

# **FRACKVILLE DEANERY REPORT**

## **CLERGY**

**Archpriest Michael Hatrak, Dean**  
SS. Peter and Paul Church, Minersville  
Assumption of the Virgin Mary Church,  
St. Clair

**Priest Timothy Hojnicky**  
Assistant Dean  
Holy Apostles Mission  
Mechanicsburg

**Archpriest John Onofrey, Secretary**  
St. Herman's Church, Shillington

**Archpriest Michael Evans**  
**Treasurer**  
St. Michael Church, Mt. Carmel  
Holy Ascension Church, Lykens

Archpriest James Jadick  
Rector  
Holy Ascension Church, Frackville

Priest Stephen Vernak  
Rector  
Christ the Savior Church, Harrisburg

Priest Daniel Mathewson  
Rector  
St. Mary's Church, Coaldale

Archpriest Claude Vinyard  
Priest In Charge  
Holy Trinity Church  
McAdoo

Archpriest Paul Ropitsky, retired  
Attached St. Mary's Church Coaldale

Attached St. Herman Church, Shillington  
Archpriest Michael Rachko, retired  
Archpriest Stephen Janos, retired

Attached to Christ the Savior Church, Harrisburg:  
Archpriest Michael Kovach, retired  
Archpriest Daniel Ressetar, retired

Attached to Holy Apostles Mission  
Deacon Seraphim Reynolds

Two Deanery meetings were held this past year. The clergy discussed concerns of the deanery, diocese and national church.

A Deanery Pre-Sanctified Liturgy was held at SS. Peter and Paul Church, Minersville, on March 31<sup>st</sup>, the feastday of St. Innocent, celebrated by His Grace, Bishop Tikhon, assisted by deanery clergy. Responses were sung by deanery clergy.

Lenten Mission Vespers were held each Sunday during Lent in various parishes.

The clergy participated in the Lenten Retreat with His Grace, Bishop Tikhon; the Diocesan Divine Liturgy during Bright Week and helped at the annual Monastery Pilgrimage over Memorial Day weekend.

Over the summer a FOCA outing to Knoebel's Amusement Park and a deanery family picnic at Minersville were enjoyed.

In addition to liturgical services; classes, lectures, food and bake sales, dinner-dances, picnics, Chinese Auctions, raffles, dinners, community and FOCA activities are included in the life of our parishes.

## 2011 PARISH HIGHLIGHTS

### **Holy Ascension, Frackville**

- Parish worked diligently to pay back more than \$82K of the \$100K loan for hall reconstruction. All of this in less than 2 years
- Parish wide program for Great Lent and Advent including children, teens and adults
- Parish outreach to local community via food banks, etc.
- Parish picnic
- Continuing renovations to rectory; i.e. remodel bathroom, remodel family room and private office
- Replaced 50 year old electric heat in church with newer efficient baseboard heating
- All projects done with members of the parish donating their time, talents and materials
- We had 2 Baptisms, 2 Weddings, 3 burials and 5 adults and 2 children have joined our parish family

### **Holy Trinity, McAdoo**

- Divine Liturgy every Sunday and Holy Days; Vespers every Saturdays @ 6 P.M. and on eve of Holy Days
- Will schedule a date for an Akathist to St. Alexis of Wilkes-Barre
- Parish Picnic, July 9-10
- Hold perogie and Halushki projects throughout the year
- Planning stage for making roof repairs and usual maintenance

### **SS. Peter and Paul, Minersville**

Along with liturgical services our activities include a Pre-Lenten Dinner and a Thanksgiving Dinner along with holiday bake sales and participation in Minersville's Spirit Day. Also, improvements were made to property around the Church.

### **St. Mary's Church, St. Clair**

Hold monthly perogie sales and seasonal bake sales.

### **St. Michael's, Mt. Carmel**

Divine Liturgy is celebrated every Sunday, all major feast days, some minor feast days, Saturday Great Vespers and services during the Great Lenten Season.

Fr. Michael Evans, pastor, is going to start serving an Akathistos Hymn Service of Our Father Among the Saints, Alexis of Wilkes-Barre, Confessor and defender of Orthodoxy in America, on a monthly basis starting in the month of November 2011.

We are doing a perogie fundraiser on a monthly basis.

Our parish of St. Michael is made up of mostly senior citizens located in the Northumberland County coal region area.

