

Philadelphia Deanery Report

V. Rev. Victor Gorodenchuk, Dean

V. Rev. John Perich, Assistant Dean

Rev. Deacon George Zlatkowski, Treasurer

During the past year we held a number of Deanery-wide events. St. Nicholas Church in Coatesville, Holy Assumption in Philadelphia, and St. Michael in Wilmington hosted Lenten Deanery Vespers. We had two Deanery lectures: one by Sister Vassa (sponsored by the Diocese) on the topic “Keeping Christ in Orthodoxy” and one by Fr. Martin Browne on the topic of “Challenges of Orthodox Mission in 21st- century America”, both of which were hosted at St. Stephen’s Cathedral. Also, in June the clergy and their families gathered for the Deanery picnic and had a wonderful time in fellowship.

Below are the reports from parish in the Deanery.

Holy Trinity Orthodox Church, Catasauqua, PA

Holy Trinity is blessed to have a faithful core group of parishioners and to be financially stable. Over the last year three parishioners have fallen asleep in the Lord and one family joined our Parish. Presently we also have two people interested in joining.

Last year, along with the town of Catasauqua, our church suffered damage during an intense summer hail storm. Both the roof and stained glass windows were damaged. We have just recently completed replacing the church and garage roofs. The stained-glass windows are in the process of being repaired, and we have continued to spruce up the parish grounds.

We look forward to continued success and growth in 2017.

St Herman's Orthodox Church, Gradyville, PA

This is a short excerpt of our activities at St Herman's 2016. To begin with on February 22, 2016, we were involved in the opening of the Alaskan Native Exhibit at Villanova University which ran thru May 15, 2016 and featured lectures by Frs. John Kowalczyk, Michael Oleksa and Nicholas Harris. The exhibit received worldwide attention appearing in numerous articles, announcements and reviews. Many of our parishioners gave of their time and energy throughout the duration of the exhibition. We had a very spiritually rewarding Lenten journey with His Eminence Archbishop Mark celebrating the Vespers Liturgy on Holy Saturday morning with a large number of faithful. Following Pascha many of our youth and adults as well as our pastor, Father John, worked and helped at the St. Tikhon's Summer Camp. This year we held our first annual parishioner appreciation picnic on August 21 2016 with a large crowd of family and friends. We enjoyed several weddings, chrismations and baptisms this year enlarging our parish numbers. On October 8th, we blessed animals and pets outside of our Church portico and had many people and friends attending.

We also hosted the Konovets Choir from St Petersburg, Russia and the St Tikhon's Seminary Choir and Chamber Choir during October and November. Our Festival was again a great success with everyone working energetically in ensuring a rewarding

experience. We celebrated our parish Feast day on December 11, 2016 with His Eminence Archbishop Mark celebrating the weekend services. In December we participated in the world conference on the Persecuted Christians of the Middle East which hosted over 500 delegates from throughout the world. This was in conjunction with a special exhibition on ecclesiastical items from the various Orthodox, Greek Catholic and Oriental Churches of the Middle East.

Also, His Eminence Archbishop Mark tonsured two readers, Nicholas Macura and Alexander Hubiak, on Sunday December 11th 2016.

So as you can see we at St Herman's have had a very active and rewarding 2016 - All For the Glory of God and His Holy Church!

St. Mark's Orthodox Church, Wrightstown, PA

St. Mark's Orthodox Church had an enriching year in 2016. We were enriched by inquirers, new members and many first-time visitors, some local and some passing through.

We were enriched by the generosity of parishioners who made possible additions to our iconography, enhancing those we have and adding new ones to enhance "the beauty of Thy house" and the building up of the Body of Christ through worship and prayer.

We were enriched with the refurbishment of our Gospel Book, Candle stand, fans and processional Cross.

We were enriched by the visit of Archbishop Mark who led the parish in its celebration of Holy Pascha.

We were enriched by our Church School that has three levels, two meeting on Sundays and the preschool meeting on Friday afternoons.

We were enriched by the service of visiting clergy, both those who served in Father Martin's absence and those who visited with us when in the area.

Most of all, we were enriched by ongoing work of the Holy Spirit in building up our parish community through the sacramental life of the church in one wedding and one baptism, in the education of adults as well as children in our ongoing series on Orthodoxy in the Public Square and Mirrors of Truth, which is an ongoing discussion on the relationship of Orthodox faith to modern scientific thought.

We are grateful to all those who support our ongoing participation in the Wrightstown Food Cupboard and the weekly ministry to inmates at the Bucks County Correctional Facility.

We hosted Fr. Alexander Golubov for a parish retreat during Great Lent on *Healing the Pathology of the Soul*, and Fr. Martin offered an Advent retreat on the topic of *The Healing Agony of Forgiveness*.

Archangel Michael Orthodox Church Wilmington, DE

God in His mercy continues to bless us at St. Michaels Orthodox Christian Church. Through a rich life of worship and service together, the faithful are being nourished by the teachings of the Apostolic Faith and by sacramental communion with the Word of God, the living Christ. It is clear to see that, thanks be to God, there is abundant life here. We try and continue to encourage through many activities and ministries. Below is a snapshot of the ongoing work in 2016:

Adult Study Group Thursday Mornings
Friday evening study group during Great Lent
Preschool, Primary, and Teen Sunday Church school
Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF) University of Delaware
Introduction to Orthodoxy Class
Little Angels Every Wednesday with 10+ families
Fellowship outside of Services
New Vestments and Altar Server Robes
Hosted Philadelphia area Orthodox Clergy Lenten Vespers Apr. 17th 2016
New AC
Additional Sound Baffles to parish hall
Parish Picnic
Family Game Nights
Pot Luck dinner after Presanctified Liturgy

We thank God for the faithful of St. Michael's and their continued service in our Church Family. We look forward to our bright future, and with JOY being a part of this Parish Family.

