
*“Where there is no vision
the people will perish.”*

PROVERBS 29:18

**STRATEGIC
PLAN
— FOR THE —
GREEK
ORTHODOX
METROPOLIS OF
ATLANTA
AND ITS PARISHES**

**Administration Goal 1.5
COUNCIL OF MINISTRIES**



METROPOLIS OF ATLANTA

COUNCIL OF MINISTRIES TEAM MESSAGE

At the end of the Clergy Laity Assembly of our Metropolis in Columbia SC on June 24-27 2015, we were highly motivated and determined to be part of the Strategic Planning of our Metropolis. Mr. Bill Marianes words', "Welcome to the new Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Atlanta" made us realize the imperative need of such a transformation, mainly because: "Where there is no vision, the people perish" (Proverbs 29:18).

It was obvious for everybody that the healthy growth of a Greek Orthodox community must be ministry based, a response to the spiritual and material needs of the people, as well as the potential of every community to create new ministries.

The idea of "Council Of Ministries" was brought to life by Fr. Steve Dalber and implemented with great success in his St. Nectarios parish in Charlotte, NC. With his permission and counseling we want to integrate the concept of Council of Ministries in the Strategic Planning of our Metropolis. The great value of this concept hinges in the fact that it provides a leadership structure within the parish and Metropolis ideal for ministries growth. Expanding everything at the Metropolis level it will create a pool of information and resources permanently open to every parish. It may improve existing ministries and open opportunities for potential ministries at the Metropolis level.

The Council of Ministries team establishes a cohesive effort that will facilitate the surfacing of best practices across the parishes of our Metropolis. We truly hope and pray that the materials collected and provided will be helpful to you and your parish. They are but seeds. We hope you will be inspired to start something that may turn into a blessed opportunity to bring people together and assist them in their journey of salvation.

Council Of Ministries Team:

Rev. Fr. John Bociu
Rev. Dn. John Pantelis
Ms. Stavroula Crafa
Ms. Peggy Doukas

Consultants:

Rev. Fr. Steve Dalber
Rev. Fr. Constantine Simeonides

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WHY DO WE NEED A COUNCIL OF MINISTRIES ?

Here are some answers:

The Council of Ministries gives the opportunity to all the ministry leaders to come together as a group and be reminded of the mission and vision of the church.

- ◆ for a common goal (fulfilling Christ's mission)
- ◆ to support and encourage each other in a group setting
- ◆ to improve their leadership skills through informational or inspirational presentations
- ◆ to establish and coordinate joint projects
- ◆ to share ideas
- ◆ to ask for help from other ministry leaders to help solve problems, concerns or needs
- ◆ to share upcoming events
- ◆ to be informed of any pertinent information that affects the entire parish and needs to be supported by the ministry leaders, so they can go out into the parish community and be liaisons for whatever the goal or project that needs to be achieved

Example: The parish has an obvious need to expand its facilities (educational building, bigger social hall, etc). To do so would require a loan putting the parish into financial debt. A plan is prepared and presented to the joint ministries, as a test presentation before presenting it at a general assembly. Two things would be accomplished with this: since the leaders are generally a good cross section of the parish, both young and old, they will have questions and concerns, providing an opportunity for the council to “tweak” it’s presentation and be better prepared. It’s also an opportunity to get the support of **ALL** of the parish leadership so that they can then go into the community and encourage the parishioners not only to attend the general assembly but to also support the project.

Positive impact on the parish:

- ⇒ Ministry leaders were better informed and felt much more supported in their efforts
- ⇒ Concerns were presented and discussed, and issues solved, thus, avoiding continuing or escalated conflicts (most of the time) ,

- ⊖ Improved leadership skills
- ⊖ Improved cooperation and communication between ministries, council and clergy
- ⊖ Ministry growth (more parishioners joining ministries)
- ⊖ The potential impact in parishes could have widespread positive implications in the overall growth of a community.

WHAT IS THE COUNCIL OF MINISTRIES.

Introduction

The concept of a “Council of Ministries” *is not only a structuring of ministries but also a leadership structure for the entire community.* This is not something that was invented, but rather something that evolved in our community and is serving us well. It is my hope that this concept might benefit other communities.

Most Orthodox communities in America use a leadership structure which involves the priest and a parish council as leaders of administration and ministry. Some communities use this system effectively, while others find themselves in a seemingly constant struggle. While the priest has the backing of the Archdiocese Regulations and is the spiritual and ministerial leader of the parish, the parish council, never the less, controls the “purse strings.” The debate then becomes: How do we get money, how do we spend it, and who makes this determination? The priest’s job is to develop ministries, while the parish council sees the need to pay the bills and there never seems to be enough money to go around. Meanwhile, the parish in general doesn’t have a clue as to what’s going on while developing an attitude of, “I really don’t care.” In these parishes true stewardship cannot take hold. This creates even greater desperation to raise funds, usually resulting in an ever increasing dependence on festivals and an endless stream of other fundraisers in an effort to keep the parish financially afloat. Survival becomes a priority while ministries take a back seat and the arguing seems endless.

This negative dynamic between money and ministry creates an atmosphere of dysfunction in the community which can become intergenerational, creating many factions within a community, and, often times, a revolving door policy for priests.

WHAT COUNCIL OF MINISTRIES IS NOT.

First, the Council of Ministries will provide no help if it only functions as a reference file in a computer, or a hard copy document on a shelf in the church office. It will not replace the motivated leadership in the parish. The priest and the parish council need to make the Council of Ministries a priority, by having regular meetings that would be, ideally, highlighted and specified in respective updated church bylaws, thereby informing the ministries leaders of their accountabilities and responsibilities.

The Council of Ministries is not a “magic dust” solution nor a short term fix for the lack of ministries in a parish. It may not produce the expected results if an essential part were to be ignored or left out (e.g. vision).

PART I - STRUCTURE AND ROLES

1. PARISH LEVEL :

The Model

A flow chart was constructed showing:

- The priest and
- the Board (Parish Council) on the top tier
- an administrator (office person) with
- each ministry headed by a volunteer

This new structure gave *ownership to the ministry heads*.

⇒ The priest became a resource and spiritual father to the ministries with

⇒ The Parish Council and administrator providing material support.

The ministries began to flourish giving birth to sub-ministries and new ministries.

The Mission

By decentralizing the authority structure, the artificial restrictions to ministry growth and development are shattered, leaving behind fertile fields for innovation and growth. With each new ministry or sub-ministry, a new leadership position is created. This allows even more people to become intimately involved and feel ownership in the community, which in turn creates an excitement and a desire to truly be a ministry centered church.

The sharing of authority and leadership with so many people and ministries can be a frightening process. After all how do all these leaders stay focused and oriented in the same direction? What keeps them from going astray, wanting to do their own thing? It is critical that a strong, non-negotiable mission statement is in place to which everyone agrees and adheres. In order for the mission to be non-negotiable, it must come from the very authority who established the church and its ministry as reflected in His own worldly ministry; that is to say, Jesus Christ Himself. **The mission statement is non-negotiable.** *The vision statement is how we see ourselves accomplishing the mission statement.*

OUR MISSION:

(Example) St. Nektarios Greek Orthodox Church is dedicated to the continuation of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ's ministry of salvation through the proclamation and teaching of the Gospel; through Baptism in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; and through loving service to God and to mankind.

OUR VISION:

The community will provide a loving, caring and welcoming environment where all belong and grow in the faith through worship, service, witness, and fellowship.

Samples of other Mission Statements:

"St. George Greek Orthodox Church mission is to preserve, practices, and proclaims the Orthodox Christian Faith in order to glorify God, and to grow and serve the Parish and the community."

"St. Barbara Greek Orthodox Church follows the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ assisting those in spiritual and physical need towards a transformed life and sanctifying the lives of the faithful through the Holy Sacraments."

"We seek to understand our Orthodox faith, live that faith, and offer our faith to others."

The Role of the Priest

The priest in this model is free to be a priest; to oversee the work of the parish council and all of the ministries without having to try to micromanage every detail of every aspect of parish life. Above and beyond his liturgical duties, he is also freed to be a teacher, a spiritual guide, and a counselor to the community entrusted to him. *The priest will appoint the team ministries leaders.* By having regular Council of Ministries meetings where the priest encourages the efforts of all and reiterates the mission and vision, this system becomes self-policing. The entire ministry structure then has a natural tendency to evaluate itself against the mission and the vision which has been unanimously accepted by all.

The Role of the Team Ministry Leader

The most important responsibility of the Ministry Leader is to assist the Parish Priest in the ministries work of the Parish. Some of the principal roles employed by effective ministry leaders include, but are not limited to, planning, developing, organizing, and implementing programs and various ministries of the Church; In all things, the ministry leader should imitate our Lord Jesus Christ, who “came not to be served but to serve” (Matt hew 20:28). The entire focus of the ministries must be to serve the needs of the faithful and to spread the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. If ministry leaders treat everyone with love and respect, as Christ loves us, then parishioners will do likewise. The ministry leader must practice servant leadership by identifying and examining the ministry needs of the parishioners and taking the necessary steps to meet those needs, whether through the improvement and expansion of the ministry work.

Christ-Centered Servant Leadership

Ministry leaders serve as a role model for parishioners and must take their ministry very seriously. They should lead by example by attending Church and parish events, and regularly participating in the sacramental life of the Church. By doing so, they will have a powerful effect on the overall life of the community.

