

CHARTER

of the Sisterhood of the Myrrh-Bearing Women
at Holy Protection Russian Orthodox Church ('parish,' 'the parish'), Austin-Pflugerville, Texas



This charter is based on the charter of the St. Juliana Sisterhood at St. Jonah Church in Spring, the parish of our regional dean (благочин) Fr. John Whiteford, with minimal alteration. It is blessed by the rector of Holy Protection Russian Orthodox Church, Fr. Hieromonk Aidan (Keller) and will take effect Sunday, Nov. 12, 2017, subject to the approval of Archbishop Peter.

I. Organization and Objectives of the Sisterhood

1. At Holy Protection parish in Pflugerville by Austin, Texas, a church sisterhood has been established which bears the name of the holy myrrh-bearing women who excelled in active charitable service to our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ. Under their name, and striving to embody their devoted service, the sisterhood shall serve God and their brothers and sisters in Christ, in the manner described below.
2. The sisterhood celebrates its annual feast on the Third Sunday of Pascha (the second Sunday after Easter). The icon of the Myrrh-Bearing Women is prominently displayed in the parish temple.
3. The sisterhood comprises a component and integral part of the parish, and exists in accordance with the parish's bylaws and any parish charter blessed by the rector, as a *parish organization*.
4. It is the sisterhood's objectives on the one hand that those who enter its membership may perfect themselves morally in Christian virtue, in accordance with the teachings of the Russian Orthodox Church, under the pastoral guidance of their rector and in close contact with the life of the parish. The general object of the sisterhood is to render active aid to the parish and to carry out, in a practical manner, the duties of the parish, in accordance with paragraph 2 of the Normal Parish By-Laws of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad.
5. The duties of the sisterhood are as follows. They ought always to be implemented with a prior blessing from the rector, except in cases of emergency.
 - a) Cleaning and adornment of the entire church building during divine service and afterwards; the care, cleaning, repair, and/or replacement of vestments and items of cloth; and the adornment of the church, as for example with flowers, plants, and decorations.
 - b) Visitation of the sick; inquiry into the cases of those in need; provision of assistance to them; assistance and visits to prisoners.
 - c) Visitation of the seriously and/or chronically ill; informing the priest of such cases; reading prayers for the dying; finally, moral and practical support for families of the dying and deceased.
 - d) Concern for the unbaptized, unwed, and unchurched; bringing them to church so that the Holy Mysteries may be performed over them.
 - e) Aiding, with every means at their disposal, the parish school(s) for children.

- f) Collection of funds and materials for: (a) church needs, done outside the time of divine service; (b) for the sick; poor; invalids; homeless; or any other suffering person; (c) conducting and/or coordinating parish fund-raising activities; (d) conducting and/or assisting with public events or local pilgrimages.
- g) Organizing and coordinating the provision of refreshments at the Sunday and feast day trapeza. Funds may be collected to defray these expenses.
- h) Aiding the parish starosta in acquiring and distributing prayerful and instructive literature, such as texts for daily and common prayers, lives of saints, liturgical texts, counsels of Saints of the Church, and audio recordings of these.

