



**EASTERN FEDERATION OF GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH MUSICIANS
Federation Council Meeting Minutes**

**St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church, Perth Amboy NJ
October 28, 2017**

The meeting was **called to order** at 1:30 pm by President Paul Mavromihalis. Rev. Fr. George Parsenios opened with a prayer.

The **Roll Call of Delegates** was read by Secretary Miriam Kotsonis. 15 Choirs and 12 Board Members were present and eligible to vote. Total voting strength for the meeting was 27.

District I (MD) (3) – Baltimore Annunciation, Bethesda, Falls Church

District II (VA) (3) – Newport News, Norfolk, Richmond

District III (NJ) (7) – Asbury Park/Ocean, Perth Amboy, Piscataway, Trenton/Hamilton, Westfield, Staten Island, Flemington

District IV (Greater PHL) (2) – Broomall, Media

Board Voting Members Present – Kathryn Athanasoulas, Sondra Awad, Alexa Garrison, Faye Hayes, Kay Kehayas, Maria Keritsis, Miriam Kotsonis, Nick Kyros, Paul Mavromihalis, Fotini Nichols, Drucie Papafil, Pamela Sande

OFFICERS' REPORTS

Secretary Miriam Kotsonis asked that everyone look over the **Minutes** of the 2016 Council Meeting, which were distributed in the 2017 Council packets. They had also been posted in draft form on the EFGOCM website for prior review. Pam Sande moved to approve as written, Kathryn Athanasoulas seconded, and the motion passed.

President's Report – Paul Mavromihalis read highlights of his report for the year. He thanked Fr. Dimitrios Antokas, Perry Alexion, and choir members of Saint George Bethesda for hosting the 2016 conference, Fotini Nichols for conducting Frank Desby's liturgical arrangement and Teodora Adzharova for accompanying, and the Rev. Stefanos Alexopoulos for giving a workshop on "*Hymnology, Music, and the Liturgy.*"

Paul thanked Miriam for recording and producing the 2016 Conference CD and stated that he hoped this would become an annual offering. He thanked Nick for all the work he does for Communications and the ListServ. He also thanked Drucie for her ongoing electronic publication of *The First Mode*.

Paul told the Council that we had introduced and evaluated initiatives to promote Federation Conference participation. He mentioned last year's Anna Gallos Scholarship award of \$1,000, which had been given to Elias Nicholas Kotsis of Holmdel NJ.

In 2017, the Board met twice prior to the Conference: in Fulton, MD, in March and at the Metropolis of NJ Clergy Laity Assembly in Garfield, NJ, in May. Eight Board members represented the EFGOCM at the Metropolis Clergy Laity Assembly (three more called in for the Board meeting). Thirteen EFGOCM members attended the annual meeting of the National Forum of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians held in Flushing, NY. Our Federation had the largest number of participants.

At the Metropolis Clergy Laity Assembly, several clergymen visited our Board meeting. They expressed a need for a stronger bridge between youth musical activities and adult choirs. Youth Committee Chair Sondra Awad is working to define a *Bridging the Gap Youth Initiative* to more effectively recruit young people into our choirs. Paul asked anyone with ideas and interest in this area to contact Sondra.

The NJ District sponsored a workshop at Holy Trinity, Westfield on November 13, 2016. The clinician, Valerie van Hoven, a faculty member at Montclair State University, presented *Breathing Coordination for Singers*, based on the Alexander Technique. Our Federation has CMI funds available for use between now and the end of June, 2018. Paul encouraged all Districts to propose CMIs, saying we were limited only by our energy and ideas. He asked attendees to suggest topics to their District Supervisors.

Paul thanked the members of the Saint Demetrios Parish of Perth Amboy, NJ, for hosting us during their 100th Anniversary weekend. He then announced the date of the 2018 EFGOCM Conference, October 11-14, 2018, hosted by the Saints Constantine & Helen Cathedral Choir of Richmond, VA. He mentioned that we are seeking a host for the 2019 Conference.

A summary of the 2017 National Forum Annual Meeting Summary was referenced and included in the packet.

