

Parish Council FAQ

What exactly does the Parish Council do?

The Parish Council is responsible for making the day-to-day decisions required to run our parish, including decisions about repairs, finances, special projects, charitable works, fundraising, etc. Parish Council members are also responsible for eliciting feedback from the parish and listening and responding to the concerns, goals, and needs communicated by parishioners.

What will I be asked to do?

Come to the meetings, speak your mind on the issues at hand, and allow others on the Council to speak their minds. There will probably be at least a few action items each meeting that Parish Council members will be expected to volunteer for, or to solicit volunteers for.

For the first year of your term, you will probably just be a regular member. After you've had some time to figure out how the Council operates, you may be asked to serve as an Officer for the remaining two years of your term.

You must plan on being at any parish-wide special meetings and the annual meeting. You are expected to actively participate in the liturgical life of the church and model good stewardship.

I've heard Parish Council meetings can be contentious.

Sometimes, but we love one another. We're trying to do what's best for the parish. We all have different communication styles, and, with God's help, we continually work on learning to listen to each other and prayerfully consider each other's words. At all times, Parish Council members are working with God's help to operate according to the theology and practices of the Holy Orthodox Church.

Why should I serve?

Serving on Parish Council is a ministry, a charism. It is a way of caring for and serving our parish that will allow it to grow in God's love and extend that love more and more into the community. By helping to care for the material concerns of the parish, the Council allows the priest to be more free to focus on another important aspect of his job – taking care of the spiritual needs of his flock.

For a wonderful discussion of this very question, please read the following article on the Antiochian Archdiocese's website: <http://www.antiochian.org/content/ministry-parish-council>.

Duties of Parish Council Members and Officers

All Parish Council Members are responsible for:

- being a member in good standing of the Orthodox Church, which includes
 - actively participating in the liturgical life of the Church;
 - participating in the sacraments; and
 - providing a good example of Orthodox Christian stewardship, including the offering of time and talents to the church, as well as sacrificial monetary support.
- serving a regular term of three (3) years.
- helping the Parish Council to make decisions according to the theology and practices of the Orthodox Church.
- doing their utmost to attend every Parish Council meeting (members who miss three consecutive meetings are automatically removed from the Council).
- attending special meetings and the annual meeting.
- discussing important issues with members of the parish and bringing any concerns, questions, or ideas forward at Parish Council meetings.
- voting on actions to be taken by the Parish Council or to be put forward to the parish.
- acting promptly to complete any action items for which they volunteered and reporting back to the Parish Council on the results of the action.
- reading and understanding our Parish Constitution, and enforcing its Articles.
- being willing to chair a committee or become an elected officer of the Parish Council.

Per our Constitution, the **Chair** is responsible for:

- compiling the agenda for Parish Council meetings and publishing it (via the weekly email bulletin) at least two days in advance of each meeting.
- presiding at Parish Council meetings, keeping everyone on topic, making sure everyone gets a chance to speak, and ensuring that everything on the agenda is covered during the meeting.
- acting as tie-breaker for votes at Parish Council meetings (otherwise, the Chair does not vote)
- in cooperation with the Treasurer, preparing a pledge packet report to be distributed to parish members no later than the end of October.
- forming a Nominating Committee at least a month before the annual meeting. This committee is responsible for nominating parish members to stand for election to the Parish Council.
- preparing a report to give at the annual meeting, which describes the work and projects undertaken by the Parish Council over the past year.
- Preparing the agenda of the annual meeting for publication no less than a month in advance of the meeting.
- ensuring he or she has received the Nominating Committee's report in a sealed envelope no less than ten days in advance of the annual meeting
- reading the nominations for Parish Council at the annual meeting.
- presiding in place of the Pastor at parish meetings, including the annual meeting and any special meetings, should the Pastor choose not to preside.
- setting the time and location of any special meetings called.

- appointing all members of any standing committees created by the Parish Council from the general membership of the parish after consultation with the Pastor and other members of the Council, and designating the Chair of each.

Per our Constitution, the **Vice-Chair** is responsible for:

- presiding at Parish Council meetings when the Chair is absent, keeping everyone on topic, making sure everyone gets a chance to speak, and ensuring that everything on the agenda is covered during the meeting.
- acting as tie-breaker for votes at Parish Council meetings when the Chair is absent (otherwise, the Vice-Chair does not vote while acting as Chair).

Per our Constitution, the **Secretary** is responsible for:

- being present at all meetings (Parish Council, annual meeting, any special meetings) and keeping minutes of those meetings.
- publishing Parish Council meeting minutes within 10 days of each meeting (via weekly email bulletin).
- sending out notices of the annual meeting by regular mail, e-mail, telephone, fax, or in person to all voting members at least thirty days before the date of the meeting, along with a copy of the agenda.
- sending out notices of any special meetings by regular mail, e-mail, telephone, fax, or in person to all voting members at least ten days before the meeting.
- maintaining a binder of all meeting minutes in a public location.
- maintaining the Bishop's binder, which includes Parish Council meeting minutes.

Per our Constitution, the **Treasurer** is responsible for:¹

- writing and obtaining second signatures on checks for authorized requests.
- processing deposits.
- reconciling all accounts.
- creating the monthly Treasurer's Report (balance sheet and profit and loss report) and presenting it at each Parish Council meeting.
- managing ACH deposits (for those fulfilling pledges by electronic payment).
- managing Father's compensation, income tax reporting, W-2, etc.
- in cooperation with the Chair, preparing a pledge packet report to be distributed to parish members no later than the end of October.
- in consultation with the Parish Council and based on actual pledges, preparing a proposed budget and presenting it at each annual meeting.
- preparing an annual financial report and presenting it at each annual meeting.

¹ This is a summary list. The Treasurer maintains a comprehensive manual that details the day-to-day operations of the Treasurer.