

ST. JOHN THE DIVINE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH PARISH BY-LAWS

ARTICLE I

Name and Purpose

See UPR, CHAPTER ONE: PARISH AND PARISH ORGANIZATION, ARTICLE 15: PARISH; Section 8.

The Greek Orthodox Church of St. John the Divine of Jacksonville, Florida is the official name of the parish, a non-profit corporation organized under the laws of the State of Florida (hereinafter referred to as “Parish”).

The Parish recognizes and adopts as its purpose the aims and purposes set forth in Part One, Article 15 of the Uniform Parish Regulations. In addition it is the aim and purpose of the Parish to particularize those specific purposes and assume them as goals in fulfilling the lives of its members with the enrichment of the Orthodox Christian Faith.

ARTICLE II

Parishioners

See UPR, CHAPTER ONE, ARTICLE 18: PARISHIONERS.

Any person, eighteen years of age or over, who was baptized according to the rites of the Church, or was received into the Church through Chrismation, who lives according to the Faith and canons of the Church, abides by the Uniform Parish Regulations and these appended bylaws, and fulfills his or her financial obligation to the Parish, and cooperates in every way towards the well being of the Parish is a member in good standing of the Parish.

The definition of “fulfilling one’s financial obligation to the Parish” is by necessity a flexible one. Generally, for purposes of voting in Parish Assemblies and elections, one is considered to have fulfilled his or her stewardship and financial obligations to the Parish if he or she has pledged and paid an amount certain for the year prior to the current year and has pledged an amount to the Parish for the current year. However, in the event an individual refuses or neglects to pledge a specific amount, but he or she has committed himself spiritually, morally and financially to the Greek Orthodox Faith and the parish and the records of the parish so reflect the financial commitment, he or she will be considered to have fulfilled his financial obligation and be eligible to vote, as determined by the Parish Priest. (Stewardship is recommended to be ten percent (10%) of one’s annual income as stated in Holy Scripture to help meet the financial obligations of the Parish, the Metropolis and the Archdiocese.)

New members to the Parish will have met their financial obligation to the Parish by merely pledging a sum certain for the current year. The same shall be true of persons not currently members in good standing.

A pledge may be increased or decreased at any time during the year by submitting a written modification of the original pledge to the Stewardship Chairman or priest.

ARTICLE III

Parish Assembly

See UPR, CHAPTER ONE, ARTICLE 31: PARISH ASSEMBLY

In addition to the guidelines and requirements relative to the conduct of Parish Assemblies specified in Article 31 of the Uniform Parish Regulations, the Parish adopts the following rules and regulations as controlling its local Parish Assemblies:

- A. The presence of fifty (50) "Parishioners" shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of any business. The Parishioners at a regular or special Parish Assembly meeting at which a quorum was present when initially convened may continue until adjournment to validly and properly transact all appropriate business and take any proper actions notwithstanding the fact that such attendance at such meeting may subsequently drop below fifty (50) Parishioners; provided that for any action which requires a two-thirds (2/3) vote at a first called meeting there must be at least fifty (50) Parishioners present to approve such action. If a quorum cannot be achieved, no vote can be taken. Within twenty-one (21) days, a Parish Assembly shall be called a second time. At such time, decisions may be taken by the number of parishioners in good standing present, with the exception of matters pertaining to the purchase, sale or encumbering of Parish property which shall require a quorum.
- B. An attendance register shall be kept which all those present shall sign. The Secretary and Treasurer of the Parish Council shall check the roster to determine if all who signed the register are in good standing. They will report their findings to the Chairman of the Parish Assembly, so that he/she may determine if a quorum is present. If a quorum is determined to be present, the list of all those who are entitled to vote and be recognized will be read by the Secretary of the Assembly.
- C. The Secretary shall read the minutes of the previous Parish Assembly meeting which shall be approved as read or as corrected.
- D. Regular meetings of the Parish Assembly shall be held during the first and fourth quarter of each year. Special Parish Assemblies may be convened as set out in Article VI, Section 2 of the Uniform Parish Regulations.
- E. At the fourth quarter Parish Assembly, the Parish Council shall submit a proposed Parish budget for the following year, which shall be subject to final approval at the next first quarter Parish Assembly, which shall reflect, at a minimum, the Fair Share Assessment to the Archdiocese.
- F. At the first quarter Parish Assembly the first order of business shall be a report by the immediate past President or Treasurer of the Parish Council providing a financial statement of the Parish for the immediately preceding year, said report to include a statement of receipts and expenditures derived from all properties owned by the Parish.

