

2024 NATIONAL PHILOPTOCHOS BIENNIAL CONVENTION



**Sheraton San Diego Hotel and Marina
San Diego, California**

**MINUTES
Wednesday, July 3, 2024**

The 2024 National Philoptochos Biennial Convention was reconvened by Jeannie Ranglas, Convention Chair at 11:05 PST at the Sheraton San Diego Hotel and Marina in San Diego, California.

Spiritual Reflection- His Grace Bishop Athenagoras of Nazianzos

His Grace began his reflection with reciting Psalm 133 and offered his reflections.

- The word unity has two components, unity with God and unity among each other.
- We believe in one God, but he is three persons - how are these three persons one? They are a community of love, in communion with one another.
- Oil signifies consecration and the Holy Spirit, true unity is a gift from God
- Dew of Hermon represents the lifegiving grace of God, sustaining the community of believers.
 - Read a quote from Saint Basil the Great: *“For the Spirit of peace is the spirit of Christ, and as many as are at peace with one another, the same are in possession of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ, which they that are not at peace cannot have.”* (Letter 114)
- Mother Maria of Paris dedicated her life to Christ, the church and all of those in need. She became a nun and opened the house for the poor. She saved many Jewish people and gave her life to protect them. She died on Holy Saturday 1945 after refusing to give the names of those she helped.

“There is no new and old, no antiquated and modern. There is a unique path of love and will always be, both in eternity and here on earth. Our love should be made manifest in our unity with each other, reflecting the divine unity in the Holy Trinity.”

His Grace informed us of an educational Ecumenical Patriarchate program to educate the US on how we communicate and support our Ecumenical Patriarchate. His Grace graciously gifted two icon cards for each attendee in honor of this effort.

Jeannie Ranglas thanked the volunteers from the Metropolis of San Francisco for their continued dedication and support.

- Cindy Kezos joined Jeannie on stage and shared some meaningful remarks about Philoptochos being the heart of San Francisco, of the Archdiocese of America and that we are here to celebrate and enjoy our sisterhood.
- Jeannie then recognized Metropolis Presidents and Executive Boards.

Lunch break- Cindy Kezos dismissed for lunch at 11:25AM PST. Jeannie Ranglas reconvened the meetings at 12:03 PM PST.

Ministry Presentation IOCC- Father Paul Zaharas, US Country Representative, IOCC Jeannie Ranglas introduced and shared the accomplishments of Father Paul Zaharas to give the presentation on the IOCC. Father Paul shared that International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC) Executive Director and CEO Dean Triantafiliou sent his regards and made President Kehl an honorary member of an IOCC Action team. Philoptochos is the Army of Agape, militant in compassion.

- Founded in 1992
- IOCC has delivered \$830 million in relief
- IOCC has worked in over 60 countries and are currently active in 14 regions
- IOCC Core Sectors:
 - Emergency Preparedness & Response
 - Sustainable Livelihoods
 - Health
 - Food Security and Agriculture
 - WASH: Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
- IOCC and Philoptochos have had a partnership over the last 30 years. Recent collaborations between IOCC and Philoptochos include:
 - Ukraine - the Army of Agape has made healing and restoration possible. We have funded the Women's IDP Economic Empowerment Ukrainian project for women struggling with vocational skills in employment to be able to support their families.
 - Barbara Pasalis shared that Philoptochos raised \$300,000 in one month for Ukrainian projects.
- Care after Disasters - IOCC's US Program serves both the survivors of the disaster but also the first responders to those disasters (Priests, Caregivers, Police & Fire, etc).
- IOCC shared that \$0.92 of every dollar goes directly towards relief, and every dollar is leveraged times seven (7).

- If you would like the money to be spent on a US program, please designate that on your donation.

Ministry Presentation Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF)- Deacon Marek Simon, Executive Director, OCF

Deacon Marek Simon shared that OCF has a student leadership board whose focus is to bring the college students together. Deacon Marek shared his gratitude to Philotochos for their involvement and support with the retreats and conferences that the OCF participants attended.

