

Northwest Deanery Report 2017

Deanery Activities

- Our **deanery officers** are:
 - Fr William Evansky, Dean
 - Fr Thomas Soroka, Associate Dean
 - Fr Patrick Carpenter, Secretary
 - Fr George York, Treasurer
- Welcome to **Fr Andrew (Keith) Lowe**, Acting Parish Administrator at St Andrew Church in Lyndora
- Welcome to **Fr Evgeni Peykov**, Acting Rector of St Gregory Church in Homestead
- Congratulations to **Fr Daniel Mathewson** for being awarded the Gold Cross
- St John the Baptist Church in New Kensington was the host of the well-**attended OCA Small Parish Forum** in July, sponsored by the Archdiocese of Pittsburgh and Western PA, and the Diocese of the Midwest.
- Fr Nikolai Breckenridge represents the archdiocese on the **Metropolitan Council**
- Fr Patrick Carpenter edits the archdiocese publication, **The Light of Orthodoxy**
- A successful **Lenten deanery retreat** was held for all the faithful at St Nicholas Church in McKees Rocks on “Mary in the Scriptures,” preceded by a Divine Liturgy. The speaker was Dr Edith Humphrey.
- The deanery parishes sponsored the food at the **Archdiocesan Family Day**
- Holy Assumption of St Mary Church in South Side hosts the **St Cyril of White Lake Food Pantry**
- Fr Thomas Soroka directs the **Pan-Orthodox Choir of Pittsburgh**

Holy Ghost Church, Ambridge

holyghostoca.org

V. Rev. William Evansky, Rector

Deacon Matthew Stahoviak, Attached

Deacon Peter Ilchuk, Attached

- In addition to pastoral duties, Fr William continues as Archdiocesan Chancellor/ N.W. Dean / FOCA Pgh. District Spiritual Advisor
- Additional church leadership roles from Ambridge parish:
 1. Dn. Peter Ilchuk - O.C.A. All-American Council Manager
 2. Dn. Peter Ilchuk - FOCA National Convention Planning Officer
 3. Mat. Danielle Ilchuk - FOCA National Executive Board Recording Secretary
 4. Mat. Danielle Ilchuk - Pgh. District FOCA Governor
 5. Mat. Debbie Evansky - Pgh. District FOCA Recording Secretary
 6. Omelan Mycyk - Archdiocese of Pgh and W PA Administrative Assistant at the chancery
 7. Patty Lear - Diocesan Youth Committee Co-Chair

- Parish had a wonderful 110th Parish Anniversary in June with a Hierarchical Liturgy celebrated by Archbishop Melchisedek and visiting clergy followed by a beautiful banquet at the Edgeworth Club in Sewickley
- Parish held a successful 25th annual Slavic Food Festival in October
- Parish hosted the Ambridge Church Tour in September with over 80 visitors touring the church and hearing a lecture about the parish's history plus basics of Orthodoxy
- Parish for the first time participated in the Ambridge Festival of Churches at the downtown borough park with a food booth
- Started a new religious discussion series for both current parish members and those interested in Orthodoxy called "A Journey to Fullness."

Intercession of the Holy Virgin Church, Carnegie
V Rev George York, Rector

This year we were blessed to receive into the Faith six new converts through Baptism and Chrismation. Many of their friends and family members have shown an interest in the Orthodox Faith and beginning in October, 2017 there will be Adult Classes for those interested in learning the Faith. These classes will also be open to the members of our congregation as well.

The major project that is facing the parish is the great need for a new roof on the church before the winter weather sets in. At the present time we have two bids and looking for a third so that a wise decision may be made with all of the various facts at hand.

Beautiful additions to the Cross Memorial Garden are being done at the generosity of Barbara Atrostic in memory of her parents.

SS Peter and Paul Church, Crossingville
Rev. Daniel Mathewson, Rector

orthodoxcrossingville.org

Saints Peter and Paul in Crossingville has had a year of blessing! In a time of darkness over many parishes we have had a small light dawn upon our humble parish. There is an excitement in the air, with two new convert families and more on the way, and new babies, there is a renewed sense of God's presence at work. By the Grace of the Holy Spirit young people are finding the True light of the Church. Pray for Christian who is doing his catechesis by mail, as there is no Church within 100 miles, he's 15 living in Missouri.