- G. The Parish Council shall publish all documentary material reflecting all reports on the budgets to be submitted at all Parish Assemblies and cause same to be mailed to all parishioners no later than ten (10) days prior to the first and fourth quarter Parish Assemblies.
- H. *Robert's Rules of Order* shall control the order of business only if Parish Assembly is unable to reach consensus, and to the extent that it is not inconsistent with the Uniform Parish Regulations. Consensus is defined as broad unanimity, but does not require that all agree but rather that the participants can live with and support the decision or position. Consensus, no majority vote, is an expression of Christian fellowship where all actions reflect the positions of everyone.

ARTICLE IV

Elections of Parish Council

UPR, CHAPTER TWO, ARTICLE 25; ELECTION OF PARISH COUNCIL

- A. Candidates shall be nominated at the last Parish Assembly of the year. In addition, a candidate may be nominated in writing by any two (2) members in good standing, provided that such nominee has indicated his/her assent thereto by countersigning same. These nominations must be received in the Parish Office at least 15 days prior to the elections.
- B. Absentee ballots shall be presented in a sealed envelope, which shall be deposited in the ballot box. The ballot will be accompanied by a separate marking which will identify the sender of the ballot. Any parishioner in good standing may vote absentee by requesting an absentee ballot from the Church office any time prior to elections. The ballot must be in the hands of the Board of Electors no later than the commencement of the elections.
- C. In order for a parishioner to participate in the Parish Council elections, he/she must be a member in good standing at least three (3) months prior to the election.
- D. A decrease in a member's pledge for the current year that is made within 15 days of the election shall negate the member's right to vote.
- E. Voting shall begin after the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy and shall terminate at 3:00 p.m.

ARTICLE V

Parish Council

Each Parish shall be administered by the Priest and Parish Council cooperatively. See UPR, CHAPTER THREE, ARTICLE 30: PARISH ADMINISTRATION.

A. **Membership**

The Parish Council shall consist of the Priest, as the head of the Parish and twelve (12) elected lay members. The Priest shall not have a vote. While not a voting member, the Priest has full standing as a member of the Parish Council, in order to cooperatively administer the Parish. A regular Parish Council meeting or a special Parish Council meeting may be held in the Priest's absence, if he is unable to attend and rescheduling is not practical, and such meeting will be deemed proper under these by-laws, and any action taken therein shall have full force and effect.

B. **Terms Of Office**

The members of the Parish Council shall be elected at annual elections as provided herein for a two-year term or until their successors are elected and qualified. The terms are to be staggered, with six (6) members being elected one year and six (6) members elected the next year. Parish Council members' term shall commence upon his or her taking the oath of office. The new Parish Council members shall be given a brief orientation as to their duties and responsibilities by the Priest and senior members of the Parish Council. No member may serve more than three (3) consecutive two-year terms.

C. **Officers**

Annually, at its' first meeting following the qualifying and swearing in of the Parish Council, the Parish Council shall elect from its number the following officers by a secret ballot: a President, a Vice President, a Secretary, a Treasurer and an Assistant Treasurer. The term of office of the officers is to be one (1) year. In the event vacancies occur in the office of Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, or Assistant Treasurer, the Parish Council shall immediately elect a replacement to serve for the remainder of the term of office. In the event a vacancy occurs in the office of President, the Vice President shall succeed to the office of President, and the Parish Council shall immediately select a replacement to serve as Vice President for the remainder of the term of that office.

D. **Duties**

It shall be the duty of the Parish Council to coordinate those affairs of the Parish as set out herein in furtherance of the aim and purposes of the Church and in accordance with the dictates of the Uniform Parish Regulations, specifically Chapter One: Parish and Parish Organization: Articles 15, 24, 28 and 29 contained therein.

