

PHILADELPHIA DEANERY REPORT, 2011
Archpriest S. David Mahaffey, Jr., Dean

Over the past year the Philadelphia Deanery has received many blessings from God for which we are extremely grateful. Every Parish within the Deanery continues to reach out to their communities through extra services, lectures, festivals and visitations. Included in this report are the submitted reports of each Parish in the Deanery for your review. You will find some traditional as well as unique ways to evangelize in each section of the Deanery. Basically, there are three sub-groups within the Deanery, the Lehigh Valley Parishes of St. Nicholas, Bethlehem and Holy Trinity, Catasauqua; the Philadelphia area parishes of St. Stephen's, St. Nicholas, Holy Assumption and St. Mark's in Wrightstown; and the Western Deanery parishes of St. Michael's of Wilmington, Holy Trinity in Catasauqua, St. Nicholas, Coatesville, and St. Herman's in Gradyville. Despite the large distances, we meet regularly and have activities with the Deanery and within the two Clergy Associations of the Lehigh Valley and Philadelphia area. As our report shows this duality serves as both extended opportunities for fellowship and a more unified approach to presenting Christ to the unchurched in our area.

Officers for the Deanery are as follows:

- Archpriest David Mahaffey, Dean
- Priest Victor Gorodenchuk, Vice-dean
- Archpriest Theodore Heckman, Treasurer
- Priest Sergius Willis, Secretary *pro tem*.

Below are just some of the highlights of our activities and changes that have occurred.

- Annual St. Herman's Lecture at St. Stephen's Cathedral with Dr. Harry Boosalis last December 12.
- Sunday of Orthodoxy was held at St. Stephen's Cathedral with His Grace, Bishop Tikhon and the Philadelphia area Orthodox Clergy.
- Fr. Joseph Hunneycutt gave a lecture this past October at St. Nicholas, Bethlehem entitled "Following Christ Is Easy, We Just Make it Hard". This event was co-sponsored by both the Deanery and the Lehigh Valley Orthodox Clergy Brotherhood.
- We offer our Congratulations to the two newest members of the clergy family of the Deanery, Theodore Thomas, son of Fr. Matthew and Matushka Jennifer Cantrell; and Sophia, daughter of Fr. Jason and Matushka Jennifer Franchak.
- A Deanery Clergy Picnic was held at the Rectory in Bethlehem in June.
- A Farewell Dinner for Fr. Andrew Bartek, who left us for the fertile fields of the Midwest, was also held in June. Catasauqua is awaiting another permanently assigned priest and is currently served by Priest Timothy Hasenecz.
- We congratulate Fr. Timothy Hasenecz on his achievement as a Board Certified Chaplain for the Lehigh Valley Health Network.
- We Congratulate Priest Leonid (Derek) Schmidt, 2011 graduate of St. Tikhon's Seminary on his ordination to the priesthood at his home parish of Holy Assumption in Philadelphia on August 13.

- We welcome Fr. Stephen Miller to the Deanery; he is assigned as the Priest in Charge of St. Nicholas in Coatesville; we also thank Fr. Joseph Toroney for his many years of dedicated service to the faithful of St. Nicholas. He remains attached to St. Nicholas in Philadelphia.
- Fr. Andrew Anderson, who was attached to St. Stephen's Cathedral while on a leave of absence has been released from the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania and is now in the Diocese of the West under the Omophorion of Bishop Benjamin.
- In addition to this, we want to give thanks to God and congratulations for the amazing growth at Holy Trinity in Pottstown under Fr. Jason Franchak, this past year saw 19 new members added to the adult membership, with an additional substantial growth in births (over 10) over the past year.

BETHLEHEM, ST. NICHOLAS: Archpriest David Mahaffey

This past year there were 6 Baptisms, 3 weddings and 8 funerals, and currently 9 Catechumens. In addition to the full cycle of services there were Moliebens for Healing and anointing with oil, Holy Unction and services for other lesser feasts. The Russian Days Festival was extremely successful as was our Christmas Bazaar and Christmas Concert. Several lectures were given at St. Nicholas covering everything from an Orthodox understanding of marriage and gender relations to learning about the Koran and Muslim religious practices. Financial assistance was given to various persons in need as well as a contributions to a local church for mortgage assistance and to a parish in Bulgaria for preservation of an ancient Gospel book.