Mentoring and Succession: Within the Council of Ministries, there are two very important activities needed to continue developing the leadership of its members. The first is to enhance leadership skills through the mentoring of competent leaders. In

order to assist new members as they assume their positions and as ministry leaders, the more experienced members should aid, guide, and encourage these new leaders to assume their responsibilities. The second is the development of a systematic succession strategy in which each ministry has a chairperson and an assistant (who will eventually become the next chairperson). The role that you assume as a ministry leader is best understood when the Parish is viewed as an integral part of the “One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church” that we confess in the Nicene Constantinopolitan Creed at every Liturgy.

The Role of the Parish Council

The parish council in this system is no longer one of a “bean counter” but rather one of ministry. *The mission and vision of the community is what drives their ministry as well.* Their decisions are no longer based on a matter of personal opinions, which cause egos to clash, but rather on the criteria of how well those decisions align with the mission statement. *Once again the acceptance of the mission statement is critical.* The members of the parish council may serve in one or more of the designated ministry teams. They do not lead a team. The vice president is responsible for the ministry team process, and he/she also serves as the liaison to the Board for the ministries that are lead by volunteers.

The Role of the Administrator

As ministries grow and multiply there is an increasing need for office support. The administrator, ideally a paid staff person, handles:

- the financial record keeping and
- coordinates all of the logistical support for everyone, including:
 - ◆ priest
 - ◆ parish council
 - ◆ all ministries

Benefits:

- Processes are defined
- Church operational policies become politically neutral

- Communication among ministries is improved
- Financial records are open, and transparency is achieved

Again, as the parish grows, more paid staff will be needed to assist the administrator in their various ministries responsibilities and support.

Volunteer staff is also instrumental in supporting the paid staff with “non-critical” work.

Regular office hours are maintained to respond to the needs of our congregants.

The Role of the Community in General

The community’s role is to support the Church’s mission of time, talent (involvement in ministries) and treasure. It is the priest’s role to do his utmost to educate every parishioner as to the non-negotiable mission of the Church, and that by accepting salvation; we have also accepted the mission with which Jesus Christ has entrusted us. *Once again making the mission clear is critical.* In this system the task of teaching the mission is made much easier in that a significant number of those in the community are already members of the Council of Ministries and have already bought into the mission and are excited about making it successful.

MEETING FREQUENCY AND TIMES

During the Ecclesiastical year there are periods of time that are better suited for the gathering together of the ministries leaders for a Council of Ministries meeting. The recommended frequency of these meetings is from a minimum of two (2) up to four (4) meetings a year.

1. August, for general preparation of the new Liturgical year
2. Possibly mid November, after the ministries are in full swing
3. End of January
4. End of May or beginning of June as a general evaluation of the past year as a group, possible pre-planning that can take place over the summer months and to gather suggestions for topics the ministries would like to have presented for next year (S.C.)

The Council of Ministries meetings are scheduled and called for by the Vice President

of the Parish Council in agreement with the priest. Although the Parish Council members should not lead any of the ministries, it is desirable that they participate in the Council of Ministries meetings. Their presence will not only encourage the ministries, the Parish Council will have the opportunity to receive first hand information about the successes, challenges and the needs of the parish that they serve.

PART I - STRUCTURE AND ROLES 2. Metropolis Level Structure

The Council of Ministries of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Atlanta is an integral part of the large picture of the Strategic Plan under the all encompassing Mission Statement, Vision and Statement of “Why” of the Metropolis:

Mission Statement

The Metropolis of Atlanta’s mission is to energize, cultivate and guide the faithful in the Southeastern United States by proclaiming the Faith and Gospel of Christ, and teaching and spreading the Orthodox Christian Faith.

Our Vision

We will grow the Metropolis of Atlanta, and personally grow in Christ and make disciples, by living as witnesses of our faith through loving, faithful and purposeful Orthodox Christian communities focused on worship, education, stewardship, philanthropy, and fellowship.

Statement of “Why”

The Metropolis of Atlanta and its Parishes welcome all people seeking salvation, love, truth and fulfillment.

The Council of Ministries at Metropolis level has a two fold course of action.

1. Unites the Councils of Ministries of all the parishes across the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Atlanta, providing guidance and best practice resources. The Council of Ministries page will be constantly adding content of “know-how”, activities, forms, etc. that will facilitate the work of clergy and laity in the Lord’s vineyard. All parishes will benefit of this common source.
2. The Metropolis Council of Ministries brings together and focuses on the Ministries that are active at the Metropolis level. These ministries (*St. Stephen’s Camp, Winter Youth Rally, Hellenic Dance Festival, Diakonia Retreat Center, Disaster Relief, SFGOCM, Family Life etc.*) are designed for the participation of the Orthodox faithful in our Metropolis. They offer an equal opportunity of participation to all parishes and each parishioner within the parish (*subject to rules, restrictions and deadline registrations established by each individual ministry*).

◆ **Mission Statement and Vision of the Metropolis of Atlanta Council of Ministries.**

The Council of Ministries of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Atlanta serves the believers of its parishes by creating opportunities for learning, spiritual growth and fellowship that lead to a fulfilling Orthodox life pleasing to God, Who “desires that all man should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth” (I Tim. 2:4).

Vision:

The Metropolis Council of Ministries will nurture the existing, successful ministries and add potential new ministries sharing with love and kindness all Metropolis and parishes resources, engaging and stimulating the gifts of the Holy Spirit of everyone.

a. Metropolitan, Chancellor, Metropolis Council (Vice President), Metropolis COM Administrator

✝ As a Shepherd and Overseer, the **Metropolitan** will always be the spiritual

guide and advisor of the Council of Ministries. In his absence, the Chancellor of the Metropolis is the most competent resource of advice.

- ✝ **The Vice President of the Metropolis Council** will be the coordinator of the Metropolis Council of Ministries, He will give reports at the Metropolis Council meetings. During the Metropolis Clergy-Laity Conference he (*or he may appoint a ministry leader*) will present a ministries development report and will have a workshop featuring a successful ministry of the Metropolis or parish.
- ✝ **Metropolis Council of Ministries Administrator.** In the Metropolis model of the Council of Ministries, the Administrator will fulfill a similar function as the Administrator of the Parish Level. It may be one or more positions covered by volunteers or, paid positions as the Metropolitan Council in agreement with His Eminence will decide. The Administrator's job descriptions will specifically address all duties related to the Council of Ministries.

b. Meetings

- The Metropolis Council of Ministries will follow the schedule of meetings established by the Strategic Planning committee and the Metropolitan Council. The Vice-President of the Metropolitan Council may organize meetings, webinars, phone meetings, or by using any other means of communications as he/she sees fit for the maintenance and progress of all ministries across our Metropolis.

PART II - ARCHDIOCESE MINISTRIES

1. Youth and Young Adults

➔ Y2AM (Youth and Young Adults Ministry — this department serves several important ministries of our church, including

- Young Adults
- HOPE
- JOY
- GOYA
- Altar Boys

- Orthodox Christian Fellowship
- Scouting, and
- Camping Ministries

Our mission is to strengthen the relationship of young Orthodox Christians with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, encouraging them to become active sacramental participants in the life of the Body of Christ. The ministries below offer them the opportunity to experience the Faith, ultimately leading them to Salvation. These ministries are not "organizations" or "clubs," but rather a ministry of the Church--a gathering of the faithful who share the same ages and common interests.

[read more...](#)

➔ St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival (Dept. of Religious Education)

QUICK FACTS

Introduced in 1983, the St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival provides Greek Orthodox teenagers the opportunity to write and talk about their faith. The Oratorical Festival Program begins at the parish level and is divided into three divisions:

- ◆ Elementary Division (local festival only) for students in grades 4–6
- ◆ Junior Division for students in grades 7–9
- ◆ Senior Division for student in grades 10–12

[read more...](#)

➔ Ionian Village

Teens and young adults that participate in Ionian Village travel across Greece, venerate the relics of saints, walk in the footsteps of the Apostles, and visit significant sites of Greek history and culture. Ionian Village is a unique summer camping program located in Greece and operated by the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. Located in Greece, Ionian Village offers its participants a unique experience that is unavailable elsewhere. At the end of the program, staff and campers return to their homes with strengthened faith and with a greater appreciation for the Church and for Greek culture and heritage.

[read more...](#)

➔ OCF (ORTHODOX CAMPUS FELLOWSHIP)

OCF is charged with connecting Orthodox college students—and those interested in the Orthodox Christian faith—to Christ and His Church. OCF realizes this mission by:

- ♦ Supporting fellowships on college campuses, whose members experience and witness the Orthodox Christian Church through community life, prayer, service to others, and study of the Faith
- ♦ Providing a variety of thoughtful and innovative programs, including College Conferences and Real Break, and domestic and international service projects
- ♦ Training lay and clergy volunteers, in addition to our students, for leadership roles on campus and beyond

Our North American Office is located in Brookline, Massachusetts on the campus of Hellenic College/Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology.

[read more...](#)

St. Basil's Academy

The Saint Basil Academy is a national not-for-profit philanthropic center of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America which provides love, shelter, food, education, protection and a home for her orphans, children of chronically ill or destitute parents or children from broken homes.

The Saint Basil Academy ministers to the whole child: mind, body, and spirit. Our mission is to facilitate shelter, protection, love, and education to these entrusted youth so that they may grow up to be healthy, wholesome, well-rounded Orthodox Christians, as well as productive members of society, with vision and hope.

[read more...](#)

Trinity Children and Family Services

Trinity Children and Family Services (TCFS) is a not-for-profit, multi-services agency serving the needs of children requiring out-of-home placement through residential/treatment and foster family programs. We have one mission: to help children who have been damaged by abuse, neglect, or abandonment, to heal, and return them to society and family. These children can then begin to reclaim their right to pursue successful and fulfilling lives

[read more...](#)

Adult and Special Purpose Ministries

➔ CENTER FOR FAMILY CARE

MISSION

In collaboration with the Metropolises and parishes of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, the mission of the Center for Family Care is to equip families with the resources to "affirm the importance of the family as a blessed gift of God and to address the specific needs of families as they try to live in a very challenging culture and world" (Archbishop Demetrios of America).