- OCF will be growing staff on college campuses, after their pilot program at Texas A&M
- OCF video was shown to the delegation, the link for the video will be shared
- This fall, 2 additional locations will be added with OCF staff on college campuses: Arizona State University and Atlanta in the Georgia Tech & Emory University area.

Ministry Presentation Youth/Young Adult Ministry (Y2AM), GOA

Eva Konstantako, Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries (Y2AM) at the GOA Jeannie Ranglas introduced Eva Konstantako. Ms. Konstantako expressed her honor and gratitude to Archbishop Elpidophoros for appointing her as the first woman director of Y2AM. The Y2AM mission and vision is to introduce youth to Christ so they can live out their relationship with the Lord and His Church on a daily basis. Eva shared how critical the role of youth involvement is within a parish and how providing resources are critical for engagement. Some of the resources include:

- Camping Ministries Curriculum
- Creating a new Be the Bee program with other incredible leaders and in a new way to connect with the youth, will also add worksheet materials
- YAL National conference will be here in San Diego and will be working with the National Philoptochos Diakonia project to create 1500 care package on July 4th
- Philoptochos is actively serving as an example to YAL as active Orthodox Christians
- Eva shared the newly established National Young Adult League Board to enhance communication and collaboration across the districts and Metropolises for Young Adult Ministries. The Board consists of two Board Members from each of the nine Metropolises
- Y2AM has developed a Camping Ministries Mental Health Guide
- Effective Christian Ministries (ECM) training has two components:
 - Online ECM Course with 5 hours of self-paced training

- ECM Cohort Program which includes a 9 month intensive course for parish teams and introduces a 1 year ministry plan at the end of the courses and training

Eva shared how grateful she is that we have a large community of women to continue to engage our youth and support them as Orthodox Christians throughout their future.

Ministry Presentation Hellenic College Holy Cross- Demetrios S. Katos, Ph.D., President Hellenic College Holy Cross- Jeannie Ranglas introduced and shared the accomplishments of President Katos. Dr. Katos shared his gratitude for being here at our Philoptochos Convention and started off the presentation with a video.

- Dr. Katos shared that Philoptochos has provided \$1.6 million in grants to the school
- Philoptochos has provided funding for renovations throughout the school, and revitalization of the Holy Cross Orthodox Press.
- HCHC is training our future leaders of the faith encompassing many different facets of that experience:
- HCHC launched two fully-remote online masters programs
 - Master of Theology - typically attracts students who already have their undergraduate in Theology and is a flexible program
 - Master of Divinity which has 20 full time students
- HCHC has seen an increase in seminarians, accepting twice as many Seminarians for August 2024 as were graduated this past May.
- Overall enrollment to HCHC is up 90%
- Single most important mission is the educating of our clergy - creating a vibrant eucharistic community.
- Dr. Katos shared his excitement that the Philoptochos leadership will be visiting HCHC to expand both student knowledge and Philoptochos knowledge on needs & experiences of both ministry efforts.
- Our Philoptochos President, Arlene Siavelis Kehl, communicated how we need to evaluate what we, as a Philoptochos, need to continue growing our partnership and asked our delegation to think about what we need from our partners at HCHC.
- Any Philoptochos scholarships are reviewed

Beverage Break- Jeannie Ranglas, Metropolis of San Francisco President and Convention Chair, recessed at 1:57 PM PST and reconvened at 2:24 pm PST.

Report of Credentials Committee

Director Amy Kalogeropoulos reported the following:

Registered Delegates: 323

Delegates in attendance: 320

Voting Delegates: 309

Non Voting: 11

Fiscal Fitness- Barbara Pasalis, National Board Treasurer, delivered a presentation on "Preparing a Chapter Budget."