II. Government and Membership

1. Any woman who is a member of the parish in good standing, may be admitted to membership. Any Orthodox woman of at least 21 years of age, who is enrolled officially as a parish member; has signed the sisterhood membership roll; and who has not been removed by the bishop, rector, or sisterhood general assembly, is considered a member in good standing. Sisters in good standing may vote at the general assembly and are eligible for election to the sisterhood council.
2. In all its activities the sisterhood is subject to and guided by the rector.
3. The sisterhood is governed by the sisterhood council. This council is composed of the president (or “senior sister”); vice-president; treasurer; and secretary. If the general assembly desires, at-large council members may also be elected. Council members are elected for a one-year term by the sisterhood general assembly. The president is an ex-officio member of the parish council. The sisterhood council will meet at least every other month. Any sisterhood member may attend these meetings, and if she wishes to bring up an issue with the council, she may do so during the time allotted for discussing new business.
4. The general assembly of the sisterhood is convoked annually. Notification of such meetings is sent out two weeks prior, indicating the scheduled meeting date and time. Additional meetings may be convoked by the rector or, with the rector’s blessing, the president. The general assembly is considered valid when a majority of the sisterhood membership is present. All sisters have the right to an advisory voice at the general assembly, at which assembly elections for the sisterhood council take place. The rector confirms each officer-elect and submits the name of the president-elect to the ruling bishop, as an ex-officio member of the parish council.
5. The sisterhood council manages sisterhood funds. The treasurer keeps a record of receipts and expenditures, copies of which are submitted to the parish treasurer at least quarterly and to the parish auditing committee, which will review sisterhood accounts. Monies received are given to the parish treasurer for deposit. The yearly accounts, along with parish auditing committee recommendations (if any), are submitted to the parish general assembly for confirmation. The parish treasurer will write checks for the sisterhood for those funds which the parish may keep in behalf of the sisterhood. The parish treasurer may also write checks for the sisterhood when requested by the sisterhood treasurer (or, if unavailable, sisterhood president).
6. A book of minutes of all official sisterhood and sisterhood council meetings is kept by the secretary and signed by the president and secretary. Minutes are not required when the sisters hold informal meetings, such as to discuss practical matters related to upcoming events.
7. The sisterhood cannot establish titles of honor.

III. Expulsions and Disbanding

1. A sister may be expelled from the sisterhood by the rector, by a vote of the sisterhood council, or by a vote of the sisterhood general assembly.

2. If it should occur that the sisterhood is disbanded, a special assembly of the entire sisterhood first issues a resolution to that effect; next, the ruling bishop gives his prior blessing for this; finally, the rector carries out and announces the disbanding, as appropriate.
3. All sisters are provided with at least one week notice prior to the special assembly mentioned above. At this special assembly, two-thirds of enrolled sisterhood members will attend.
4. The ruling bishop has final authority in all matters pertaining to the sisterhood.
5. In the event of disbanding, all property of the sisterhood is transferred to the parish it served.

IV. Alteration and Amendment of This Charter

1. If local conditions require, alterations and amendments of this charter may be made at the sisterhood general assembly by a two-thirds majority vote of those in attendance. No less than two-thirds of the sisters listed as members should be present at such a sisterhood general assembly.
2. Alterations and amendments of this charter which are accepted at the sisterhood general assembly take effect only after these are confirmed by the ruling bishop.



APPENDIX

As of Nov. 12, 2017, the following is the official list of sisterhood members:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Larisa Mokhova, president 2. Olga Belovusava 3. Lia "Lilia" Hidalgo 4. Yekaterina "Kate" Pastuha 5. Elena Larina 6. Olga Ponomareva 7. Irina "Ilona" Longway 8. Anna Kashkina 9. Galina Kouzmicheva 10. Olga Falkowski 11. Olga Kamenskiha 12. Anna Spikes | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 13. Tatiana Kosachevskaya 14. Vera Mityushina 15. Marina Matsiuhova 16. Anna "Diana" Tyurina 17. Larissa Tyurina (mother of Anna) 18. Elena Aleshina 19. Xenia "Yulia" Griffith 20. Anna Pashalova 21. Marina Frolova 22. Dominica McGinnis 23. Natalia Boston |
|--|--|

NOTICE

The first annual sisterhood general assembly is scheduled for Sunday, Nov. 26, 2017, at 12:30 p.m.

Please inform Fr. Aidan of any changes to the above list of members by Friday, Nov. 24, 2017.

By Saturday, Nov. 25, 2017, all nominations for sisterhood council (president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer) should be sent to Fr. Aidan by phone (512 915 0667), text (SMS to that number), or email (hieromonachusaidanus@yahoo.com).

cc: All sisterhood members