VISION

As the Center grows, we aspire to provide ministries and resources to meet the needs of all Orthodox Christians in every part of the family life cycle. At present, we offer ministries for parents and children, married couples with special attention to those who have spouses who are not Orthodox, men and their role in the Church and society, clergy and seminarian couples, and couples preparing for marriage.

[read more...](#)

➔ Senior Residents locations—[read more...](#)

➔ SAINT MICHAEL'S HOME

Saint Michael's Home is committed to expanding both the size of the facility and the level of care which it is licensed to offer.

Spiritual, emotional and physical comfort and care are provided in a loving Greek Orthodox environment where residents are treated as "family members". For five decades, the Home has cared for countless members of our community. Greater demands will be placed on this facility, as the number of elderly in the United States is growing faster than any other age group.

With blessings from above and support of our many friends, St. Michael's will meet these challenges and continue its distinguished history of service, bringing much honor and pride to the Greek Orthodox Church! [read more...](#)

➔ IOCC (International Orthodox Christian Charities)

MISSION

IOCC, in the spirit of Christ's love, offers emergency relief and development programs to those in need worldwide, without discrimination, and strengthens the capacity of the Orthodox Church to respond:

VISION

We envision that, by God's grace, IOCC will respond, without discrimination, to those who are suffering and in need, to enable them to continue to improve their own lives and their communities, and to have the necessary means to live with dignity, respect and hope.

COMMITMENT & CONTEXT

IOCC, an agency of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America, represents Orthodox Christians in North America. IOCC understands its mission to include the developing and instilling in Orthodox Christians a commitment to philanthropy and global cooperative involvement as a reflection of the Orthodox Church.

[read more...](#)

OCMC (ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN MISSION CENTER)

THE GREAT COMMISSION (MATTHEW 28:19-20)

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age”.

MISSION

As the official missions agency of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States it is OCMC's mission to make disciples of all nations by bringing people to Christ and His Church.

VISION

That all people may come to know the saving love of our Lord: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

VALUES

- ◆ We value proclaiming and witnessing Christ to all people with priority given to those who have never heard or accepted the Gospel
- ◆ We value sharing the love of Christ for the care of the total person – spiritual and physical
- ◆ We value ministry in the language and culture of the people

- ◆ We value our people – well-trained Missionaries, Staff, Board, Supporters, Indigenous Leadership and those being served

- ◆ We value communities, parishes, and individuals that are mission-minded and have active mission involvement
- ◆ We value being an open and transparent agency that values the gifts of stewardship provided to us by the faithful

[read more...](#)

OCPM (ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN PRISON MINISTRIES)

To bring the love of Christ to those who are in prison by providing encouragement, material support, transition and reintegration guidance, Christian education, spiritual guidance and the sacramental life of the Church.

QUICK FACTS

- ◆ OCPM ministers to nearly 1,000 men and women in the United States who are in prison or who have recently been released. Many have embraced the Orthodox Faith, while others who were already Orthodox found their way back to The Church
- ◆ Five men have been tonsured Orthodox monks in prison and several others have become Iconographers
- ◆ There are currently over 300 Orthodox catechumens in jails and prisons across America
- ◆ Many of the men and women whose lives have been touched by OCPM are now out of prison and leading productive, Christ-centered lives as active members of their local parishes
- ◆ OCPM has published 8 books and distributed more than one million copies to prisons
- ◆ Over two million icon prayer cards have been printed and distributed
- ◆ OCPM ministers monthly to more than 300 homeless and needy people, including families of those in prison
- ◆ OCPM sends 1,000's of personal letters to those in prison each year offering them spiritual guidance and hope

OUTREACH AND EVANGELISM DEPARTMENT

MISSION

The Mission of the Department of Outreach & Evangelism is to renew and share the Orthodox Christian Faith in America by nurturing a deeper commitment to our Lord Jesus Christ within His Church, by reaching out to inactive Orthodox Christians and to the unchurched, by meeting the needs of those inquiring about the Orthodox faith, and by offering each community the tools for parish renewal and for the establishment of new parishes. As Archbishop Demetrios has said, "It is the Parish, it is the local community which has been, is, and will forever be the central, indispensable agent for offering our Orthodox faith to contemporary America." [read more ...](#)

➔ STEWARDHIP MINISTRIES

Orthodox Christian Stewardship is a way of life, which acknowledges accountability, reverence, and responsibility before God. A primary goal of Stewardship is to promote spiritual growth and strengthen faith. Becoming a Steward begins when we believe in God, to whom we give our love, loyalty, and trust and to act on those beliefs. As Stewards, we affirm that every aspect of our lives comes as a gift from Him. Stewardship calls on the faithful to cheerfully offer back to God a portion of the gifts of time, talent and treasure with which they have been blessed.

[read more...](#)

➔ THE DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

MISSION

The mission of the Department of Religious Education is to serve the parishes and dioceses of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America by providing materials and services that will advance parish programs of religious education.

The Department also serves individuals, organizations, military bases, ecumenical groups, and overseas parishes with catechetical resources that advance the spiritual admonition to: "Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ"

(2 Peter 3:18)

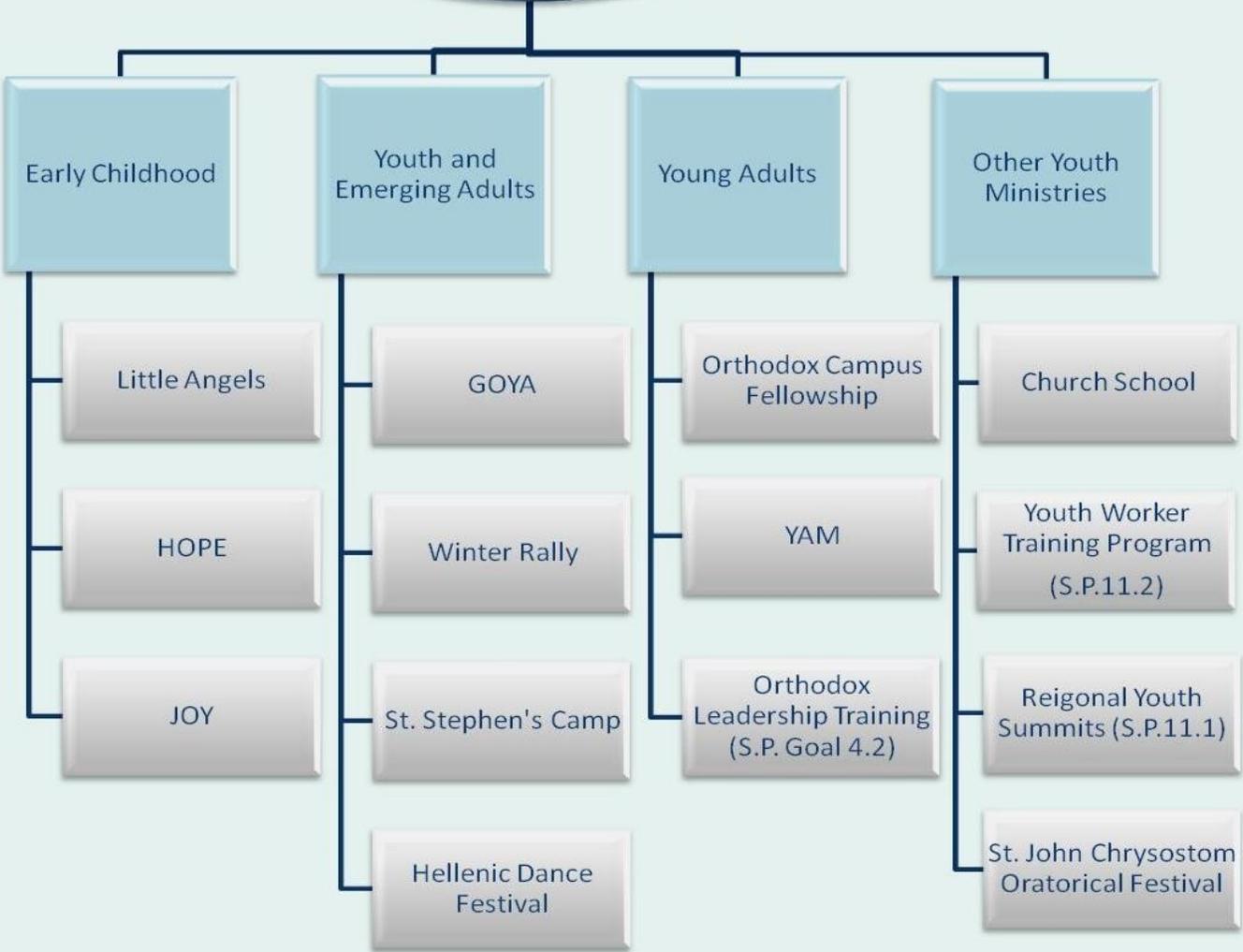
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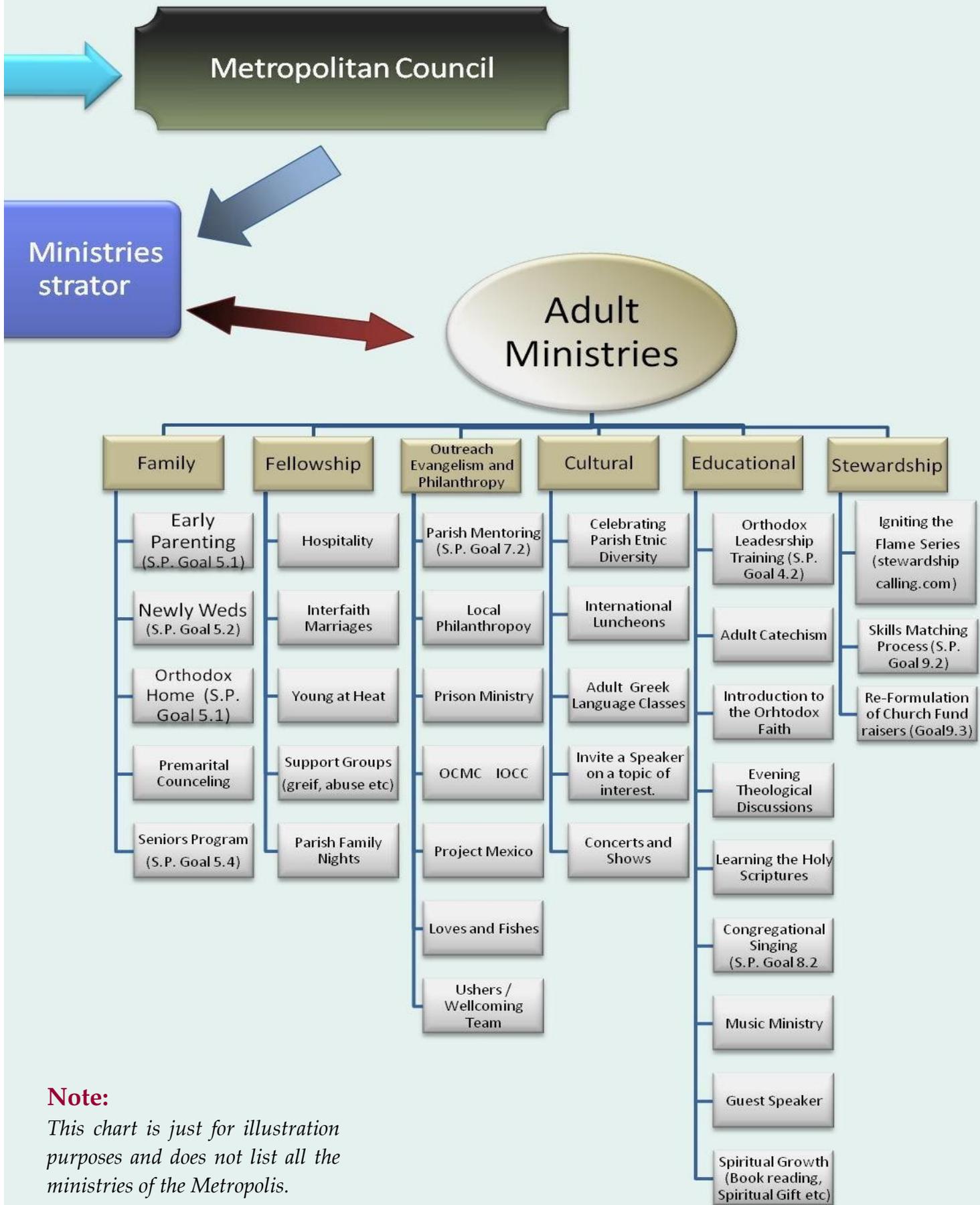
PART III - METROPOLIS MINISTRIES

