

# **Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church of Biloxi Mississippi**

## **Bylaws**

**February 8, 2011**

### **Preamble**

*By the authority granted in the Uniform Parish Regulations (UPR) of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, Part III, Article 21, the Parish Assembly of the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church of Biloxi, Mississippi, adopts the following by-laws, same having been approved in advance by the Metropolitan of the Metropolis of Atlanta. The provisions of these by-laws are intended to address themselves to the local needs of the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church of Biloxi, Mississippi. It is recognized by the Parish Assembly that in adopting these provisions they become appended to the UPR and nothing contained herein is to be construed in any way to be inconsistent with the spirit of said Regulations.*

### **Article 1 - Name and Purpose**

#### **SECTION 1**

The Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church of Biloxi, is the official name of the parish, which is incorporated as the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Community of the Mississippi Gulf Coast Inc., a non-profit corporation organized under the laws of the state of Mississippi ( the "Parish").

#### **SECTION 2**

The aims and purposes of the Parish are to keep and proclaim pure and undefiled the Orthodox Christian faith and traditions in conformity with doctrine, canons, worship, discipline usages and customs of the Church, IAW Article 15 of the UPR.

### **Article II - Parishioners**

#### **SECTION 1:**

Any person, eighteen (18) 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 UPR and the by-laws of the Parish, and who fulfills his or her financial obligation to the parish is a member in good standing of the Parish, except that persons under twenty-one (21) shall not serve on the Parish Council when such service is contrary to local law. An annual list of members in good standing shall be posted on the Church Bulletin Board in the Hall of the Community Center on the first Sunday of October.

## **SECTION 2:**

A person qualifying for membership as above and wishing to be a member of more than one Parish must pay his or her financial obligations to each Parish.

## **SECTION 3:**

No person shall be accepted for membership in a Parish while retaining membership in a non-Christian religion, or in an Orthodox Parish which defies the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical authority of the Archdiocese, or who deliberately disregards and transgresses the moral law as may be determined by an ecclesiastical tribunal.

## **SECTION 4:**

The Parish Register should include the following information concerning each member: baptismal and family name, profession, dates of baptism and marriage, complete family record of spouse and children, date of entry into the Parish, indicating if transferred from another Parish, record of payment of Parish and Archdiocese financial obligations, and date of death, closing the said register record. The register shall be maintained by the Church Office.

## **SECTION 5:**

When transferring from one Parish to another, the parishioner shall present to the Priest of the new Parish a certificate of transfer signed by his or her former Priest, which shall include all the pertinent information hereinbefore recited in Section 4 of this Article.

## **SECTION 6:**

In accordance with Canon Law, the religious, moral and social duties of a parishioner are to apply the tenets of the Orthodox faith to his or her life and activities, to attend the Divine Liturgy and other services of worship faithfully on Sundays and holy days, to keep the rules and fasts of the Orthodox tradition, to receive frequently the sacraments of Penance and Holy Communion, to train and teach the young according to the faith and spirit of Orthodoxy, to respect the clergy, the ecclesiastical authority and all governing bodies of the Church, to be obedient in matters of faith and ecclesiastical order, and to cooperate in every way towards the welfare and prosperity of the Parish and the success of its sacred mission.

## **SECTION 7:**

The stewardship and financial obligations of a parishioner are to sign and fulfill an annual fair share pledge. 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 Archdiocese.

## **SECTION 8:**

The rights of a parishioner are to attend all regular and special Parish Assemblies, to take part in its discussions and to vote therein, and be elected a member or officer of the Parish Council and in such position to take part in the administration of the Parish and in the direction of its life and activity.

### **Article III Parish Assembly**

#### **SECTION 1**

Parish Assemblies will be held in accordance with (hereinafter IAW) Article 31 of the UPR. In addition the Parish adopts the following rules to control its assemblies.

#### **SECTION 2**

The presence of ten (10) Parishioners in good standing 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 at the beginning of the meeting may continue to transact all appropriate business and take any proper action even though attendance at the meeting may fall below ten (10) Parishioners provided that for any action which requires a 2/3 vote there must be at least 10 parishioners present to approve such action. If a quorum cannot be achieved no action can be taken. Within twenty-eight (28) 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 presently, with the exception of matters pertaining to the purchase sale or encumbering of Parish property which shall require a quorum.

