



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA
METROPOLIS OF CHICAGO

STRENGTHEN STEWARDSHIP NOW AND FOREVER

Paving the Way to a Culture of True Christian Giving of Time, Talents, and Treasures

The Strategic Plan for the Metropolis of Chicago's Comprehensive Parish Stewardship Ministries Program

Prepared by:

The Metropolis of Chicago Stewardship Goal Task Force

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INTRODUCTION

In 2018, the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Chicago (“the Metropolis”), inspired by the vision of and led by His Eminence Metropolitan Nathanael, began a strategic planning process to determine the actions needed to help our Metropolis parishes become the strongest and most dynamic possible. One of the most critical of the goals created relates to “Stewardship,” an oft misunderstood concept, but central to the beauty of our magnificent Orthodox Christian Church.

Stewardship and raising money are viewed by many as interchangeable. But there is so much more to stewardship than money. Volunteering time, helping the church using people’s talents and skills, engaging friends to participate in the church services and ministries, welcoming new people—these are but a few examples of true Christian stewardship. At the initiation of the Metropolis strategic planning process, the Metropolis faithful were surveyed to identify strengths and weaknesses of and opportunities and threats to the Metropolis. Stewardship was one of the highest cited weaknesses.

As a result, the Metropolis strategic plan includes a goal devoted to developing a Comprehensive Parish Stewardship Ministries Program for the Metropolis parishes to adopt and use as they see fit. A task force was formed to focus on developing the stewardship goal:

Goal 7.1

Within 18 months, each parish will begin to implement the Metropolis comprehensive new Stewardship ministries program, including a youth stewardship program, adapted to the needs of the parishes, that will be thereafter successfully implemented in at least: (a) 20% of the parishes within 18 months; and (b) 40% of the parishes within 30 months.

The Stewardship Task Force was assembled and put together an action plan to achieve this goal. The action plan included a lengthy research phase. The Task Force split up into sub-committees to research stewardship programs in (1) parishes within the Metropolis; (2) the Archdiocese program and other Metropolis stewardship programs; and (3) non-Orthodox churches. After sharing their research, the Task Force determined that there were many common elements to successful stewardship—that is, the giving of time, talents, and treasures—in Orthodox and non-Orthodox churches alike. These elements helped shape our program.

During the development of our Comprehensive Parish Stewardship Plan, the COVID-19 pandemic occurred. Many of our Task Force members took on urgent assignment by His Eminence to develop a short-term best practices plan to assist parishes in the Metropolis that were struck by the

financial consequences that flowed from COVID-19. The team put together a program that continues today, called “Strengthen Stewardship Now.” The program provides a myriad of significant information that is designed to help parishes with ideas to enhance—or in some cases develop—their stewardship programs. The program centers around three key elements: ownership, engagement, and generosity. Videos, testimonials, a toolkit with sample documents, reading materials, and ongoing educational meetings were included in this program. It captures many of the elements that our research shows results in strong participation, engagement, volunteerism, and ultimately financial contributions. Many of these elements are also found in other comprehensive stewardship programs, including the one adopted by the Metropolis of Atlanta and Metropolis of San Francisco. Accordingly, we have determined that Strengthen Stewardship Now contains the foundational elements of our Comprehensive Parish Stewardship Program, which we now call by extension, Strengthen Stewardship Now *and Forever*.

Strengthen Stewardship Now and Forever builds upon the work the Metropolis’s special stewardship task force initiated in 2020. Here, we look to the longer term, we seek to add significant resources and training to help all parishes, large and small, develop the skills necessary to execute the many great ideas presented in the foundational program. We seek to package ideas that are best practices in a form that can easily be adopted by parishes and applied to enhance their stewardship programs. We offer ways to propel stewardship into the 21st century and take advantage of today’s technologies, communication platforms, and new philosophies that aim to involve more people. Critically, we also provide a youth stewardship program.

Ultimately, our long-term program is designed to *transform the culture* of giving—to pave the way to true Christian giving of time, talent, and treasures. We do not believe one or two things will change parish programs significantly; it will be many things, done by many people, over a period of time that will require time and effort. But the result, we believe, will be a strong parish, a loving parish, a giving parish, and a parish that strengthens and grows with a heart of Christian charity and an unshakable bond of community.

* * *

The audience for this document is the Metropolis of Chicago. Upon approval of the plan, we will create communications directed to the parishes as well, but we offer this strategic document for the leadership of the Metropolis.

The Strengthen Stewardship Now and Forever Program is divided into four sections.

- Section 1: Defining “Stewardship”
- Section 2: The Key Elements of Successful Stewardship
- Section 3: Actions to be Taken by the Metropolis of Chicago
- Section 4: Actions to be Taken by Each Parish

In the first section, we offer a definition of “stewardship” for use at all parishes within the Metropolis for consistency purposes. Section 2 provides a discussion about the key foundational elements of a successful stewardship program—ownership, engagement, and generosity. These are the foundational principles upon which our plans for action are built, which are contained in Sections 3 and 4. Section 3 contains 7 actions to be taken by the Metropolis, and Section 4 contains 6 actions that are

to be taken by each of the parishes within the Metropolis, most of which flow from the Metropolis’s actions.

The table below contains the summary of actions that are described in Sections 3 and 4.

METROPOLIS ACTIONS (See Section 3)		PARISH ACTIONS (See Section 4)	
Action	Timeline	Action	Timeline
ACTION 1: Hire a Metropolis of Chicago Director of Stewardship to lead the SSN&F Program	ASAP (goal by mid to end of 2022)	ACTION 1: Strengthen the Parish Stewardship Committee (or Form A Stewardship Committee if the Parish Does Not Current have One)	ASAP (goal by end of 2021)
ACTION 2: Form a volunteer team of 6-10 clergy and laity that will serve with the Director of Stewardship to Implement the SSN&F Program	ASAP (goal by end of 2021)	ACTION 2: Complete All Required Trainings & Use the Metropolis Stewardship Center of Excellence Portal	Annually starting upon launch of Metropolis training modules
ACTION 3: Develop Robust Training to Teach Stewardship Principles and Practical Skills that Will Enable Successful Implementation of Key Stewardship Elements	ASAP (launch on a rolling basis)	ACTION 3: Develop and implement an annual Parish Stewardship Strategy that includes at least 3 action items from each key element (ownership, engagement, and generosity) and at least one action item from each key element of the Youth Stewardship Program. This strategy will be revised each year.	Starting in 2022
ACTION 4: Establish the Metropolis of Chicago Stewardship Center of Excellence Portal	ASAP (use existing platform and enhance or redesign as required)	ACTION 4: Launch the Parishioner-Facing Campaign Prepared by the Metropolis	Starting in 2022
ACTION 5: Establish a Parishioner-Facing Stewardship Campaign Telling Parishioners What They Need to Do for their Parish	By early 2022	ACTION 5: Follow Metropolis Technology Directives and Use Technology to Enhance Stewardship	Starting in 2022
ACTION 6: Embrace Technology and Advance Stewardship Using Recent Technology		ACTION 6: Share Best Practices, Ask Questions, and Seek Help	
ACTION 7: Implement a Youth Stewardship Program that Has Four Components: Education; Engagement; Giving; and Outreach			

We include an appendix with some additional resources as well. Additional information is found at the Metropolis’s website that we plan to upgrade and create a Stewardship Center of Excellence that will be the “hub” of all issues and resources about stewardship in our Metropolis.

