



METROPOLIS
OF CHICAGO

METROPOLIS VISION

(5-Year Vision 2023–2028)

Metropolitan Nathanael's vision for our Metropolis

Metropolitan Nathanael



Since 2018, the Metropolis of Chicago has labored to establish a culture of trust. This has largely been achieved through our commitment to fiscal responsibility and accountability. The season of **building trust** has yielded greater collaboration between the hierarchy, clergy, and laity. We are now well positioned to embark on the next season of our development—a season of **building relationships**. Our Metropolis is growing because we are intentionally seeking ways to nurture impactful relationships within and beyond the walls of our parishes and institutions.

(1) Our success stems from the dynamism of our clergy. The Metropolis *Higher Calling Program*¹ is helping them grow spiritually and professionally. Over 50 priests are engaged in continuing education and formation opportunities. Annually, clergy embark on spiritual retreats and dedicate adequate restorative time with their loved ones. Clergy approach their ministry with a sense of renewed joy and enthusiasm, and they are prepared to lead their parishes in bold new ways. Their formation has also shaped the hearts and minds of their parishioners, making them more eager to assist in the work of the parish.

(2) Along these lines, we offer parishes essential resources and best-practice guidelines to do God's work in their local contexts. Parishes are working closely with each other, which helps amplify success stories across our Metropolis. More than 50 *Mustard Seed* micro-grants² have given parishes opportunities to express their creativity, respond to local challenges, and bear greater fruit. Through our *Strengthen Stewardship Now and Forever Program*,³ tailored workshops have been conducted at over 30 parishes, increasing the holistic commitment of the faithful. Synergy exists on all levels of the Church: Parish-Metropolis-Archdiocese-Patriarchate.

(3) Our hearts are burning with a desire to share God's love with others. Outreach to the most vulnerable members of society has made us a vital part of our cities and towns. Major nonprofit organizations and government agencies are seeking to partner with us. Through the efforts of *Philotochos* and *Project HOPE*,⁴ we have served more than 18M meals and provided over 80K nights of shelter to those in need.

(4) Over 50K of our youth, young adults, and new families are engaged in such philanthropic initiatives. This renewed spirit of philanthropy has sparked in them a profound desire to deepen their relationship with Christ and to invite others to His Church. Care for one another has inspired countless faith seekers to commit to Jesus Christ and to learn more about the Orthodox Church. All of our programs and ministries are a vital part of the catechetical journey of faith seekers. The number of adults embracing the Orthodox faith and joining our parishes is growing exponentially year over year.

(5) With greater engagement and more people joining our faith, we are fueling the growth of the Church in dynamic ways. Grassroots generosity through our Metropolis *Vision Fund* covers 100% of our operating budget; funds received through the Archdiocesan National Ministries program are earmarked to support our parishes; all parish debt, totaling \$15M has been eliminated. We are no longer "slave to lender" (Prov. 22:7). We are free to invest our God-given resources in programs and ministries that will grow the Church and transform people's lives!

Motivated by a spirit of abundance, we are locked in arms and walking together toward a more inspirational future.

**Develop
Clergy**

**Support
Parishes**

**Expand
Philanthropy**

**Increase
Engagement**

**Fuel
Growth**

¹ "Higher Calling" provides the clergy of the Metropolis of Chicago with opportunities for continuing education and leadership formation. The ultimate purpose of programming under Higher Calling is to help clergy deliver better spiritual guidance, pastoral care, and Christian inspiration to the faithful and faith seekers across the Metropolis of Chicago.

² The purpose of the Mustard Seed Fund is to test and scale promising new ministries and programs that inspire and motivate a new generation of Orthodox Christians to participate in the Church. Micro-grants are awarded to Metropolis of Chicago clergy and stewards seeking to develop and implement new or existing parish-level initiatives that advance evangelism, welcoming, and outreach.

³ The "Strengthen Stewardship Now & Forever" program is designed to help parishes instill the value of stewardship as a way of life, as a path to greater spiritual growth and as a source for strengthening faith for Orthodox Christians. Stewardship is the natural outgrowth of a parish's efforts to reach out, welcome and engage its parishioners in the life of the Church. The program offers guidance to parishes for inspiring generosity among the faithful.

