


DOEPA – PARISH ANNUAL REPORT

for the 2025 Diocesan Assembly

Parish name and Address	Photo	
St Michaels Orthodox Church 512 Summer St Old Forge, PA		
Clergy		
Rev. Michael Shepherd Rector Reader Blaise Shepherd	V. Rev. Theodore Orzolek Attached	V. Rev. Elias Krenitsky Retired, Attached
Committees/Societies		
Greeters Committee, Calling Tree, Catechumen Committee, Women of St Michaels, St Michaels Youth Group, Prospora Brigade		
Since January 2024		
Highlights of Top Three Activities		
<p>In 2024, St Michaels has seen a growth spurt of 9 catechumens. St Michaels has instituted a Heavenly Image program in which a deep clean of the church began. With the amount of donations the church received towards the program we were able to replace the carpet, have the entire church repainted along with the ceiling to include adding stars to the ceiling. Currently, the carpet in the altar is being replaced with tile. We have seen increased participation with laity in our agape meal. We now have several families rotating with the responsibility of providing a meal. And Blaise Shepherd was tonsured as a Reader.</p>		
Outreach Directed to Growth, Adult Education and Charitable Activities (<i>Fundraisers are not Outreach</i>)		
<p>This year we focused on adult education beginning with our Lenten Journey of “We are an Icon of Christ.” 15 parishioners attended an hour and a half long session every Saturday guided by Susan Shiposki on writing an icon and a class was given by Fr Michael on different lenten topics. During our agape meal Fr Michael has instituted Orthodoxy 101 and once a month has done a trivia to check on knowledge which is well received and very fun to participate in. 3 of our adults were enrolled in the St Vladimir's online certification program for catechists, Laying Foundations for Teaching the Faith. Fr Michael has compiled a 380 page booklet for catechumens to follow along during classes and a lesson plan for the catechist to follow. Our youth program had several activities including bowling day and nerf & pizza. The youth had an overnight trip planned to DC to visit the Bible Museum however that was moved to this coming year due to a scheduling conflict. Currently we have another group project where the group is learning about and painting a nativity scene. We had two charitable events this year, one in particular was our Veterans Day Pasta Meal. This year a portion of the proceeds were donated to Camp Freedom in Carbondale that assist Veterans, First Responders, and Gold Star Families with medical treatments, financial aid, and/or a place to relax.</p>		

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Major Challenges Faced

As we begin to grow, we are still faced with an aging population. Our parish is extremely dedicated but do not have the energy they once had to assist in the ministries that we would like to institute. Slow and steady is the way. This also is challenging for our people to volunteer for the parish council but we are doing the best we can. Our choir still has no director, but the members of the choir conduct practice every Saturday prior to Vespers and their hard work is showing in how we sound during our services.

Upcoming Special Events/ Anniversaries – January 2025 to December 2025

January - first meeting what will be our men's group to plan a monastery trip.

Women of St Michaels - lenten retreat to Holy Protection

May - Chicken BBQ Event

July - 135 year Anniversary Book - republished with color pictures of the work done under the guidance of Bishop David (Mahaffey) then Fr David rector, of the icons in the church including the new painting of the ceiling and the stars.

Nov - 3rd Annual Veterans Day Pasta Meal

Pascha baptism

As of October 1, 2024

Active Members Count

41

Children (under 18)

12

January 1 thru December 1, 2024

Average Sunday Divine Liturgy Attendance

41

Average Sunday Divine Liturgy Communicants

27

Average Saturday Vigil Attendance

27

Number of Catechumens

9

January 1, thru December 1, 2024

Baptisms

3

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Funerals	3
Marriages	0
Receptions into Orthodoxy	0
Church School/Number Enrolled	7
Adult Education/Number Enrolled	15