SECTION 1: DEFINING “STEWARDSHIP”

The first step the Metropolis Stewardship Task Force took to develop this stewardship plan was to coalesce around a definition of “stewardship.” What the Task Force quickly found was that there were several definitions of “stewardship” out there. We of course looked at several definitions in the Orthodox Church context, and even there found a number of different ways stewardship was defined.

We determined that it would be useful to have a single definition for the Metropolis as we put together the comprehensive plan. We do not believe that our definition is right and other Orthodox Churches or Metropolises are wrong; we simply were drawn to the strength of the words in our definition and the direction we believe they provide.

We define “stewardship” as follows:

Stewardship is our grateful and loving response to God’s love, grace and gifts to us. It is our personal commitment to God and His Church to ensure its vitality and continuous growth by joyfully and sacrificially offering of our talents, time and treasures that we have received from Him. Stewardship puts our faith in action and demonstrates our trust in God.

We define stewardship as a response, a commitment, and an act that demonstrates our trust in God. The response is to God’s love, grace and gifts He has bestowed on us. The personal commitment is to the offering of our talents, time and treasures that we would *not* have but for God bestowing those gifts on us. And last, but not least, we define stewardship as a call to action, to offer and use those talents, time, and treasures as a demonstration to God that we trust in Him, we are grateful to Him, and we want to see our beautiful Orthodox Church joyfully grow.

It is important to note that we do not see stewardship as solely *financial*. It is not just about money. We know that many view the two words as synonyms, but that is not the case. While there is definitely a financial aspect to stewardship, as we define this beautiful concept we believe the emphasis should be on response, commitment, and action of all three important principles of stewardship: offering of talents, offering of time, and offering of treasures.

Enlightening the people of the Metropolis on the principles of true Christian stewardship and disassociating the word from dues, fundraising, or other words that reflect money only, is at the heart of our Comprehensive Parish Stewardship Plan. As you will see throughout the plan, our goal is **transform the culture** of how we see, understand, and speak about stewardship. This transformation of culture will take time, effort, and diligent work through education, action, example, and purposeful change on how

we do things. We are transforming from the days of dues and putting \$1 in a tray to joyful volunteerism, sacrificial offering of skills to help the church or its people, and prayerful donations as a percentage of income as a way to thank God and give back to all that He has given us!

We expect that parishes within the Metropolis are at varying stages of this journey already. We have designed this plan to be useful to any and all parishes that can adopt those aspects that will help them continue the transformation. **But the first step is committing to the transformation and having leadership endorse, lead, and take responsibility for the change.** This is what we call **ownership**, one of the three key elements to our program. **We must own the transformation of stewardship culture.**

We believe our definition of stewardship captures the spirit of true Christian stewardship, and it is our hope and prayer that this plan will pave the way to true Christian stewardship for each parish within the Metropolis.

To see more definitions of stewardship, please see Tab ___ in the Appendix. We will also make these definitions of stewardship available on the Metropolis Stewardship Center of Excellence Portal. Our web version will be updated periodically.

To review Biblical references to stewardship, please see Tab ___ in the Appendix. We will similarly make these references available on the Metropolis Stewardship Center of Excellence Portal. Our web version will be updated periodically.

SECTION 2: THE KEY ELEMENTS OF SUCCESSFUL STEWARDSHIP

As outlined in the Strengthen Stewardship Now materials that were made available to the Metropolis in 2020, the three key elements of stewardship are **ownership, engagement, and generosity**. We review them here, as they form the foundation of the Comprehensive Parish Stewardship Plan.

Ownership

The first of the three key elements is ownership. Stewardship must have an owner, a leader, and people responsible for and devoting specific attention to it to make true Christian giving of talent, time and treasure a central part of any parish. All parish leadership are responsible for and must be aligned with the goals of stewardship, there must be meaningful communication about the topic, and there must be a building of trust with the parish community to capture the true spirit of Christian giving.

Commitment of Parish Priest and Parish Leaders

Ownership requires that the parish priest and lay leadership (e.g., Parish Council, Ministry leaders, Philoptochos leadership, etc.) commit to and align with the vision and mission of the parish and the stewardship program. The stewardship committee can do fantastic work, but if the parish leadership is not supportive, the results will not be as successful. This includes homilies by the parish priest about stewardship helping to educate the faithful about the topic and true Christian giving of time, talent, and treasure.

Indeed, the stewardship strategy should be developed and supported by the parish priest and leaders. Of course the stewardship committee can be an integral part of the process, but the stewardship strategy should align with the vision and mission of the parish and the Metropolis. Having a “dues” strategy or something similar would be misaligned with the Metropolis’s stewardship plan, but in order to change what might be a longstanding practice in parishes, the parish priest and lay leadership will need to endorse the change, communicate and educate on the change, and ultimately resist the temptation to revert back to the prior program if the transformation is not quickly attained. Change takes time, and the persistence and investment in the plan will work; it is tried and true and at its very core aligned with our Christian faith.

Diverse Stewardship Committee

Each parish should have a stewardship committee made up of 4-12+ members. The size will depend on the size of the parish. The bigger the parish, the more people you should recruit for the committee, as there are many tasks that require personal touch, outreach, welcoming, etc. Imagine 4 people trying to do this for a community of 500 families. Impossible! Of course, we recognize for smaller parishes where distances may be far and number of families small, this will be more challenging. We offer the resources as part of this plan to help in any way for those smaller parishes.

Parishes should strive to have a diverse team to ensure that they have the benefit of diversity of thought. Diversity of thought will help their teams develop ideas that will reach a great number of people in the parishes. Diversity could be attained by having different age groups (youth, young adults, middle age, seniors), different marital status (single, married, married with children, single with children, divorced, etc.), different backgrounds professionally or personally (longstanding attendees of the parish

versus new to the parish, different professions), and different races, ethnicities, or people with disabilities. Consider including people that may be investigating whether to become Orthodox, non-Orthodox people that may have a special interest in our faith or in stewardship, or other volunteers that have other differences that would bring a valuable perspective to the committee.