St. Nicholas Orthodox Church, Coatesville, PA

The events of St. Nicholas Church in Coatesville that took place in 2016 are as follows. We are happy to have had one baby baptism this year but also grieved the lose of a long time parishioner with a funeral. We have had weekly vespers every Wednesday and Saturday evenings as well as Sunday morning Liturgy and Sunday School for the kids. St. Nicholas had Presanctified Liturgy twice a week during Lent and services every day during Holy Week. The Church had its St. Nicholas Day Celebration with His Eminence Archbishop Mark attending on Sunday December 4th. After the St. Nicholas Day Liturgy a dinner was held in the Church Hall followed by a skit presented by our Church Sunday School children. A good year.

St. Nicholas Russian Orthodox Church, Bethlehem, PA

Over the past year, St. Nicholas Russian Orthodox Church in Bethlehem celebrated our 100th Anniversary with a wonderful three-day event. Friday evening Akathist to St. Nicholas followed by a wine and cheese reception hosted by our young adults, on Saturday morning, 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 and after Saturday evening's Vespers, we enjoyed a prime rib buffet dinner. On Sunday, Metropolitan Tikhon celebrated the

Hierarchical Divine Liturgy followed by a gala banquet at the Best Western Lehigh Valley.

Liturgically, we held a full cycle of services which included: Vespers and Divine Liturgy for Sundays and Major Feast Days, Memorial Liturgies and Presanctified Liturgies, House Blessings, Molebens for the Beginning of Works and for Thanksgiving. We held a variety of very successful fundraising events; Halupki Dinner, Lenten Fish Dinners, 'Russian Days Festival' and Christmas Bazaar. These helped provide donations to the three Seminaries and the 'Food Drive' for the local Soup Kitchen. 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.

St. Stephen Orthodox Cathedral, Philadelphia, PA

The year 2016 was filled with many events and undertakings.

We started the year with the decision to completely abandon the system of dues and only have pledging as proper form of financial stewardship for the parish. Previous to this year there was a "hybrid" system that encouraged parishioners to indicate their pledged amount for the year, while still allowing for some to give their contribution to the parish as "dues". Even though such a transitional system was necessary at the time, it was creating much work and confusion in the record keeping. We are now finally are using a single system that keeps track of parishioners donations. This was very timely considering the move of the Diocese to proportionate giving.

A major project that took place during the last year was the renovation of the icons on the main iconostas in the Cathedral. The original icons were replaced with icons of the same saints written by Ivan Rumiantsev and that were graciously donated by our parishioners. On January 15, 2017 His Eminence Archbishop Mark blessed the new icons and recognized those who contributed towards the cost of this project. During the Liturgy Deacon George Zlatkowski was awarded with a double orarion, and Nathan Clausson was tonsured a reader for our parish.

Another important project (even though much less noticeable at first), was replacing of the roof of the church that was deteriorating and causing leaks and damage to the church's ceiling.

In addition to these projects, our church continues to have regular educational activities and services. We have regular catechetical class and Bible study. Our youth, besides attending Sunday School classes, also attend our Vacation Church School in the summer and participates in various projects. Our parishioners are active in putting together various events that involve local community: Food Festival, Penny Party and Flea Market. Also, special attention in our parish is given to the continuous missionary outreach to the local Russian-speaking community. This effort, supported by the Diocese, brings more and more people to the parish and this past year we began an exploratory effort in determining whether a separate Russian-speaking missionary parish of our Diocese could be established on the basis of the work that has been ongoing at the Cathedral.

Holy Trinity Orthodox Church, Pottstown, PA

Metrics:

- 4 Baptisms
- 2 Chrismations
- 1 Catechumen
- 2 Funerals

Outreach:

- 4 Visits to local soup kitchen which is part of the Pottstown Cluster of Churches
- Syrian Refugee Dinner
- Visitation of the Miracle Working Icon of St Anna.
- Items for Christmas Dinner was collected for needy families in the area in conjunction with the Pottsgrove School District
- Toys were collected for needy area children in conjunction with Pottstown Mom's Group

Speakers:

- Fr. Timothy Cremeens in March, Topic: *Baptism*
- Fr. Daniel Kovalak in July, Topic: *Parish Health*

Church renovations:

- 2 support beams running the length of the Church were enclosed and beautified
- Basement floor was leveled and partially tiled
- New LED donated to church by GE

Parish Beautification:

- New Artophorion purchased

Parish enrichment:

- Church will subsidize cost of Orthodox Study Bibles for parishioners

Liturgical Cycle:

- All Feast Days served, Full Pascal Week schedule
- Vespers, Matins, Liturgy Served weekly
- Obednitsa served Wednesday

Ordinations:

- Reader John Black was ordained a subdeacon by His Eminence Archbishop Mark

Parish Education:

- Weekly Adult education held Sunday Morning
- Weekly Sunday School Class

Assumption of the Holy Virgin Mary Church, Philadelphia, PA

Liturgical and Sacramental life-

During the past year, we had a full and varied liturgical life with good to excellent attendance. We had one, marriage, one funeral, one baptism and numerous memorials/litya services. Over 95% of our parishioners went to confession regularly. And the parish hosted a local mission Vespers service during Great Lent. We had the great joy of having His Eminence, Archbishop Mark serve on Great and Holy Thursday.

Education

Our successful monthly bible study now has a companion adult education class on the Divine Liturgy and the Holy Mysteries of the Church.

Facilities

Parishioners have had four cleaning and preparation events to help to maintain our property. We are in negotiations with two groups interested in renting space in the parish hall.