the love of Christ to those in need, both in word and action.**



The Parish is part of the Orthodox Church in America and the Diocese of New England, and therefore, its organization and its administration are subject to the Statutes of the Orthodox Church in America, adopted by the Second All-American Council of October 19-21, 1971, and as amended by subsequent All-American Councils, and to the decisions of the Diocesan Assemblies of the Diocese of New England, and to the decisions of all relevant governing bodies of the Orthodox Church in America.

The Parish is primarily a spiritual body recognized by the canons and traditions, disciplines and regulations of the Orthodox Church in America. Its adoption of a civil corporate existence is done to allow it recognition in a secular world. The Parish By-laws as presented herein attempt to reflect the letter and spirit of the current Statutes of the Orthodox Church in America.

Should the Statutes of the Orthodox Church in America be amended, the Parish shall adhere to the canons, traditions, disciplines and regulations of the Statutes of the Orthodox Church in America until the Parish By-laws conform to the then current Statutes of the Orthodox Church in America.

The Parish shall be regulated by the following By-laws which are intended to express the spirit of the Holy Orthodox Tradition, as interpreted by the Orthodox Church in America, on a practical level in the life of the Parish as a whole, so that the Parish might fulfill its divinely appointed mission in a peaceful and orderly way.

## **ARTICLE 1: THE PARISH MEMBERSHIP**

### **Section 1          Voting Member**

A voting member of the Parish shall fulfill the following requirements:

- a) By virtue of their Baptism and Chrismation, the parishioners (OCA Statutes; Section 5, subsection a) are members of the Body of Christ and must strive to live in accordance with their high calling (Ephesians 4:1). No one can be a member of the Parish if he openly betrays the teaching of the Orthodox Church, or if he leads a life or acts in a manner condemned by the Holy Canons as incompatible with the name Orthodox Christian (OCA Statutes; Section 5, subsection b, c);
- b) be at least 18 years of age; and
- c) at least once per year partakes of the Sacraments of Private Confession and Communion in the Parish; and
- d) regularly Fulfills annual stewardship obligations as may be established by the Parish within the calendar year.
- e) The Council of Stewards is granted the authority to waive the financial and stewardship obligations of the voting for “good cause” shown and that such circumstances are to be retained as confidential information not for dissemination to the general parish.

## Section 2          Transfer Member

A person who was a “voting member” in another Parish of a canonical Orthodox Church, and who has transferred into the Parish, in accordance with the authorized transfer form, shall have full “voting member” status.

## Section 3          Stewardship

The definition of a Christian, a member of the Church, as steward (and of the whole Church as “stewardship”), is not accidental but essential. It stems from the very nature of Christian faith and the nature of the Church. Christ calls us to be His co-workers in the work of salvation, or rather, He works through and in us, the living members of the Church, which is His Body. Therefore, we are all called to be stewards, both individually and as a community.

- a) Each year the Parish shall remit to the Diocesan Treasurer its financial obligation to the Diocese and to the Orthodox Church in America as stipulated by the Diocesan Assemblies and the All-American Councils.
- b) Out of our personal commitment to Christian stewardship, each voting member will give of their time, talent, and treasures.

## Section 4          Parish Membership Registration

The Council of Stewards is responsible for submitting annually the census and membership information to the office of the Diocesan Bishop, in accordance with the form as determined in current Diocesan Directives.

## Section 5          Exclusion of Voting Membership

The Council of Stewards together with the Rector shall, within jurisdiction, initiate action to remove from voting membership that person who:

- a) directly or indirectly defies the Dogma or Canons of the Orthodox Church;  
or
- b) directly or indirectly obstructs those decisions rendered by the majority of the Parish or the Diocesan Authority; or
- c) directly or indirectly causes such disruption so as to affect adversely the spiritual life of the Parish.

Action to remove the rights of voting membership shall be referred to higher Diocesan Authority in the manner set forth in the current Diocesan Directives.

## ARTICLE II: THE PARISH CLERGY

### Section 1      Vacancy

Upon the death, retirement, or transfer of the Rector, the vacancy in office may be filled on a temporary basis by the Diocesan Authority until the office is filled on a permanent basis.

