In the interest of keeping current, events that have occurred prior to the most recent issue date will not be included.

Please submit articles and photographs (with captions) to Aric Gingo at communications@doepa.org.

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Helping to Keep the Children in the Church

I remember when I was newly married and had just started attending an Orthodox church. People would complain about how their children were refusing to come to church any more, and how when they left the family home, they often left the church entirely. So this is far from a new problem, and there must be hundreds if not thousands of articles written not only by Orthodox authors, but also by writers in many other religious groups, who are facing the same problem: children are not following their parents’ footsteps in faith.

This is clearly a critical issue. No young people means no future for our churches. So I started doing a little thinking about it, and I hope this article will start you thinking about it, too; and perhaps it will start a discussion in your family or in your parish.

There are lots of reasons why children choose to leave the church as they grow up. Some of them are related to the church practices – perhaps the services are in a language the children don’t understand; perhaps even if they understand the language they still feel bored or unconnected during the services; perhaps they never learn why coming to church and participating in the Sacraments are essential for our spiritual life; perhaps the priest and other adults don’t listen to their questions, much less answer them.

All of these are serious problems that we need to face and address honestly. Are we doing all we can to make the children’s time at church (not only in the services but also in Church School, in other church groups, in their interactions with other parishioners) a positive reason for them to want to stay and keep coming back?

However, I was thinking about other more fundamental reasons that the children might choose to leave the church as they grow older, and this involves the family. From a very early age, children pick up on the parents’ attitude about going to church. Is it a really meaningful and important commitment for the parents, or is it something they do from time to time as it fits into their busy schedule? Is it important to arrive on time for the services, or is it okay to come in toward the end of the services, whenever it’s convenient for them? Are the services and Sacraments the fundamental reason to come to church or does it simply provide more of a social time with friends and acquaintances the family doesn’t see during the rest of the week? Does the family pray, or read the Scriptures and Lives of Saints at home? All of these give a basis for the impressions the child might have about church.

But (in my opinion at any rate), perhaps the most important element for the child is how the family “feels” about going to church. Is it an “obligation” with the children pushed and scolded to get ready for church, behave themselves in church, and not bother the adults otherwise? If this is the “feeling” the parents communicate to the children about church, surely the children will remember it in a rather sad way.
The families I’ve seen over the last thirty years whose children have remained in our churches and have become the next generation in our parishes, seem to share some common traits. For one thing, their faith is an important part of their lives, not only on Sunday but also during the rest of the week. They pray together, they try hard to apply the lessons from the sermons and from their spiritual readings to their lives, and they share their faith with their children. And even more than that, they enjoy their faith and are happy and eager to come to church – for them it is a positive experience, and they look forward to it. They encourage their children and help them to find ways to learn and participate in the services.

We need to be honest about what we are asking of our children. There are enormous societal pressures on families these days not to attend church – organized sports activities, invitations from non-church-going friends, just the opportunity to stay home and relax after a busy week. And let’s not sugar-coat a basic issue: many young adults just hit a time when they need to break away from the parents and “leaving the church” is a pretty easy way for them to make a statement. And as they get older, the possibility of a “mixed marriage” with the other spouse being non-Orthodox is quite high, leading to a pull in other directions.

There are also sad situations in church where members find themselves in bitter disputes with other parishioners. Even if they don’t know the causes, the children pick up on the tension and unhappiness in what should be a loving environment; and if there is a disconnect between what the adults say and how they actually behave, the children are quick to label the adults as “hypocrites” and the faith therefore false.

So we need to recognize that what we are asking of our children is not easy, and if we can’t provide them with adequate support and try our best to “live what we preach,” we are letting them down in a big way.

On the other hand, there are families who come faithfully in spite of problems in their church and find a way to overcome any negativity, and indeed bring light and love to the rest of the parish. And there are children whose parents are not really connected to their church by their faith, but who find a mentor or friend in an adult, perhaps the priest or a Church School teacher or a grandparent, and find a deep faith of their own in that way. God works in mysterious ways indeed.