#### **SECTION 3**

Parish Assemblies will be held at least twice a year. The Fall Parish Assembly will be held no later than November 30th. The Spring Parish Assembly will be held no later than May 10th.

#### **SECTION 4**

At the Fall Parish Assembly, the Parish Council will submit for approval a budget for the following year. Proposed budget will be subject to final approval at the Spring Parish Assembly and shall reflect, at a minimum, the Fair Share Assessment to the Archdiocese. Nominations for Parish Council, Election Committee and Audit Committee will take place during the Fall Parish Assembly.

#### **SECTION 5**

At the Spring Parish Assembly, the immediate past Treasurer of the Parish Council will provide a report 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. The Audit Committee Report and the report of the independent auditor's compilation will be submitted at this Parish Assembly.

## **SECTION 6**

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 Fall and Spring Parish Assemblies.

## **SECTION 7**

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, not majority vote, is an expression of Christian fellowship where all actions reflect the positions of everyone.

## **SECTION 8**

Special assemblies shall be held when the Priest and or Parish Council deem it necessary, or when 10% of the parishioners in good standing submit a written petition therefore to the Parish Council stating the purpose there on for such a meeting.

# **Article IV Parish Council**

## **SECTION 1**

The Parish Council will consist of the Priest as head of the Parish, and five (5) members in good standing elected by the members in good standing of the Parish. The Priest is a non-voting member of the Parish Council but has full standing as a Parish Council member in order to cooperatively administer the Parish. The Parish Council may meet without the Priest when necessary and such meetings will be held valid under these bylaws and any action taken at such meetings will have full force and effect.

## **SECTION 2**

Officers of the Parish Council shall be a President; a Vice -President; a Secretary and a Treasurer. They shall serve for a term of one (1) year and may be re-elected subject to the limitations on the office of President and Treasurer of six (6) consecutive years, IAW Article 27 sec 2 of the UPR. Officers will be elected at the organizational meeting held immediately after the swearing in of the Parish Council. Vacancies occurring in any office will be filled IAW Article 27, Section 3 of the UPR.

## **SECTION 3**

The members of the Parish Council are elected for a term of two (2) years by the members in good standing of the Parish. However, not all members will be elected

during the same year, with three (3) members one year and two (2) members the next year. They will be elected by the second Sunday of December each year. IAW Article 25 of the UPR.

#### **SECTION 4**

Vacancies. The Parish abides by Article 27, Section 3 of the UPR relative to vacancies of Parish Council Members. Therefore, in the event a member of the Parish Council is absent without justifiable cause for 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.

#### **SECTION 5**

**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 & 29 contained therein.

1. 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 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.

2. 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.

3. 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.

4. 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.

5. It shall cooperate with and assist the Priest in maintaining the supplies necessary for church services.

6. 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.

7. It shall annually determine and publish all fees, dues and charges deemed appropriated for use of any and all facilities owned by the Parish.

8. It shall make no alterations or improvements to the physical premises or property, or purchase which would by reasonable estimate exceed \$1500.00 without the approval of the Church membership. All such projects shall be on a cash basis.

**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 and 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 Priest on matters requiring Parish Council action
4. Report from Secretary
5. Report from Treasurer
6. Committee reports and Ministries reports and status

## **SECTION 6**

### **Duties of Officers & Ministry Liaison/Coordinators**

1. At least two (2) Parish Council Officers authorized by the Parish Council sign all checks made in payment for Parish expenditures. All checks shall be fully filled in and completed before signing.

2. President:

a. 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 Mississippi and the Parish Assembly.

b. 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.

c. To call special meetings of the Parish Council.

d. To sign minutes of all meetings together with the Secretary and the Priest.

e. 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 Mississippi and the Parish Assembly.

f. To appoint Committees for the purpose of carrying out such duties as may be assigned to each Committee.

g. To supervise the administrative functions of the Parish, including the duties of the office personnel.

h. Sit as member of Stewardship Committee.