1. The Parish Council shall have the power and be authorized to spend from the Church funds for Church operations a sum not to exceed 2% in excess of total budgeted operations expenses. Cost of expenses that are fully recovered from donations or are covered by insurance are excluded from the above stated amount.
2. The Parish Council shall hold a regular meeting at least once a month, and shall hold special meetings whenever the Priest, the President or a majority of members of the Parish Council shall call a special meeting. Notification of a special meeting shall be given by the Secretary of the Parish Council at the direction of the President by oral notification or a majority of the Parish Council members in writing.
3. It shall maintain in a conspicuous place in the church, a current list of all members of the Parish currently fulfilling their financial obligation to the Parish, provided that said list does not indicate specific amounts pledged or paid by individual members.
4. It shall have the exclusive power to recommend to the Parish Assembly, by majority vote, the purchase, sale, or mortgage of Parish-held property, which is thereafter subject to approval of the Parish Assembly, as set out in Article 29, Section 1 of the Uniform Parish Regulations.
5. It shall have exclusive power to collect the revenues of the Parish against receipts for same and shall pay only by check the salaries of the Parish employees.
6. It shall cooperate with and assist the Priest in maintaining the supplies necessary for church services.
7. It shall make a semi-annual inventory of the church premises and the real property owned by the Parish for the purposes of preparing and maintaining a physical inventory of all Parish property.
8. It shall annually determine and publish all fees, dues and charges deemed appropriate for use of any and all facilities owned by the Parish.

E. Vacancies

The Parish abides by Article 24, Sections 5 & 6 of the Uniform Parish Regulations relative to vacancies of Parish Council Members. Therefore, in the event a member of the Parish Council is absent without justifiable cause for more than three (3) consecutive meetings, he or she shall be considered relieved of his or her duties upon said third consecutive absence, and the Parish Council shall give written notice to said member, which notice shall be recorded in the minutes of the Parish Council. However, if said member shows justifiable cause for one or more said absences at the next regular meeting of the Parish Council, the Parish Council may elect by majority, secret ballot vote, to maintain said member on the Parish Council. If said member chooses to make no such showing, the Parish Council shall then proceed to fill the vacancy as set out in Article 24, Section 7 of the Uniform Parish Regulations.

F. Conduct of Business

The Presence of a majority of the members of the Parish Council shall be necessary to constitute a quorum for any meeting, *Robert's Rules of Order* shall control the conduct of business, only if Parish Council is unable to reach consensus, and when not inconsistent with the Uniform Parish Regulations. The business of the Parish Council shall be preceded and ended by a prayer and reflection from the Priest, if he is present. If the Priest is not present, the President shall delegate an individual and/or individuals to say the opening and closing prayer. The President, in consultation with the Priest, shall prepare an agenda to include, but not limited to the following:

1. Reading and approval of the minutes of the previous meeting
2. Report from the President
3. Report from the Treasurer
4. Committee reports and Ministries reports and status
5. Report from Priest on matters requiring Parish Council action
6. New business

G. Parish Organizations

The Parish recognizes the existence of those organizations enumerated in Chapter One, Article 19, Section 3 of the Uniform Parish Regulations.

BEST PRACTICES: *It is not realistic to think that any parish can be effectively administered by the Parish Council at one monthly meeting. There may be a need for an Executive Committee, consisting of the Officers and Clergy, to meet as frequently as required to effectively administer the Parish between regularly scheduled Parish Council meetings. Some items of the Parish Council agenda may be handled prior to the meeting via such means as e-mail.*

ARTICLE VI

Duties of Officers

For the full rights and duties of Parish Councils of see UPR, CHAPTER TWO, ARTICLE 24: PARISH COUNCIL, ARTICLE 27: ELECTION OF PARISH COUNCIL OFFICERS, ARTICLE 28: MEETINGS OF PARISH COUNCIL, ARTICLE 29: DUTIES OF PARISH COUNCIL and CHAPTER THREE: PARISH ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE, ARTICLE 30: PARISH ADMINISTRATION, and ARTICLE 34: PARISH FINANCES AND ARCHDIOCESAN TOTAL COMMITMENT.

The President or the Vice-President and the Treasurer or Assistant Treasurer shall sign all checks made in payment for Parish expenditures. All checks shall be fully filled in and completed before signing.