### Section 2      Assignment

The Parish Priest, also referred to as rector or priest-in-charge, by virtue of his ordination and canonical appointment, serves as the spiritual father and teacher of that portion of the flock of Christ entrusted to him, the first among the parish clergy, and presides over liturgical worship in accordance with the tradition and the norms of the Church. The Rector is assigned, transferred, or removed by the Diocesan Bishop by virtue of the authority of his office and in accordance with the Canons, ecclesiastical procedure and the needs of the Parish and of the Diocese. The Rector cannot be removed or leave his assignment without the specific permission Church of the Diocesan Bishop. The Parish shall be responsible for the support and welfare of its Rector until such time as he is removed from his position by the Diocesan Bishop.

- a) The Bishop is the spiritual leader of all parishes within his Diocese. In consultation with the Diocesan Council, he shall establish, territorially define, consolidate with another parish, or suppress a parish. He appoints parish clergy, maintaining a relationship with them that is at once hierarchical and conciliar, marked by obedience and collaboration. He has the obligation and right of visitation to the parish and receives and approves regular reports on parish life. In case of conflict and disorder within the parish, he takes all necessary measures to resolve them consistent with the Sacred Canons and this Statute.
- b) For the establishment of a parish, a local group of faithful must demonstrate that it is stable and has the potential to become self-supporting and self-sustaining, and that it agrees that its corporate charter and Bylaws will be consistent with canonical requirements and this Statute. No corporate charter or Bylaws of any parish shall be effective unless approved by the Diocesan Authority.
- c) When the Bishop deems it appropriate, in consultation with the local group of faithful, he dedicates the new parish to a feast day or places it under the protection of a patron saint.
- d) Additional signs of the canonical status of the parish and the sacramental communion that exists between it and the Bishop are the Holy Antimension given by the Bishop and the commemoration of the Bishop during liturgical services.

### Section 3      Responsibility

The Rector of the Parish shall:

- a) serve the liturgical and sacramental needs according to the order of the Typikon of the Orthodox Church in America;
- b) instruct members of the Parish in the tenets of Orthodox Faith and piety;
- c) implement and be responsible for the religious education of the Parish and, together with the Parish, stimulate Church growth and outreach;
- d) strive to raise the level of spirituality and morality of the members of the Parish;
- e) preside at all Parish meetings;
- f) keep the Parish records of baptisms, receptions into the faith, marriages and burials; issue copies of the same, and report the statistics annually to the Diocesan Bishop and at the annual Parish meeting;
- g) report, as may be required by law, to civil authority marriages performed;
- h) be the intermediary between the Parish and the District Dean and the Diocesan Bishop;
- i) keep the Church seal;
- j) be responsible for the well-being of the Parish;
- k) implement the decisions of the All-American Councils, of the Diocesan Assemblies, of the Diocesan Bishop, of the District Dean, of the Annual and Special meetings of the Parish and its Council of Stewards;
- l) check and sign the minutes of the Annual and Special meetings of the Parish and the Council of Stewards;
- m) be responsible for the supervision of additional clergy who are appointed or assigned by the Diocesan Authority;
- n) be an *ex officio* member of all committees and the Council of Stewards.

Head and administer the parish consistent with the provisions of this Statute, the governing documents of the Diocese and parish, and the directives of the Diocesan Authority in cooperation with the Parish Council. No activities in the parish can be initiated without his knowledge, approval, and blessing; neither should he do anything pertaining to the parish without the knowledge of the appropriate parish bodies, so that always and everywhere there may be mutual trust, cooperation, unity, and love.

### Section 4      Compensation

To be free from material preoccupations and wholly committed to his sacred ministry, the Rector must be compensated by the Parish, the amount and terms of such compensation shall be determined prior to the time of his assignment and which shall conform to the then current Diocesan Guidelines concerning compensation and benefits for the clergy. The compensation package shall be reviewed yearly and recommendations made to the Annual Parish meeting in the Parish budget.