Treasurer's Report – In Adam Birnbaum's absence, Paul presented the report. He stated that we had a nearly \$2,000 surplus in 2017. He suggested that attendees look through the report, which has many helpful explanatory notes. He turned his attention to the 2018 proposed budget, explaining its format and the elements of the proposal. Paul noted that Adam proposed a balanced budget, which includes \$1,875 for reserves in 2018. Drucie Papafil moved to approve and adopt the Proposed 2018 Budget, seconded by Ann Sophocles. The motion was passed.

DISTRICT REPORTS

Paul introduced each District Supervisor: Faye Hayes, District I (MD), Alexa Garrison, District II (VA), Kathryn Athanasoulas, District III (NJ), and Pamela Sande, District IV (Greater PHL). The District Supervisors mentioned highlights of their reports, which were included in the packets.

District I: Faye congratulated our 2017 Conference Music Director, Nick Kyros and Accompanist, Teodora Adzharova, whom the MD district views as "their own." She reported on an exciting youth initiative in their District. Fifi Nichols and Faye Hayes from Annunciation Cathedral, Baltimore, implemented a new music program at Camp Good Shepherd - Chesapeake Bay. They "went to camp" for four days. They taught hymns and responses Monday through Wednesday, and on Thursday morning, all fifty campers sang the entire Divine Liturgy in English.

District II: Alexa said that it was very difficult to get feedback from the churches that have congregational singing rather than choirs. This is a source of challenge when trying to communicate and build the Federation. She referred attendees to her report for details of activities in Richmond and Newport News, and asked for their support in seeking out responsive contacts in other District churches.

District III: Kathryn reported on the successful Lenten Concert, held for the 27th year. Perth Amboy hosted the event as part of their 100th Anniversary celebrations. She thanked Kay Kehayas for directing the Holy Cross Choir in Asbury Park this past September and noted that it is challenging to get new singers to replace those who have moved, retired, or passed away. We did have two new singers in 2017, bringing the current total to 25 (in 2005, the number was 43). She announced an upcoming collaborative Christmas concert together with the Pan-Orthodox Spirit of Orthodoxy Choir, to be held on December 8 at St. George Greek Orthodox Church, Clifton.

District IV – Pam asked attendees to read her report in the interest of time. She requested the support of all attendees to help build attendance, participation, and communication with the churches in the district, very few of which respond to her requests for news or offers of help. She called on the Council membership to be our ambassadors to other churches as well as their own, in order to expand membership and help ensure the future of choirs.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

Scholarship – Chair Maria Keritsis reported that they continue to solicit applications for next year's scholarships to outstanding young musicians. She said that they had received warm letters of appreciation from these young people, whom we hope to groom to come in and take our places. She asked attendees to be sure to congratulate our three 2017 recipients if we know them (Joey Chavez, Richmond, VA; Peter Papadopoulos, Broomall, PA; and Elias Kotsis, Holmdel, NJ), and encourage the young musicians in our parishes to apply for these scholarships. Paul mentioned that he had received information on Pan-Hellenic Scholarships in the Arts (to be distributed in the next ListServ email) which might also be helpful to musically talented youth.

Communications – Chair Nick Kyrus asked attendees to read the report. He then awarded 25-year Choir Service certificates. He reiterated that it is important to send updated rosters to Susan Karcanes, and thanked her for her work. Since it is desirable to update them every year, a request was made by a Council member to mail out the current roster to all choirs next year. Nick urged attendees to visit the EFGOCM website and see all the helpful information that is posted there. Drucie reminded everyone that *The First Mode* is exclusively distributed on-line. (For the few people who do not use computers at all, she asked choir directors to print out copies.) She urged everyone to sign up for ListServ and to encourage all members of their choirs to do so, in order to receive information from the Federation.

Administration – Chair Kay Kehayas reported that the Committee (comprised of herself, Kathryn Athanasoulas, and Hope Demitry) continues to review governing documents. She reminded the group that the deadline for submission of Athenagoras Award and scholarship nominations is May 1, so that they can be considered annually at the Spring EFGOCM Board meeting. May 1 is also the due date for nominations of music and conductors for the 2020 Conference.