GRADYVILLE, SAINT HERMAN OF ALASKA: Archpriest John Perich

The year 2011 has been a very busy and spiritually rewarding one for the faithful of our parish here in Gradyville, Pa. Following a very beautiful and joyful Christmas -Epiphany season our Church prepared for a most solemn Great Lenten period which included numerous services sung by our parish Choir under the direction of Reader Gregory S. Hubiak. We held our annual Lenten retreat for the students of our Sunday School on Lazarus Saturday as well as other activities including a Pysanky Workshop for the entire community and several projects by our Charity Committee. We sponsored a program in our parish to help our servicemen in Iraq and Afghanistan in which we sent special notes of encouragement as well as kits for some 100 servicemen and women. We had two men from our parish who served over six months each, one as a Pharmacist (Dr.) and the other an expert in Sikorsky helicopters. Both have just recently returned to their families and our parish community safe and sound.

Following a most glorious and joyful Pascha we celebrated our Annual Mother's Day Luncheon on May 8th as well as our two day Special Tea's on May 21 and 22, 2011. These events proved very successful for our parish yet another year. On Memorial Day May 30th, many of our parish participated in the Annual Memorial Day pilgrimage to our beloved St. Tikhon's Monastery helping our pastor, Father John Perich with the many tours at the Metropolitan Museum of the Orthodox Church in America and the Guzey Repository, of which he serves as Curator.

On June 12th, we sponsored the Konevets Choir from Russia who sang the responses to our Divine Liturgy as well as performing a Concert for the general public of Russian Folk Songs and Orthodox Hymns including those by Greek, Russian and Serbian composers. This was well attended and brought many interested people from our local community to our Church. We also held our Graduation Luncheon for all our graduates, as well as our Annual Father's Day Breakfast.

In July we held our annual Chicken Barbecue which was well attended allowing many non-Orthodox the opportunity to visit our Church and learn about the Orthodox faith. In September and October our Church conducted numerous workshops in preparation of our Annual Festival which included the women, men and the children of our Church. During the weekend of November 4-6, 2011 we held our Annual Festival as well as welcoming the Miraculous Icon of the Mother of God, "She Who Is Quick To Hear" and the Feodorovskaya Mother of God as well as many Holy Relics and Items from our beloved St. Tikhon's Monastery including the Mantia and Relics of St. Patriarch Tikhon, Vestments and Mitre and Relics of St. Nicholas of Zicha, the Relics and personal items of our own St. Alexis of Wilkes-Barre, Relics and Icon of St Sergius of Radonezh, Relics of St. Seraphim of Sarov, Relics and Icon of St. Barbara the Relics and Icon of the Great Martyr St. Catherine as well as many others. Special prayers and services were said before all these relics by the visiting hierarchs and clergy, including His Beatitude Metropolitan Jonah , Metropolitan Theodosius and hundreds of faithful from the southeastern part of Pennsylvania. This was truly a spiritual joy for our parish!

One of the most important endeavors of our Church community was the love and care shown by our faithful for a young boy named Brian and his family throughout the year. Brian was diagnosed with ALS only ten months before. Our parish helped sponsor a Community Fund Raiser on September 17th, for him and his family which raised over \$45,000. The Fund Raiser was held across the street from our parish with our Church facilities serving as the Food service headquarters for the days activities attracting over two thousand people. Brian unfortunately fell asleep in the Lord only one month later in October and our Church continues to help his widow, Casey and newly born child, Sophia. We have also been graced with an Icon Project led by our own John Pusey Jr. who has embarked on a project to transform the walls of our Church with Icons of the Saints and the Feastdays. This project is on going and has already received great reviews from those who have come to pray within our Church!

