
METROPOLITAN COUNCIL of the ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA

REPORTS
2023 Special Session

Friday, February 3, 2023
Conducted by video conference

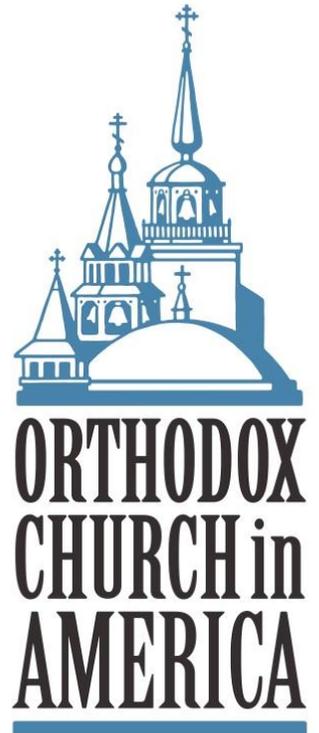


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Evaluation of 2023 Mission Planting Grant Applications

Orthodox Church in America
Department of Evangelization

St. Ambrose of Milan Mission

Roanoke, Virginia

stambrosechurch.org

Founded 1979

Rev. Jeremy McKemy

Priest-in-Charge

Office: 540-650-3391

priest@stambrosechurch.org

Average Sunday attendance 45

70 adult members, 15 children

Projecting 75% growth in three years

St. Nina the Enlightener Mission

Azalea Park, Florida

stninaoca.com

Founded 2022 (though I believe this date is misleading - they have been active as a dependency of St Stephen for decades)

V. Rev. Andrey Syrkin

Home: 407-536-1071

frandreysyrkin@gmail.com

Average Sunday attendance 45

56 adult members, 23 children

Projecting 20% growth in three years

(St Nina is a Russian language mission that was a dependency of St Stephen in Longwood FL.)

Archangel Gabriel Mission

Hickory, North Carolina

Archangelgabrielhickory.org

Founded 2014

V. Rev. Paul Schellbach

Priest-in-Charge

Home: 980-745-3002

mswpadre@gmail.com

Average Sunday attendance: 23

37 adult members , 7 children

Projecting approx 20% growth per year

Assessment: In reviewing multiple applications, we must use some type of objective criteria to evaluate the investment of the three-year grant. While ideally we would invest in every possible mission plant, our financial constraints limit us to one award for a first year grant. **The purpose of the grant is to provide income for a priest to work full-time to grow the mission.**

The following criteria are fair measurements for the health and long term viability of a mission plant:

- Geographic factors
- Outreach
- Vision
- Projected growth
- Liturgical, educational, and social
- Leadership
- Need

Each mission has strengths and weaknesses.

- Each mission is in a growing area.
- St Ambrose has an inviting looking website where information is presented in an clear manner.
- Both St Ambrose and Archangel Gabriel are open to all. St Nina is geared to Russian speakers.
- St Ambrose is projecting accelerated growth in three years.
- Archangel Gabriel has some regularly scheduled adult classes noted. All three missions have at least weekly Vespers and Liturgy.
- St Ambrose is led by a younger priest. While age cannot be an issue in regards to effectiveness, it may speak to stability of leadership and vision over the next five to ten years.
- The priest of St Ambrose has no regular source of income. *It has been noted that there **may** be other regular sources of income for the priests at Archangel Gabriel and St Nina.* This might speak to the more pressing need for support in one place over another.

Using these measures, overall, **St Ambrose of Milan in Roanoke VA** rates strongest overall. We propose the new amount of **\$40,000 for the first year grant.**

The other two awards would be :

St John the Merciful, Kissimmee FL (Year 3 unrevised amount) \$16,000

Archangel Gabriel, Azle TX (Year 3 unrevised amount) \$16,000

Please let me know if you would like to discuss or if you have any questions.

Archpriest Thomas Soroka

Your Beatitude, Reverend Fathers and Father Deacons, Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The Property Committee, after de-listing Westwood in December 2021, worked through 2022 in direct discussion with multiple prospects. These efforts resulted in two offers, which ultimately were either not accepted or failed to proceed to a conclusion. We advised at our Fall Meeting of the Metropolitan Council that we would focus our attention on re-listing Westwood, ideally with a commercial broker, to occur in early 2023.

The Property Committee is now presenting for your consideration the Real Estate firm RIPCO and President, Mark Kaplan, whom we are recommending to engage as our listing agent. Ripco was founded by Mark Kaplan in 1991 with offices in New York, New Jersey, Connecticut and Florida. They serve middle market commercial customers with deals ranging from \$3M to \$50M closing on average 800+ transactions annually. Mark was raised in nearby Jericho (Long Island) and is familiar with the Westwood property. He is local and works from the Ripco office located in nearby Woodbury. Mark's family was instrumental in developing commercial properties in Syosset and nearby Jericho since the 1950's and are familiar with the workings of the Oyster Bay zoning board.

Our conversations with Mark quickly demonstrated his knowledge and awareness of the barriers we've experienced in our past efforts to seek a buyer for Westwood. Often, the conversation was inoculated by Mark with a stream of topics, before we had the opportunity to raise our concerns. The Property Committee believes Mark Kaplan to be well-suited to represent The Orthodox Church in America as their broker for the sale of Westwood. Ripco is not the largest or the smallest firm available for these services, but, we believe to be the right fit for our needs. Mark stated he, and his team, will focus on creating the market and identify a prospect providing the best sale price with the highest probability to transact.

We have attached the engagement letter and details for your review, prior to our call for a vote at our next Metropolitan Council Meeting.

Ray and Greg
Chairmen, Property Committee