Youth – Chair Sondra Awad said that most news had been covered by Faye and Paul. She asked attendees to help her find out more about how churches “bridge the gap” to encourage youth participation in our choirs. She mentioned that in her church, while it is difficult to involve youth in choirs for weekly Liturgies, she has had good results getting help from them with special projects (in this case, the Hymnology Series recording). Sondra described the Hymnology Series, being produced by the National Forum. Each hymn is accompanied by an icon, music, descriptions about the icon and music, and teaching suggestions. In an earlier Hymnology Series, the group *Eikona* performed the hymns. In the new series coming out, now in its final stages, Sondra is making the recording with a youth choir. For each hymn, the children perform it first, followed by a “teaching” track in which an adult, Lucy Pappadakes of Charlotte, NC, sings a phrase, echoed by the children. Sondra requested that attendees speak to their Religious Education directors, youth directors, and other relevant groups to purchase the series and incorporate it into Sunday School classes.

Continuing Education – Chair Miriam Kotsonis reported that the National Forum had agreed to partially reimburse speaker/clinician expenses for 4-hour Church Music Institutes (at 40%), while continuing to reimburse 6-hour CMIs (100%). Because of this new option, she collected attendee preferences via a survey at this year’s Conference and summarized results during the Council meeting. There were 38 participants, a response rate of approximately 70%. Key results are given below. Miriam reminded attendees that there was money for CMIs this year and encouraged its use. She also invited anyone interested in helping with Continuing Education to contact her.

- Continuing Education Topics:
 - Highest interest: How to use voice well, how to sound better as a choir
 - Moderate interest: Becoming a better sight-reader, hymns as prayer, how hymns fit into Liturgy and other services, learning more about Byzantine music structure
 - Lowest interest: How to read Byzantine notation, how to read Western notation
- Formats:
 - 4-hour (rated #1); 6-hour (#2)
 - Two 2-hour sessions (distant #3); three 2-hour sessions or two 3-hour sessions (#4)
- Locations:
 - Good support for in-District sessions, almost as good for sessions at Conference (note: at Conferences, two 2-hour sessions were more acceptable than when in the District)
 - Limited interest in on-line sessions having reduced interactivity with presenter
- Short (one hour or less) on-line learning sessions:
 - Positive for recorded sessions to be seen/heard whenever convenient
 - Much less interest in attending live presentations on-line

OLD BUSINESS

Music/Conductor Selection (Kathryn Athanasoulas, Chair, and Nick Kyrus)

Nick described the overall process: the EFGOCM normally selects music and conductors for two years in advance. Members submit nominations before the deadline (May 1) of each year. From the list of

nominations, the Board selects a subset to be presented to the Council. Because of the ongoing publication of new English translations, in 2016 we deferred the 2018 selection in order to have a greater choice of music. Therefore we now need to vote on 2018 and 2019 music. Before lunch we presented the music and sang several hymns from each liturgy. Paul noted that liturgies available in both languages allow selection of a blend of languages appropriate for the host church.

The choices for 2018 and 2019 music were identical: Gallos IV (2017 selection), Gallos II in Greek/English; Limberakis in Greek/English; and Roubanis. Choices for conductor for both years were: Nick Kyrus, Fifi Nichols, and Lucy Pappadakes (Southeastern Federation).

For 2018, the Roubanis Liturgy was selected, conducted by Fifi Nichols.

For 2019, the Gallos II Liturgy was selected, conducted by Nick Kyrus.

NEW BUSINESS

Good of the Federation

Drucie requested outreach by all attendees, asking them to visit nearby parishes, talk with them, and keep encouraging them to participate, offering to help with resources.

Motion to adjourn was made by Paul Mavromihalis and seconded by Maria Keritsis and the meeting was adjourned at 2:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Miriam Kotsonis

Miriam Kotsonis
Secretary

Note: Copies of all Reports were published in the October 28, 2017, Federation Council Meeting packet and are attached to the original Council Minutes.