As defined and described in the OCA Statutes (Section 4, subsections a through e), additional clergy as appointed by the Diocesan Bishop shall assist the Rector. The provisions of Article II, Sections 1, 2, and 4 shall be applicable to them. In addition to the general pastoral duties, such additional clergy shall be responsible for those specific duties in the assignment in concurrence with the Rector and Council of Stewards as approved by the Diocesan Bishop.

### **ARTICLE III: THE PARISH MEETING**

Section 1 Meetings

- a) Annual meeting: An Annual meeting of the voting members of the Parish shall be held on the second Sunday of November every year (following the celebration of the Divine Liturgy) for the purpose of electing members of the Council of Stewards and auditors, and for the transaction of such other business as may come before the meeting. Should circumstances preclude having the annual Parish meeting at its regularly appointed time, then an alternate date agreed upon by the Rector and the Council of Stewards can be selected.
- b) Special meetings: Special meetings of the voting members of the Parish may be called by the Rector, the Council of Stewards, the Diocesan Bishop or his designee, or by not less than 25% of the voting members of the Parish. When 25% of the voting members of the Parish shall call a meeting, they shall file with the President of the Council of Stewards at least four (4) weeks prior to the date of said meeting a written request signed by them stating the purpose of such meeting. Arrangements shall then be made for notice to be given as per subsection (d) hereof.
- c) Place of the meeting: The Annual meeting and any Special meeting shall be held in the Church building, unless size prohibits. In such case, the Rector, with the Council of Stewards, shall choose an alternate site.
- d) Notice of meetings: Notice of the Annual and any Special meeting shall be given by the Rector from the ambo on three (3) consecutive Sundays prior to the meeting and published in the Parish bulletin, and electronically as feasible. The agenda of any Special meeting shall be included in the notice. In any meeting which has as part of its agenda capital expenditures, the purchase, sale, mortgage, lease or encumbrance of real property of the Parish, or the amendment of these By-laws, the notice shall specify the matter or matters to be acted upon at said meeting.

Section 2 Quorum

The quorum for all Parish meetings shall 33% of voting members enrolled at least thirty days prior to the date of the meeting. In the absence of a quorum at the Annual Parish meeting, that meeting may be adjourned to a time determined by the majority of voting members present at that meeting.

### Section 3      Voting

- a) A simple majority vote by those voting members in attendance shall determine the decision of a Parish meeting.
- b) As a family in Christ, the Parish should strive for consensus decision making, so that members work in a spirit of cooperation, unity and love.

### Section 4      Order of Meetings

- a) Officers of the Parish meeting
  - 1) The Rector is the presiding officer of the Parish meeting, but may delegate the chair to another officer.
  - 2) The Secretary of the Council of Stewards, or in his absence, someone appointed by the Rector shall record the Minutes of the Parish meeting.
  
- b) The Agenda of the Annual meeting
  - 1) Opening Prayer
  - 2) Determination of a Quorum
  - 3) Minutes of Previous Annual meeting
  - 4) Reports
  - 5) Financial Statement and Auditor's Report
  - 6) Adoption of the Parish Budget
  - 7) Election of the Council of Stewards and Delegates to the Diocesan Assembly and All-American Council
  - 8) Unfinished Business
  - 9) New Business
  - 10) Adjournment
  - 11) Closing Prayer
- c) The Agenda of the Special meeting
  - 1) Opening Prayer
  - 2) Determination of a Quorum
  - 3) Statement of Purpose of meeting
  - 4) Resolutions
  - 5) Adjournment
  - 6) Closing Prayer
- d) Record of a Parish meeting: Two copies of the minutes of a Parish meeting, Annual or Special, signed by the Secretary of the meeting, and the Rector, including financial data and attached reports, shall be sent to the Diocesan Bishop, with an additional copy to the District Dean in a timely manner.

The Rector is the intermediary between the Parish and the Diocesan Authority. In case of his disagreement with one or more decisions of the Parish meeting, his motivated opinion must be recorded in the minutes and the whole matter submitted to the Diocesan Bishop. Parish officers may state their motivated opinion, first to the District Dean, then to the Diocesan Bishop.