Metropolitan

Council of Admini

Youth and Emerging Adults guided by Metropolitan Youth Director





Note:

This chart is just for illustration purposes and does not list all the ministries of the Metropolis.

1. YOUTH

✦ Hellenic Dance Festival

The Hellenic Dance Festival is a yearly event that takes place over the Martin Luther King, Jr. weekend every year. One would ask, why have a Hellenic Dance Festival Program for our youth? The answer is that Dance is an integral part of our life and society in general. It is creative expression, art, and a social phenomenon, which includes history, folklore, music, songs, and the actual act of dancing. Thus, while dancing we engage a lot more than just our feet. Learning to dance the Greek traditional dances helps us to expand our knowledge about our heritage, our roots, where we came from. Even for those of us who are far removed from the first Greek immigrants that helped build this country, even if we only have one eighth or one tenth of Greek blood in us, we are still Greek as well as American. Our religion, our Greek language, and our culture help us to maintain our identity as Hellenes. The need for our communities to perpetuate our culture, along with the philosophy of ancient Greece and the Olympic spirit of "a healthy mind in a healthy body" were instrumental in the decision by his Eminence Metropolitan Alexios to establish this Hellenic Dance Festival for the youth and families of our Metropolis.

[read more ...](#)

✦ Orthodox Leadership Training

A new ministry developed by the Strategic Planning of the Metropolis of Atlanta that aims to train Parish and Ministry leaders, future leaders and youth, focusing on increasing meaningful results, leadership succession, community involvement and Parish interaction.

✦ St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival

Introduced in 1983, the St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival provides Greek Orthodox teenagers the opportunity to write and talk about their faith. The Oratorical Festival Program begins at the parish level and is divided into three divisions:

Elementary Division (local festival only) for students in grades 4–6

Junior Division for students in grades 7–9

Senior Division for student in grades 10–12

The top speakers in the Junior and Senior Divisions advance to the district level. Two finalists in each district division represent the district at the Metropolis Oratorical

Festival. The top speaker in each metropolis division is then selected to participate in the Archdiocese Finals, which is hosted by a different metropolis each year.

Metropolis Oratorical Chairperson: Dr Maria Angeliadis: angeliadism@msn.com
[read more ...](#)

✠ [Winter Youth Rally](#)

Orthodox teens involved in their parish GOYA and Church School program gather in Atlanta each December to compete in athletic tournaments representing their church community.

We offer round robin style competition in Jr Boys Basketball, Sr Boys Basketball, Girls Basketball, Girls Volleyball, & Co-Ed Volleyball. Each evening several rounds of Bible Bowl are also offered for teens to grow in their faith and knowledge of Holy Scripture.

The Winter Youth Rally commences each year on the Feast of St Stephen the Protomartyr - December 27th

[read more ...](#)

✠ [St. Stephen's Summer Camp](#)

Recognized as the highlight of the summer for many of our youth throughout the Metropolis, St Stephen's Summer Camp offers teens entering 6th through 12th grades when school begins in the fall, an opportunity to spend a week at our Diakonia Retreat Center, located at 455 Quail Ridge Rd, Salem, SC.

Our St Stephen's Summer Camp has a rich tradition, dating back to the 1980's, and is grounded on the principals of living a true Orthodox lifestyle with twice daily liturgical services, opportunities for reflection, community living and meals, athletics, arts & crafts, and nightly social activities.

Registration for staff members typically begins in early February, and registration for campers opens in April.

[read more ...](#)

✠ [Regional Youth Summits](#)

Establishes a series of annual Regional Youth Summits in major geographic regions of the Metropolis where we offer multi Parish youth activities, programs, mentoring, training and fellowship.

2. YOUNG ADULTS

✠ Orthodox Campus Fellowship

2016/2017 OCF LEADERSHIP TEAM

Fr Anthony Salzman

SE Region Spiritual Advisor

UGA - Athens, GA

Niko Wilk

SE Region Student Coordinator

UNC - Charlotte, NC

[read more...](#)

ADDENDUM: **Scholarship Opportunities:** [read more...](#)

✠ Orthodox Leadership Training

A new ministry developed by the Strategic Planning of the Metropolis of Atlanta, whose goal is to train Parish and Ministry leaders, future leaders and youth, focusing on increasing meaningful results, leadership succession, community involvement and Parish interaction.

3. ADULTS AND SPECIAL PURPOSE MINISTRIES

✠ **DIAKONIA RETREAT CENTER (DRC)**

The Diakonia Retreat Center is a destination secluded in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains featuring wooded glens and hiking trails and its own 12 acre private lake. The campus also features a team-building ropes course, canoeing, fishing, swimming and more. First class accommodations and dining all await your group once you arrive at this spectacular getaway.

We specialize in providing successful group gatherings such as:

- Youth Retreats and Summer Camps
- Family Reunions
- Staff Planning Meetings
- Clergy Meetings
- Couples and Small Group Retreats

Diakonia Retreat Center

Metropolis of Atlanta

455 Quail Ridge Road

Salem, SC 29676

Phone: 864.944.6788

[read more...](#)

✦ [Youth Worker Training Program](#)

Offers online and in-person Youth Worker Training Programs and materials, including compliance and youth protection issues, that will be regularly taught throughout the Metropolis via regional Youth Summits.

✦ [Youth Ministries Resource Center](#)

A compiled resource of successful youth ministry information, materials, programs and evaluations processes for the Metropolis and Regional Youth Summits.

✦ [D.R.C. DEBT REDUCTION](#)

A new ministry developed by the Strategic Planning of the Metropolis of Atlanta that commits to find ways to pay down by \$1 million DRC debt within three years.

✦ [Orthodox Leadership Training](#)

A new ministry developed by the Strategic Planning of the Metropolis of Atlanta that aims to train Parish and Ministry leaders, future leaders and youth, focusing on increasing meaningful results, leadership succession, community involvement and Parish interaction.

✦ [Family Life Ministry](#)

What is Family Life Ministry?

We inspire individuals and families in our communities to live out Orthodoxy in the home. We serve our faithful through a daily updated website, dynamic seminars and retreats, as well as creative and engaging materials.

We believe...

...in Awareness: Our resources are meant to be **proactive** and **preventative**. We strive, not only to help make others aware of how to better their families, we also impart encouragement about what is working, through **humor and creativity**.