In short, create or upgrade the committee to one that values thinking of new, fresh ways of ownership, engagement, and generosity by bringing diverse perspectives to the table. The parish priest, who inevitably commands the attention of the parish, must be an active member of the stewardship committee to ensure consistency in message and tone from the top, and it is advisable that members of the lay leadership be involved as well. The committee should meet regularly to discuss their strategy and ensure there is proper follow through on the parish stewardship initiatives.

As we will cover in a later section, consider forming a Youth Stewardship Committee as well to help focus on the education of generosity of talents, time and treasures for the youth and future of our Orthodox faith.

Attached in the appendix is a PowerPoint document that outlines the key principle of ownership that was published as part of the Strengthen Stewardship Now initiative.

Engagement

The next key element of a successful stewardship program is engagement, that is, connecting with people, inviting them to participate in the parish spiritual, educational and fellowship ministries, and parish and community outreach.

First, there must be a culture of engagement created and maintained at each parish. This takes a strong commitment from the parish priest and the parish leaders, including the Parish Council, the Stewardship Committee, and the leaders of various ministries at the parish. There must be a culture of *invitation* to participation. While many volunteer freely, others do not feel as comfortable, and creating a culture of inviting people to attend, participate, join, visit, volunteer, etc., will bring them into the church and its services, ministries, and activities. Culture is key.

Next, processes must be in place to obtain contact information of existing stewards and people who attend services, visitors, new people, those reaching out to learn more, etc. Processes should include ways to identify new people, whether visiting, getting married, baptizing a child, learning about Orthodoxy, converting to Orthodoxy, or any other reason they may be stopping by to visit the parish. Processes should include *follow up*. It is simply not enough to make a single contact with someone new. Multiple contacts are necessary, and established processes will help with ensuring people do not get missed. Processes should be set up to ensure ministries are highlighted, and processes must include *personal* touches, not just e-mails or letters. Personal contact, phone calls, visits, texts, or other ways to reach people personally is the most widely successful engagement method our research showed across many faiths with regard to engagement. This is vital.

Parishes must have ministries that are set up to engage people, invite them to participate, and get them involved. The amount and identification of ministries will vary based on the size of the parish and the parish interests, but the key to success is active engagement. The ministry leaders must reach out and communicate schedules, advertise activities, take pictures and share them, provide testimonials

about their involvement, and invite new people to get involved. Good coordination and communication will enhance ministry engagement.

Connecting people is another key success factor for good engagement. The more people meet and share time together the more likely they will continue to want to spend time together at church (and even not at church). Finding small group activities (Bible studies, clubs, baking classes as examples) gives people an opportunity to bond in ways that break the ice and form lasting relationships.

One of the best way to involve people is through shared philanthropy. Uniting for the purpose of helping others brings people together. Even the smallest parishes can find ways to help those in need. Outreach and evangelism are great ways to engage new and existing people in parishes.

Last, but not least, it is important to acknowledge, thank, and celebrate people's dedication of time, talent, and treasures. Appreciation luncheons, free to stewards, listing stewards, and public recognition of those that *volunteer* (not just give money) is key to make people feel recognized and appreciated for their giving of their time and talents.

Attached in the appendix is a PowerPoint document that outlines the key principle of engagement that was published as part of the Strengthen Stewardship Now initiative.

Generosity

The final key element is generosity. Again here, generosity is not just generous monetary giving, it is the generosity of volunteerism as well. Generosity is a reflection of the gratitude we have to God. Although education transcends all key elements of a stewardship program, [we emphasize the need for a focused educational effort to teach how generosity is a primary tenet of Orthodox Christianity.](#) Generosity can be supported by Biblical references and teachings of the Orthodox Church, including percentage of income giving, a financial characteristic of generosity that may be the most difficult concept for those born and raised in traditional Greek households to understand. Our research shows percentage of income giving is mainstream in many non-Orthodox Christian and non-Christian religions. [Our plan includes a transition to percentage of income giving as a way to help parishes return to the tradition taught by the Orthodox Church.](#)

Generosity includes important elements such as having a variety of processes in place to encourage volunteerism and allow for various methods of receiving financial commitments. Online sign up sheets and calendars could be good ways to make volunteering easy to do at people's convenience. Various methods of receiving financial gifts, such as online, through text or QR Code, monthly credit card, stock or securities donations, and other ways to eliminate barriers to giving should be evaluated and adopted where possible.

Parishes must find ways to *justify* the generosity they receive, such as finding ways for the parish to provide philanthropic efforts. The parish can donate money to charities or Philoptochos, or even other Orthodox missions or worthy causes. Engage the community to ask what charities are of most interest to them! Make philanthropy a budget line item. Those that give usually give to charities that give. There is no reason why the parish shouldn't be a beacon of giving itself, as Christ was Himself!

As above, acknowledge and celebrate generosity in the parish. No act of charity is too small to recognize and celebrate, and this will serve to *inspire* parishes. Inspiration is important to keep people

engaged. Ownership, engagement, and generosity are intertwined elements. They all work together to provide the best possible way to keep the Orthodox Church growing and thriving!

Attached in the appendix is a PowerPoint document that outlines the key principle of generosity that was published as part of the Strengthen Stewardship Now initiative.

SECTION 3: ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN BY THE METROPOLIS OF CHICAGO

Having defined stewardship and addressed the key elements that we believe are foundational to a successful stewardship program, we now turn to the Metropolis of Chicago's Strengthen Stewardship Now and Forever Program ("SSN&F Program"). The SSN&F Program builds upon the ongoing Strengthen Stewardship Now initiative and recommends adding several components to the existing initiative that will improve time, talent, and treasure contributions at each parish within the Metropolis.

The SSN&F Program puts into practice the key elements of stewardship. It adds to the several activities already ongoing to help parishes with their stewardship programs, such as monthly Tuesday night stewardship education sessions, website tools, and stewardship focus at Clergy Laity. The SSN&F program strives to make stewardship hands on, more practical, and ultimately more effective. We incorporate technology (and challenge ourselves to keep evolving as technology does), training, and charity in a way that we believe will over the long term *change the culture* of stewardship.

The following 7 actions are proposed for the Metropolis of Chicago to take to assist the parishes in strengthening their stewardship programs. We believe a significant investment of time, effort, and resource is optimal to transform our culture and pave a path to true Christian giving.

Action #1: Hire a Metropolis of Chicago Director of Stewardship to lead the SSN&F Program

Who is Responsible: The Metropolis of Chicago

Description: We recommend that the Metropolis of Chicago hire a full-time employee to lead the Metropolis Strengthen Stewardship Now & Forever Program. Stewardship is the lifeblood that will keep our Church going and growing, and we believe dedicated expert resources to provide assistance to parishes and lead the SSN&F Program efforts is a key part of this plan.