So what are some ways we can help our children grow in our faith and remain in our churches? We can give them the best instruction possible; we can bring them to all the services; we can teach them to cook, sing and dance according to our own traditions. And all that will (or at least might) help. But just like raising children in general, there is no simple “one way”. And I am no expert – in our own family, of our three grown children, only one attends an Orthodox church regularly at this point.

But my thought is that the bottom line for children has to be in the positive experience they find at church, and perhaps most important of all, how the family as a whole makes their church experience a happy, meaningful and spiritually enriching part of their lives.

In Christ

+Melchisedek

Bishop of Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania
locum tenens of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania
Diocesan Council Meets in Mechanicsburg
The Diocesan Council met on August 13, 2013 at Holy Apostle’s Mission in Mechanicsburg, PA.

D I O C E S A N  N E W S

Diocesan Women’s Retreat

Over 80 women attended the retreat on Saturday, August 18. The speakers for the retreat were Mother Magdalena from the Monastery of the Transfiguration, Ellwood City and Mat. Valerie Zahirsky, Chairperson OCA Department of Education and OCEC Representative.
MATUSHKA MARY FEDORONKO • 1920 - 2013

Matushka Mary Fedoronko (nee Dubnansky), 93, August 11, 2013. A Beloved and devoted Matushka of the late Archpriest Alexander J. Fedoronko, founding Pastor of St. Stephen Orthodox Catholic Cathedral in Philadelphia, Fell Asleep In the Lord at home. She is survived by son, Paul Fedoronko (Diane) of Swarthmore, PA and daughter, Alexandra Vickers of Calabash, NC, 5 grandchildren and 5 great grandchildren. Memory Eternal!
BERWICK - The Icon of St. Anna was brought to Holy Annunciation Orthodox Church by Archimandrite Athanasy on Saturday, September 7.

STROUDSBURG - Holy Trinity celebrated the feast of Transfiguration on August 11 at Divine Liturgy with the traditional blessing of grapes and fruit by Father Nicholas Solak.

MECHANICSBURG - The faithful of Holy Apostle’s Mission, Mechanicsburg, had their vehicles blessed by Fr. Tim on July 14, 2013.

HARRISBURG - On Saturday, May 18th the community of Christ the Saviour celebrated its 50th Anniversary. His Grace Bishop MARK led the Diocesan and local Pan-Orthodox clergy, and the many faithful who gathered for the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. Also in attendance was Metropolitan Herman, retired primate and former archbishop of the Diocese of Eastern PA (1981-2002). At the Liturgy, Peter Scott Staller was tonsured a reader - we congratulate him and his family and ask God’s blessing upon them.

OLYPHANT - On Sunday, March 31, 2013, His Grace, Bishop MARK made a hierarchical visit to St. Nicholas Orthodox Church where he presided during Divine Liturgy.

SHILLINGTON - Alexander Christensen, of St. Herman’s Orthodox Church was tonsured a reader by His Grace, Bishop MARK, on December 2, 2012.

BERWICK - The Icon of St. Anna was brought to Holy Annunciation Orthodox Church by Archimandrite Athanasy on Saturday, September 7.
SHILLINGTON - On December 2, 2012, the faithful of St. Herman’s Orthodox Church blessed new icons for the parish.

WRIGHTSTOWN - On Sunday, June 16, 2013, His Grace, Bishop Mark made his first pastoral visit to St. Mark’s Church. His Grace awarded Acting Rector, Fr. Martin Browne, the kamilavka for his service to the church. His Grace also blessed the church renovations. Couples Myron and Linette Sedor and Ken and Dorothy Martiak were recognized for their 40th Wedding Anniversary this year.

HARRISBURG - Christ the Saviour welcomed Fr. Peter Baktis (Col. US Army) and M. Jeanne, who were in Carlisle at the US Army War College on Sunday, July 21st and celebrated their annual car blessing.