...in Not Reinventing the Wheel: No parish should have to “reinvent the wheel” when it comes to ministries and programs. We want all of our parishes to consult our website, where we will have the templates for programs and resources.

...in Collaboration: Instead of a “top-down mentality”, we hope to establish a network where each parish will communicate and use the resources that are available to

all of their sister parishes.

For more information [please visit our website](#), or email us at atlfamilylifeministry@gmail.com

✦ **Early Parenting**

A new ministry developed by the Strategic Planning of the Metropolis of Atlanta that develops an Orthodox Building Blocks (OBB) program template that provides a step-by-step process to assist parents in bringing up spiritually healthy Orthodox children.

✦ **Newly Married Couple Mentoring**

A new ministry developed by the Strategic Planning of the Metropolis of Atlanta that connects newly married couples to each other and to the community, offering meaningful mentoring that strengthens the family.

✦ **Orthodox Family**

A new ministry developed by the Strategic Planning of the Metropolis of Atlanta that aids families in creating an *Orthodox Home* family environment.

✦ **Orthodox Leadership Training**

A new ministry developed by the Strategic Planning of the Metropolis of Atlanta that aims to train Parish and Ministry leaders, future leaders and youth, focusing on increasing meaningful results, leadership succession, community involvement and Parish interaction.

✦ **Senior Programs**

A new ministry developed by the Strategic Planning of the Metropolis of Atlanta that will address the physical, emotional, personal, and spiritual well-being of the seniors in our Parishes and Metropolis.

✦ **Philoptochos**

While the Greek word “philoptochos” means “friends of the poor”, it does not begin to describe the many facets of the organization that chose this name. The Greek Orthodox women of Philoptochos are involved in all areas of philanthropy, whether it be on a global scale, helping earthquake and tsunami victims, or helping a struggling parishioner to pay a bill, **Philoptochos seeks to serve those in need**. Following the dictates of Christ, we seek to aid those who are in physical or

emotional pain, by working in homeless shelters, conducting food drives, raising funds for cancer, autism & other medical needs. We help our parishes in countless ways; we extend our hand to as many as we can. And as we do this work, we find not only the joy of giving and helping, but in creating fellowship and treasured friendships among our members. Philoptochos needs you. Your desire to serve and help others will find a place of welcome in this philanthropic organization.

[read more...](#)

✦ **Southeastern Federation of Greek Orthodox Choirs and Musicians.**

QUICK FACTS

Under the guidance of †Father George and Presvytera Anna Gallos, the Southeastern Federation is made up of individual member choirs of the Metropolis of Atlanta that includes the states of Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee. These Orthodox choirs, like others throughout the country, have joined together and through the activities of annual conferences, district workshops, area gatherings, and special programs, they have strengthened the quality of Greek Orthodox Church music. Each member choir participates and plays a major role in a variety of musical activities, as well as having a vote in all matters brought before the Federation Council. Officers are elected at the annual conference.

GOALS

- ◆ To enlighten and improve the spiritual and musical background of choir personnel, clergy, chanters and Greek Orthodox faithful
- ◆ To promote the establishment of music education programs at all levels
- ◆ To provide assistance to local churches in organizational matter pertaining to choir development
- ◆ To encourage development, composition, publication, and performance of Greek Orthodox sacred and Greek folk music
- ◆ To offer workshops, choir schools, and annual conferences to develop musical skills

✦ **OUTREACH MINISTRIES**

◆ **INTERNATIONAL ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHARITIES (IOCC)**

IOCC is the humanitarian aid agency of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America. IOCC works in cooperation with the

Orthodox Church and on behalf of Orthodox Christians. In carrying out its mission, IOCC applies the highest professional standards and renders itself fully accountable to the public and its donors.

IOCC, in the spirit of Christ's love, offers emergency relief and development programs to those in need worldwide, without discrimination, and strengthens the capacity of the Orthodox Church to so respond.

[read more...](#)

♦ **ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN MISSION CENTER (OCMC)**

OCMC is the official missions agency of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States. It is OCMC's mission to make disciples of all nations by bringing people to Christ and His Church.

[read more...](#)

♦ **ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN PRISON MINISTRY (OCPM)**

The Orthodox Christian Prison Ministry is a ministry of the Assembly of Bishops. The mission is to bring the love of Christ to those who are in prison by providing encouragement, material support, transition and reintegration guidance, Christian education, spiritual guidance and the sacramental life of the Church.

[read more...](#)

✦ **Financial Ministries and Goals**

♦ **D.R.C. DEBT REDUCTION**

A new ministry developed by the Strategic planning of the Metropolis of Atlanta that commits to find ways to pay down by \$1 million DRC debt within three years.

♦ **Metropolis Endowment Fund**

Establishes a Metropolis Endowment of \$ 250,000 that will increase to \$1,000,000 within three years, to provide financial support for selected ministries and programs, seminarian internships, and to those Parishes experiencing temporary financial hardship.

♦ **Parish Finance Vitality Tools.**

Develops the tools, model and regional training programs to promote best practices and financial vitality.

✦ **[Stewardship Ministry](#)**

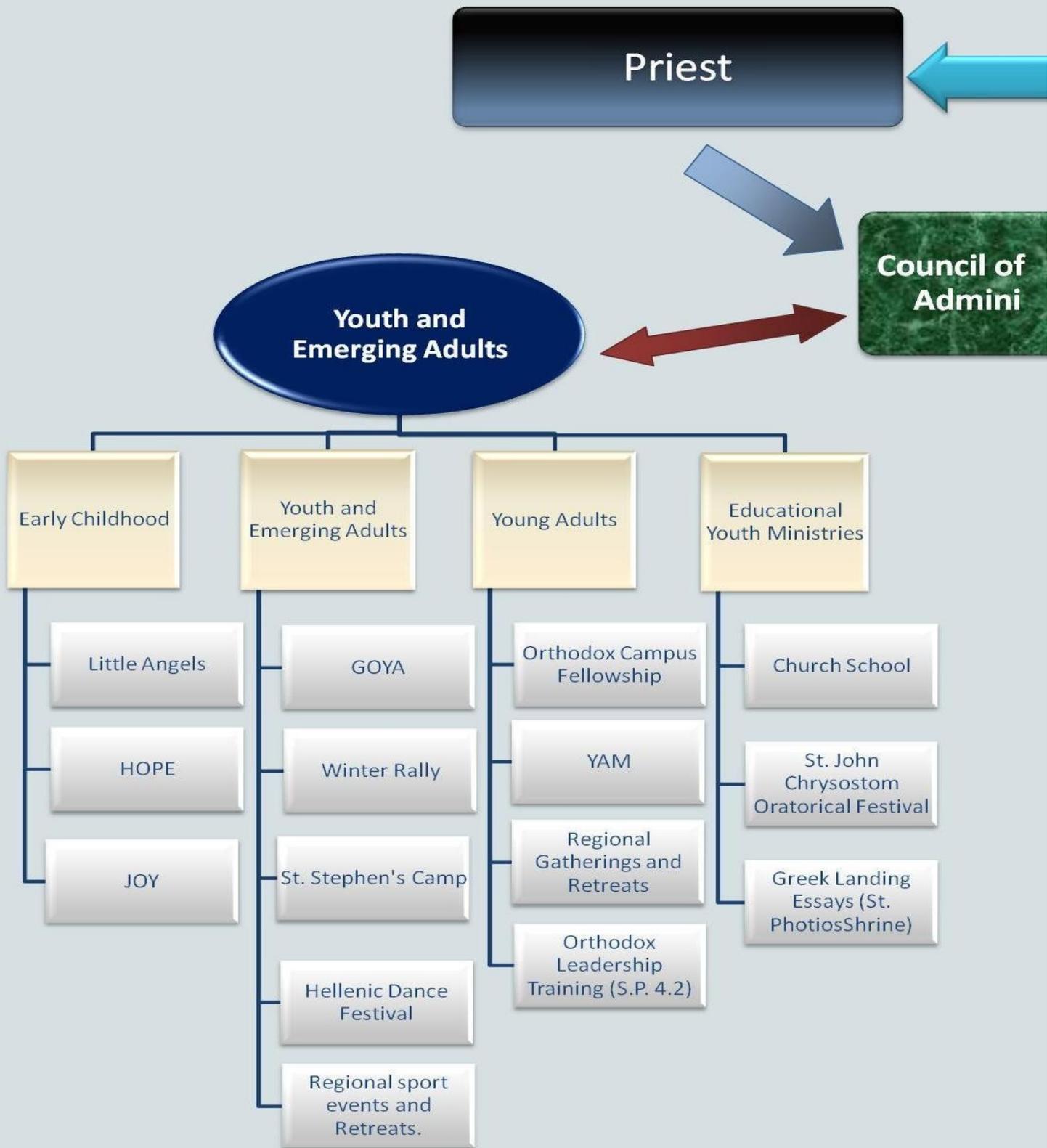
A comprehensive Stewardship Program *“Igniting The Flame of Stewardship”* adapted to the needs of the Parish is offered for implementation at the Parish level throughout the Metropolis. It also includes a youth stewardship program.

- ◆ **Skills Matching Process.** Establishes a process and a resource for collecting and matching parishioners’ skills and talents with Parish and Metropolis needs.
- ◆ **Re-Formulation of Church Fund Raisers.** A program that inspires Parishes to re-tool, re-dedicate, and re-purpose church fundraising activities to focus on external charitable outreach, evangelism and hospitality.