⁴ Project HOPE (Humanitarian Outreach and Philanthropic Engagement) partners with parishes in the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Chicago and local organizations to help provide food security and stable housing to those in need.

PROGRESS TO DATE

Develop Clergy

- 20 clergy participating in development initiatives

Support Parishes

- 9 Micro-Grants from The Mustard Seed Fund
- 5 Parish Stewardship Workshops

Expand Philanthropy

- 1.8M meals
- 8K nights of shelter
- 72K personal care kits

Increase Engagement

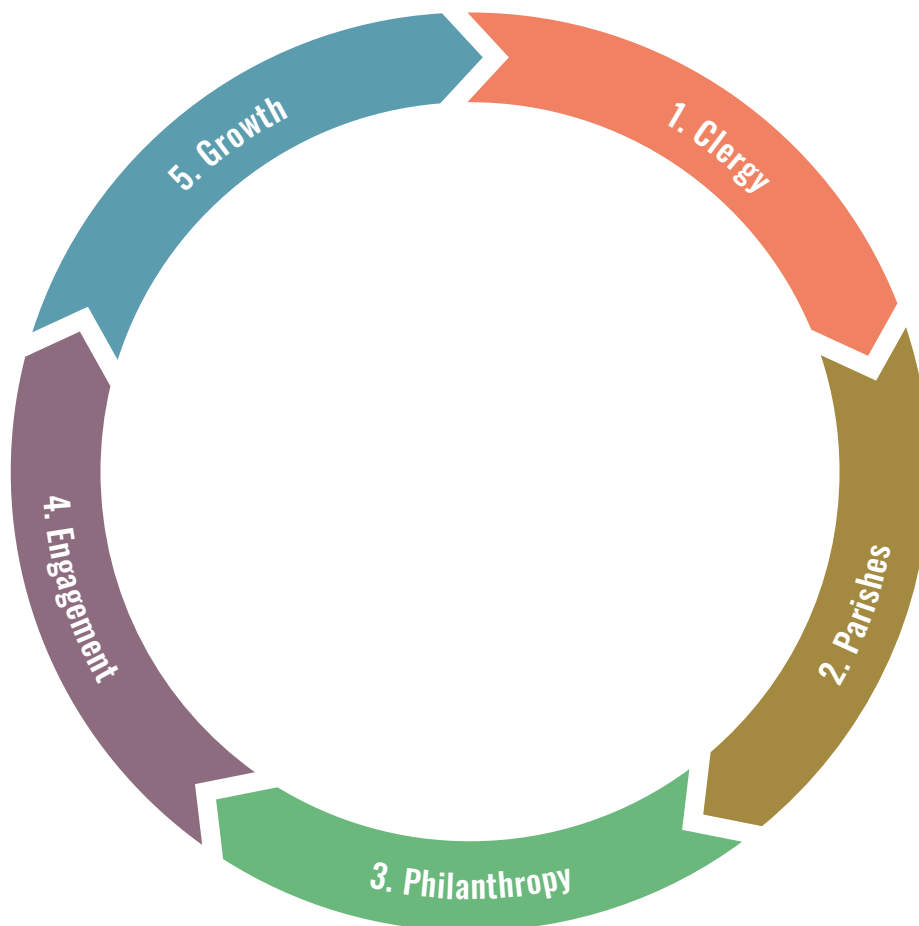
- 2K youth and young adult participants in Metropolis-wide programs
- 3K members of Philoptochos
- 140 adult converts annually

Fuel Growth

- Operating Budget Breakdown:
60% GOA Parish Allocation Funds;
40% Other



- \$15M in parish debt to be retired.



OPPORTUNITIES TO FUEL GROWTH



MoC VISION FUND

Annual giving funds current Metropolis programs and ministries to directly impact parishes and leadership. As operations are covered, the Metropolis can direct GOA Parish Allocations to our parishes to fuel growth locally.

10% of contributions to the Vision Fund will be directed to our philanthropic initiatives and the Mustard Seed Fund.



CAPITAL & SPECIAL PROJECTS

Targeted support through grants, major gifts, and sponsorships build and grow the programs and physical spaces that invite our faithful to learn, lead, and build relationships.