## **Holy Ascension, Lykens**

Celebrates Divine Liturgy usually on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of each month, Nativity of Our Lord and Holy Pascha. The celebrant is Fr. James Chuta

Fr. Michael Evans, Priest-in-Charge, is conducting the service of Obednitsa on the remaining Sundays.

## **Christ the Saviour, Harrisburg**

### **TIME-LINE OF ACTIVITIES NOVEMBER 2010 – OCTOBER 2011**

*(Compiled at the request of the Diocese of Eastern PA)*

November 23, 2010: Our parish distributed the canned/dried goods, and turkeys donated by our faithful to our neighbors in need. We also distributed over \$420 in grocery store gift cards.

November 24<sup>th</sup>: His Grace Bishop TIKHON joined our weekly noon-time downtown Pan-Orthodox Bible Study at 33 N. 2nd Street in Harrisburg.

January 9<sup>th</sup>: His Grace Bishop TIKHON visited Christ the Saviour Orthodox Church (Harrisburg, PA) in conjunction with the Pan-Orthodox Blessing of the Susquehanna later in the afternoon. This was the third consecutive year for the service held at City Island Park and 8 clergy and over 100 faithful attended.

February 6<sup>th</sup>: Our parish joined Orthodox communities around the country to celebrate Scouting Sunday. We were blessed to have several of our Boy and Girl Scouts participate in various activities throughout the Divine Liturgy. Our young adults also collected canned good and monetary donations for the annual “Souper Bowl of Caring”. Our parish youth have raised over \$3,000 in 8 years.

March 12<sup>th</sup>: Our parish hosted a Lenten Retreat with the V. Rev. Dr. Michael Oleksa, Chancellor of the Diocese of Alaska (OCA) and an eminent theologian and commentator on cross cultural communications. The retreat opened with the St. Theodore Saturday Divine Liturgy, which was celebrated by His Grace, Bishop TIKHON, as well as our parish and visiting clergy.

Holy Week & Pascha 2011: Our parish hosted Dn. Ian Shipley and his family from St. Tikhon Seminary for the week. He assisted in all the Liturgical services and gained valuable first hand experience of parish life during Holy Week and Pascha.

April 26<sup>th</sup>: Our parish hosted His Grace, Bishop TIKHON, as well as clergy and faithful from throughout our Diocese and local area, to celebrate Bright Tuesday Divine Liturgy. Parish son, Steven Wood, prepared a gourmet meal following the service.

June 19<sup>th</sup>: Our parish recognized its class of 2011 graduates. Each graduate was presented with a prayer book and a traveling icon for their continued spiritual growth and as a token of our love and prayers.

July 17<sup>th</sup>: (the Sunday closest to the feast of St. Elijah), the clergy and faithful of our parish participated in special prayers and a blessing for our vehicles, as well as other forms of transportation.

July 24<sup>th</sup>: His Grace Bishop MICHAEL of the Diocese of New York and New Jersey made a visitation to our parish and presided at the Divine Liturgy. In the afternoon, His Grace presided at the marriage of Laura Hadginske (a daughter of our parish) and Alexei Schmidt (Bishop MICHAEL's driver and assistant).

July 31<sup>st</sup>: His Grace Bishop TIKHON made a pastoral visit to our parish. At the conclusion of the service His Grace celebrated the "Eighth Day Removal of Crowns" for newly-weds Alexei & Laura Schmidt, as well the blessing of six new lampada which were donated by several parishioners in memory of their loved ones.

July 31<sup>st</sup>: His Grace Bishop TIKHON led a Pan-Orthodox gathering of over 100 clergy and faithful in a service of Thanksgiving and Blessing for the Agia Sophia Coffee House and Bookstore in downtown Harrisburg. The store opened September 1, 2011.

August 10<sup>th</sup> and August 12<sup>th</sup>: Our parish gathered to sing the Paraklesis (Supplication Service) to the Mother of God, as part of our preparation for the feast of Dormition. On Wednesday we were blessed to have the V. Rev. Dr. Alexander Atty, Dean of St. Tikhon Seminary, as our guest celebrant.