COALDALE - On Sunday, September 9, 2013, the faithful of St. Mary’s Orthodox Church celebrated the feast of their parish namesake. His Grace, Bishop MARK, celebrated with the faithful.

MECHANICSBURG - On Sunday, June 30, 2013, the Faithful of Holy Apostle’s Orthodox Mission welcomed His Grace, Bishop MELCHISEDEK, as they celebrated their Patronal Feast.

HARRISBURG - On Sunday, July 28th Christ the Saviour offered a fond farewell to Fr. Alexander and Kh. Olga Atty. They also welcomed home “parish son” Fr. Paul Fetsko, visiting from Ft. Smith, Arkansas.

SHILLINGTON - On December 2, 2012, the faithful of St. Herman’s Orthodox Church blessed new icons for the parish.
COALDALE - St. Mary’s Orthodox church lights up the night sky with the completion of their lighting project. The lights came on in August with the help from the local fire company and much hard work by the Parish.

WILLIAMSPORT - On Tuesday, August 6, Holy Cross Orthodox Church held their 2013 “Vacation Youth Day” in conjunction with Transfiguration celebrations.

MECHANICSBURG - Holy Apostle’s Mission held their annual Vacation Church School in June.

STROUDSBURG - Holy Protection Orthodox Christian Preschool, a joint effort of Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church and Holy Trinity Orthodox Church of Stroudsburg, prepares for a new year.

SHILLINGTON - Alexander Christensen, a parishioner at St. Herman’s Orthodox Church, was recently awarded the rank of Eagle, Boy Scouts of America’s highest honor.

SIMPSON - Mrs. Julia Mikulak celebrated her 103rd Birthday at the Clarks Summit Senior Living Center on June 23, 2013.

MECHANICSBURG - Holy Apostle’s Mission held their annual Vacation Church School in June.

OLYPHANT - On Sunday, June 11, 2013, Stephanie and Zachary Stafursky were presented with the Alpha Omega and Chi Rho religious Scouting awards, respectively, from Rev. Benjamin Huggins.

WILLIAMSPORT - On Tuesday, August 6, Holy Cross Orthodox Church held their 2013 “Vacation Youth Day” in conjunction with Transfiguration celebrations.
STROUDSBURG - Holy Trinity Orthodox Church held their annual Parish Picnic on June 30, 2013 at the Hawks residence with swimming and a barbecue picnic.

COALDALE - The faithful of St. Mary’s Orthodox Church held a Children and Family festival on August 15, 2013. The festival included games, tours of the Temple, food, and pet blessings by Fr. Daniel.

MINERSVILLE - On Tuesday July 2nd, Fr. Michael and Matushka Valeria Hatrak hosted the 5th annual Frackville Deanery clergy family picnic in Minersville.

EDWARDSVILLE - On Saturday, August 21, 2013, the faithful of St. John the Baptist Orthodox Church held their annual Ethnic Food Festival.

JERMYN - Parishioners and Clergy of St. Michael’s Orthodox Church met to make final plans for their 4th Annual Parish Festival, scheduled to be held on Friday, September 27th, Saturday, September 28th and Sunday September 29th at St. Michael’s Center 403 Delaware St. in East Jermyn.

PHILADELPHIA - St. Stephen’s Cathedral parish had another year of successful Vacation Church School program. During three days of August (Aug 20-22) 36 children from St. Stephens as well as from neighboring parish of Sts. Peter and Paul came for prayer, study, work and play.
SHILLINGTON - On May 18, 2013, Lisa Matsick of St. Herman's Orthodox Church in Shillington and Christos Pappas of Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church in Westerfield NJ celebrated the Sacrament of Marriage at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church in Westerfield, NJ. Fr. John Onofrey was co-celebrant at the service.

SHILLINGTON - On March 16, 2013, Jesika Ream of St. Herman's Orthodox Church in Shillington, PA wed Justin Wilhelm at SS. Constantine & Helen's Greek Orthodox Church in Reading PA, with Fr. John Onofrey, rector of St. Herman's as the celebrant.