A. President

1. To be responsible for the proper administration of the Parish as prescribed by the Uniform Parish Regulations, these by-laws, the laws of the State of Florida and the Parish Assembly.
2. To preside at all meetings of the Parish Council and the Parish Assembly in the absence of an elected chairman, as provided for in the Uniform Parish Regulations.
3. To call special meetings of the Parish Council.
4. To sign minutes of all meetings together with the Secretary and the Priest.
5. To execute on behalf of the Parish any contracts, mortgages, notes or other documents entered into within the authorities prescribed by the Uniform Parish Regulations, these by-laws, the State of Florida and the Parish Assembly.
7. To appoint Committees for the purpose of carrying out such duties as may be assigned to each Committee.
8. To supervise the administrative functions of the Parish, including the duties of the office personnel.

B. Vice President

1. To act on any and all matters in the absence of the President.

B. Secretary

1. To oversee the keeping of minutes of meetings of the Parish Council and Parish Assembly.
2. To supervise all Parish correspondence.
3. To ensure availability of the Parish Seal within the custody of the Priest.

C. Treasurer

1. To supervise collection of Parish funds and to deposit same with depositories selected by the Parish Council, in the name of the Parish.
2. To see that adequate records of Parish revenues and expenditures are properly and promptly recorded and to submit a balance sheet and a statement of receipts and expenditures monthly to the Parish Council together with such additional financial information the Parish Council may request.
3. To oversee the Parish accounting system and ensure its availability to the Parish Council upon request.
4. To call a meeting with the Board of Auditors prior to the end of each year to discuss the review of the accounting records of the Parish.

D. Assistant Treasurer

1. The Assistant Treasurer shall have all the powers and duties of the Treasurer when he/she acts in the place of the Treasurer.
2. The Assistant Treasurer shall be responsible for all revenues from special events or projects that are undertaken by the Parish where a special account is required.
3. The Assistant Treasurer will be accountable to the Treasurer for all the funds under his/her supervision.
4. All expenditures from these special accounts shall require two (2) signatures. One of the signatures shall be that of the Treasurer or Assistant Treasurer on his/her behalf. The other signature shall be that of the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the particular event or project or the Treasurer acting in his/her behalf.

ARTICLE VII

Board of Auditors

For the full scope of selection, responsibilities of the Board of Auditors see UPR, CHAPTER THREE, ARTICLE 33: BOARD OF AUDITORS.

The Board of Auditors, consisting of at least three (3) members and no more than five (5) members in good standing, none of whom are members of the Parish Council, elected for a term of one (1) year at the last Parish Assembly of the year, shall have the following powers and duties:

- A. It shall audit quarterly the accounting records of the Parish, prepare a report of such audit, and present same to a meeting of the members of the Parish.
- B. It shall have access to the Parish records at all times. However, the Board of Auditors is not empowered to remove the Parish records from the business office of the Church.
- C. A physical count of all Church property shall be made during the last two weeks of December each year. In addition, an inventory of all documents and insurance policies shall be checked.

NOTE: The term of office is not for the calendar year because the job of auditing the year-end books will carry into the following year.

ARTICLE VIII

BOARD OF ELECTIONS

For the full scope of selection, responsibilities of the Board of Elections see UPR, CHAPTER THREE, ARTICLE 32: BOARD OF ELECTIONS. See also UPR CHAPTER TWO, ARTICLE 25: ELECTION OF PARISH COUNCIL

The Board of Elections shall be composed of five (5) members, from those who are not a current Parish Council member nor candidates for election to the Parish Council, to be elected by the Parish Assembly at last Parish Assembly meeting of the year, and it shall be the duty of the Board of Elections to conduct and supervise the annual election.

- A. The Board of Elections shall, check with the Priest to ensure that candidates are eligible to stand for election by being ecclesiastically and fiscally members-in-good-standing, notify all eligible members concerning the elections, and supervise the elections and tabulate and report the results.
- B. A vacancy on the Board of Elections shall be filled by the Parish Council by electing a successor from the members of the Parish in good standing.

ARTICLE IX

Revision of Parish By-Laws

These Parish by-laws may be amended or revised at any time by the Parish Assembly. Any revisions or additions to the By-Laws must be circulated to the members of the Parish at least ten (10) days prior to the convening of said Assembly. After it has been determined that the convening of the Assembly is in order, (that there is a quorum present and qualified to vote), the approval of two-thirds (2/3) of members in good standing present is required for the proposed revisions or additions to the Parish By-Laws to be enacted.

Revised and approved 11/13