### 3. Vice President

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

### 4. Secretary

a. To oversee the keeping of minutes of meetings of the Parish Council and Parish Assembly.

b. Supervise all Parish correspondence.

c. Ensure availability of the Parish Seal within the custody of the Priest.

### 5. Treasurer

a. To supervise collection of Parish funds and to deposit same with depositories selected by the Parish Council, in the name of the Parish.

b. 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.

c. To oversee the Parish accounting system and ensure to availability to the Parish Council request.

d. To keep current a list of members in good standing.

e. To oversee a Memorial Fund savings account in which shall be deposited donations to the Church in the name of deceased communicants. An accounting shall be kept of all monies in the fund, by deceased name, and when certain funds are used , the use of the funds shall also be recorded. The family of the deceased shall have the right to determine the use of the funds if they so desire. Interest on such funds shall remain in the Memorial Account. All Memorial Funds must be given a designation for use by said families within a period of five years. After five years, Community members in good standing may vote to spend these funds for any Church needs.

f. 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.

g. Sit as member of the Stewardship Committee.

## **Article V Board of Elections**

### **SECTION 1:**

The Board of Elections shall consist of three or five members in good standing elected at the Fall Parish Assembly from among those who are not candidates for election to the Parish Council and not members of the current Parish Council.

### **SECTION 2:**

The Board of Elections shall, on cooperation with the Priest and the Parish Council, check the list of candidates and notify all eligible members concerning the elections, and said notice shall contain the following:

1. Name and address of each nominee to the Parish Council
2. Years of membership in the Community
3. Service and position held in Parish Organizations
4. Resume of attendance and duty record of Parish Council nominee
5. Instructions on absentee balloting.

### **SECTION 3:**

The Board of Elections shall supervise the elections and tabulate and report the results in accordance with procedures consistent with UPR Article 25.

### **SECTION 4:**

A vacancy on the Board of Elections shall be filled by the Parish Council by electing a successor therefore from amongst the members of the Parish good standing.



## **Article VI Board of Auditors**

### **SECTION 1**

The Board of Auditors shall consist of at least three (3) members in good standing elected annually for a term of one (1) year. Election will be held along with Parish Council elections. Candidates for Board of Auditors may not be sitting members or candidates for the Parish Council or Trust Fund Committee.

### **SECTION 2**

The Board of Auditors shall audit quarterly the accounting records of the Parish and prepare in duplicate a report of such audit for presentation to the Parish Council, and shall deliver a report annually to the Parish Assembly, one copy of which shall be transmitted to the Metropolis. Financial Report will be signed by the Board of Auditors.

### **SECTION 3**

Parish records will be available to the Board of Auditors in the church office on request but may not be removed from the office.

### **SECTION 4**

Board of Auditors will review and inventory all insurance policies.

## **Article VII Nominations to the Parish Council**

### **SECTION 1:**

The Parish Council shall prepare the list of members in good standing and shall post it in a conspicuous place on the Church Bulletin Board in the Hall of the Community Center on the first Sunday of October.

### **SECTION 2:**

Candidates for election to the Parish Council must be members in good standing as stipulated in Article II.

### **SECTION 3:**

Nominations of candidates for election to the Parish Council shall be made and seconded by members in good standing at the Fall Parish Assembly meeting.

### **SECTION 4:**

Nominations of Candidates for election to the Parish Council will be accepted by mail if

1. Nomination is attested to by two other members in good standing and

2. Nomination is received by the last Sunday prior to the Election of a member of the Election Committee.

## **Article VIII Elections to the Parish Council**

### **SECTION 1**

The election of the members of the Parish Council shall be held by the second Sunday in December.

### **SECTION 2:**

A member duly enrolled in the Parish Register but delinquent in signing his or her Fair Share Pledge may vote in the election by signing a Fair Share Pledge at any time prior to balloting.

### **SECTION 3:**

A new member of the Parish may vote in the election if he or she has been enrolled at least three months prior thereto.

