To the Reverend Priests and Deacons and
The Parishes and Members of the Parish Councils of the
Holy Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America

Beloved in the Lord,

Important Update Regarding Youth Safety Rollout

One of our greatest responsibilities as a Holy Archdiocese is to introduce our Youth to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ through ministry work that is faithful and effective. We need programs and activities that are safe and healthy. This is why we are overjoyed by the adoption of the new Policies for the Safety of Children and Youth, which were the subject of a letter I sent to you in September.

To become a Youth Worker under the Policies, a person must simply:
Register with his/her home parish,
Successfully complete online training once a year, and
Successfully pass a background screen every two years.

Both registration and the online training are fully subsidized by our Holy Archdiocese. After our initial negotiation with Praesidium, our official youth safety vendor, we determined that the baseline screen mandated by the Policies (once every two years) would cost $17 per Youth Worker applicant plus additional fees charged by your county or state. We discovered that certain states and counties impose extraordinarily high surcharges for the county of residence criminal background screen.

Rather than burden individuals in these regions with such high surcharges, Praesidium has told us that they can shift baseline background screening costs from $17 to $28 per Youth Worker applicant throughout the United States. This $28 figure would be a flat fee for each individual Youth Worker applicant across the Archdiocese, which includes both third party screening costs and Praesidium’s service fee.

Our policy implementation is based on careful, prayerful consideration and a desire to keep our children safe. Our primary goal is that our young people know Christ: to achieve this end, it is imperative that we cultivate the safety which the Policies help facilitate.
Rolling out these Policies has been a complicated process. I thank both the Parish and Metropolis Youth Safety Administrators for their diligence and commitment to keeping our young people safe. I also applaud the thousands of faithful who have already become certified Youth Workers under the Policies.

Keeping our children safe is a deeply important responsibility. It is a holy calling. May God grant us the wisdom and strength needed to implement the Policies for the Safety of Children and Youth across our Archdiocese in the weeks ahead.

More information about the Policies, including easy-to-follow checklists concerning the process of compliance, can be found at goarch.org/safety.

With paternal love in Christ,

† ELPIDOPHOROS
Archbishop of America