Then there are those worthy faithful like Vern and Katherine (Memory eternal) who repose and we are both in sorrow and in joy simultaneously, and the witnesses of these paradoxical emotions, those we meet at funerals who are not Orthodox, are so impressed by our joy, our piety and worship, and care for the reposed, that they are inquiring an looking deeper into the truth of Christ and His Body.

We offered a workshop in the early fall on an Orthodox perspective on end of life care with much acclaim. "Wow, I never knew that!" - *a parish member*

We gave our first lecture on Eastern Orthodoxy and the Celtic lands on the Edinboro University Campus this summer, and saw some great interest in the Church and the origins of our Holy Faith.

An OCF chapter is forming at Allegheny College, and Edinboro and they will be joining Slippery Rock's chapter for outings this year. There are about 15 students between the schools and momentum is building for good interaction and encouragement for our Orthodox students who face a more and more godless educational system. Perhaps this is why this generation of young people in the world are searching for something with meaning, something with structure, something with purpose, and for The Truth. We must offer it to them!

By the Grace of the Almighty we look forward to another year of struggle with new darkness that will birth new light!

St Michael Church, Curtisville
V Rev Alexander Poshvaylo, Rector

St Nicholas Church, Duquesne
V Rev David Lesko, Rector

St Gregory Church, Homestead
Rev Evgeni Peykov, Acting Rector

stgregoryrussianchurch.org

- Fr. Evgeni Peykov has been transferred into the parish on August 1st 2017.
- With God's blessing the parish plans to renew the Holiday Bake Sale and Lenten Fish Fries, that were not held for the last 3 years.
- We are going to host:
 - Visitation of The Hawaiian Myrrh-Streaming Iveron Icon of the Mother of God on October 10th, 2017
 - The Archdiocese Annual Meeting on November 4th, 2017.
- Still under considerations, but not approved by the parish council (at least not yet) are the following projects:
 - Re-opening of the Sunday School
 - Organizing a Christmas – New Year Kid's Yolka party focusing on the Russian, Bulgarian and Serbian communities in the area

St Andrew Church, Lyndora
V Rev Andrew (Keith) Lowe, Acting Parish Administrator

standrewlyndora.com

Deacon Seraphim Truckley, Attached

The Lyndora parish has been transitioning since it lost its pastor of forty (40) years in October, 2016. The parish is currently administered by an archpriest of the Moscow Patriarchate who is seeking entry in the Orthodox Church in America.

The administrator is the “locum” and celebrates all services with the blessing of his own bishop as well as our archbishop, His Eminence, Archbishop Melchisedek. This arrangement has been in operation since Lazarus Saturday, 2017.

The parish has made some changes in so far that it no longer has “Summer hours” and celebrates Divine Liturgy each Sunday at 10:00 hrs. each and every Sunday. It appears that this parish is the first in the archdiocese to make this move and it has worked well here!

In addition the parish now celebrates Great Vespers on the first Saturday of the month. However, that will change in 2018 when it will be scheduled for the first and third Saturday of the month at 17:30 hrs. So this will be a time change and an additional monthly service will be added. The purpose of doing so is to gradually increase attendance.

There has been one death and no Baptisms, Chrismations or marriages thus far in 2017.

The parish is stable and has a “Growth Committee” to raise awareness of the parish in the greater Butler community. Its first event proved successful and is looking forward to even greater improvement.

The parish council is active and working and ensures that the parish’s financial situation is overviewed.

The parish website has been overhauled and is displaying up to date and current information.

The parish is on its way, in the fullness of time, to being a successful comeback story.

St Nicholas Church, McKees Rocks

stnicholas-oca.org

V Rev Thomas Soroka, Rector

Deacon Luke Loboda, Attached

Our parish strives to emphasize and encourage participation in the Liturgical services as the primary focus of parish life, the lens through which other activities are accomplished. The parish offers daily services during the Lenten season.