### **SECTION 4:**

Ballots shall be cast by each eligible parishioner, in person, following signatory registration. Absentee ballots may be obtained from the Church Office any time up to 1 p.m. on Friday prior to the election. Absentee ballots must be in a sealed envelope marked ballot, this envelope must be signed by the absentee voter. They must be turned in prior to 12 noon the day of the election in order to be valid. The Election Committee is to write "Absentee Ballot" on the master signatory registration sheet next to the absentee voters name, open the envelope and place the ballot in the ballot box. Those eligible are the disabled, ill or absent on election day.

### **SECTION 5:**

Elections shall be held at a place on Parish premises previously announced by the Board of Elections and voting shall be by secret ballot. Voting shall begin after the close of the Divine Liturgy and shall terminate at one o'clock in the afternoon on the same day.

### **SECTION 6:**

The election results shall be entered in the minutes book of the Parish, showing the votes cast for each candidate and shall be signed by each member of the Board of Elections. The candidates receiving the greatest number of votes shall be declared elected for the ensuing term. In case of a tie, a majority vote ballot by the incoming Parish Council at its first meeting will be necessary to determine the winner.

## **SECTION 7:**

Any member of the Parish questioning the validity of any election may within five days after such election, lodge a written protest with the Metropolitan through the Parish Priest. Such protest shall be signed by the questioning member and at least four other Parish members. The decision of the Metropolitan there on shall be final.

## **SECTION 8:**

In case of the resignation of any member elect of the incoming Parish Council, or vacancy for any other reason, in the interim between the day of the Parish Council elections and the election of officers, the incoming Parish Council will elect a new member from among the eligible parish members to fill the vacancy.

### **Article IX Ratification of Parish Council and Oath of Office**

## **SECTION 1:**

Within six days after the election, the priest shall forward the results to the Metropolitan for review and ratification. The Metropolitan shall ratify the election after it shall be confirmed by the Archdiocese. The Priest shall at the same time verify in writing that all candidates were qualified and that the election was conducted in accordance with these regulations and Parish bylaws.

## **SECTION 2:**

The election will be considered ratified upon receipt of verification hereinbefore provided for in the absence of the filing of any protest thereto. In the event that a protest is filed and such protest is upheld, the Metropolitan will declare the protested election void and a new election will be ordered.

## **SECTION 3:**

When ratification of the election has been received from the Metropolitan, a special ceremony shall be held at the close of the Divine Liturgy in which all members of the Parish Council shall take the oath of office jointly. The oath shall be administered by the Priest and shall be repeated by all the members of the Parish Council.

## **SECTION 4:**

Each member of the Parish Council is obligated, without exception, to take the following oath of office and thereafter subscribe his or her name thereto - "I do solemnly swear that I will uphold the dogma, teachings, traditions, holy canons, worship, and moral principles of the Greek Orthodox Church, we will as the constitutional charter, discipline, and regulations of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America, and that I will fulfill faithfully and sincerely the duties and obligations required of a member of the Parish Council. So help me God." A person refusing to take the oath and subscribe

to same shall not assume duties as a member of the council or be elected as an officer at the Parish Council.

## **Article X - Stewardship Committee**

### **SECTION 1:**

The Stewardship Committee shall consist of the Parish Council President, Treasurer, and a Chairperson appointed by the President.

### **SECTION 2:**

The Stewardship Committee shall in cooperation with the Priest and Parish Council, plan and execute the annual "fair share stewardship campaign" IAW the guidelines of the Archdiocese established program and local/parish produced procedures.

### **SECTION 3:**

The goal of the Committee is as follows:

1. Obtain stewardship commitments from the parish equal to the General Fund Budget needs of the Parish.
2. Educate the parish as to why stewardship is part of our faith and its importance to our salvation.
3. Increase the stewardship roles of the parish.
4. See to the collection of stewardship commitments and see that they are handled IAW Archdiocese guidelines and pastoral care.

## **Article XI - Amendments**

These Parish by-laws may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of voting members present and voting at a special or regular meeting of the Parish Assembly, provided that notice of said meeting is given at least fourteen (14) days prior to same. Notice shall be given by mail to all Parishioners on the church roll and copies of the proposed amendments are to be sent along with said notice.

## **Article XII**

Any topics not specifically covered in these by-laws will be governed by the appropriate articles of the 2005 UPR.