After review of the Parish meeting minutes, the Diocesan Authority shall approve or disapprove the decisions and resolutions, including elections, in those minutes. If approved, those decisions and resolutions, including elections, shall become effective as of the date of approval by the Diocesan Authority. If disapproved, those decisions and resolutions, including elections, shall be remanded back to the Parish for correction or amendment. No decisions or actions of a Parish meeting shall become effective until approved in writing by the Diocesan Authority.

#### **ARTICLE IV: THE COUNCIL OF STEWARDS**

##### Section 1 Election

- a) The Council of Stewards shall function as the Board of Trustees and shall be composed of a minimum of seven members: The Rector, President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and, two (2) At-large member(s).
- b) The Council of Stewards shall appoint a three member nominating committee, the purpose of which will be to identify and put forth nominations for parishioners to serve on the Council of Stewards. The nominating committee shall consist of one member of the Council of Stewards and 2 other parishioners. The nominating committee shall present the list of nominees to the Council of Stewards.
- c) The election of the members of the Council of Stewards shall take place at the annual parish meeting. Once elected, they, together with the Rector, shall decide who shall serve in which position.
- d) Additionally, two auditors shall also be elected.
- e) The role of Bookkeeper will not be an elected position.
- f) Voting members of the Parish, with at least one year of full participation, are eligible for election to the Council of Stewards with the following exceptions:
  - 1) any full-time employee of the Parish is not eligible to serve on the Council of Stewards.
  - 2) only one member of any household, including the Rector's household, is eligible to serve at the same time as a member of the Council of Stewards.
- g) The At-large member(s) shall:
  - 1) Assist the other Council members, as directed by the Rector or by the President.
  - 2) Maintain communications with all Parish committees to insure their accountability to the Council.
  - 3) Perform such other duties as may be imposed by law, by the Articles of Incorporation, or by these By-laws, or as may be prescribed from time to time by the Council of Stewards.

##### Section 2 Terms of Office

- a) The term for members of the Council of Stewards and the auditors shall be three (3) years. Such terms for the Council of Stewards shall be staggered so that no more than three (3) members of the Council of Stewards will be replaced at any one election.

- b) Any member of the Council of Stewards who has served three (3) consecutive years automatically becomes ineligible for re-election for a minimum of one (1) year.
- c) Notwithstanding any provisions contained in this Section under a) and b), all officers and auditors shall hold office until their successors are duly elected, qualified, confirmed, and installed.

### Section 3 Confirmation and Installation

Upon adjournment of the Annual Parish meeting, the Rector shall notify, in writing, the Diocesan Authority of the results of the election and request confirmation of said election. This is to be done as soon as possible, but not later than twenty-one (21) days after the Annual meeting.

Only upon the confirmation of the election of the Council of Stewards and the auditors by the Diocesan Authority can the Council of Stewards and auditors be installed. Upon receipt of the confirmation, the Rector shall install the Council of Stewards and auditors during a Sunday Divine Liturgy to be determined, if possible, before the next regularly scheduled Council meeting.

### Section 4 Qualifications and General Responsibilities of the Council of Stewards

- a) All Council of Stewards members must be regular participants in the sacramental and spiritual life of the Parish.
- b) All Council of Stewards members must continue to fulfill their qualifications for membership in the Parish and in the Council of Stewards during their entire tenure of office. Failure to retain membership as described in Article I and Article IV, will bring automatic dismissal from the Council. All Council of Stewards members are expected to attend all Council meetings during their tenure of office. The unexcused absence of any Council member from three (3) regularly scheduled Council meetings will render said member subject to dismissal by the Council of Stewards.
- c) The Council of Stewards initiates all dismissal procedures. However, the Diocesan Bishop through the District Dean may intervene in cases in which a Council member becomes subject to dismissal for causes stated in a) or b) of this Section.
- d) The responsibilities of the Council of Stewards, under the leadership of the Rector, shall include, but not be limited to:
  - 1) Be responsible, not only for the spiritual and material needs of the Parish, but also for the Parish's unity and connection with the Diocese and National Church, for the Parish is called to be a living cell and a member of the Body of Christ, and carries responsibility for the WHOLE church.
  - 2) To assist the Rector in implementation of the decisions of the All-American Councils, Diocesan Assemblies, Diocesan Directives, parish meetings and Council of Steward meetings.