We also celebrated several Baptisms and Weddings this year as well as welcomed many new members and their families within our Community! Hopefully, if God wills, St. Herman of Alaska Church will continue to work for the Glory of God and His Holy Church within Delaware/Chester Counties and throughout our great Commonwealth! Glory To God For All Things!

POTTSTOWN, HOLY TRINITY: Priest Jason Franchak

- 1) has installed new doors between the narthex and vestibule
- 2) added 4 iconostasis sized Icons to the walls of the Church.

- 3) The Sunday School areas have been cleaned up, remodeled and furnished.
 - 4) A youth group has been started for the teenagers at Holy Trinity.
 - 5) Paid off a long-standing loan leaving us debt free.
- Holy Trinity stands at a membership of 107 Orthodox; 65 adults and 42 children.

PHILADELPHIA, ST. NICHOLAS: Archpriest John Bohush

Saint Nicholas continues its successful Liturgical Schedule throughout the year, amending and supplementing it as the dynamics of the congregation changes. Our regular annual social and fund-raising projects continue, as our: Annual Saint Nicholas Day Dinner, Holy Night Supper, Yolka, Maslenitsa, Eggs-Stravaganza, Annual Picnic, Sportsmen's Club Crab-Fest, Three day Ethnic Bazaar, Sisterhood Annual Pokrova Dinner, periodic Perogi Sales. Supplemented this year with Matt's Italian Night at Saint Nicholas, and Matt's No-Fast Friday Steak Dinner, and his In between Christmas and Theophany No-fast Friday night Salmon and Steak Special.

It could be noted that events like our Holy Night Christmas Eve Supper has taken a new dimension, with our third and fourth generation families, and new to the faith parishioners, this has become a bigger and family oriented event. The evening Christmas Eve vigil is becoming more popular and better attended, and; the American Family tradition of opening presents Christmas morning is dramatically changed from the Christmas' of yore. Christmas day services are always ended with a sing-along Christmas Carol with the choir, and a social gathering in the church hall. Socializing emphasized with those who live a great distance from the church, or who live alone and we give quality time so their Christmas Day is something special for them also.

When the opportunity to sponsor a Lenten Mission Service happens, as did this year, the congregation does a masterful job preparing the entire event, from beautiful choir responses to the services, to a beautiful gourmet meal served to all who attend. Annually on the Sunday before Memorial Day the congregation exits the church to the Large Memorial Historic Cross on the southeast corner of the Church commemorating all those whose lives were sacrificed in all our American wars and conflicts, from the Revolutionary War to our present time, concluding with a live rendition of TAPS by our parish trumpeter. A moving event in our community!

Repairs this year were minimal. Repair to the north side rain gutter repair to stop a leak noted on that side of the church. We now contract to have the parking lot and sidewalks cleaned of snow as required by city ordinance. This year it was quite extensive and expensive.

The City of Philadelphia passed new ordinance for what they call water runoff, adding to the of the water bill. By satellite they have photographed our property, made measurements and put charges on drainage to the sewer system. Added to the cost presently will increase up to an additional \$2,000. We are considering repaving our parking lot with permeable asphalt to minimize water drainage. In addition to the regular Sunday School classes, the children take and prepare a Sunday dinner, the profits go to help defray needs and costs of the Sunday School. They sponsor a Halloween Parade, and

have a Yolka and a Lenten Retreat on Lazarus Saturday each year. The parents use that time for cleaning the church property and in the Church and Church Hall. A tremendous task.

We had three antique chairs restored and repaired. They came with the purchase of the Church in 1918. They were in their original condition, and now have a new luster. This year the Annual Sportsmen's Club Crab Fest in September reached its goal for attendance and profit. They continue supporting the church by covering costs to major parish projects.

The membership of the Sisterhood has changed over the years. Now the new generation, younger and more dynamic, continue fulfilling the objectives of the older generation. No longer do their dinners serve halupki and boiled potatoes and a bottle of QT, their dinners are more sophisticated and elegant, yet their importance as an organization to the church life continues as a steady and viable need and structure in the life of our Church.