The Director of Stewardship will provide direction and lead the clergy and laity volunteer group that administers the SSN&F Program. The Director is in charge of ensuring that the Metropolis parishes have stewardship programs with the key elements (ownership, engagement, and generosity) and will assist them as they work to implement or grow their programs. The Director will also help roll out the youth portion of this program in conjunction with the Metropolis of Chicago Youth Director.

The Director will also work on leading training initiatives as outlined herein, stay informed on the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America Stewardship developments, and develop additional initiatives that share best practices among the Metropolis parishes. The position should report into the Metropolis of Chicago's Executive Director. A draft job description is attached in our Appendix. At the Metropolis's option, this position can also work on major fundraising initiatives, such as endowment funds and/or legacy giving.

Is funding required? Yes. We recommend that the Metropolis of Chicago apply for a grant to cover the Director's salary for two years to pilot this position. Organizations such as the Renaissance Fund may be willing to offer such funding as they are continuing to champion efforts to strengthen stewardship for our parishes. If the position is successful after two years, additional grants can be applied for or other methods of funding the position can be explored.

Action #2: Form a volunteer team of 6-10 clergy and laity that will serve with the Director of Stewardship to Implement the SSN&F Program (the “Metropolis Stewardship Team”)

Who is Responsible: Metropolis of Chicago/Director of Stewardship

Description: The Metropolis Stewardship Team will help administer the SSN&F program. It must include both clergy and laity and must include people that can devote approximately 5 hours per month at least to working with the Director of Stewardship on implementing the program. Ideally, the group should be diverse (gender, age, Orthodox-born, convert, Greek, non-Greek, etc.), as stewardship requires the ability to reach everyone and diversity will bring a variety of diverse thought and ideas to the discussion. Ideally, the group includes:

- 2 clergy
- 2 young adults
- 2 middle age adults
- 2 senior adults
- 25-50% people who converted to the Orthodox Church
- 50% women
- Additional diversity encouraged

The purpose of the Metropolis Stewardship Team is to be the helping hands of the Director of Stewardship. This team will help develop, coordinate and/or implement training, create best practice materials and seminars, and help create the parishioner-facing campaigns that will be adopted by local parishes. The team will be assigned parishes within the Metropolis to act as a “stewardship resource” and help collect best practices to share with other parishes and help those parishes as they try to implement their own best practices.

The Metropolis Stewardship Team is **not** a substitute for a parish stewardship committee. To the contrary, each parish must have their own stewardship committee. The Metropolis Stewardship Team is a resource for parishes and a conduit for collecting and sharing best practices.

The Team will serve an initial two-year term and will report to the Director of Stewardship. In the absence of a Director of Stewardship, the team will report to the Executive Director, who may appoint a chair of the team at her option.

Is funding required? No.

Action #3: Develop Robust Training to Teach Stewardship Principles and Practical Skills that Will Enable Successful Implementation of Key Stewardship Elements

Who is Responsible? The Director of Stewardship with the assistance of the Metropolis Stewardship Team

Description: One of the most important actions is the development of training to help people develop the skills to succeed in implementing parish stewardship programs.

As we outlined earlier, the key elements to successful implementation of stewardship are ownership, engagement, and generosity, but these three loaded elements have many aspects and skills

needed to successfully accomplish them. Some aspects may be simple, e.g., forming a stewardship committee, getting clergy and Parish Council buy-in, putting on an appreciation luncheon, but others are not as easy, e.g., recruiting volunteers to lead ministries, engaging with new parishioners, or talking to people about percentage of income giving. Some of these skills are not readily available to us, or some of these topics are beginning to change practices that are embedded in our Greek Orthodox Churches in America.

In short, culture change takes time and effort *and training*. This is the focus of Action #3.

This action is itself its own program. We are recommending developing a training program that covers several topics. **Much of this training will be required for parish stewardship committee members, some for Parish Council members, and optional for everyone.**

[Training on the Key Elements of Successful Stewardship \(Ownership, Engagement, and Generosity\)](#)

Overview of the Key Elements of Successful Stewardship (1 hour in length; annual; online; knowledge check at the end which must be passed to complete)

- This training will be **mandatory** for the Director of Stewardship, the Metropolis Stewardship Team, all members of the stewardship committees of each parish, and all members of the Parish Councils of all parishes
- This training will be online. We will need to develop the training module that will provide a high level of overview of the key elements of stewardship (much of this can be taken from existing Strengthen Stewardship Now videos/materials).
- The purpose of the training is to give all leadership an overview of what success looks like with stewardship, what needs to happen, and an overview of how these elements can be implemented in parishes.
- The training will be approximately one hour in length and will require a 5-10 question knowledge check to be successfully completed (80-90% correct) for the training to be completed. All parishes will need to submit their certifications of completion to the Director of Stewardship, and the training will be required annually. (The training can be updated by the Director of Stewardship year-to-year.)

Deep-Dive Modular Training on the Key Elements of Successful Stewardship (multi-hour; annual; online; knowledge check at the end of each module which must be passed to complete)

- This training will be mandatory for the Director of Stewardship, the Metropolis Stewardship Team, and all members of the stewardship committees of each parish. Parish Councils will be encouraged to take this training, but it will not be mandatory.
- This training will be online. We will need to develop the training modules that will provide a more detailed discussion of each of the elements (one module will focus on ownership, another on engagement, a third on generosity, and a fourth on percentage of income giving).
- The purpose of this training is to give stewardship committee members more in depth understand of these elements and the components within them. People will be given

ideas, practical examples, and links to additional resources to help them as they implement this program within their parishes.

- The training will be released in digestible portions (e.g., 4 45-minute online trainings that can be released for completion over the span of several months). There will be a 5-10 question knowledge check to certify completion (80-90% correct). All parishes will need to submit their certifications of completion to the Director of Stewardship, and the training will be required annually. (The training can be updated by the Director of Stewardship year-to-year.)

Monthly Stewardship Seminars Covering Topics Relating to the Key Elements

The monthly stewardship-focused seminars are a good forum to continue educating on stewardship and sharing best practices and practical tips. We can use this time for training identified above on occasion as well.

In-person Workshops Covering Topics Relating to the Key Elements

The Director of Stewardship will coordinate annual or bi-annual workshops to help parish stewardship committees work on developing and enhancing their strategies, which will encompass practices articulated in the key elements of successful stewardship training. This will include sessions on helping launch volunteer campaigns, percentage of income giving, youth stewardship, and better ways to connect with small groups. The workshops may include guest speakers and may involve breakout sessions to help teams form their best practices and strategies. These workshops can be help in conjunction with other Metropolis meetings, including the Clergy Laity Assembly.

[Practical Skills Training: Learning the Soft Skills of Stewardship](#)

Much of the success in recruiting people for the stewardship committee, forming small teams that can engage all of the parishioners within a parish, recruit volunteers for various ministries, form new ministries, raise money, have difficult discussions about percentage of income giving, etc., takes a special set of skills that do not come naturally to all of us.