- 3) To formulate and present an annual budget for consideration at the Annual Parish meeting.
- 4) To assure funding of the programs approved at the Annual Parish meeting in the Parish budget, and any funding requests that may come within the purview of the Council.
- 5) Approve any and all expenditures needed to maintain the safety and upkeep of the Parish properties up to a value equal to five (5) percent of the Annual budget. When possible, the Council shall anticipate such expenses and include a request for said item(s) in the Annual budget.
- 6) Take appropriate action in an emergency situation, where the safety or health of persons or property are threatened. In the rare event that a Special Meeting, and its need for notification as specified in Article III, Section 1 d), would unnecessarily delay remedial action, the Council is authorized to take whatever action is reasonable to minimize potential damage or loss. In such an unusual situation, the Council will inform the Parish membership as soon as is practical of the emergency and the actions taken.
- 7) Exercise day-to-day stewardship of the properties and programs of the Parish, being mindful at all times of the reality that ownership belongs to God, not the Parish.
- 8) To maintain all Parish real and personal property and annually maintain an inventory and balance sheet of all such assets.
- 9) To enter lease agreements or other real estate transactions including financing arrangements as authorized by a simple majority vote of the Parish membership
- 10) Any other responsibility that would normally fall to the Council in any question regarding the Parish.

#### Section 5            Vacancies in Council of Stewards

Any vacancy, with the exception of the office of President, whose vacancy is automatically filled by the Vice President, shall be filled by the Council of Stewards by electing a successor therefore with installation by the Rector, for the remainder of the vacated term.

#### Section 6            Council of Stewards Meetings

- a) The Council of Stewards shall meet monthly. If there is a conflict, the Council of Stewards may choose an alternate date and place. In all cases, none of its meetings may be held without the knowledge and blessing of the Rector who, as the head of the Parish, must take part in the discussion and solution of all Parish affairs.
- b) The Rector is the head of the parish, and shall appoint the President of the Council of Stewards to serve as chairperson.
- c) The Council of Stewards shall conduct its business from a pre-established agenda. Items for the agenda must be submitted no later than the Sunday

immediately preceding the meeting. Any Council member may request an item be placed on the agenda.

- d) A simple majority of the Council of Stewards shall constitute a quorum, provided that either the President or Vice President is present.
- e) A majority vote of the Council of Stewards members in attendance can decide issues brought before the Council of Stewards.
- f) All decisions of the Council of Stewards must be confirmed by the Rector before becoming effective.
- g) The Minutes of the Council of Stewards meetings shall be signed by the Secretary, the President, and the Rector. The original of the Minutes is property of the Parish and becomes part of the Parish archives.
- h) At its discretion, the Council of Stewards may hold a Closed meeting, i.e., one that is restricted to Council members only accordingly noted in the Minutes. Notification of a Closed meeting will be given to the general Parish membership one (1) week prior to the meeting.
- i) In the event that a matter is brought before the Council of Stewards which, in the opinion of the Rector, is in violation of the Canon Law of the Orthodox Church, the Statutes of the Orthodox Church in America, or the Diocesan Directives, including, but not limited to matter of:
  - 1) Doctrine
  - 2) Canon Law
  - 3) Liturgical Practice
  - 4) Sacramental Observance
  - 5) Ecclesiastical Discipline

The Rector has the right to veto both discussion and vote on said matter within the Council of Stewards. Any appeals from this decision shall be handled as provided in Article III and Article IV Section 10b.