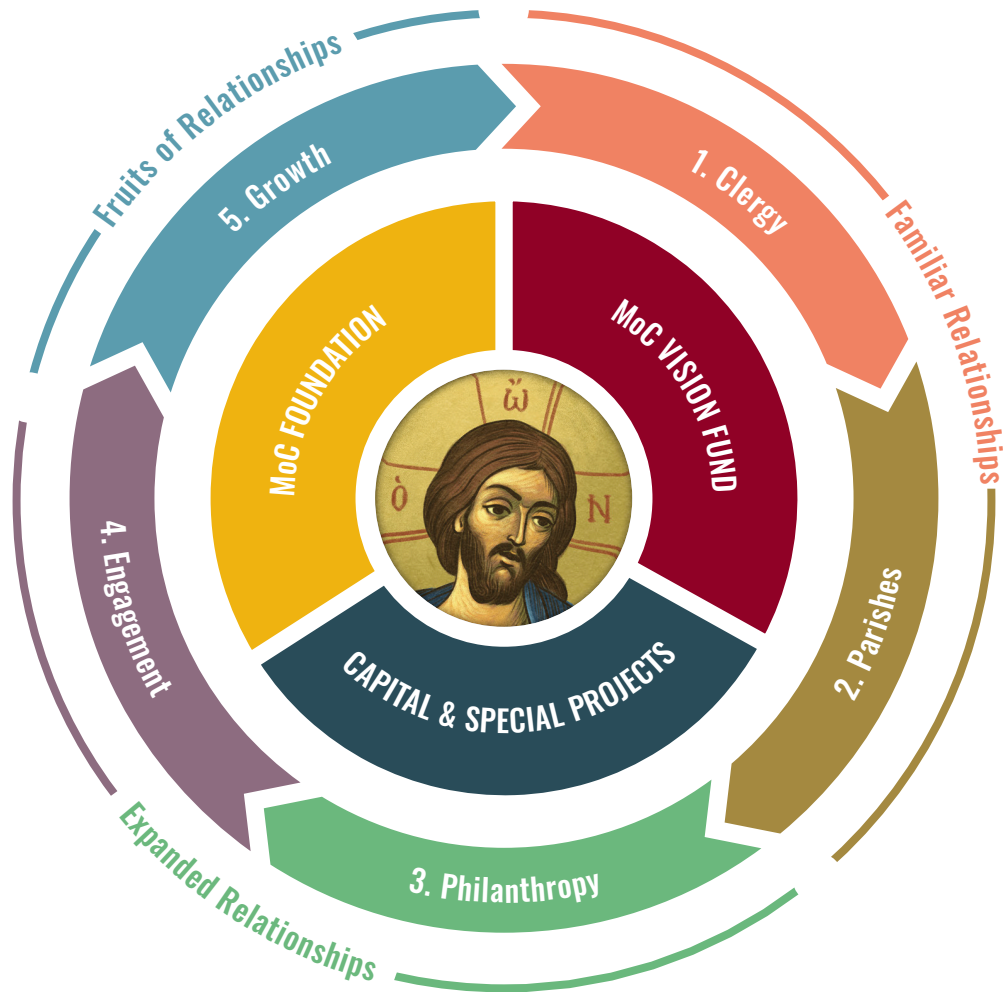
MoC FOUNDATION

Transformational and legacy giving to the Metropolis of Chicago Foundation secures the long-term growth of our Metropolis and parishes for generations to come

CHALLENGE COMMITMENTS MAKE YOUR VISION FUND GIFT GO FURTHER

Moved by the potential of our shared vision, two anonymous donors stepped forward at the Clergy-Laity Assembly to support and encourage others to join them in realizing this vision. Each commitment of \$50K will increase individual and parish gifts to the Vision Fund. When \$100K in gifts are committed, we will receive \$50K. Likewise, when the next \$100K is committed, we will receive another \$50K. Resulting in \$300K to support our efforts to realize our vision.

OUR VISION. OUR OPPORTUNITY. OUR GROWTH.



Our Vision

Unity in Christ cultivates relationships with family, friends, and neighbors bearing fruit for vibrant communities and a flourishing Church.

**Join us in bringing our vision to fruition
with a gift to our Vision Fund.**



METROPOLIS OF CHICAGO
chicago.goarch.org

555 E. Butterfield Road, Suite 201
Lombard, IL, 60148

t (312) 736-2280
f (312) 284-2380