Many non-Orthodox dominations have the benefit of having a culture of volunteerism, percentage of income giving, and a myriad of ministries and activities that are embedded in their faithful from childhood. Not all Greek Orthodox Churches have these same benefits.

We recommend a series of trainings that will help stewardship committees with these *soft skills*, helping them better engage, initiate conversations that may not be easy or comfortable, and ultimately successfully increase volunteerism, participation, and donations for their parishes.

Soft Skills Series 1: Book Club

The first “soft skills training” we recommend is the formation of a book club made up of anyone interested throughout the Metropolis. We would highly encourage stewardship committee members from parishes to be part of the Book Club, but these lessons can also be helpful to others as well (welcoming committee, Parish Council, ministry leaders, etc.).

The Book Club will be led by the Director of Stewardship and books will be selected by the Director with the blessing of the Metropolitan of Chicago. The books selected will focus on key soft skills issues such as: methods for increasing community participation/volunteerism, finding ways to activate and motivate people, having difficult discussions (e.g., about raising money), getting out of your comfort zone, meeting new people, and other similar topics that are identified as helpful to providing practical advice to support the SSN&F key elements).

Like typical book clubs, the key will be that participants read the book and then meet with the club to discuss what they learned, what they have questions about, and how those lessons can be incorporated in their parish stewardship programs.

Soft Skills Series 2: Online Tools

Here, we recommend a series of online trainings that can be used to help people with practical tips to improve their “soft skills.” We would hand select a manageable set of tools that can be used as optional training for anyone within the Metropolis. Stewardship committee members would be required to take at least 1 soft skills training from the menu of options. Given the amount of training available, stewardship members would be encouraged to select any additional training that is helpful to them and not expected to complete all the options available.

The Director of Stewardship and Metropolis Stewardship Team would research and select trainings that would be offered and made available at a centralized online location (e.g., Metropolis Stewardship Portal). There would also be an evaluation sheet that participants would be asked to fill out to help give feedback on the utility of the training.

To ensure accountability, each year the parishes would be required to submit training reports of their stewardship members to the Director of Stewardship, including the optional training. The Director of Stewardship may require parishes to have their stewardship committee members perform additional “soft skills” training if the Director sees fit.

Soft Skills Series 3: Hands-On Skills Training

Last in the series, but not the least important, is the opportunity to have people test their soft skills in the safe confines of hands-on training. *Doing* is the best way to gain experience and confidence, and each year the Director of Stewardship will host an in-person or virtual training session open to all stewardship committee members in the Metropolis to work on a practical skill as deemed appropriate by the Director and blessed by the Metropolitan of Chicago. For example, a guest speaker can be brought in to discuss best ways to engage new parishioners, and then people can be paired off into groups to practice new skills. Another year, a video or guest speaker can be used to introduce the concept of having difficult discussions about money. Then, a practice session in small groups can be used to help people work on those skills.

Other topics can include working on parishioner-facing campaigns, ministry leadership skills, learning new technologies, or anything that may help provide hands-on experience to those that are working to increase time, talent and treasures in their parishes.

This is a once-a-year event, required for stewardship committee chairs, optional for stewardship committee members and Parish Council members. It can be held in conjunction with the Clergy-Laity Assembly if desired in the years the assembly takes place.

Is funding required? Most likely, yes. Here again, we recommend that grants are sought to hire the resources to create the necessary online training modules. A budget for guest speakers could also be provided annually.

Action #4: **Establish the Metropolis of Chicago Stewardship Center of Excellence Portal**

Who is Responsible? **Metropolis of Chicago Webmaster/Director or Stewardship/Metropolis Stewardship Team**

Description: The Metropolis of Chicago has created a dedicated webspace to stewardship. We recommend building this out into a portal that will house all resources relating to stewardship, including training, best practice sharing, calendar of events, tools, tutorials, testimonials, videos, and any other resource that applies to the SSN&F Program. This “Center of Excellence” will be the one-stop resource for any parish stewardship committee. It will be organized and updated to ensure the content is fresh and up to date.

The Stewardship Center of Excellence will include at a minimum the following key sections:

- Information on the key elements of stewardship (ownership, engagement, and generosity) and the SSN&F Program, including the actions required by all parishes.
- All online training modules will be housed on this portal. All trainings (in person or virtual) that are recorded will be found on this portal, and the calendar of events will include scheduled trainings.
- Book Club information will be included here as well.
- There will be a dedicated section to sharing best practices. These best practices will include descriptions of parish strategies and tactics that have worked to help advance their stewardship programs. The goal will be to put together a package of information that can enable other parishes to lift and copy these best practices without having to recreate the wheel. The Director of Stewardship will have the responsibility of choosing those that will be included, and the Metropolis Stewardship Team will be collecting these best practices from their assigned parishes. These best practices can also be the subject of training or special calls.
- There will also be a dedicated section for testimonials about stewardship. This section will serve to encourage and motivate stewardship committees and as models for how testimonials can be used to strengthen stewardship in parishes.
- Stewardship materials, links, online tools and resources, books, and other materials helpful to stewardship learning will be found at the Center of Excellence as well (approved by the Director of Stewardship).
- A collection of informational and inspiring videos categorized for ease of use will be available.

- There will be a contact list for parish questions (including the assignments of Metropolis Stewardship Team members to parishes) and a way for questions to be submitted.
- There will also be a section that recognizes parish stewardship committees for their extraordinary work. This will serve to help highlight and show appreciation to people that have dedicated significant time and talent to their stewardship programs.

Is funding required? No.

Action #5: Establish a Parishioner-Facing Stewardship Campaign Telling Parishioners What They Need to Do for their Parish

Who is Responsible? Director of Stewardship/Metropolis Stewardship Team

Description: One of the most critical elements of the Strengthen Stewardship Now & Forever Program is to launch a campaign at each and every parish within the Metropolis of Chicago that is aimed at **telling parishioners their role** in stewardship. In other words, the campaign is less about theory and more about action; it tells parishioners the 4 things they need to do to help the parish and be good stewards of their parish.