September 18<sup>th</sup>: We celebrated the 68th anniversary (September 21, 1943) to the Holy Priesthood of the V. Rev. Dr. Michael Kovach. In honor of his anniversary, Fr. Michael was the main celebrant at the Divine Liturgy and at the conclusion he spoke humbly about his ordination and his hope that his priestly ministry spanning 68 years would be considered "acceptable" to our Lord.

October 1<sup>st</sup> and October 2<sup>nd</sup>: Our parish held its annual Slavic Food Fest. Many of our parishioners, neighbors and friends came to support this annual event.

October 5<sup>th</sup>: Our parish hosted an evening lecture entitled "The Way of Christ is Easy... We Just Make it Hard!" with Fr. Joseph Huneycutt (host of the "Orthodixie" podcast). Over 70 parishioners and guests attended his witty, substantive, and engaging lecture.

### **Nativity of the Theotokos Parish, Coaldale, PA**

2011 has stayed much the same as the previous year, but the spirit and general feel of the parish has improved and is continuing in a positive direction. Much of the work to be done at St. Mary's is true revitalization. Webster's dictionary defines the word revitalize- "to give new life or vigor to". Many in the parish want to see it grow, but few are willing to make the effort to make this happen. The Charge of the Lord is to "go and make disciples" and the Apostle Paul reminds us that the clergy and leadership of the parish are to be about the "equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." Many in the parish think that it is the work of the priest to "get new people". Yes, we the clergy are to be out in the community inviting those in the world to come and see, but we are only able to do our part, our main focus is to equip the saints for this work and to lead them to do this vital work.

Before we can bring in new people and begin making disciples, one of the areas of focus at St. Mary's is to prepare the faithful to receive new visitors and seekers of the True Faith. This is an area where we are in need of great improvement. The usual response when a new person enters unannounced is: "Why are they here?" or "Why are they in my seat?" These responses are not inviting and welcoming. As a priest when I hear these types of questions I realize that we are not prepared to receive new people. So, our work now is still education and preparation.

At this stage of the game we have to prepare our hearts and educate our faithful on how to greet and meet new inquirers. We have done this by starting a Greeting and Welcome Team. This team, under the direction of the rector, has begun to lay out strategies for how to approach new people who enter our temple. We began three years ago by putting up signs to direct visitor to the parish and doing a makeover of the grounds and entryway of the parish and making up welcome packets for new visitors. We all know that first impressions are everything.

As our central administration and our beloved hierarch His Grace Bishop Tikhon have suggested the future of the parishes are young people. So, in addition to greeting and meeting new people, we started a youth group and added a class to our Sunday Church School. This year we got our youth group involved in the FOCA. We attended the National Basketball Tournament in April of this year in Cleveland and represented the DOEPA by winning the championship game in the Juniors Division. Our youth plan on continuing to attend other FOCA functions throughout this coming year.

We have held our 3<sup>rd</sup> Children's Festival in August to invite new families and children to the parish with over 100 children and families attending. This year we added 2 film nights: one in the summer and one in the fall, inviting the community to an introduction of the Orthodox Faith. This year we will also hold two or three "5<sup>th</sup> Quarter" outreach nights after Basketball games in the parish hall, which will include live music and food, with a special speaker and brief introduction and explanation of the Orthodox Faith.

All of these outreach events are of no use without the backing of the prayer and services of the Church. This fall we have added 2 liturgies with vespers per month and an Akathist service once per month. These Liturgies have enabled many in the parish to attend Divine Liturgy due to working on the weekends.

We also plan on working directly on Objective #5 under the OCA's Strategic Plan Goal 1. This Objective is to *Support personal and family formation*. We will accomplish this by adding regular inserts into our parish bulletin on the subject and holding a series of talks during Great lent, as well as providing resources for families to get regular family prayer time as a part of their "little Church". This prayer is the backbone of any outreach and service to the community.

This year the parish council is looking into the start of a food pantry to service those needy families in the local community. One of the goals of this endeavor is to begin a community garden, where members of the community help to plant, care for and harvest high quality organic produce grown on the parish property. We hope to involve other farmers in the parish to supplement the basic staples as well.

We pray that as we continue the work of the Gospel in this coming year we can continue to educate the faithful of our parish to the great need to pray without ceasing and to see beyond ourselves and reach out with sincerity and love to the needy world in our own back yard.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Fr. Daniel Mathewson- Acting Rector

Respectfully submitted,

Archpriest Michael Hatrak, Dean