

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS
ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
Keene, New Hampshire

CONSTITUTION

Each Parish shall append to the Special Regulations and Uniform Parish Regulations of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America in the form of By-Laws, such additional provisions as local needs may require, provided the same do not conflict with the matters dealt with the Regulations herein, provided such By-Laws are consistent with the spirit of the Regulations herein, and provided further that such By-Laws are approved in advance by the Diocesan Bishop/Metropolitan.

ARTICLE I.

NAME

The name of the Greek Orthodox Church of Keene shall be St. George.

ARTICLE II.

PURPOSE

The St. George Greek Orthodox Parish Church of Keene was founded on October 11, 1931, for the following purposes:

- A. Preserve and proclaim the Orthodox Christian Faith.
- B. Educate parishioners in the language and teachings of the Greek Orthodox Church.
- C. Establish appropriate school(s) for teaching the Greek language.
- D. Aid and support philanthropic institutions.

ARTICLE III.

MEMBERSHIP

- A. The St. George Parish shall be composed of all duly qualified members of the Keene area that are registered with the Parish Council.
- B. A member in good standing is further defined as “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, who has met his financial obligation (stewardship pledge) and abides by the regulations herein and the By-Laws of the Parish”.

ARTICLE IV.

PARISH COUNCIL

- A. The Parish shall be governed by ¹*no fewer than nine or greater than 12 council members.*
- B. The Parish Council shall be elected by a secret ballot vote of members in good standing only.
- C. Only members in good standing will be eligible for the Parish Council.
- D. Election shall be held no sooner than the first Sunday in November and no later than the second Sunday in December.
- E. The term of service is staggered for the council members and shall be for a period of three years. This suggests that there will be a minimum of three members elected each year. Any council member may be reelected in addition to the three year term.
- F. The newly elected Parish Council shall meet within eight days after the elections to elect the officers. The Secretary of the outgoing Council shall give notice of such meeting to all newly elected and reelected Council members.
- G. The outgoing Council President, Treasurer and Secretary should attend the first meeting of the newly elected Council for the purpose of communication and transferring of records.
- H. On the first Sunday of January and after ratification of the election by the Bishop, a special ceremony shall be held at the close of the Divine Liturgy in which all Parish council members shall take the oath of office which shall be administered by the Parish Priest.
- I. The Parish Council shall be responsible to convene one spring and one fall parish assembly meeting. Special assemblies may be convened as provided by the uniform Parish Regulations.

ARTICLE V.

OFFICERS

- A. The officers of the Parish Council shall be: President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer and such other as the Council may deem necessary.

¹Change approved at May 19, 2002 General Assembly Meeting

ARTICLE VI. **AMENDMENTS**

- A. This Constitution may be amended by a 2/3 majority vote of the members in good standing present in a legally constituted Parish Assembly meeting provided that the total membership is notified in writing of the amendment(s) under consideration at least twenty days prior to the scheduled Parish Assembly meeting.

BY-LAWS

ARTICLE I. **MEMBERSHIP**

- A. Participation in the Stewardship Program is necessary to become a member in good standing. Pledges shall be required from two classes of membership.
1. Single person (over 18 and not a student).
 2. Family (married couple – with or without children).

ARTICLE II. **DUTIES OF OFFICERS**

- A. President – The President represents the community on all occasions, calls meetings and presides over them, recognizes members in good standing who wish to be heard, rules on the voting, signs all correspondence and documents on behalf of the Parish, implements the Constitution and By-Laws, carries out the decision of the Parish Council and Parish Assembly and general superintends the affairs and business of the Parish. Co-signs with the Treasurer all checks over ²\$5000. No member shall serve as President of the Council for more than six consecutive years except by special permission of the Bishop/Metropolitan.
- B. Vice President – In the absence of the President shall perform that officer's duties. In addition, this officer will be responsible for Greek School and Sunday School, building maintenance, and recruiting and scheduling the acolytes.
- C. Secretary – Records and reports the minutes of the Council and Assembly meetings. Registers the members of the Parish and carries out all correspondence.

²Change approved at November 12, 2006 General Assembly Meeting

- D. Treasurer–The Treasurer receives all collections, payments and donations. Pays bills of the Parish with the approval of the Parish Council. Adheres to generally accepted accounting principles. Keeps records of all money collected and spent and gives monthly reports to the Parish Council and annual report to the Parish Assembly. No member shall serve as Treasurer of the Council for more than six consecutive years except by special permission of the Bishop/Metropolitan.

ARTICLE III.

ALLEGIANCE

- A. On September 8, 1985 St. George Greek Orthodox Parish voted to adopt the SPECIAL REGULATIONS and UNIFORM PARISH REGULATIONS of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. In the event of any conflict between these By-Laws and said REGULATIONS the latter shall be controlling.

ARTICLE IV.

FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS

- A. Stewardship, a program of giving through faith and resources, is the primary financial commitment to the Parish. Parishioners are asked to submit a stewardship pledge to sustain the Parish budget as presented by the Treasurer and approved by the Parish Council and the General Assembly.
- B. Notifications (pledge cards) of stewardship pledges are due by November 30th of the prior year. Pledge payments commence as of January 1st of the pledge year in accordance to the terms of the pledge. Parishioners electing to meet their pledge in a lump sum manner should do so at their earliest convenience.
- C. Although donations are accepted for sacraments such as weddings, baptisms, memorial services and funerals, there are no fees to stewards who have been members in good standing for a minimum of three years.
- D. Parishioners with their stewardship in arrears may become members in good standing by paying the average stewardship pledge for the years of delinquency up to a maximum of three years.

However, **please note:** in cases where the religious sacrament takes place on days other than Sunday, the person(s) requesting it will be responsible for the additional maintenance expenses,

honorarium and personal expenses of the priest, etc. Funerals are excepted.

- E. Special Fees: The Parish Council will set the fees, if any, for Greek School and Sunday School. The fee will depend on the number of students, cost of teacher(s) and types and amounts of supplies used.
- F. Waiver of stewardship pledge – The Parish Council in conjunction with the Priest shall judge cases of financial hardships or other special circumstances justifying the waiver of a parishioner’s financial obligations. The member whose obligations are waived shall be considered a member in good standing.

ARTICLE V.

ETHICS

- A. Members of the Parish Council shall publicly support decisions of the Parish Council. In all cases, the decision of the majority of the Parish Council is binding on all Council members.
- B. Complaints or requests for information from parishioners should be addressed in writing to the Parish Council via the President.
- C. Any Council member absent without justifiable cause for three consecutive meetings shall be considered as resigned and shall be replaced by an alternate receiving a majority vote of the Council. In the event that there is no alternate or such member wishes not to serve on the Council, the president may appoint a member in good standing from the Parish.

ARTICLE VI.

MEETINGS

- A. The Parish Council shall meet regularly once per month. Special (additional) meetings may be called when the President deems necessary.
- B. The Parish Council shall convene two Parish Assembly meetings – one in spring one in the fall.
- C. Robert’s Rules of Order shall be used in conducting meetings and in all decision making.

ARTICLE VII. **QUORUM**

³Parishioners in good standing who are present shall constitute a quorum for the conduct of a Parish Assembly meeting which is the general meeting of the Parish, except when Constitutional By-Laws are a topic for discussion; then the One Quarter Rule (1/4) for a quorum takes precedence.

ARTICLE VIII. **PARISH COUNCIL RESTRICTIONS**

- A. Expenditures of funds – With the exception of ordinary and necessary expenses, the Parish Council shall not expend more than ⁴\$5000 without prior approval of the Parish Assembly unless there is an emergency or there is a matter of safety and waiting the extra time would bring the cost considerably higher.
- B. Bank deposits – ⁵All funds collected on behalf of the Parish shall promptly be deposited in banks selected by the Parish Counsel taking into consideration the safety of principal and operating needs of the Parish; with a view to improve the conduct of the Parish financial operations, increasing the return on Parish funds, and assuring the continuing mission of the Parish. The Parish Council, through its Finance Committee and the assistance of professional advisors, shall adopt and implement financial management and policies for investment of surplus Parish funds. This may include, among other things, the establishment of Parish endowment funds and the provisions for dealing with gifts, bequests and contributions to the Parish in any form.
- C. The Parish Council shall, at the spring general assembly meeting, nominate three members in good standing to serve as a Board of Auditors (to be elected by the Parish Assembly) or recommend that an independent auditor do a review/general audit of books. A majority vote will decide the above.

³ Change approved at November 12, 2006 General Assembly Meeting

⁴ Change approved at November 12, 2006 General Assembly Meeting

⁵ Change approved at May 25, 2008 General Assembly Meeting

ARTICLE IX. **PARISH COUNCIL ACTIVITIES**

- A. The feast Day of St. George shall be observed with a special program to be determined by the Parish Council.
- B. The annual outing and/or festival of the Parish shall be held as determined by the Parish Council.
- C. The Parish Council may sponsor and/or participate in other activities, as it deems necessary or desirable.

ARTICLE X. **PARISH PRIEST**

- A. The clergy are assigned or transferred by the bishop within his Diocese by virtue of the authority of his office and in accordance with the canons, ecclesiastical procedure and the needs of the Diocese.
- B. When necessary, the Parish Council will make known to the Bishop the Parish's concerns about a priest before the assignment as well as express to the Bishop/Metropolitan the Parish's desire to have its priest transferred.

ARTICLE X1. **BY-LAWS AMENDMENTS**

- A. These By-Laws may be amended or repealed in whole or in part by a 2/3 majority vote of members in good standing present at a legally constituted Parish Assembly meeting, provided that the membership has been notified in writing of the changes under consideration at least twenty days prior to the scheduled meeting and/or unless otherwise provided for herein.
- B. Article IV A and C will be the **only** exception to the above. Annual financial obligations and special fees and/or assessments will be established by a simple majority vote of members in good standing present at a legally constituted Parish Assembly meeting, provided the membership has been notified in writing of the changes under consideration at least twenty days prior to the scheduled meeting.

This Constitution and By-Laws were adopted at a legally constituted Parish Assembly Meeting on Sunday, February 15, 1998.

First Revision – May 17, 1998.

Second Revision – November 18, 2001.

Third Revision – February 27, 2012.