Our choir is not as large as in years past. The voices in the choir today are more trained and fulfill the needs of the Liturgies, Vespers and Holy Days. With the additional voices of those who come during Great Lent, Holy Week and Easter, we still enjoy the beautiful music passed down from the generations. We marvel and enjoy the music of the Russian masters, and prayerfully will pass on to our next generation the love we have enjoyed at Saint Nicholas music of the choirs of the past 95 years.

The web sites of the www.Saintnicholaseoc and the Saint Nicholas Group have greatly improved over the past years. We have changed web masters as time has gone by, and we believe our improvements have produced a masterful and informative web sites. In this area, we have developed within our church a Weather Alert System whereby in the event of severe weather we can alert most of the parishioners of weather conditions almost immediately, and of up to the minute snow removal and icy conditions of the local streets. It has helped a few times during bad weather conditions this past year.

For Mother's Day and Father's Day, we honor them on these civil recognized days with a Molebin for the living Mothers and Fathers, and Parastas for the Memories of the deceased Mothers and Fathers. Carnations are given, and they are treated with a special dinner.

We have had a Special Series of Protracted Annual Meetings, where we have given deep insights in the present conditions of our local church, the diocese and the national Church. These have been helpful in more people understanding why we have done things as we have in the past, given a better understanding of the present financial conditions of the church, and given serious thought to the future of Saint Nicholas. Exactly where we now stand, and what we anticipate in the future. This has generated more cooperation within the community, in volunteerism and contributions. It has been a positive endeavor, and we have a few more parish meetings planned in the near future.

Considering our observations of many local Orthodox churches in a hundred mile radius, we believe we have moved and prepared our parishioners, and fixed and leave our facilities, which are maintained in perfect and good, right and positive condition, and that the next generation is ready and beginning to slowly assume the responsibilities in all phases of our beautiful inner city church.

PHILADELPHIA, HOLY ASSUMPTION: Priest Matthew Cantrell, acting rector

Although still a small community of around forty parishioners, there were two baptisms and two chrismations at Holy Assumption this year, which means that over the past two years parishioners have welcomed eight new Christians to Holy Assumption. Especially exciting is the new catechumen from the parish's neighborhood who should be baptized soon.

The parishioners at Holy Assumption continue to forge community ties not only through their support of the local food bank, but also by working with the coordinator of the early education school program next door to our parish in order to support local community residents through prayer and charity. A toy drive is one example of this.

There remain a number of tests for Holy Assumption, the foremost of which is outreach to the community surrounding the parish. Although the parish has been forging ties and is about to baptize the aforementioned catechumen, the parish remains invisible for the most part to the surrounding community. A number of parishioners, however, have been willing to knock on doors and introduce themselves to the surrounding community, which with time might bear fruit. Secondly, income from our properties has been sporadic, although this situation has improved now that the early education school has opened. For over a year bureaucratic ineptitude in the great city of Philadelphia had delayed the school's opening.

Despite these tests and with God's help, Holy Assumption Orthodox Church will continue to be a presence in south Philadelphia for years to come. A strong commitment from parishioners to evangelize the neighborhood for Christ and eagerness for charitable work despite tight finances points to this conclusion. Please do pray for us!

PHILADELPHIA, ST. STEPHEN'S CATHEDRAL, Priest Victor Gorodenchuk, Dean

At the end of 2010, St. Stephen Cathedral community was blessed with the presence of two miracle-working icons: of the myrrh-streaming Iveron icon of the Mother of God, which visited us in October and of the Kursk-Root Icon which was brought to our Cathedral by representatives of ROCOR as a special blessing on the patronal feast of our parish, the Day of St. Stephen the Protomartyr.

In 2011 we were honored to host Sunday of Orthodoxy Vespers service at which many clergy and faithful of the area joined our Diocesan Hierarchy, His Grace Bp. Tikhon, for this visible show of unity of Orthodox parishes in Philadelphia area. Many of those who came stayed for a Lenten meal and a special presentation from IOCC representatives. Our parish continues to participate in the work of IOCC and we were able to send a number of donations to help with their relief efforts throughout the world.

