



# GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS <sup>OF</sup> ATLANTA

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## ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΑΤΛΑΝΤΑΣ

June 2, 2014

Beloved in the Lord,

I greet you with love and joy in the Name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

For many years, I have been blessed to travel throughout our Holy Metropolis of Atlanta and speak with our Faithful about our parish communities and our Metropolis. As a result, after prayerful study and reflection, I have directed Mr. Bill Marianes to implement a 6-step Strategic Planning process to systematically guide our Metropolis of Atlanta in the future. Through this process, we will together develop a comprehensive road map to achieve meaningful programs and ministries for the spiritual, educational and social growth of our Faithful and our parish communities. The purpose of this letter is to update you on the excellent progress we have made thus far.

Recently, a dedicated group of nearly 50 clergy and laity from throughout our Metropolis representing many constituencies and viewpoints were invited to meet for three days at a Strategic Planning retreat. The participants brought with them a broad background of service to the Church, reflecting the diverse geography and perspectives of our Metropolis. The discussions were very positive, and all decisions were reached by consensus and with enthusiasm. Preceding this retreat, many clergy and laity from throughout the Metropolis were asked to help identify our Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (referred to as a SWOT analysis).

The Metropolis of Atlanta Strategic Planning Team reached a consensus on our SWOT analysis and then developed the following Statement of Why for our Metropolis: **The Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Atlanta welcomes all people seeking salvation, love, truth and fulfillment.**

We then carefully reviewed the Archdiocese's extensive Mission Statement and re-affirmed it for the Metropolis: **The Metropolis of Atlanta's Mission is to energize, cultivate and guide the Faithful in the Southeastern United States by proclaiming the Faith and Gospel of Christ, and teaching and spreading the Orthodox Christian Faith.**

Following this, we discussed and refined the Core Values that will guide the overall work of our Metropolis:

### Metropolis of Atlanta Core Values

1. **Christ-centered**
2. **Love**
3. **Sacred Apostolic tradition**
4. **Education, training and leadership development**
5. **Outreach and evangelism**
6. **Integrity, accountability and transparency**
7. **Family**
8. **Service and philanthropy**
9. **Stewardship**
10. **Hospitality, acceptance, welcoming and embracing**
11. **Spiritual growth**

These Core Values then led to the development of a Vision Statement for our Metropolis, that focuses on both “*What do we want to accomplish?*” and “*Where are we going?*” After thorough and extensive analysis, prayerful reflection and consensus-driven discussions, our Strategic Planning Committee unanimously recommends that our Holy Metropolis embrace the following new Vision:

### **Metropolis of Atlanta Vision**

**We will grow the Metropolis of Atlanta, and personally grow in Christ and make disciples, by living as witnesses of our faith through loving, faithful and purposeful Orthodox Christian communities focused on worship, education, stewardship, philanthropy and fellowship.**

We believe this Vision is fully consistent with the Mission of our Archdiocese and Ecumenical Patriarchate, our statement of Why, the Core Values we identified as our guiding principles, and the overall calling each of us has to be great stewards of Christ’s Church. As we proceed through the next phases of our Strategic Planning process, we will use our Core Values and Vision to help us prioritize our work and the steps we take to attain our goals.

We have now formed the following 11 Task Forces that are developing Strategic Goals and detailed action plans to achieve our Vision. These Task Forces will develop “SMART” Strategic Goals that are **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**ealistically written, and with a detailed **T**imetable.

### **Metropolis of Atlanta Strategic Objective Task Forces**

#### **VISION Task Forces**

1. Clergy
2. Education
3. Family
4. Outreach
5. Spiritual growth
6. Stewardship
7. Youth

#### **OPERATIONAL Task Forces**

8. Administration
9. Communication
10. Finance
11. Technology

It is important to note that these Task Forces (just like our Core Values) are not listed in order of importance, for they are all critical to our work as a Metropolis. Our work will not be complete until we excel in all of our Strategic Goals and achieve our Vision to strengthen our Parishes and parishioners. In addition to the core Strategic Planning Team that has been working so diligently, we are currently reaching out to our communities to identify additional individuals to assist us in accomplishing our critical work. If any parishioner wants to participate in this Strategic Planning process, please contact our Strategic Planning facilitator, Bill Marianes, at [Bill@stewardshipcalling.com](mailto:Bill@stewardshipcalling.com) or [bmarianes@mcguirewoods.com](mailto:bmarianes@mcguirewoods.com) and identify on which Task Force you would like to work.

In addition, I want to invite everyone to attend a Strategic Planning open forum discussion during our annual Archangel Michael Honors weekend. The afternoon of Saturday, November 8<sup>th</sup>, we will present our proposed Strategic Goals and seek your input, comments and consensus. We hope you will be able to attend and let your voice be heard as we proceed to build a plan to assist our Parishes and Metropolis for the next several years.

God continues to bless us every day of our lives. He has given us the stewardship responsibility over the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Atlanta, and I know that you, as a member of our Metropolis family, take this awesome responsibility very seriously. Of course, there is so much we are doing well, and there are other things we can do better.

Naturally we will keep you informed every step of the way and look forward to the full realization and implementation of our final Strategic Plan. With God's help, there is nothing we cannot achieve if we work together for His greater glory and as faithful stewards of His Holy Orthodox Church: *'for with God, all things are possible.'*

Praying that you and your families will enjoy a restful and blessed summer, I remain,

With paternal blessings and with much love in our Lord,

*+Metropolitan Alexios*

**+ALEXIOS**

Metropolitan of Atlanta