✧ Technology Ministry

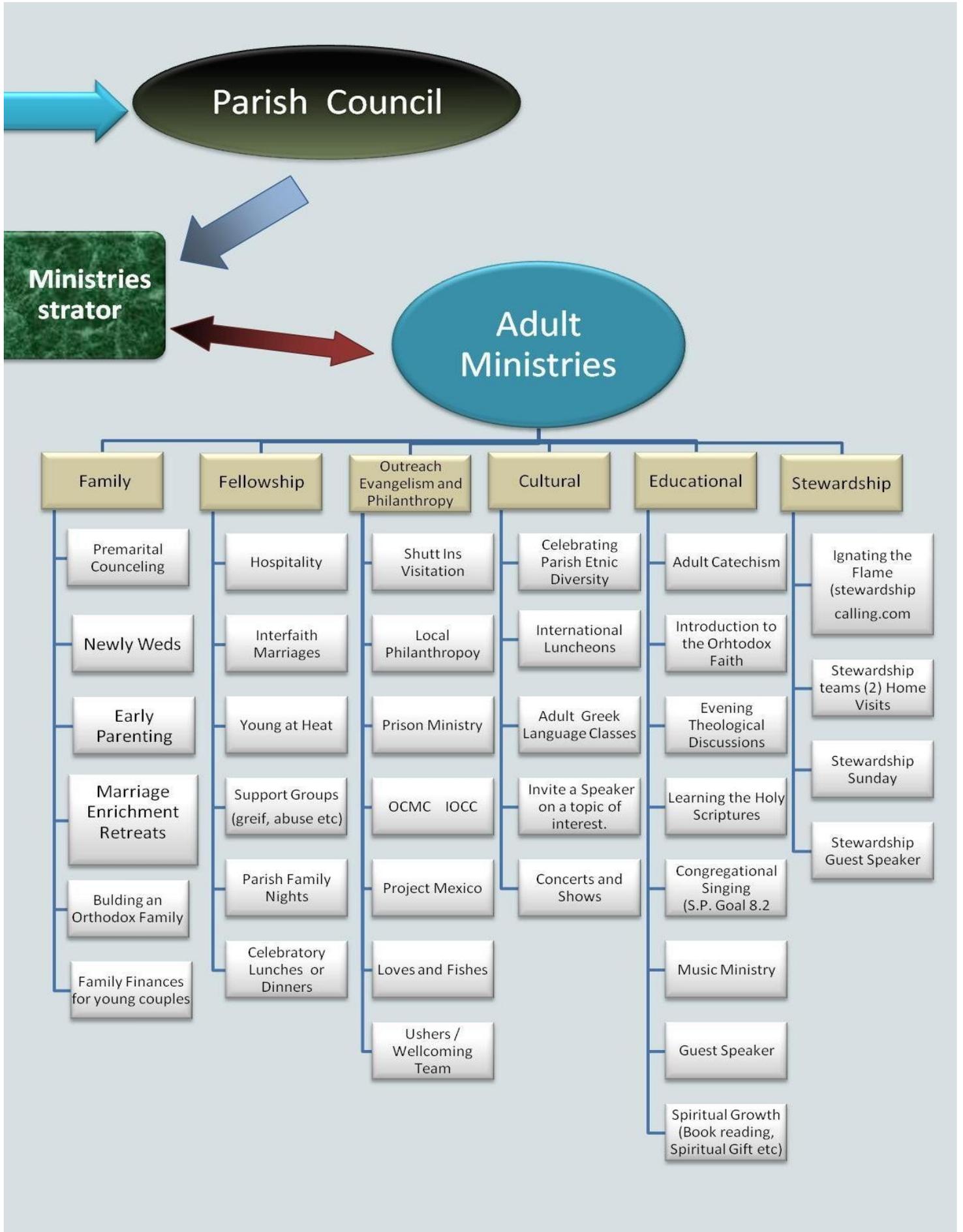
- ◆ **Metropolis Website.** Offers a comprehensive analysis of the Metropolis and its ministries website and online needs. It will redesign and implement a new website and APPS for the Metropolis ministries.
- ◆ **Youth Ministries Resource Center.** A compiled resource of successful youth ministry information, materials, programs and evaluations processes for the Metropolis and Regional Youth Summits.
- ◆ **Social Media.** Includes resources, a best practices center and polices. It will offer complete training for Clergy and Parish Leaders throughout the Metropolis regarding Social Media Ministry.
- ◆ **Best Practices Metropolis Resource Center Portal.** Develops and implements a web-based portal to deliver programs and materials as well as a comprehensive strategy for effective use of available tools, technologies and resources in our Parishes and Metropolis.

PART IV - PARISH MINISTRIES



Note:

This chart is just for illustration purposes and does not list all the ministries of the parish



1. Youth and Young Adults Ministries

❖ **Little Angels** (Mommy and Me, Daddy and Me)

Gives the new mothers and fathers in the community and their toddlers the opportunity to come together to play and pray

❖ **HOPE**- Fellowship group of youth in Kindergarten to Second Grade [Guidelines—read more...](#)

❖ **JOY** - Fellowship group of youth in Third to Fifth Grade [Guidelines—read more...](#)

❖ **GOYA** - Fellowship group of youth in Sixth to Twelfth Grade [Guidelines—read more...](#)

❖ **Church School** - Youth Catechism

Christ said, "Let the children come to Me." With that spirit, Saint Theophan the Recluse maintained that "of all holy works, the education of children is the most holy."

This ethic is our goal for our Greek Orthodox Church. We offer Youth Catechism in our faith each Sunday, following communion, from September to May. Starting with our three-year-old class, and continuing through high school graduation, all young people are welcomed as we journey together towards spiritual strength.

It is recommended to develop and implement a rotation curriculum that reinforces the important themes of our faith: Lives of the Saints, Major Feast Days, The Divine Liturgy, and The Sacraments. In this manner, children are exposed to each topic several times during their studies, at various levels of maturity, thereby fostering a deeper understanding and knowledge base. We strive to incorporate many community activities that illustrate our living and practicing of the Orthodox faith outside of the classroom as well.

Our catechetical team is dedicated to the future of our faith: our children.

[read more...](#)

- ❖ **Young Adult Ministry** - Fellowship group for young adults, age 18 to 35. [Guidelines– read more...](#)

- ❖ **Athletic Programs** - boys/girls basketball, volleyball, soccer etc. teams.

- ❖ **Regional GOYA Events** (Conference Events)
 - Lenten Retreat (DRC, Tampa)
 - Winter Event (Clearwater)
 - Volleyball Tournament (St. Petersburg)
 - Summer Olympics (Tampa)

- ❖ **Campus Ministry** (OCF) This new ministry supports our youth who are away at college, as well as Orthodox college students attending college/university in your Parish area. Volunteers may be called upon to “adopt” a college student over the holidays, visit our Parish youth who are away at school, or send “care packages” from the Parish community. [read more...](#)

- ❖ **Hellenic Dance Ministry.** These groups are the folk dancing troupe of young people of the parish whose performances are sought by civic and cultural organizations. They perform the traditional folk dances of Greece and provide the entertainment for the Greek Festival. They may consist of a Senior Group, a Junior Group, and The Young children. [read more...](#)

- ❖ **Greek School** - Greek School classes may be available for children age five and up. Five-year-olds begin with a Kindergarten class, then move into classes divided by level (you may have three levels). Students older than five could be assigned a level based on their knowledge of the Greek language. All of these plans are to be discussed with the Greek School principal. [read more...](#)

2. ADULTS AND SPECIAL PURPOSE MINISTRIES

A. FAMILY MINISTRY

- ❖ Family Life

- **Marriage and Relationship** *Offers information and support for newlyweds, for marriage enrichment, and for those facing separation and/or divorce.*
- **Life Balance** *Offers information and support for family life phases, including raising children, midlife issues, empty nest issues, elder care, substance abuse, and domestic trauma. In addition, ideas and programs are offered to support sound mental, physical, and emotional health.*
- **Woman-to-Woman Support Circle.** *Offers mentoring on women-centered issues.*
- **Grief Support.** *Offers resources and support to families suffering a severe loss—a death in the family, career or job loss, divorce, or neonatal loss.*
- **Helping Hands.** *Offers meals and home assistance to those dealing with a family crisis. Also offers handy man talents to parishioners unable to handle such tasks.*

❖ **Early Parenting**

A new ministry developed by the Strategic Planning of the Metropolis of Atlanta that develops an Orthodox Building Blocks (OBB) program template that provides a step-by-step process to assist parents in bringing up spiritually healthy Orthodox children.

❖ **Newly Married Couple Mentoring**

A new ministry developed by the Strategic Planning of the Metropolis of Atlanta that connects newly married couples to each other and to the community, offering meaningful mentoring that strengthens the family.

❖ **Orthodox Family**

A new ministry developed by the Strategic Planning of the Metropolis of Atlanta that aids families in creating an *Orthodox Home* family environment.

❖ **Parish Family Night**

Monthly gathering of families and singles (it is a Parish Family!) that starts with a Small Complain for Family Nights (see goarch.org), a potluck dinner, continues with a brief faith related presentation (10-15 minutes) and includes a family game (jeopardy, ice breakers—getting to know each other etc.)