WILLIAMSPORT- George Lamprinos and Mary Meredith Gee were united in the Holy Sacrament of Marriage on Sunday, September 1, 2013 at Holy Cross.
It is not every day that our Diocesan youth get to spend time on grounds where saints have walked! Perhaps that is the reason why Saint Tikhon’s Summer Camp is such an important tradition for so many people within our Diocesan community and beyond - children and adults alike. During the week of July 7, 2013, 119 children and a volunteer staff of 53 adult counselors gathered at St. Tikhon’s Seminary and Monastery to celebrate our 42nd successful season of camp.

The program allows Orthodox Christian children between the ages of 7 and 17 to grow in their relationship with Christ and each other by participating in a variety of educational and recreation activities. The typical day at camp includes morning and evening prayers, delicious meals in the Monastery Trapeza, religious education workshops, and activities such as field sports, swimming, boating, ethnic dance lessons, arts and crafts, and iconography.

We were very fortunate this year to benefit from the gifts of generous donors and the hard work of several “Good Samaritans” who worked diligently to ensure that the Seminary pool was in working order, and that we had a fully-operational fleet of paddleboats at the Lake for the use of the campers.

The camp’s educational theme this year was “To Gather Together,” developed by Educational Program Coordinator Mrs. Anna Marie Black of Holy Trinity Orthodox Church, Pottstown, and implemented by our vibrant team of educators. The campers learned about the physical body of the church, religious figures both visible and invisible, the physicality of our church services (using all five senses to experience Liturgy), and the annual church calendar and feast days. They also learned about the broader organization of the Church body by creating posters to represent the different dioceses and jurisdictions of the campers in attendance.

UPCOMING EVENT:
Diocesan Winter Teen Retreat
February 7-9 at Fatima Renewal Center in Dalton, PA
Open to students in Grades 7-12
Registration begins November 2013

Please visit www.ocayouth.org for more information, or email info@ocayouth.org to be placed on our mailing list!
Apart from the camp’s usual routine, we enjoyed several very special activities this year. On Tuesday, July 9, we were fortunate to have two important visitors! His Grace, Bishop Michael of the Diocese of New York-New Jersey, and the Rector of St. Tikhon’s Seminary, spoke with our teen campers in an afternoon workshop before joining us for dinner. Afterwards, the children each received Bishop Michael’s blessing and the gift of a triptych icon that he brought back from a recent trip to the Cathedral of Christ the Savior in Moscow. Later, our second special visitor arrived – the myrrh-streaming icon of St. Anna and her caretaker, Fr. Athanasy, who shared the icon’s beautiful story. Everyone venerated the icon and was anointed with holy myrrh during a beautiful Moleben to St. Anna.

On Wednesday, July 10, the youngest campers enjoyed a special tour of the Monastery Church with Fr. Nicodemus. All of the campers also had the opportunity to enjoy a tour of the Metropolitan Museum.

We ended the week by attending Divine Liturgy in the Monastery Church on Saturday, July 13. Our campers served as the choir, the readers, the altar boys, and the congregation alongside the monastics and the local parishioners.

We wish to express our deepest thanks to His Grace, Bishop Mark and the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania, to Bishop Michael and the community of Saint Tikhon’s Seminary, and to Fr. Sergius and the Monastery Brotherhood for sharing their space and their resources with our campers and counselors during that first week of July. We would also like to extend our gratitude to our Camp Chaplain, Fr. Timothy Hojnicki of Holy Apostles Mission, Mechanicsburg, PA, whose warmth and friendly smile are always a welcoming sight to our campers. And last but certainly not least – we appreciate all of our hard-working counselors, for the donation of their time and talents to the camp program.

