

Northwest Deanery Report 2018

Deanery Activities

- Our **deanery officers** are:
 - Fr William Evansky, Dean
 - Fr Thomas Soroka, Associate Dean
 - Fr Patrick Carpenter, Secretary
 - Fr George York, Treasurer
- Fr Thomas was the keynote speaker at the **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 Holy Ghost Church in Ambridge entitled “Inner Peace in a Noisy World,” preceded by a Divine Liturgy. The speaker was Mr Andrew Weaver of Indiana PA.
- 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 V. Rev. William Evansky, Rector

holyghostoca.org

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 Lieutenant 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. Nicole Yakich - Archdiocesan Youth Committee member
 8. Joseph Lear - Pittsburgh District FOCA Auditing Committee member
- Both deacons attached to the parish were honored with receiving the right to wear the double orarion by the archbishop in recognition of outstanding service to the Holy Church
- Parish held a successful Slavic Food Festival in October - 26th in a row!
- Parish for the second consecutive year participated in the Ambridge Festival of Churches at the downtown borough park with a food booth

- Continued religious discussion series for both current parish members and those interested in Orthodoxy called “A Journey to Fullness” on Monday nights
- Continued monthly “Sunday Dialogue” sessions for parish teens and adults with Fr. Bill to discuss question about the Faith and current moral issues
- New state-of-the art audio-video system was installed to be used both in the church nave and downstairs in the church hall during services as well as during educational classes and meetings
- Emergency repairs to the interior of the main “fiberglass” dome was done to eliminate a damaging water leak to the church nave ceiling
- New front steps carpet was installed
- Continued outreach dinners at the community’s “Center for Hope” in downtown Ambridge
- Did a Cookie Walk prior to the Nativity of Christ Holyday to benefit the local community
- Provided four camp scholarships for parish youth to attend the St. Vladimir’s FOCA Camp in nearby Ohio
- The parish’s pledge system, in lieu of the outdated “dues” system, continues to grow steadily, albeit modestly, with the Stewardship Program reaching the \$80,000.00 annual mark for the first time this past year.
- Hosted the NW Deanery’s Lenten Retreat
- The parish said “good-bye” to our oldest living member, +Olga Petkash, who reposed in the Lord at age 104. Memory Eternal!

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

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

orthodoxcrossingville.org

Our parish has had a year of continuing trials and joys. We lost some faithful members and we gained some new ones! Two highlights this year are our effort to reach out and make ourselves known to the local community, and the overhaul of our education program from children to adults.

We began an “Orthodox Bible Study” in Nativity of last year, meeting at local coffee shops and bars bi-monthly. Our purpose was to explain how the holy Church uses and studies the holy scriptures, and to engage people to come and see the holy Church in her prayer life. We had five meetings one new catechumen and many seeds planted.

Our education program has taken on a new face as we have adopted the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd program across all our education efforts. We began by training then implementing the program this fall. We have also began a clinic in our community hall for those with auditory and verbal difficulties. The AAC ICan Institute has offices on our campus and meets regularly with

clients with ALS, Autism, and other related disabilities. The office is headed by Dr. Katya Hill. For more information email Dr. Hill khill@pitt.edu.

We are financially stable and are looking to continue to attract new people to join our community, in order for this to happen we must pray for all around us, and make ourselves available. Then, when they come we must teach them to pray and to worship, and by Grace we shall!

St Michael Church, Curtisville
V Rev Alexander Poshvajlo, Rector

St Nicholas Church, Duquesne
V Rev David Lesko, Rector

St Gregory Church, Homestead
Rev Evgeni Peykov, Acting Rector

stgregoryrussianchurch.org

- We were blessed to receive in the Faith four new children through baptism this year.
- Our bake sales for the Christmas and Pascal seasons were successful, considering the fact that there weren't any for the last couple of years.
- Slowly but steady the numbers of people present at Divine services is growing.
- The goal for St. Gregory parish for next year is to reopen its Sunday school. We are in need of some child-friendly books and materials.

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

standrewlyndora.com

Deacon Seraphim Truckley, Attached

The Lyndora parish has transitioned since it lost its pastor of forty (40) years in October, 2016. However, the parish is still 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 celebrates Great Vespers on the first and third Saturdays of the month at 17:30 hrs. except during Summer months.