The 4 things unsurprisingly are derived from the key elements of stewardship:

- **Volunteer.** The first action to parishioners is to volunteer their time and talents. To help their parish in any way they can with whatever time they can spare. To volunteer for ministries, leadership, outreach, fundraisers and festivals, to serve on committees or councils, to help with the landscape, maintenance, office, bookkeeping, technology, or whatever other needs the parish might have that the parishioners’ talents can fill. The parish must be specific in offering projects and options for volunteerism. And they must recognize and reward it.
- **Participate.** The second action is for parishioners to be active participants in as many aspects of their parish as possible. It starts with participation in the spiritual aspects of our Church: participation in the Divine Liturgy (even attendance counts!) and other services, the sacraments, and Bible study or other spiritual educational opportunities. But active participation should also be encouraged for ministries, committees, fellowship opportunities, youth programs, and outreach and service programs. Participation in small group sessions and similar programs put on by stewardship committees should heavily be encouraged.
- **Give.** The third—and possibly most difficult—action is for parishioners to give a percentage of their income to their parish. We are not suggesting what that percentage should be or that there should be a minimum. But, we are recommending the official Metropolis-wide launch of the percentage of income giving campaign. It will not be enough to encourage donations. This action will ask parishioners to consider giving a percentage of their income to the church—what percentage is up to them. It will not be specific (e.g., it will not say donate 1%, 2%, 5%, or 10%). It will invite the parishioners to consider their circumstances and pick a percentage that works for their situation. (A percentage such as 1% can be offered as an example of a good place to start.) The goal of this action is to begin the *change of mindset* from a set amount that has been recurring likely at the same level for several years to a number that is more in line with the tithing concept that the scriptures teach.

- **Share.** The fourth action for parishioners is the broad principle of sharing. We want our faithful to share their positive experiences with giving their time, talents and treasures through testimonials, in small or large groups, to their friends and family, and with their stewardship committees. We want them to share the lessons with their kids so that the giving of time, talent, and treasure becomes a family focus.

The Volunteer-Participate-Give-Share campaign will be developed by the Metropolis but it will be implemented by the parish stewardship committees with the support of the clergy and Parish Council. Clergy, Parish Council executive committees, and the stewardship committees will be trained on the campaign and the best way to administer it to their parishes. There will be FAQs and resources by the Metropolis Director of Stewardship and Metropolis Stewardship Team available to assist.

Although there is a focus on parishioner action, the campaign will include the *why* of stewardship: why we give our time, talent, and treasure. This is important to be done in conjunction with clergy, as education on why giving is a fundamental part of Christianity is critical.

The campaign will be refreshed each year but will remain consistent in principles. It will take time to and repetition and consistent messaging to change culture. This cannot be launched once and abandoned. It will also be a Metropolis-wide campaign, which will help with consistency, best practice sharing, and addressing areas of challenge.

Is funding required? Yes. There will be some need for creating the campaign and the materials that will be provided to all the parishes to launch the campaign.

Action #6: Embrace Technology and Advance Stewardship Using Recent Technology

Who is Responsible? **Director of Stewardship/Metropolis Stewardship Team (with assistance from technology experts)**

Description: The purpose of this action is to provide direction to parishes on the use of technology as it relates to stewardship. The individual parishes will be responsible for the ultimate adoption of technology, but the Metropolis can provide much help and direction that will enable using technology to help with our change of stewardship culture.

The first directive that can be provided to parishes is to set a three-year window to eliminate the use of collecting donations by passing trays or having trays available. Recurring credit card donations, text giving, bar code scanning, and other technology can be preferable substitutes to trays. Increasing financial stewardship contributions is also an alternative to trays. This may not be well received at first, but with education and persistence, we can change the culture of putting \$1 in a tray to meaningful percentage of income giving that will increase overall giving in parishes.

Another directive relating to technology is using advances in technology to find new ways to communicate and meet. Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Meet, and myriad other platforms allow for interactions in new ways. While these should not substitute for in person meetings all the time, they can be useful in connecting people that cannot travel or are at long distances away. Social media—Facebook, Twitter, Instagram (and likely a dozen new platforms that have emerged since this writing)—is another powerful communication tool that can bring people together in ways that traditionally were

not available. Websites must be updated to be informative, inviting, and appealing. These types of platforms are not optional; they are necessary for us to keep the young generation engaged, as these platforms are how young people learn and communicate today.

A third directive can be to research, identify, and mandate a church management system for each parish that can then collect information at the Metropolis level. For those parishes that have not used a church management system, these systems can be very helpful in collecting and maintain a myriad of information about stewards. If all parishes use the same system that can be fed into the Metropolis level, this could provide opportunities for sharing and data analysis. Once the management system is researched and approved, the directive could be for the adoption of the system to occur at each parish within 2-3 years to provide the parish the opportunity to plan for the expense and adoption of the new system.

Is funding required? Most likely, yes. For the church management system, there will be an expense at the parish level. If the Metropolis could obtain a grant or funds to assist parishes in that expense, it would help with the acquisition of the new system. For other areas of technology mentioned, funding is likely not required.

Action #7: Implement a Youth Stewardship Program that Has Four Components: Education; Engagement; Giving; and Outreach

Who is Responsible? **Metropolis Director of Stewardship in conjunction with the Metropolis Director of Youth**

Description: The future of our church is our youth. While many teach their children about generosity, charity, outreach, service, and giving, it has not been a widespread focus of the church to teach stewardship to our children. The Strengthen Stewardship Now & Forever Program emphasizes the need for a strong youth stewardship program focus, and without our youth the “forever” aspect is in jeopardy.

The Youth Stewardship Program is part of the SSN&F Program. It in essence includes the same key elements but is tailored for the youth. It has four components:

- **Education.** The youth must learn what stewardship is and the importance to their lives and the life of the church.
- **Engagement.** The youth must have opportunities to engage in the spiritual, educational, and fellowship aspects of the parish.
- **Giving.** The youth must learn to donate their time, talent, and treasure to the church. They must know the blessings that will flow from their active charity to the parish.
- **Outreach.** The youth should have the opportunity to serve others and experience the blessings of engaging in Christ-like service.

The Youth Stewardship Program offers opportunities for the parishes to adopt these four components in the various ministries of their parish. Forming a Youth Stewardship Committee that includes youth of various ages and is supervised or coordinated by the parish stewardship committee may be a good way to involve the youth in the ideation and governance processes.

Education & Engagement

We recommend that the Metropolis commission educational materials relating to stewardship under the guidance of our Director of Stewardship and clergy members of the Metropolis Stewardship Team for all youth school age groups (kindergarten through high school). The purpose will be to use and require incorporation of those materials in Sunday School curricula on a monthly basis starting in 2023 at the latest (earlier if possible). We believe it is important to educate our youth on the spiritual aspects of stewardship and the importance of volunteering time and talent, as well as financially supporting our churches.

The lessons should be combined with volunteer activities in coordination with Youth Ministries activities so that students can model the behaviors discussed. Volunteer activities can include helping beautify the church or doing tasks that are needed on the church property and should also be combined with outreach and service activities discussed below.

It is critical for clergy to consistently speak to the youth about stewardship as well. Whether as part of an homily or part of Youth Ministries activities, our clergy should provide the spiritual education and the practical realities that we must care for our church as we do our home, as the church is our spiritual home.

During the college years, parishes should put extra effort into maintaining contact with those in college (away or local). We can teach through example by providing information to the college students about all the good service works of the parish and related stewardship information. Parishes should send communications, care packages, and remind students to find some time to volunteer and serve others. Zoom sessions with clergy can be arranged to keep contact and have discussions on a myriad of topics, including stewardship.