Saint Tikhon’s Summer Camp is sponsored by the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania, and our next season is scheduled for July 6-12, 2014. Please visit www.sttikhonscamp.org for more information. We strongly encourage our Diocesan youth to attend and expand their circle of Orthodox friends! We host children from all over Pennsylvania as well as many other states, including New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Florida, and Nebraska. Simply e-mail info@sttikhonscamp.org with your home address to be included on our registration mailing list for 2014!
Deborah Armstrong
Parents: Mark and Daria Armstrong
Parish: Holy Cross Orthodox Church, Williamsport PA
Graduated from: Bellefonte Area High School
Future: University of Pittsburgh

Tatiana Beard
Parents: Paul and Judith Beard
Parish: Holy Cross Orthodox Church, Williamsport PA
Graduated from: Loyolsock Township High School
Future: Millersville University

Daniel J. Bendyk
Parents: Kristina and Joe Bendyk
Parish: Holy Trinity Orthodox Church, Pottstown, PA
Graduated from: Owen J. Roberts High School
Future: Penn State University, Major: Mechanical Engineering

John Black
Wife: Alexandra
Parents: John and Annamarie Black
Parish: Holy Trinity Orthodox Church, Pottstown, PA
Graduated From: St. Tikhon’s Seminary Certificate of Diocesan Formation
Future: Immaculata University, Major: Special Education/Elementary Education

Jefferson Harvard Braun
Parents: Mr. and Mrs. James Braun
Parish: St. Basil’s Orthodox Church, Simpson, PA
Graduated From: Douglas County High School
Future: Denver University

Maria Kathleen Braun
Parents: Mr. and Mrs. James Braun
Parish: St. Basil’s Orthodox Church, Simpson, PA
Graduated From: Denver University - BS Communications

Christopher Carey
Parents: Nona and Christopher Carey
Parish: Saint Michael the Archangel Orthodox Church, Gradyville, PA
Graduated From: University of Delaware, BA in Mathematics
Future: Deloitte Consulting

Amanda Chobany
Parents: Jim and Susan Chobany
Parish: St. Herman of Alaska Orthodox Church, Gradyville, PA
Graduated from: Bayard Rustin High School
Future: Penn State University

(Reader) Alexander Christensen
Parents: Paula & David Christensen
Parish: St. Herman of Alaska Orthodox Church, Shillington, PA
Graduated From: Conrad Weiser High School
Future: Lebanon University, seeking a Music Education Degree

Sam Demianovich
Parents: Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Demianovich
Parish: St. Basil’s Orthodox Church, Simpson, PA
Graduated From: Carbondale Area High School
Future: Bloomsburg University

David Drobish
Parents: Daniel Drobish
Parish: St. Herman of Alaska, Gradyville, PA
Graduated from: Penn State University
Future Plans:

Stephanie Elko
Parents: Scott and Renee Everman
Parish: Holy Resurrection Orthodox Cathedral, Wilkes-Barre, PA
Graduated From: Crestwood High School
Future: Pennsylvania College of Technology

Corey Everman
Parents: Scott and Renee Everman
Parish: Holy Resurrection Orthodox Cathedral, Wilkes-Barre, PA
Graduated From: Crestwood High School
Future: Pennsylvania College of Technology

Theadora Federoff
Parents: Theodore and Carol Federoff
Parish: Holy Cross Orthodox Church, Williamsport, PA
Graduated From: Trinity Homeschool
Future: Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Indiana, PA, Major: Criminology

Briana Fedorko
Parents: Michael and MaryLou Fedorko
Parish: St. John the Baptist Orthodox Church, Edwardsville, PA
Graduated from: Wyoming Valley West High School
Future: Luzerne County Community College/Misericordia University
Jessica Friedly  
Parents: Melissa & Matthew Friedly  
Parish: St. Herman of Alaska Orthodox Church, Shillington, PA  
Graduated from: Ephrata High School  
Future: Penn State - Berks, Major: Occupational Therapy

Alexios (Derek) Givler  
Parents: Christopher & Joyce Givler  
Parish: Holy Apostle’s Mission, Mechanicsburg, PA  
Graduated from: Muhlenberg College, Major: Music Theory/Composition  
Future: Work before deciding whether or not to go to grad school.