- Chapter Budget is a prediction/estimate of income and expenses for the coming year, based on the past year's income and expenses.
 - Fundraisers generate income to cover expenses, and leave a profit.
 - Profit from events and collections provide funding for commitments.
- Income- Project total gross income based on prior year's income generating sources (income, collections, etc.)
- Expenses - Project total expenditures for disbursements, Metropolis and National commitments, fundraising expenses, administrative expenses, etc.
- 10-15% contingency may be left in account at the end of the year as a reserve for startup costs for the following year; however, this should be based on prior year, and should be conservative.
- Resources- A budget template will be uploaded to the Philoptochos website. National uses a program called TechSoup for reduced pricing for Quickbooks and other software, contact the National office for information on this program.
- Each Philoptochos Chapter needs its own 501(c)(3), and should not use the Church's 501(c)(3). Chapters will be able to file under National Philoptochos' umbrella possibly starting in the fall. National Philoptochos will communicate with Metropolis Presidents and Chapter Presidents once the process is ready. Each Chapter should return the forms to National in a timely manner in order to be included in the submission to the IRS by the National Philoptochos.
- National Philoptochos has been working to update the internal Financial Procedures guidelines.
- Local Chapter financial records should be audited every year, or at the end of every President's/board's term

Featured Speaker Vas Priebe, ESO Founder, Transformative Educator and Holistic Health Coach, delivered a presentation regarding holistic wellness.

- Body's power to heal is profound. Wellness has nothing to do with how you look. Health and wellness come from within.
- Movement focus shifts as we age.
- Movement- Five Keys to Physical Wellness
 - Create Space- Your body, bones, muscles and organs need space to properly function and feel happy. Create space in the schedule, stretch daily, breathing exercises, posture practice, tissue work.
 - Functionality- Find a movement that works for you.

- Cardiovascular Health- The ability for your body to pump and circulate throughout your body. Daily walks, sauna, breathing exercises, creating space in the chest and abdomen, healthy diet, sleep and restorative time.
- Longevity- Find physical movement that you can sustain for the long haul.
- Joy- Seek joy in your movement practice.
- A band was handed out and various stretches/ exercises were performed with the group.

Children’s Medical Fund 2023 Houston- Stella Piches, Metropolis of Denver President, presented the report on the Children’s Medical Fund Luncheon hosted by the Metropolis of Denver in Houston, Texas on November 11, 2023.

- Report on the CMF Luncheon is available for review on the Philoptochos App under Convention Documents listing all grantees from the CMF Luncheon.
- National Philoptochos raised and distributed ~\$350k the day of the 2023 CMF luncheon. More than \$550k was raised in sponsorship and the remainder of those funds will be distributed through the grant process
- Video highlighting the event was presented

Children’s Medical Fund 2025 Atlanta- Irene Politis, Metropolis of Atlanta President- The next Children’s Medical Fund Luncheon will be hosted by the Metropolis of Atlanta on Saturday, September 27, 2025. Irene presented information on the 20th CMF Luncheon. The hotel will be the Grand Hyatt Atlanta, Buckhead and the Luncheon will be held at Flourish, Buckhead, Atlanta, GA. The National Board Meeting and an evening event hosted by the Annunciation Cathedral in Atlanta, GA will be held on Friday, September 26th.

2024 Chapter Challenge Part 1- A video was presented summarizing the Chapter Challenge initiative.

Holy Trinity Philoptochos, Columbia, SC, Metropolis of Atlanta

- Chapter Challenge supporting children supported children with developmental disabilities

St. George Philoptochos, Lynn, MA, Metropolis of Boston

- Prepared brown lunch bags for the food bank “My Brother’s Table”.

St. Demetrios Philoptochos, Libertyville, IL, Metropolis of Chicago

- Chapter Challenge to support Midwest Veterans Closet

St. Catherine’s Philoptochos, Holy Resurrection, Brookville, NY, Archdiocesan District

- Established Prison Ministry within the parish

Holy Trinity Cathedral & Prophet Elias Philoptochos, Greater Salt Lake, UT, Metropolis of Denver

- Goal was to create intergenerational bonds.

Closing Prayer- Anita Kartalopoulos, National 1st Vice President and Chairman Co-Chair

Meeting Recessed -Jeannie Ranglas recessed the meeting at 4:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dara Phillips, Secretary

Catherine Naltsas, Secretary

Chrissy Orginos- Zografos, Secretary