We are blessed by active participation of many of our parishioners who make themselves available not only on Sundays but also at other times for special projects at the Cathedral. We should especially recognize the work of the ladies of the Sisterhood who provide for hospitality that is essential for building strong fellowship among our parishioners.

Our parish has very active Sunday School with many children growing in faith and knowledge through participating in services and classes. At our annual Vacation Church School this past summer we were joined by the youth group from Holy Annunciation Church from Berwick for a day of fellowship, study and service to the local community. Together, the children prepared meals for the homeless in Philadelphia and participated in the food distribution at a regular King Jubilee event.

We continue to provide a special outreach to Russian-speaking immigrant community of North-East Philadelphia by holding early Sunday Slavonic service. Starting with January, we were able to have early Divine Liturgy in Slavonic due to the dedication of Fr. Nikolai Gulin. Since the beginning of regular Sunday Divine Liturgy many more Russian-speaking faithful started to attend St. Stephen's and joined in active participation in parish life as well.

Currently many of our parishioners are looking forward to participating in the diamond anniversary of the Novogodny Ball which is organized by our local FOCA chapter, St. Stephen's OCF. 2012 is a landmark year in the history of the Novogodny which for 75 years brought Orthodox people from different parishes together. This year the organizers of the Ball decided to dedicate a major portion of the income from the event to IOCC. We hope that many of our regular participants and many who didn't attend the Novogodny before will come and enjoy this celebration on Jan. 15, 2012.

WRIGHTSTOWN, ST. MARKS: Archpriest Theodore Heckman

The 37th year of St. Mark's Church was marked by a full schedule of Services: Feast Days--major and minor, Lenten Services, Holy Week, Pascha, Bright Week, Moliebens and Panikhidas. Our Religious Education includes a year-round children's program on Sundays as well as adult classes on Thursday evenings.

This year we had four seasonal retreats: Winter (2010)-"Christmas and Covenant"; Lenten Spring--"Christ, the Lamb of God (Mar. 26); Early Summer (for youngsters)--"Christ the Light of the World" (June 18); Late Summer (for adults)--"Purity of Heart and the Vision of God (Aug. 13). And projected this year, Autumn--"The Birth of Christ in the Human Heart" (Nov. 26).

Baptism/Chrismations included: Liana Gelovani (Jan. 4), Natalia Fox (July 4), Nancy Perdikis and her daughter Catherine (Oct. 22) .

Weddings: Marek and Renee Szeliga (Feb. 20); Demetrios and Nancy (Evangelia) Perdikis (Nov. 12).

Funerals: Delores.Marmaluk (repose: Deco 31, 2010), burial at St. Tikhon's Monastery. (Jan. 4); Evangelia Perdikis (mother of Demetrius)--repose on June 13; and our very faithful Jack Malriat (Aug. 8).

Charitable projects included: an offering for St. Herman's Seminary in Alaska; the Vietnam Veterans of America (Feb. 16 and May 10); a Scouting food drive in February; the IOCC appeal for relief for Japan in April; the Jack Malriat medical fund (June), and "Operation Christmas Child"--providing useful gifts for children in war-torn countries (October).

We were greatly honored to welcome our Bishop TIKHON at the Liturgy on Orthodoxy Sunday (Mar. 13), who illumined us with his presence and words of comfort. Each year we remember with love and gratitude our founder, Archpriest Vladimir Borichevsky (21st Anniversary this year), and Matushka Mary (11th Anniversary) in September and in March.

We are greatly blessed to have attached to our parish retired Archpriest Michael and Matushka Theresa Sekela, who arrived here officially in September, and we are deeply grateful for the continued services of our Protodeacon Gregory Moser, and for the excellent musical leadership of Mr. Sergei Arhipov, Mrs. Martha Moser, and Mrs. Daria Cortese.

We are ever thankful for the merciful loving-kindness of Our Lord Jesus Christ for Whom and in Whom we live.

In His love,

Archpriest Theodore Heckman