Eric Hertzog  
Parents: Rick and Mary Hertzog  
Parish: St. Mary’s Orthodox Church, Coaldale, PA  
Graduated from: Muhlenberg Area High School  
Future: Shippensburg University

Joanne Huddy  
Parish: All Saints Orthodox Church, Olyphant  
Graduated from: Penn State University-Worthington Major - nursing

Alexis Jacob  
Parents: Jacob and Neena Keecheril  
Parish: Christ the Saviour Orthodox Church, Harrisburg, PA  
Graduated from: Central Dauphin High School  
Future: Harrisburg Area Community College and Penn State University

Levi Jekel  
Parents: Symeon & Rebecca Jekel  
Parish: Holy Apostle’s Mission, Mechanicsburg, PA  
Graduated from: West Chester University, Major: Accounting, Minor: Economics  
Future: Pricewaterhouse Coopers, Philadelphia

Nathan Jekel  
Parents: Symeon & Rebecca Jekel  
Parish: Holy Apostle’s Mission, Mechanicsburg, PA  
Graduated from: Trinity High School  
Future: University of Delaware Honors College, Major: Chemical engineering, minor in cello performance

Valentina E. Kariouk  
Parents: John and Kathryn Kariouk  
Parish: St. Nicholas Orthodox Church, Philadelphia, PA  
Graduated from: Marple Newtown High School  
Future: Culinary school and major in pastry arts

Daniel Kraiter  
Parents: Daniel and Cristina Kraiter  
Parish: Saint Michael the Archangel Orthodox Church, Wilmington, DE  
Graduated from: The Charter School of Wilmington High School  
Future: University of Delaware, Major: Biochemistry

Samantha Lopez  
Wife of Lazarus “Manny” Lopez  
Parish: Christ the Saviour Orthodox Church, Harrisburg, PA  
Graduated from: Duquesne University, B.S. Professional Studies

Alex Maezes  
Parents: Chuck and Larissa Ravetto  
Parish: St. Mark’s Orthodox Church, Wrightstown, PA  
Graduated from: Central Bucks High School  
Future Plans: Pursue a career in fire fighting

Jesse D. Mathewson  
Parents: Fr. Daniel and Mat. Gail Mathewson  
Parish: St. Mary’s Orthodox Church, Coaldale, PA  
Graduated from: Panther Valley High School  
Future Plans: St. James House Orthodox Ministry for one year in Anchorage, Alaska

Sophia Montgomery  
Parents: Ron and Reni Montgomery  
Parish: Holy Trinity Orthodox Church, Pottstown, PA  
Graduated from: Upper Merion High School  
Future: Muhlenberg College, Major: Neuroscience

Anastasia Nikolaeva  
Parent: Ekaterina Hancher  
Parish: Christ the Saviour Orthodox Church, Harrisburg, PA  
Graduated from: Penn State University, B.A. New Media  
Future: Employment at Penn State University
DIOCESAN GRADUATES

Christian M. Pascuzzo
Parents: Michael and Lisa Pascuzzo
Parish: SS. Peter and Paul Orthodox Church, Minersville, PA
Graduated From: Shippensburg University
Degree in Economics Minor in Mathematics

Lisa A. Pascuzzo
Parents: SS. Peter and Paul Orthodox Church, Minersville, PA
Graduated From: Alvernia University - Masters in Business Administration/ Community Service and Economic Leadership

David “DJ” Pawlush
Parents: Lorrie and Dr. David Pawlush
Parish: Christ the Saviour Orthodox Church, Harrisburg, PA
Graduated From: Hershey High School
Future: Rochester Institute of Technology

Nicholas Pawlush
Parents: Lorrie and Dr. David Pawlush
Parish: Christ the Saviour Orthodox Church, Harrisburg, PA
Graduated From: Colgate University, BS Environmental Studies
Future: Investment Management (Alpine, Texas)

Joshua S. Pcsolyar
Parents: Nancy and Alan Pcsolyar
Parish: St. Herman of Alaska Orthodox Church, Gradyville, PA
Graduated From: United States Military Academy Major: International Relations
Future: Aviation, Fort Rucker, AL

