

Wilkes-Barre Deanery

Report to the 2023 Diocesan Assembly

Fr Innocent Neal, *Dean* + Fr Jason Franchak, *Assistant Dean* + Secretary: Vacant + Fr PDn Sergei Kapral, *Treasurer*

Glory to Jesus Christ!

The Wilkes-Barre Deanery of the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania is comprised of 15 Parishes. 11 parishes are served by full-time or bi-vocational clergy and have a full cycle of liturgical services. We are thankful for the very challenging work our clergy face as our communities continue to recover from the COVID pandemic.

We currently have 4 vacant parishes that are served by our faithful supply clergy. Many thanks to Fr. Peter Henry, Fr. David Hester, Fr. Michael Evans, Fr. Mikel Hill, Fr. Barnabas Fravel, Fr. Stephen Kopestonsky, and Fr. James Chuta.

VACANT PARISHES

- **Saints Peter and Paul in Uniondale** is currently vacant but consistently served by available clergy.
- **Saint John's Parish in Edwardsville** is currently vacant but consistently served by available clergy.
- **St. Nicholas Parish in Olyphant** is currently vacant but consistently served by available clergy.
- **Saint Vladimir's Parish in Lopez.** Continues to be vacant but consistently served on a weekly basis by V. Rev. Dennis Hendershot.

ACTIVE PARISHES

Holy Resurrection Cathedral in Wilkes, Barre, **Holy Trinity** in Wilkes-Barre, **Holy Cross** in Williamsport, **Holy Trinity** in Stroudsburg, **All Saints** in Olyphant, **St. Michael's** in Old Forge, **Saint Michael's** in Jermyn, and **Holy Annunciation** in Berwick, **Saint John** in Nanticoke, **Saint John** in Dundaff, and **Saint Basil** in Simpson continue to be blessed by the diligent and faithful service and pastorship of their priests.

CLERGY RETIREMENT & ASSIGNMENTS

The Wilkes Barre Deanery recently experienced the retirement of Father Vladimir Fetcho who faithfully served Saint Nicholas in Olyphant for many years. May God grant him and Matushka Marianne many blessed years in retirement! Fr. Paul Witek was ordained to the Holy Priesthood and assigned as Acting Rector of All Saints in Olyphant. Father Michael Shepherd was assigned as Acting Rector of St. Michael's in Old Forge. Fr. Innocent Neal was assigned Dean of Wilkes-Barre Deanery in June. Fr. Nick Solak was released from his duties as Dean. We are grateful for the many years Fr. Nick served as Dean of the Wilkes-Barre Deanery and pray God's blessings for his new assignment as Chair for the Department of Pastoral Life for the OCA. Father Gregory White was appointed by Archbishop Mark as the parish administrator for Sts. Peter and Paul, Uniondale. Father Innocent Neal was appointed by Archbishop Mark as the parish administrator for St. John's in Edwardsville. Fr. John Kowalczyk was relieved of his

duties as Administrator of St. John's in Edwardsville. We are thankful for the work of Fr. John as administrator of St. John's. Father John Nightingale was appointed by Archbishop Mark as the parish administrator of St. Nicholas in Olyphant.

Great Lent 2022: 3 Mission Vespers Services were held for the first time since the pandemic. We are thankful for the Parishes that have hosted these events during this time as we continue towards normalcy.

FELLOWSHIP: A Deanery Clergy Picnic was held on October 9th at Holy Trinity, Wilkes-Barre.

EDUCATION/OUTREACH: A deanery-wide "parish renewal retreat" with Bill Marianes was held on October 1st. Divine Liturgy was served in celebration of the Feast of Protection of the Mother of God followed by a full-day seminar. Over 100 parishioners and parish leadership from the deanery attended the retreat. Two parishes in the Deanery have engaged Mr. Marianes for parish strategic planning (*Holy Annunciation, Berwick and Holy Trinity, Wilkes-Barre*).

MINISTRY: Parishes of the deanery continue to perform the sacraments of the Church, visit the sick and infirm, feed the hungry and poor, minister to the imprisoned, and preach the gospel in their communities in different and difficult ways during the year. All Deanery priests worked diligently in the unique context of their situations.

Respectfully submitted,
Fr. Innocent Neal, Dean