For our post-college young adults, education is just as important. Young Adult activities should be arranged quarterly to discuss stewardship principles and encourage young adults to witness the blessings of dedicating time, talent, and treasures to the church. These efforts can be coordinated with any young adult education efforts that may be recommended by the Metropolis Strategic Plan.

Engaging our youth of all ages on the topic of stewardship—and allowing them to explore the topic together by engaging with each other through small group discussions—is a great way to build their awareness. Parishes must create opportunities for youth engagement in all aspects of church life.

Giving

The Metropolis youth must learn to put in practice the education they will receive about stewardship by volunteering their time and making monthly offerings to the parish. Children learn by seeing and doing. We recommend that parishes set up a system wherein youth volunteer hours are recognized and monthly offerings are collected.

For volunteerism, the parish should provide opportunities for the youth to volunteer to assist in services, the ministries of the church, or building or property upkeep. Having a system to log and recognize our youth's contributions in the church bulletin, newsletter, bulletin board, or other means of recognition is a positive way to reinforce these efforts. Obtaining testimonials from the youth would also be a powerful tool to show the blessings of volunteerism. Each parish must establish age appropriate

volunteer opportunities based on needs. Tab [X] contains some examples of what types of volunteer activities may exist for youth.

Metropolis youth must also learn the habit of making financial offerings to the church. Sunday Schools can send home envelopes and collect offerings in those envelopes the following week (the amount is not important; it is learning the habit of giving). Technology can be incorporated as well. For youth the can, texts or online offerings would work. We leave it to the parish to determine how to implement an offering collection program based on the abilities of the parish, but the Director of Stewardship and the Metropolis Stewardship Team can assist.

Young adults, post-college, should be encouraged to volunteer their time and talents and become individual stewards of the parish they are attending and not rely on family stewardship. Recognition of volunteer efforts is just as important for this age group. In connection with education efforts outlined above, young adults should be asked to fill out their own stewardship information form and make their own individual pledge. This can be done on their phones at the meeting!

Outreach

As parishes educate and engage, and our youth give their time, talents, and treasures, parishes need to ensure our youth are involved in outreach so they can see the blessings of true Christian giving. Each parish must ensure there are age appropriate service opportunities for all of our youth to participate. We recommend that parishes survey their youth to determine the types of service options in which they are interested in participating.

Parishes should also consider donating some of the financial offerings made by the youth to a local food bank or other charitable organization in the community. This would be another great example of showing the youth the blessings of true Christian stewardship.

Is funding required? Yes. We recommend using a professional resource to develop curricula and educational materials for use with all school age groups. There may be opportunities for grants to help raise these funds.

SECTION 4: ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN BY THE PARISHES

In this section, the Strengthen Stewardship Now and Forever Program turns attention to the necessary actions of the parishes to enhance their stewardship programs or successfully implement one. We know it is critical to ensure parishes are tasked with action items as well, as stewardship is all of our responsibility and does not fall all onto the Metropolis.

The Director of Stewardship and the Metropolis Stewardship Team will assist parishes, are available to answer questions and provide ideas, and will do what they can to guide parishes, but the responsibility rests with each parish to implement actions that will advance stewardship in their parish.

With these actions, parishes will take steps that will advance their **ownership** of stewardship, **engagement** of their parishioners, and **generosity** of their parishioners' time, talents, and treasures. These key elements are interwoven into these actions, but the specific strategies that each parish employs will depend on the circumstances of the parish.

Parish Action #1: Strengthen the Parish Stewardship Committee (or Form A Stewardship Committee if the Parish Does Not Current have One)

Who is Responsible: Parish Clergy, Parish Council, and Stewardship Committee Chair

Description: An effective stewardship program starts with having the right people on the stewardship committee and parish leadership alignment. This principle of ownership is where parishes should begin in implementing the Strengthen Stewardship Now and Forever Program. Parishes need to assess their team and ensure they have people that have the time to devote to the work, as there is important training and meeting requirements, and the willingness to learn and try new tactics. *This cannot be done by those that believe we must do it like we have always done it.*

Questions to consider about the stewardship committee membership:

- Does the parish have enough stewardship committee members? The larger the parish, the more stewardship members are needed to reach all of the parishioners.
- Can the members devote sufficient time to complete trainings and help implement strategies?
- How diverse is the committee? Are there young adults, married and single persons, men and women, Orthodox-born and those that have converted to Orthodoxy, etc. on the committee?
- Are there people that are tech-savvy on the committee?
- Are the members willing to learn and try new things?

The make up of the stewardship committee from parish to parish will vary, and parishes may not be able to answer yes to all the questions above. The key is for the membership to be committed to taking the actions in the SSN&F Program, work with the Director of Stewardship, Metropolis Stewardship Team, and their parish leadership, and be willing to share best practices and implement ideas that are best practices at other parishes.

Parish Action #2: Complete All Required Trainings & Use the Metropolis Stewardship Center of Excellence Portal

Who is Responsible: Parish Clergy, Parish Council, and Stewardship Committee

Description: Parish clergy, leadership and stewardship committees must complete their required trainings annually, as applicable. Stewardship Committees will have more mandatory training than others, but all training required by the Metropolis pursuant to the SSN&F Program must be completed and completion will be certified by the Parish Council President and Stewardship Committee Chair and submitted to the Metropolis Director of Stewardship annually.

A significant amount of time and resource will go into preparing and administering the training, and as outlined in the SSN&F Program Metropolis Action Section, the online and in person trainings will cover the key elements of successful stewardship (ownership, engagement, and generosity) in detail, as well as youth stewardship and soft skills training that will be helpful to implement enhanced stewardship strategies. The return on this investment will be significant if the training is actually taken and followed. The Metropolis will provide the detailed roadmap to successful stewardship through this training, and parishes are expected to take and follow it. Non-mandatory training is highly encouraged as well.

In addition, the Metropolis Stewardship Center of Excellence Portal—the home for the online training—will also have myriad resources available to use as parish stewardship strategies are developed and the principles are turned into action items. We expect stewardship committees to review and use these resources and contribute to them as they find other useful material.

Parish Action #3: Develop and implement an annual Parish Stewardship Strategy that includes at least 3 action items from each key element (ownership, engagement, and generosity) and at least one action item from each key element of the Youth Stewardship Program. This strategy will be revised each year.

Who is Responsible? Stewardship Committee (to be approved by Parish Clergy and Parish Council)

Description: The Metropolis is requiring each parish to have its stewardship strategy documented annually. Putting pen to paper and explaining the steps the parish will take to enhance stewardship is a good way to align parish leadership and demonstrate progress against parish plans.