Michael Polk
Parish: Holy Trinity Orthodox Church, Wilkes-Barre PA
Graduated from: Wyoming Valley West High School
Future: Luzerne County Community College, Major: General Studies

Amelia Prokop
Parish: Holy Resurrection Orthodox Cathedral, Wilkes-Barre, PA
Graduated From: St Vladimir’s Orthodox Theological Seminary (M.Div.)
Future: PhD program in musicology at Duke University, Durham, NC

Nicholas Scohin
Parish: All Saints Orthodox Church, Olyphant
Graduated from: Pennsylvania State University-state college.

Ashley Shanus
Parents: Ewan & Ed Shanus
Grandmother: Ann Tanney
Parish: St. Michael’s Orthodox Church, Mt. Carmel, PA.
Graduated From: Penn State University, Bachelor of Science Psychology

Jessica Sims
Parish: Holy Resurrection Orthodox Cathedral, Wilkes-Barre, PA
Graduated From: Coughlin High School
Future: Wilkes University, Mathematics & Education

Adam Sisko
Parents: Jack and Martha Sisko
Parish: St. Stephen’s Orthodox Cathedral, Philadelphia, PA
Graduated From: North Penn High School
Future: Music Teacher

Amelia Sisko
Parents: Jack and Martha Sisko
Parish: St. Stephen’s Orthodox Cathedral, Philadelphia, PA
Graduated From: North Penn High School
Future: Penn State Altoona, Major: Early Childhood Education/Special Ed/Music

Marija Skoog
Parents: Deacon Peter and Marnie Skoog
Parish: Holy Trinity Orthodox Church, Pottstown, PA
Graduated From: West Chester University of Pennsylvania, Master’s in Geography

Emma Solak
Parents: Fr. Nicholas & Masha Solak
Parish: Holy Trinity Orthodox Church, Stroudsburg, PA
Graduated From: Stroudsburg High School
Future: University of Pittsburgh
Evelyn Staller
Parents: Robbin and Dr. Peter (Scott) Staller
Parish: Christ the Saviour Orthodox Church, Harrisburg, PA
Graduated From: Arcadia University B.A. Studio Art
Future Plans: Pursue a Masters in Fiber Arts

Shane Staller
Parents: Robbin and Dr. Peter (Scott) Staller
Parish: Christ the Saviour Orthodox Church, Harrisburg, PA
Graduated From: Central Dauphin East High School
Future: Drexel University

Jason Stankiewicz
Parent: Donna Stankiewicz
Parish: Holy Trinity Orthodox Church, Mt. Carmel, PA
Graduated From: Thomas Jefferson University, Jefferson Medical College
Future: Emergency Medicine/ Internal Medicine residency program

Teodor Staykov
Parents: Damyana Pavlova
Parish: St. Michael’s Orthodox Church, Mt. Carmel, PA
Graduated From: Mt. Carmel Area High School
Future: Lycoming College

Christa Noelle Talpash
Parents: Michael and Lisa Talpash
Parish: Holy Trinity Orthodox Church, Wilkes Barre, PA
Graduated From: Wyoming Valley West High School
Future: Wilkes University
Major: Premed studies

Michael Tatasciore
Parents: Tony and Daria Tatasciore
Parish: St. Herman of Alaska, Gradyville, PA
Graduated From: Henderson High School, West Chester, PA
Future Plans: Marymount Manhattan College

Ruth Tegene
Parents: Benyam & Alem Tegene
Parish: Holy Apostle’s Mission, Mechanicsburg, PA
Graduated from: Trinity High School
Future: West Chester University, Major: Business

Elizabeth (Cindi) Tomes
Parish: Holy Apostle’s Mission, Mechanicsburg, PA
Graduated from: St. Joseph’s University, Master of Science in Instructional Technology

Justin N. Toporcer
Parents: Mark and Nicolette Toporcer
Parish: St. John the Baptist Orthodox Church, Edwardsville, PA
Graduated From: Greater Nanticoke Area High School
Future: Wilkes University 3+4 Dental Program