B. EDUCATIONAL MINISTRIES FOR ADULTS

❖ Adult Catechism

- **Introduction to the Orthodox Faith or Orthodoxy 101.** *Offers weekly discussions for seekers as well as for the Orthodox who want to refresh their knowledge of the Faith.*
-
- **Evening Theological Discussions** - *Could be held between September and May.*
- **Guest Speakers.** *Invite speakers from the community or outside of the community to speak on faith related topics. [read more...](#)*
- **Learning the Holy Scriptures.** *Understanding the Scriptures in an Orthodox way. (check the excellent work of Fr. Evan Armatas at <http://stspyridon.dreamhosters.com/bible-studies>)*
- **Music Ministry.** *Participation in the Divine Services as reader, chanter, congregational singer anchor, choir member, choir master or leading a youth choir.*

❖ **Spiritual Growth**

- **Congregational Singing.** *Develops a music program that allows the entire Parish community to actively participate in the singing of the most common hymns of our Faith.*
- **Orthodox Book Club.** *Choosing a book written by an Orthodox author, reading it, and discussing it within the group.*
- ❖ **Spiritual Gifts.** *Helping the parishioners to discern their spiritual gifts, and how to use them*

C. CULTURAL MINISTRIES FOR ADULTS

- **Adult Greek Classes.** *Classes may be offered for Orthodox and non-Orthodox in the community.*
- **Celebrating our Diversity.** *Most of the Greek Orthodox parishes are comprised of many ethnic backgrounds. You may share those heritages through programs, including: The blessing of food in the Russian tradition on Holy Saturday, bringing in musical programs from Greece or other countries. Arabic food traditions, Arabic language classes, promoting activities of local ethnic clubs.*
- **International Luncheons.** *Featuring the culinary traditions of the various ethnic groups of the community could be opened to the wider community (town, city).*

D. FELLOWSHIP MINISTRIES FOR ADULTS

- **The Welcome Team** Welcomes visitors and members to the Divine Liturgy. They provide information to visitors and to those interested in becoming parish members, or being placed on the mailing list.
- **Hospitality Team** Supports the Sunday Fellowship Coffee hour. Several trained groups of four persons rotate Sundays. They assist parishioners who may be hosting the coffee hour and organize other meal/food requirements for events as the need arises throughout the year. Traditionally, they organize the annual Agape Picnic held on Pascha.
- **Young at Heart** Holds monthly fellowship dinner meetings, and arranges day trips, overnight retreats, and outings for seniors.
- **New Member Ministry.** Sponsors get-togethers for new and prospective members to help them become acquainted with other Parish members, introduce them to church ministries, and answer general questions about church membership.
- **Food Services.** Coordinate the inventory and purchasing of paper supplies, coffee, and light refreshments for in the kitchen.
- **Interfaith Marriage Ministry.** Seeks to identify and respond to the unique joys and challenges of families where both spouses are not Orthodox, or one is newly Orthodox.

(section reproduced mainly from <http://www.stnektarios.org/>)

E. Mission Ministries for Adults

- Outreach, Evangelism and Philanthropy

A new ministry developed by the Strategic Planning of the Metropolis of Atlanta, with a goal to energize an effective Welcoming Ministry, to best improve outreach and growth. OEP plans and executes specific local and regional Parish outreach events and implements at least one signature mission: Outreach, Evangelism, or, Philanthropic Ministry. It will provide a 'OEP Manual' of best practices and examples of ministries and programs.

- Local Philanthropies

Volunteers that help by working at local charities' special events. At holidays we collect gift items and treats to help make the holidays special for those in needs. Identify local charities and identify ways where we can offer assistance on an as needed basis.

- Prison Ministry

Parishioners reach out to those in prison through weekly Bible studies, one-on-one

counseling, and distribution of Bibles and religious literature. Follow and promote the OCM Sunday and (their) news, literature etc.

- Loaves & Fishes

Parishioners donate non-perishable food items year-round to help stock food pantries throughout Mecklenburg County.

- OCMC and IOCC

The Orthodox Christian Mission Center and International Orthodox Christian Charities are the international, educational, and charitable organizations of the Orthodox Church. Our parish supports these organizations both monetarily and through volunteer missionaries.

- Walk-a-thons, Races (CROP Walk)

This annual walk-a-thon helps raise money to provide food for local, national, and international food pantries.

- Project Mexico

This team helps raise money for Saint Innocent Orthodox Orphanage in Tijuana, Mexico.

- Support a community abroad

Fundraisers benefit St. Demetrios Indonesian Orthodox Church and St. Sophia Orphanage in Sumatra, Indonesia.

- Support A Mission Priest Program (SAMP)

Money is raised to underwrite the annual cost of \$600 to support one indigenous priest in extremely poor areas around the world, where their parishes cannot financially support them. (section reproduced mainly from <http://www.stnektarios.org/>)

For more ideas of potential ministries please read **“100 Natural Ways To Grow A Church.** A guide To Orthodox Evangelism in North America” by Adam Lowell Roberts. It offers valuable information, timelines, resources and number of volunteers needed to start a certain ministry.

PART V - APENDIX FOR RESOURCES

The “pre-requisite” of a successful Council of Ministries is based on the fact that all of those involved in this work share an Orthodox way of life:

- ✦ regular participation in the worship-sacraments of the Church
- ✦ seeking virtues through repentance
- ✦ a good understanding of the Orthodox Ecclesiology

Once more, the Council of Ministries re-emphasizes the importance of everyone involved in the ministry work to:

- ❖ understand
- ❖ embrace and
- ❖ be driven by ...

the *MISSION STATEMENT* and the common vision accepted by the community.

It behooves the clergy to educate his community about the mission statement with every opportunity: sermons, meetings, general assemblies and on a one-on-one basis. With the priest's blessing, a few select parishioners may explain it, thereby imbedding the Ministry culture within the parish, and, thereby cultivating the necessity and importance of the mission statement.

1. Always think S.M.A.R.T.

Every ministry of the parish has to implement these practical steps that assists them reach their goal. Every step of the way a goal must be:

Specific
Measurable
Attainable
Realistically written
Time table attach to it.

✦ **Specific**

Your goal should be clear and specific, otherwise you won't be able to focus your efforts or feel truly motivated to achieve it. When drafting your goal, try to answer the five "W" questions:

- **What** do I want to accomplish?
- **Why** is this goal important?

- **Who** is involved?
- **Where** is it located?

Which resources or limits are involved?

✧ Measurable

It's important to have measurable goals, so that you can track your progress and stay motivated. Assessing progress helps you to stay focused, meet your deadlines, and feel the excitement of getting closer to achieving your goal.

A measurable goal should address questions such as:

- How much?
- How many?

How will I know when it is accomplished?

✧ Achievable

Your goal also needs to be realistic and attainable to be successful. In other words, it should stretch your abilities but still remain possible. When you set an achievable goal, you may be able to identify previously overlooked opportunities or resources that can bring you closer to it.

An achievable goal will usually answer questions such as:

- How can I accomplish this goal?

How realistic is the goal, based on other constraints, such as financial factors?

✧ Realistically Written

This step is about ensuring that your goal matters to you, and that it also aligns with other relevant goals. We all need support and assistance in achieving our goals, but it's important to retain control over them. So, make sure that your plans drive everyone forward, but that you're still responsible for achieving your own goal.

A relevant goal can answer "yes" to these questions:

- Does this seem worthwhile?
- Is this the right time?
- Does this match our other efforts/needs?
- Am I the right person to reach this goal?

Is it applicable in the current parish (community) environment?

✧ Time table attached to it.

Every goal needs a target date, so that you have a deadline to focus on and something to work toward. This part of the SMART goal criteria helps to prevent everyday tasks from taking priority over your longer-term goals.

A time-bound goal will usually answer these questions:

- When?
- What can I do six months from now?
- What can I do six weeks from now?

What can I do today?

A goal is a dream with a deadline!

2. Seven principles to follow.

(These seven principles are reproduced from: "7 PRACTICES OF EFFECTIVE MINISTRY published by Multnomah Publishers, Inc. © 2004 by North Point Ministries, Inc., authored by Andy Stanley, Reggie Joiner and Lane Jones)

Practice #1: Clarify the Win

Define what is important at every level of the organization (ministry)

It is impossible to know if you are making progress if you are not clear about your destination. This means examining each and every event and program and asking the question, When all is said and done, what is it we want to look back on and celebrate?

"The truth of the matter is that with or without a goal, they're going to work hard to get *some-where*. That's the thing about leaders—they lead. The question is, Are they getting where you want them to go?"

"Just ask yourself, *What is the most important thing?* and it will start to become clear.

The church should be more determined than any other kind of organization to "clarify the win" simply because the stakes are so much higher: Eternity hangs in the balance.

Generally, volunteers want to do what the church wants them to do, but problems occur when the volunteers try to score runs in foggy conditions: Without clear direction, they are forced to chart their own course or follow whoever seems to have the best plan at the moment.

Every one of us has a God-given itch to belong to something that is bigger than ourselves. Volunteers need to know that their investment of time is going to make a difference.

When you clarify the win, you help your team stay on the same page.

Practice #2: Think Steps, Not Programs

Before you start anything, make sure it takes you where you need to go.

Your programs should take people somewhere, not simply fill up their time. Ask yourself, Where do we want our people to be? What do we want them to become? Is our programming designed to take them there?

“So what makes a good step?”

*“It has to be *easy, obvious, and strategic,*”*

First, determine where you want people to be. Then figure out how you’re going to get them there. That’s doing ministry with the end in mind.

Practice #3: Narrow the Focus

Do fewer things in order to make a greater impact.

Focus is the key to achieving excellence and making an impact. Each ministry environment should be designed to do no more than one or two things well.

Narrow the Focus. By that I mean you shouldn’t try to do everything; you should do a few things well.” Once you’ve created a step that’s easy, obvious, and strategic, you need to make sure that that step stays focused.

Don’t try to make it do something that it wasn’t created to do. “If you try to do everything you’ll end up with nothing.”

Practice #4: Teach Less for More

Say only what you need to say to the people who need to hear it.