The parish stewardship strategy must address each key element and youth stewardship. Since parishes are in varying stages of stewardship progress, it is difficult to require every parish to do the same things. Parishes will need to make that determination on their own. However, each key element—ownership, engagement, and generosity—and Youth Stewardship all have many concepts and ideas that can help advance parish stewardship. The Metropolis requires each parish to choose 3 actions from each key element and one action from each key component of Youth Stewardship (education, engagement, giving, and outreach) to work on for any given year. This is a good way to measure the success of those actions and build upon them in subsequent years.

The Director of Stewardship and the Metropolis Stewardship Team will assist parishes (members of the Metropolis Stewardship Team will be assigned to parishes in the Metropolis as a point of contact for assistance). Parishes will submit their annual strategies to the Director of Stewardship on a schedule to be determined at a future date.

The first year this will go into effect is 2022.

Parish Action #4: Launch the Parishioner-Facing Campaign Prepared by the Metropolis

Who is Responsible? Stewardship Committee

Description: As discussed in Section X above, the Metropolis will prepare a parishioner-facing campaign designed to tell parishioners their role in attaining true Christian giving in our parishes (see Metropolis Action #5 in Section X above).

The campaign will include posters, written materials, clergy homily recommendations, e-blast ideas, social media ideas, and similar materials designed to be taken and implemented at the parish level by all Metropolis parishes. The plan for roll out will be in 2022.

The campaign will tell parishioners that we need them to volunteer their time and talents, actively participate in the spiritual and fellowship ministries of the parish, donate a percentage of their income to the parish, and share their stories of stewardship with their families, especially their children and grandchildren, their communities, and with each other.

In addition to materials, training will be provided to help parishes message some of the concepts that may be very new to parishioners (e.g., percentage of income giving).

The Director of Stewardship and Metropolis Stewardship Team will assist parishes in this launch and actively communicate about the progress of the campaign.

Parish Action #5: Follow Metropolis Technology Directives and Use Technology to Enhance Stewardship

Who is Responsible? Parish Stewardship Committee

Description: The Metropolis will set certain directives relating to technology that parishes will implement. Parishes should at all times be reviewing new technology to determine whether it will enhance communications or stewardship and seek to adopt those methods, especially as it relates to youth.

The first directive will be to set a three-year window starting in 2022 to eliminate the use of collecting donations by passing trays or having trays available. Recurring credit card donations, text giving, bar code scanning, and other technology can be preferable substitutes to trays. Increasing financial stewardship contributions is also an alternative to trays. This may not be well received at first, but with education and persistence, the parish can change the culture of putting \$1 in a tray to meaningful percentage of income giving that will increase overall giving in the parishes.

Another directive relating to technology is using advances in technology to find new ways to communicate and meet. Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Meet, and myriad other platforms allow for interactions in new ways. While these should not substitute for in person meetings all the time, they can be useful in connecting people that cannot travel or are at long distances away. Social media— Facebook, Twitter, Instagram (and likely a dozen new platforms that have emerged since this writing)— is another powerful communication tool that can bring people together in ways that traditionally were not available. Websites must be updated to be informative, inviting, and appealing. These types of platforms are not optional; they are necessary for parishes to keep the young generation engaged, as these platforms are how young people learn and communicate today.

A third directive will be to use the Metropolis-mandated church management system to collect information on parish stewards. For those parishes that have not used a church management system, these systems can be very helpful in collecting and maintain a myriad of information about stewards. Once the management system is researched and approved by the Metropolis, the directive will be for the adoption of the system to occur at each parish within 2-3 years to provide the parish the opportunity to plan for the expense and adoption of the new system.

Parish Action #6: [Share Best Practices, Ask Questions, and Seek Help](#)

Who is Responsible? Parish Stewardship Committee

Description: An important part of the SSN&F Program is the Metropolis Stewardship Center of Excellence Portal that will contain stewardship success stories, recognition, best practices, and lessons learned from parishes. The value derived from this resource will be a direct result of the information supplied to the Center of Excellence Portal. We expect parishes to share their best practices with the Director of Stewardship and Metropolis Stewardship Team liaison so that best practices can be shared with others in the Metropolis. Our Metropolis stewardship will get better together as we share and learn from each other.

As stated above, a member of the Metropolis Stewardship Team will be assigned to each parish to act as a liaison with the Metropolis and help, advise, and be available for questions. Parishes should take advantage of this resource and ask for help, ask questions, and *try the tactics recommended*. The SSN&F Program is a joint effort between the Metropolis and parishes, and the Metropolis will not leave it to any parish implement the Program without help from the Metropolis.

APPENDIX

JOB DESCRIPTION

GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF CHICAGO

DIRECTOR OF STEWARDSHIP

DRAFT-FOR INTERNAL REVIEW ONLY!

SCOPE

This describes the responsibilities for this Metropolis of Chicago funded position [full time/part time TBD] to facilitate the transition to True Stewardship for all the clergy & laity in the Parishes of the Metropolis of Chicago. This description will be referenced during the annual job reviews and will be periodically modified as necessary to fit current circumstances, needs and resources.

This position is meant to support & augment, not replace, ongoing stewardship efforts at the Metropolis and parishes. The role will lead stewardship efforts at the Metropolis of Chicago and coordinate with a selected team designed to help develop and implement the strategy and materials in the Metropolis of Chicago Strengthen Stewardship Now and Forever Comprehensive Plan (“Metropolis Stewardship Plan”).

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Stewardship Director will:

1. **Lead and Maintain the Metropolis’ Stewardship Plan**
Synthesize input from the present Metropolis stewardship initiatives and participants to annually review and update as appropriate the Vision, Mission, Objectives and Criteria to measure progress in Stewardship in our Metropolis—and to define True Stewardship. This includes youth stewardship.
2. **Establish and supervise the implementation of a comprehensive training program**
Collaborate with Metropolis Stewardship Team to create online training modules and in person training seminars to train parish stewardship committee and parish leadership on principles of stewardship, soft skills training, best practices, and lessons learned.
3. **Build the Stewardship Best Practices & Resources Portal**
Collaborate with and support the on-going Metropolis efforts to identify, describe and implement best practices from both within and outside of the Orthodox Church and growth towards True Stewardship. Coordinate as necessary with Archdiocese-wide stewardship efforts and education efforts at Holy Cross Seminary.
4. **Educate Parish Laity**

Work closely with the parish priests, stewardship committees and parish councils to deepen their parishioners' understanding of stewardship and practice it.

5. Solicit Parish Feedback and Assess Progress

Work with all the Metropolis parishes to annually assess their progress towards

True Stewardship.

SUPERVISOR

The direct supervisor of the Stewardship Developer is [TBD] Direct supervisor will address any prioritization issues that may arise. Annual reviews will be conducted with input from the Metropolis Board and the leadership of the Metropolis Stewardship Team.

EMPLOYMENT STATUS & BENEFITS

TBD