#### Section 7          Officers of the Council of Stewards

- a) The President shall:
  - 1) Act as chairperson of all Council of Steward meetings in accordance with Article IV Section 6 b).
- 2) Sign all official and legal documents of the Parish as the senior elected trustee.
- 3) In absence of the Treasurer, shall countersign all checks disbursing Parish funds that:
  - a. Are over \$250, or
  - b. Represent reimbursement to an individual Parish member, regardless of amount, or
  - c. Represent monthly or adjusted Rector salary/benefits or Diocesan assessments.
- 4) Be an *ex officio* member of all standing committees.
- 5) Represent the Council of Stewards on all appropriate occasions.
- 6) Ensure that all monetary collections are done in an appropriate manner, delegating such jobs as necessary.

- 7) Generally oversee when necessary the various responsibilities of the Council of Stewards.
- 8) Perform such other duties as may be imposed by law, by the Articles of Incorporation, or by these By-laws, or as may be prescribed from time to time by the Council of Stewards.

b) The Vice President shall:

- 1) Act in place of the President during the latter's absence.
- 2) Automatically succeed to the office of President in the event of its vacancy.
- 3) Together with the Rector, be a liaison between the Council of Stewards and the Parish community and will coordinate:
  - a) developing, organizing, and annually updating a visitor's package to be handed out to all visitors.
  - b) welcoming visitors (e.g., getting names and addresses of visitors, inviting visitors to stay for coffee hour, introducing visitors to Parish members, sending a follow-up letter to all visitors).
  - c) In coordination with the Rector, make contact with all members who leave the parish to determine cause or reason.
- 4) Together with the Rector, report any proceedings or developments from meetings outside the Parish.
- 5) Coordinate maintenance.
- 6) Oversee all non-monetary collections and disbursements.
- 7) Perform such other duties as may be imposed by law, by the Articles of Incorporation, or by these By-laws, or as may be prescribed from time to time by the Council of Stewards.

c) The Secretary shall:

- 1) Keep an accurate record of the transactions of all meetings of the Council of Stewards and the Parish.
- 2) Be responsible for posting notices of all meetings of the Parish and the Council.
- 3) Jointly with the Treasurer and together with the Rector, maintain a membership list of the Parish which shall contain the address and voting qualifications of each member, and shall record therein the fact and date of termination of voting membership. This membership list shall also be shared with Council of Stewards.
- 4) Submit to the Diocesan Bishop and the District Dean copies of all appropriate reports, lists, and minutes.
- 5) Be responsible for all Parish correspondence as directed. All correspondence must be reviewed and approved by the Rector.
- 6) Safeguard all official records and minutes. File and keep all reports and documents received.

- 7) Perform such other duties as may be imposed by law, by the Articles of Incorporation, or by these By-laws, or as may be prescribed from time to time by the Council of Stewards.

d) The Treasurer shall:

- 1) Coordinate and oversee all Bookkeeper responsibilities.
- 2) Sign all official documents pertaining to financial matters of the Parish.
- 3) Keep current inventory of all real and personal property of the Parish.
- 4) Maintain proper insurance coverage on Parish property.
- 5) Prepare all appropriate financial reports and statements which are to be submitted by the Secretary to the Diocesan Bishop and District Dean.
- 6) Jointly with the Bookkeeper:
  - a) Render a monthly account of receipts and expenditures at Council of Stewards meetings. Said monthly financial statements shall be posted for the Parish to review.
  - b) Prepare the annual budget to present to the Council of Stewards.
  - c) Keep in trust for the Parish all bank books or other official financial instruments allowing the deposit or withdrawal of funds.

d) Prepare all checks disbursing Parish funds where...

- (i) Bookkeeper will sign for all normal monthly operating expense items
  - (ii) Treasurer or President will countersign for all one time disbursements
  - (iii) Treasurer or President will co-sign all checks exceeding \$250
  - (iv) Treasurer shall gain concurrence of President for all check items that meet the criteria of Section 7 a) 3)
- e) Keep a complete account of the finances of the Parish which shall be and remain the property of the Parish and which shall be open for inspection at any reasonable time by the Council of Stewards.
  - f) Render a financial statement at the Annual Parish meeting and at other times as may be requested by the Council of Stewards. The annual statement shall be audited and certified.
  - g) Issue statements of giving to parishioners.
  - h) Receive and review all receipts forwarded for authorized payment for Parish funds; issue checks for said receipts.