Our parish has concentrated this year on outreach to the community. Our second annual Community Day was attended by over 30 residents of our neighborhood after the Divine Liturgy on a July Sunday. Food, games and entertainment for the children, and church tours, enabled us to get to know our neighbors better, and they, us. Over 100 of our parishioners made acquaintance with our neighbors in a festive atmosphere outdoors. This event also gave us a specific opportunity to minister to a young mother who was in need of baby items for her

newborn. The mothers of our parish (through the Orthodox Mothers Group and the St Nicholas Sisterhood) showered her with numerous new and gently used items to use for the new baby.

Other charitable ministries and events included “A Ballgame for Life” which benefited Zoe for Life in Cleveland, our bimonthly support of FOCUS dinners in the Hill District neighborhood, and our yearly Easter Baskets for Families in Need which feeds a dozen local families during the Paschal season, among other activities and aid distributed.

A new outreach event was our very successful Slavic Food Fest. This festival has the primary purpose of bringing visitors into our neighborhood and our church to experience our hospitality, and God willing, be exposed to the beauty of the Orthodox faith through church tours, services, and talks.

Our parish continues our iconography renewal project. To date, our entire iconostasis, the back wall, and some side walls, have been adorned by renowned iconographers, Fr Theodore Jurewicz and Cheryl Pituch. The yearly iconography project will continue until the entire temple is renewed, likely into 2025.

We expanded and improved our educational offerings. Our Church School, which has 38 registered students, has instituted a new coordinated curriculum throughout all the classes. We’ve added an adult education class on Sunday morning which is well attended, the biweekly Vespers and bible study, as well as catechesis classes for our catechumens. We were also pleased to host the deanery Lenten retreat with speaker, Dr Edith Humphrey.

The entire 103 year listing of our metrical records has been digitized and indexed by Dr Kristie Mertz, who also authored a history of the Archdiocese.

The parish purchased an adjacent property and razed the building to expand our parking lot.

We continue a strong presence on social media and broadcasting as a main driver for our numerous visitors, through the website, Facebook, Fr Thomas’ podcasts on Ancient Faith Radio, and his visits to the John and Kathy Show on WORD-FM.

Our vision: St. Nicholas Church will strive to glorify God through Orthodox Christian worship, sincere love and care for one another, and service to those in need around us.

St John the Baptist Church, New Kensington

saintjohnnewken.org

Rev Nikolai Breckenridge, Rector

Deacon Joseph Rabickow, Jr, Attached

St. John the Baptist Church in New Kensington has had a busy year. Fund raising events such as Perogie making, Stuffed Cabbage Dinners, Pies, and Kolachi Rolls have been ongoing. We had a successful Adult Education Class focusing on the differences between Orthodoxy and various heterodox confessions. We also hosted this year's Small Parish Forum. We are looking forward to another year of successful adult education, and a greater focus on liturgical life in the parish,

and spiritual development for her parishioners as well as exploring our purpose as a parish in the community we are in.

Holy Assumption of St Mary Church, Pittsburgh
Igumen Patrick (Carpenter)

stmaryorthodoxchurch.net

Protodeacon Joseph Balkunowa, Attached
Reader Michael Daniels

St. Mary Orthodox Church just completed its centennial year which began with a festive Hierarchical Divine Liturgy and Banquet and concluded with a host of community activities. Among these activities were:

- 1) Aid to Transfiguration Monastery
- 2) Aid to Nativity of the Theotokos Monastery
- 3) Aid to St. Sophia's Orthodox School
- 4) Active participation in a community stuffed animal drive to assist first responders care for children in need
- 5) Weekly provision of food assistance to over 35000 people through the St. Cyril of White Lake Food Pantry
- 6) Hosting the Annual Pittsburgh Police Stuffed with Love Program where over 3500 Thanksgiving Dinners were prepared in our hall and delivered to those in need
- 7) Preparing the food for the Archdiocesan Family Day.

The year has also seen daily liturgical services, five Baptisms, three receptions into the Orthodox Faith and ongoing education programs for youths and adults. Also in the last year the parish added a handicapped restroom on the first floor, new Icons in the Church and a state of the art video-audio system.