The less you say, the more you will communicate. You will be more effective at every level of your organization if you say only what you need to say to the people who need to hear it.

Most people confuse the quantity of information communicated with the quality of implementation in the workplace. They think that the more I tell them, the better they’ll do.

“Teach less for more because everyone doesn’t need to know everything. It’s more important to get the right information to the right people.”

Practice #5: Listen to Outsiders

Focus on who you're trying to reach, not who you're trying to keep.

The needs and interests of insiders have a tendency to determine the agenda for the organization. This is especially true of the church. Focus your efforts on those you're trying to reach, rather than on those you're trying to keep.

“The question you have to answer is, What can you learn from the people you're trying to reach? If you watch them and listen to them, they'll tell you what they think and want. Then you just have to figure out how to use that information.

Don't be so concerned about keeping the folks you've got, that you neglect the folks you're trying to reach.”

Practice #6: Replace Yourself

Learn to hand off what you do.

One day someone else will be doing what you are doing. Whether you have an exit strategy or not, ultimately, you *will* exit. So embrace the inevitable and prepare now for the future. In order to replace yourself, you have to see the good of the organization as more important than your own. You have to be able to resist that natural reaction to protect yourself and your position. But I'm really talking about a lot more than just knowing when it's time to leave. You see, for an organization to grow, you have to have great leadership. And great leadership needs to be developed through a system of apprenticing replacements and duplication.”

I'm not talking about a revolving door; I'm talking about a process—a process of mentoring and teaching another to do what you do and to do it well. And while the other six practices will take care of quality, this practice insures that you will maintain quality over the long haul.

You avoid burnout and help to prevent people from becoming “entrenched.”

Practice #7: Work on It

Take time to evaluate your work—and to celebrate your wins.

To maintain your relevance, your sanity, and your effectiveness, you must carve out time in your schedule to step back and evaluate what you are doing and how you are doing it.

It's carving out blocks of time to evaluate what you've measured to see what is working and what's not. Part of working on it is carving out time to celebrate your victories. That's why we give out rings and spray champagne when we win a championship. We celebrate the fact that we've won.

You've got to make sure your people get to celebrate their victories...

3. Features of a Ministry Leader.

James C. Hunter in his "The Servant Leadership Training Course", talks about the perfect model of servant leader offered by our Lord Jesus Christ. Leadership is about love. He offers 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 as the perfect attributes of someone involved in ministry leadership:

"Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails."

In an epiphany Mr. Hunter says that all these are two thousand years old leadership principles. These have to become part of the character of a ministry leader.

While the principle "God does not call the qualified but qualifies the called" works when we talk about salvation, the leadership for the ministries is similar. The fact that leadership is a skill that can be learned opens the door for the vast majority of the people (95%). According to Hunter only those suffering of a narcissistic personality or other personality disorders cannot learn the leadership skills. Because leadership in ministries is all about relationships, character and "raising our game", becoming better, the best we can be. Leaders are made they are not born.

THE "THREE CS" OF TEAM SELECTION

(excerpts and ideas taken from the book "Courageous Leadership: Field—Tested Strategy for the 360 Leader " by Bill Hybels, starting with page 80 of his book published by Zondervan epub Edition March 2014)*

The Council of Ministries brings together the ministry leaders acting as a team united by the vision of the parish (metropolis). The principle of the "three Cs" team selection should work at any level of team building. It is a simple, common sense concept, easy to apply and have in mind, recommend to clergy as well as lay leaders when selecting their team ministry partners.

First C - CHARACTER

What is character?

*"Character is habit" (Aristotle); "Character is that person you are in the dark when nobody is looking" (Dwight Moody, 19 century Evangelist). Our character is shaped by our thoughts; thought become action; actions become habits; habits become character. Psychology tells us that personality is establish by age six and IQ by age fifteen but **character** is a continue process of thoughts, actions, habits and choices we constantly make. Character is the ethical bedrock of a person. "Ninety nine percent of leadership failures are failures of character" (Gen. Norman Swartzkopf). For a ministry leader or volunteer the character qualities are described in 1Conrinthians 13:4-8 (*quotes and ideas from "The Servant Leadership Training Course: Achieving Success Through Character, Bravery and Influence" by James C. Hunter publish as an Audiobook, August, 2016*)*

Character is the first "C" because a ministry volunteer needs to be engaged in a walk with Christ being committed to the spiritual discipline and beliefs of the Church. There must be evidence of honesty, teachability, humility and a healthy work ethic. "I have learned that in church work an occasional lapse in competence can be accepted. But lapses in character create problems with far-reaching implications. A breakdown in character tends to breed distrust and alienate team members." (Bill Hybels) When an existing team member displays lapses of character, the team leader immediately should discuss with that volunteer, trying to discern the cause of the problem. In such situations it is imperative that the volunteer admits the character lapse and repents through the Sacrament of Confession. It is best for the team and the church if such a person is advised to withdraw from the ministries work.

Second "C"- COMPETENCE

Churches are always in need of competent volunteers. Therefore the first step a ministry or a team needs to do is to pray to God to send the people with the right spiritual

gifts that the church needs. Surround yourself with outstanding people that are qualified to take up the work load. Targeting the highest level of competence of team members makes the work efficient and easy, avoiding overwhelming challenges. When recruiting (hiring) new team members (employees) consider Peter Drucker's piece of advice "*If you find someone whose qualifications look good, but he or she is unhappy or unemployed, be very cautious. The kind of people you are looking for are probably making huge contributions and setting records somewhere. They are probably deliriously happy and much loved by the people they work with. Go after that type. Go after proven competence*". (excerpts and ideas taken from the book "*Courageous Leadership: Field—Tested Strategy for the 360* Leader* " by Bill Hybels, published by Zondervan epub Edition March 2014, page 80 and following)

Third "C" - CHEMISTRY

"Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulations, continuing steadfast in prayer..." (Romans 12:10-12).

Naturally, a successful ministry or team requires working together. In most cases there are many hours of interaction, planning and working side by side with the others. This requires a certain degree of "likeability". A good recipe to increase likeability in a ministry team is the above quote from St. Paul.

Whoever signed up to serve on the parish council or other ministry or team knows how detrimental bad chemistry is. It takes only one person with a negative or bad attitude that ruins it for all. The team wastes precious time dealing with unnecessary conflicts resolutions.

When recruiting new members, the team leader (lay ministry leader of clergy) needs to be aware of a *the positive emotional effect that the potential new member has on him/her*. It may seem a bit extreme but it is up to the intuition of the ministry leader.

"But let me remind you again that it's taken me thirty years to get to this point. So if you lead a church that is four years old and you don't have a kingdom dream team yet, don't despair. 'Stay the course', would be my advice, 'but keep the selection bar high'". (*"Courageous Leadership: Field—Tested Strategy for the 360* Leader* " by Bill Hybels, published by Zondervan epub Edition March 2014, page 84)

“You are either green and growing or you are riped and rotting” (farmers quote).
Nothing stays the same in nature !

From “The Servant Leadership Training Course: Achieving Success Through Character, Bravery and Influence” by James C. Hunter publish as an Audiobook, August, 2016

CHRISTIAN ORTHODOX RESOURCES

- ✧ [“100 Natural Ways to Grow Your Church”](#)
by Adam Lowell Roberts (hard copy or Kindle version)
- very useful practical guide -
- ✧ [“Stewardship Calling”](#) at a series of videos created by Bill Marianes on Stewardship, Council of Ministries and parish life.
- ✧ [Ancient Faith Radio](#) - plethora of podcast and recordings
- ✧ [“Discovering Orthodox Christianity” video series](#)
- ✧ [Be The Bee](#) short, energetic faith video series
by Steve Cristoforou
- ✧ [“Journey To Fullness” video series by Fr. Barnabas Powell](#)
- ✧ **Orthodox Natural Church Development** (*the NCD’s founder, Christian Schwarz has done extensive research world-wide and found that healthy, growing churches share eight critical quality characteristics. This material, in addition to the concept of the Minimum Factor and the six growth forces essential to understanding how NCD unfolds, and more is in this essential resource for parish Church Health Teams. Here in the United States, the program was adapted and recommended by Fr. Jonathan Ivanoff*)

and Fr. Jim Kordaris to reflect the thinking of the Orthodox Church). To understand the program properly please follow the link [ONCD](#)

OTHER RESOURCES

By offering non Orthodox resources we don't endorse the believes of the authors. We strongly recommend that you adapt to the environment of an Orthodox community the ideas that you find useful . Please, always consult with your parish priest before taking any action that affects your community.

- ✧ Gallup Survey at www.gallup.com/Gallup
- ✧ “Seven Practices of Effective Ministry”
By Andy Stanley
- ✧ “Young Adult Ministry for the 21st Century. The Encyclopedia of Practical Ideas”
By Group Publishing Inc.
- ✧ “Every Single Ministry: A “How To” Guide for Leaders in Single Adult Ministry”
By Max Holt and Doug Stephens
- ✧ “Teaching Ministry. Equipping children, adults and young believers.
By Dr. Carl Davis

- ✧ “Courageous Leadership”
By Bill Hybels
- ✧ “Just Walks Across the Room”. Simple Steps for Pointing People to Faith.”
By Bill Hybels
- ✧ “The Volunteer Revolution”
By Bill Hybels
- ✧ “The Purpose Driven Church”
By Rick Warren
- ✧ “Cracking Your Church’s Code: Seven Keys to Unleashing Vision and Inspiration
By Samuel R. Chand
- ✧ “Autopsy of a Deceased Church: 12 Ways to Keep Yours Alive”
By Thom S. Rainer
- ✧ “Managing Oneself”
By Peter F Drucker