- 7) Jointly with the Secretary and together with the Rector, maintain a membership list of the Parish which shall contain the address and voting qualifications of each member, and shall record there in the fact and date

of termination of voting membership. This membership information shall also be shared with the Council of Stewards.

- 8) Perform such duties as may be imposed by law, by the Articles of Incorporation, or by these By-laws, or may be proscribed from time to time by the Council of Stewards.

#### Section 8      Bookkeeper

Shall assist the Treasurer as defined above and also:

- 1) Receive and safely keep all money and securities of the Parish, keep an accurate account of same, and deposit same in proper financial institutions.
- 2) Keep an accurate record of the contributions made to the Parish through the pledge system and other means.

#### Section 9      Auditors

To ensure fiscal responsibility, the auditors shall:

- a) audit all financial records of the Parish;
- b) make reports of said audits to the Annual Parish meeting;
- c) review current inventory of all real and personal property of the Parish.

#### Section 10      Parish Administration

- a) The Parish shall be administered by the Rector and the Council of Stewards cooperatively.
- b) If a problem should arise between the Rector and the Council of Stewards, the matter shall not be brought before the Parish at a Parish meeting. The Rector and/or the Council of Stewards shall have the right to refer the matter to the District Dean according to the then current Diocesan Directives. However, in matters of appeal the decision of the Diocesan Authority shall be deemed final.
- c) The Council of Stewards shall fill such paid positions as may be available in the Parish by interviewing and determining qualifications of candidates. In all cases, Orthodox Christians should be hired if possible, with the exception of the Choir Rector, who MUST be a practicing Orthodox Christian. Compensation is to be determined by the Council of Stewards and included in the Parish Budget to be approved at an Annual Parish meeting.
- d) Those Parishioners assuming authority on behalf of the Council whether in a salaried or volunteer capacity shall be responsible to the Council of Stewards as to the fulfillment of their duties, with the exception of the Choir Director, who shall coordinate the liturgical life of the Parish with the Rector. Such duties shall be determined by the Council of Stewards and clearly outlined in a "Job Description" which shall be given to anyone so designated. Said "Job Description" must be signed and dated by the hire, the Rector, and the

President of the Council, and reviewed yearly for update. Additions and/or deletions to the “Job Description” may be made by the Council of Stewards subject to a thirty (30) day notice to said hire. During this thirty days, hire may accept or reject changes by, remaining in the paid position or tendering written resignation.

## ARTICLE V: PARISH PROPERTY Section

### Section 1 Title of Ownership

- a) The Parish Corporation is the sole owner of all Parish property, assets and funds, subject to the following Sections of this Article and the Statutes and provisions of the Orthodox Church in America. In administering them, however, the parishioners and officers elected by them must always remember the religious nature, purposes, and goals of the Parish and act as trustees of God’s, not man’s property. The Parish, as the whole Church, serves God and continues God’s work in the world, and all decisions concerning Parish property must be inspired by that care and by the spiritual needs of the Church.
- b) All policies of insurance shall be obtained naming the Parish Corporation as the sole beneficiary. In addition, the insurance shall name the following entities as insured: Saint Alexis Orthodox Christian Church, Rector, Church School Directors and teachers, and the Council of Stewards as an entity, and each officer individually.
- c) All deeds, policies and other important and legal documents shall be kept for safety in a fire-proof safe or safety deposit box. The combination of any safe shall be entrusted to the Rector, the President, and the Treasurer.

