

Philadelphia Deanery Report for 2016 Diocesan Assembly

Philadelphia Deanery consists of ten parishes in the greater Philadelphia Metropolitan area, including Northern Delaware and Lehigh Valley. Almost all of the parishes are served by regularly assigned clergy. During the year 2015 we welcomed two new priests with their families: Fr. Barnabas Fravel, now serving at St. Michael the Archangel Church in Wilmington and Fr. Mark Koczak, serving at Holy Assumption Church in Philadelphia. Our clergy regularly participate in the activities of local Orthodox Clergy Brotherhood as well as come together as clergy families for fellowship. We look forward to further developing the sense of local community of Orthodox parish families of our area.

St. Michael the Archangel Orthodox Church, Wilmington, DE

In 2015 the Archangel Michael Orthodox Church in Wilmington celebrated her 100th anniversary. It was a blessed event on the feast of St. Michael (Nov 8th) led by His Beatitude Metropolitan TIKHON and His Eminence Archbishop MARK. The celebration called to remembrance all of the hard work, faith, and dedication that enabled St. Michael's to move from, humble beginnings, to her present day glory.

The faithful of St. Michael's are made up of Orthodox Christians from many walks of life. She is truly, by God's grace, a Pan-Orthodox Church ministering to all. We continue our work with many activities from OCF at the University of Delaware to the feeding the homeless in Wilmington. We look forward to many more years of service and ministry.

St. Herman of Alaska Orthodox Church, Glen Mills, PA

The year 2015 was extremely productive and spiritually rewarding for the faithful and our community. On February 23 2015 our Church participated in the opening of the Icon Exhibition at Neumann University which ran through April 26, 2015 and included several lectures and talks concerning the Orthodox Faith etc. on March 22 we hosted the Clergy Brotherhood/Deanery Mission service with the sermon preached by Archpriest Denis Bradley of Georgetown University. His Grace Bishop Thomas was in attendance. In October we participated in the set up and opening of the Special Exhibition on the Mother Of God and the Saints at Marywood University and then sending the items to Holy Trinity Church in Stroudsburg, Pa. This year we held our most successful Festival financially but more so spiritually gaining many people interested in coming to learn about our Orthodox faith. We thank God for all things!

2016 Holy Trinity Orthodox Church Pottstown, PA

Metrical Records:

5 Baptisms

1 Chrismation

1 Wedding

0 Funerals

Events:

3 Successful Fundraisers

\$50000 renovation to Church Building Foundation

\$25000 Loan was taken out and repaid after successful capital campaign

Fed the hungry in Pottstown at a local soup kitchen every fifth Friday of the month

New Parish Bylaws

Services:

All Feast day services (Vespers, Matins, Liturgy)

7 Weekly Services served; 2 on Sunday, 2 on Wednesday, 1 on Friday, 2 on Saturday

Full Nativity and Theophany Services (Royal Hours, Vespers Liturgy, Feast day Liturgy including Synaxis of the Theotokos and John the Baptist)

Lenten Services: 2 presanctified liturgies per week and the Canon of St. Andrew.

Holy Week services: 3 Bridegroom matins, 1 presanctified w/unction. Complete schedule of Services the rest of the week.

St. Nicholas Orthodox Church, Bethlehem, PA

Over the past year, St. Nicholas Russian Orthodox Church in Bethlehem sponsored a coffee hour to honor Father Ian Shipley as he and his family begins a new chapter in his life. We also welcomed Very Rev. James Weremedic and his family as he begins his ministry serving the Bethlehem community. Liturgically, we held a full cycle of services which included: Vespers and Divine Liturgy for all Sundays and Major Feast Days, Memorial Liturgies and Presanctified Liturgies, House Blessings, Molebens for several Wedding Anniversaries and for Thanksgiving Day. Our Holy Theophany Supper had approximately 50 parishioners this year.

We held a variety of very successful fundraising events; January Halupki Dinner, Lenten Fish Dinners, 'Russian Days Festival' held in September and Christmas Bazaar. Our free Christmas Choir Concert was well attended and the Annual Yolka by our Church School for St. Nicholas Day lifted up everyone's spirits, especially when St. Nicholas arrived.

The events that provided for donations included our Super Bowl Breakfast, donations of canned good for the Soup Kitchen, our St. Herman's Seminary coffee hour in March, our hosting the St. Tikhon's Seminary Century Association's Hospitality a La Russe in May, in November a coffee hour luncheon to benefit St. Tikhon's Seminary and our St. Mary's Society hot dog luncheon in October, the 'Food Drive' in November for the Soup Kitchen. We are blessed to utilize the gift of Charity in the following manner: Donations given to various organizations and needy persons throughout the year - collections taken up at coffee hour, Donations given to local food banks annually, Donations to St.