Sonia E. Toporcer
Parents: Mark and Nicolette Toporcer
Parish: St. John the Baptist Orthodox Church, Edwardsville, PA
Graduated From: Greater Nanticoke Area High School
Future: Wilkes University 3+4 Dental Program

Anna Williams
Parents: Stephen & Barbara Williams
Parish: Holy Apostle’s Mission, Mechanicsburg, PA
Graduated from: Cumberland Valley High School
Future: Center for Industrial Training, Major/Interests: Animal Care

Matushka Lisa A. Weremedic
Wife of Fr. James Weremedic
Parish: Saint Michael the Archangel Orthodox Church, Wilmington, DE
Graduated From: Gratz College, M.A. Ed., Future: Continue teaching high school math at Polytech School District

John Daniel Zwick
Parents: Anna Pron-Zwick and John Zwick
Parish: St. Herman of Alaska Orthodox Church, Gradyville, PA
Graduated From: Haverford High School
Future: Delaware County Community College, Major: General Business
With the blessing of His Grace Bishop MELCHISEDEK and His Grace Bishop MARK, seventeen people from the Diocese of Eastern PA, one from the Diocese of the Midwest, and one from the Antiochian Archdiocese travelled to South Philadelphia to participate in the 2013 Diocesan Mission Trip. Their purpose: to make much needed repairs to the Assumption of the Holy Virgin Church. The idea in this particular mission effort, after much evaluation months earlier, was “working from the outside in.” First impressions are very important. Our main evangelistic expression is “Come and see”. So we must be visible and we must have a place to see.

The goal of this year’s trip was twofold; one, for members of the team to experience a personal physical change of place and environment, an “out-of-my-comfort-zone” experience, and to place themselves within a community with which they are serving, so as to feel their burden and to bear it, even if only for a short time. Second, to bring the Good News to those we serve by “giving a cup of cold water”, or repairing a broken water pipe, fixing a roof, listening to a story, giving hospitality or receiving hospitality.

The team undertook a lot of work to help this small struggling parish in South Philadelphia. Four separate crews completed much needed repair work, including patching a series of leaks in the exterior roof of the parish, re-plastering and painting the 25 foot interior ceiling where leaks occurred, trimming trees overhanging parish, cleaning clogged drains, sanding and repainting wrought iron fences and fire escapes, painting the front doors, painting the third floor of the hall. and a full landscaping project around the entire parish grounds and apartment space, creating a refreshed “green space” for the local community. Fr. Matthew Cantrell, the rector of Holy Assumption, plans to work with the local Philadelphia Horticultural society to start a community garden for the local neighborhood. In addition to the physical labor, an outreach event was held with over 60 local community members in attendance. They were introduced to the Parish members and the newly renovated grounds.

Divine Liturgy was celebrated on Wednesday and Friday, with prayers centered upon the Great Martyr Elisabeth and her fearless devotion to Christ and her service those around her even in death. Fr. Victor Gorodenchuk visited from North Philly and celebrated the Liturgy, comparing the work to that of St. Seraphim and St. Elisabeth, and encouraging us in the struggle of the Christian life.

The project was covered extensively by the Philadelphia media, being featured in no less than 4 newspapers. The excitement and coverage stirred the local community, and 3 parish tours were given to local families, curious about what was happening. Fr. Matthew had the opportunity to meet and share ideas with local business people and residents, sharing his vision for the community.

The Mission team’s work in South Philly was not done, even after they packed up and left on Saturday, July 20th. The team decided to donate extra funds raised for the purchase of a new sign of the outside of the Holy Assumption parish to continue the revitalization process.

For an extended article and many more photos of the 2013 Missions Trip, visit www.doepa.org
CONGRATULATIONS
2013 GRADUATES OF THE
DIOCESE OF EASTERN
 PENNSYLVANIA

GOD GRANT YOU MANY YEARS!
The Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania

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