### Section 2 Real Property

- a) All parish property, assets and funds are and shall be owned and held by the parish or parish corporation in trust for the use, purpose, and benefit of the Diocese of The Orthodox Church in America of which it is a part. This provision shall not limit the authority of the parish or parish corporation in its administration of such property, assets, and funds in accord with the faith, governance, and discipline of The Orthodox Church in America.
- b) The Parish may purchase real property, or sell, mortgage, lease or otherwise encumber its real property, upon approval of a simple majority vote of the voting members of the Parish in attendance at an Annual Parish meeting or Special meeting called for that specific purpose, at which a quorum is present, due notice having been given, on a resolution presented by the Council of Stewards and Rector, and subject to final approval of the Diocesan Bishop

### Section 3 Special Bequests

The Parish willingly accepts any and all bequests, but it reserves the right to review the restrictions on any such bequests. If those restrictions are too onerous, oppressive and unreasonable, the Council of Stewards, acting on behalf of the Parish, may decline said bequest.

### Section 4 Defection

The Parish is an integral part of the Orthodox Church in America. Therefore, in the event the Parish were to decide to withdraw from the jurisdiction of the Orthodox Church of America without canonical release, the Orthodox Church in America, or its successors, shall be entitled to full title to all the Parish assets and property. In the event that a group in the Parish decides to withdraw from the jurisdiction of the Orthodox Church in America without canonical release, that segment of the Parish which remains loyal to the jurisdiction of the Orthodox Church in America shall retain full title to all the Parish assets and property.

### Section 5 Dissolution

Only the Diocesan Authority shall have the power to declare the Parish dissolved. However, the Parish may recommend dissolution of the community by a simple majority **vote** at an Annual or Special Parish meeting of ALL the voting members of the Parish, not just those present at said meeting. Upon the dissolution of the Parish, the sacred and untouchable items, such as the Holy Antimension, the Tabernacle, and the Sacred Vessels, shall be delivered to the Diocesan Authority or, by his direction, to the District Dean. If the parish is canonically suppressed or otherwise ceases to exist, its real and personal property is disposed of in accord with Article V, Section 2, Subsection A, above. In all cases, the sacred and untouchable items, viz. the Holy Antimension, the Tabernacle, and the Sacred Vessels, as well as all parish records, shall be surrendered to the Diocesan Bishop or his designee. Subject to any legal encumbrances, under no circumstances shall any type of Parish property pass into the hands of any individual.

## **ARTICLE VI: THE PARISH ORGANIZATIONS**

### Section 1 Organizations

The Parish exists as a community with its members actively participating in its life. The existence of different internal groups is inconsistent with such community life. However, if the whole Parish chooses to participate in an organization outside the community, the Parish holds itself accountable to the teachings and statutes of the Orthodox Church in America. Any moneys derived from these affiliations must be maintained in the Parish general funds and be administered by the Parish Treasurer.

**ARTICLE VII:**  
**THE AMENDMENTS, REGULATIONS GENERAL PROVISIONS**

Section 1        Amendments

The Parish By-laws may be altered or amended by a simple majority vote of the voting members of the Parish in attendance at the Annual Parish meeting at which a quorum is present or a Special meeting convened for that purpose at which a quorum is present, provided that written notice is given to the membership specifying the proposed addition, change or amendment. Such written notice shall be mailed to voting members of the Parish no later than fifteen (15) days before the date of the Annual Parish meeting at which the proposed changes, additions or amendments are to be discussed. All amendments, changes or additions so proposed shall not take effect unless approved by the Diocesan Authority.

Section 2        Scope of Rights

Notwithstanding any provisions contained herein or any provisions that might be assumed from the civil law concerning non-profit or religious corporations, nothing in these By-laws shall be deemed to have granted any individual parishioners or group of parishioners any rights as members of the present corporation, that are in conflict with, or at variance with, or superior to those recognized in the Statutes of the Orthodox Church in America.

Section 3        Text

- a) For all purposes, the English text of these By-laws shall be deemed to be the official text.
- b) In these By-laws, the word "Diocese" shall refer to the Diocese of New England of the Orthodox Church in America, and the words "Diocesan Authority" shall refer to the Bishop of the Diocese of New England and those persons or groups duly appointed by him for the governance of the Diocese, respectively.

Section 4        Adoption

**The original Parish By-laws have been reviewed and accepted by the St. Alexis Parish community, and are approved by His Beatitude, Metropolitan THEODOSIUS, in a letter dated March 27, 1997.**