Tikhon's Seminary and Monastery, Donations to St. Herman's and St. Vladimir's Seminaries, Regular volunteers from the parish who help serve at the soup kitchen.

And finally, St. Nicholas Russian Orthodox Church in Bethlehem, PA held a 100th Anniversary Kickoff Luncheon setting the positive tone for our celebration. We will celebrate the **100th Anniversary** of the founding of our beloved St. Nicholas Russian Orthodox Church the weekend of October 14, 15, and 16, 2016. The celebration will begin on Friday, October 14 with an akathist to St. Nicholas followed by a wine and cheese reception. On Saturday, October 15, there will be a Memorial Divine Liturgy with

a panikhida in memory of our founders and all those faithful clergy and laity who devoted their lives to building and nurturing the foundation of our spiritual life. We also honor the memory of those who labored so hard to ensure that we have the wonderful physical facility that we enjoy throughout the year. Following Vespers at 4 pm there will be a buffet dinner. On Sunday, October 16, our Metropolitan Tikhon and our Archbishop Mark will join us for Divine Liturgy. A gala banquet at the Best Western Lehigh Valley (300 Gateway Drive, Bethlehem) will follow.

Assumption of the Holy Virgin Mary Orthodox Church, Philadelphia, PA

During the past year, the parish has undergone major changes. With the departure of Fr. Mathew Cantell at Pentecost, Archimandrite Christopher served the parish during the summer. In October, Fr. Mark Koczak and Matushka Jan became a part of our community. We continue with regular service to our south Philadelphia neighborhood, providing food and other aide to needy families. Our monthly bible study is very well attended. We have two new parish committees, one for developing our property and the other to organize our icons and relics. Our liturgical life remains at the center of our community with increases in attendance for Great Vespers, Liturgy, Feast Days and the recent major feasts.

St. Mark's Orthodox Church, Wrightstown, PA

This past year was marked by 4 baptisms and 1 wedding. We began a separate preschool church school which meets on Thursdays for an hour and a half using art, music and crafts as a way to educate the children in the faith. And as part of a diocesan series of lectures we hosted Abbot Tryphon of Our Merciful Savior Monastery, Vashon Island who spoke to a full church of interested faithful from local parishes and dioceses. A class for catechumens was formed in response to interest from several individuals and families interested in becoming Orthodox. Also we opened up a public forum to discuss issues of faith and science from an Orthodox Christian perspective that has brought interested people of diverse religious and intellectual backgrounds.

St. Stephen Cathedral, Philadelphia, PA

This past year the life at the Cathedral was marked by a number of special events. First of all, we were joined by our Diocesan Hierarch, Archbishop Mark, for the celebration of the feast of Pascha. His Eminence was present for Holy Saturday Liturgy, Paschal Vigil service and for Paschal Vespers and joined the faithful of our parish in breaking the fast following the service.

In August the Cathedral took part in the initiative of Philadelphia Orthodox Clergy Brotherhood by hosting a service of Supplication to the Theotokos. For this special event the miracle working icon of St. Anna was brought to our church and hundreds of Orthodox faithful and Christians of other denominations had an opportunity to ask the prayers of the Theotokos and her mother, St. Anna.

St. Stephen Cathedral also started new beautification project of putting new icons on the iconostas of the main church. We are very thankful for the generosity of many of our parishioners dedicated to making our worship place more glorious.

Besides these special events, we are thankful for many dedicated parishioners who work hard on regular activities that take place every year: Holy Supper of Theophany Eve, Novogodny Ball, Meatfare, Cheesefare and Anniversary Dinners, Sunday School and Vacation Church School programs, Fall Food Festival and Flea Market.

We started our regular monthly Protomartyr Newsletter that keeps our parishioners informed about the events here at St. Stephen as well as provides educational information about our faith. Regular Sunday Catechetical instructions for those desiring to join the Orthodox Church are an important part of our activities. The Cathedral hosted two lecturers: Fr. Andrew Damick during Great Lent and Dr. David Ford during Advent. We also continue to support outreach to the Russian-speaking community in North-East Philadelphia, which continues to bring new faithful to our church.

We do all this in hope that the Lord will strengthen us in living Orthodox Christian lives and will enable us to help others find the way to salvation.