There has been one death and no Baptisms, Chrismations or marriages thus far in 2018. And one or two people have returned to the church.

Unlike like last year's report the "Growth Committee" has been fully absorbed by the Sisterhood of the Altar where it originated from. However, unlike last year we have had two successful sales enterprises at the Farmer's Market, Route 68, Butler.

We have been put ourselves out there in the media and made ourselves known through every opportunity to promote ourselves through food sales. A flyer was put into every bag!

The church received a full page editorial in the Butler Eagle on our perigee sales went through the roof so much so that we now have to re-think how in the future we are going to be able to handle them. It is a given that measures need to be put into place for the handling of money and security.

Also, we have done a lot of work on the parish plant, fixing the church chimney, felling trees in the church car park and most recently taking down the ceiling over the candle room and replacing it and the doing whatever that makes us look more attractive as a parish through landscaping activities.

The parish no longer prints its parish bulletin via outside sources but does so through its own internal resources and this has proved effective and has been a cost saving measure to the church.

The parish council is active and working and ensures that the parish's financial situation is overviewed. However, we have had two resignations and one most vital position needs to be filled urgently, ie that of the treasurer.

Research has been made into the church's legal name and while the church has changed it's internal name it has not followed through legally to change it with the state and that will be forthcoming. The legal name of the church currently is St. Andrew's Russian Orthodox Church of Lyndora and that has already been changed by the parish to St. Andrew Orthodox Church.

The parish will soon submit a filling with the State of Pennsylvania to achieve this change.

The parish will also submit new by-laws with the archdiocese (WPA) to ensure that we are current with OCA statutes and in compliance with the WPA directives.

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

orthodoxpittsburgh.org

V Rev Thomas Soroka, Rector

Deacon Luke Loboda, Attached

Our parish has focused on enhancing the liturgical life of our parish. We have expanded the Saturday evening Great Vespers to include the "Cathedral Vigil" which permits the faithful to hear the resurrectional hymns and the Matins Gospel. The parish offers daily services during the

Lenten season. We also incorporate baptisms and chrismations into the Sunday Divine Liturgy so that the entire community can participate and rejoice as one family.

Our third annual Community Day was attended by over 35 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. This event has inspired us to open our Sunday Coffee hour to whomever from the area wants to come to have food with us. We normally have four to six people from the community that come with us, some who also come to the Divine Liturgy. We have made one convert to the Orthodox faith from the neighborhood through this effort.

At the end of 2017 we sponsored the first annual “St Nicholas Symposium” which featured local Orthodox (and one non-Orthodox) speakers. This year’s topic was “An Orthodox Perspective on the Reformation.” This allowed us to reach out to the larger Pittsburgh area on a topic of great importance. The date is being moved for the second annual Symposium to be held in late February 2019 on the Subject of “The Scriptures in the Orthodox Tradition.”

Our third annual Slavic Food Fest continued this unique outreach to the community. 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. Parishioners from many ethnic backgrounds support the effort.

Our parish continues our iconography renewal project. This past year we completed the lower side walls by renowned iconographer, Fr Theodore Jurewicz of Erie. The yearly iconography project will continue until the entire temple is renewed, likely into 2025.

Our Church School, which has 45 registered students, has continues the second unit of a four year curriculum, this year focusing on the Early Church (Acts of the Apostles). We continue holding adult education class on Sunday morning taught by Nathan Graff, and the biweekly Vespers and bible study, as well as catechesis classes for our catechumens is led by Fr Thomas.

Our parking lot was expanded, leveled, and beautified with landscaping. We plan on adding large signs at each entrance to our property.

Fr Thomas had the opportunity for five major speaking engagements during the summer of 2018, one in Crete, Greece, representing Ancient Faith Radio. We continue our strong presence on social media and broadcasting as a main driver to seek out visitors and inquirers, through the newly designed website, Facebook, Fr Thomas’ podcasts on Ancient Faith Radio, and his visits to the John and Kathy Show on WORD-FM.

Finally, we were blessed with the great joy of seven women who have or are about to give birth this year. We have celebrated 10 baptisms, 7 chrismations (conversions), and 2 marriages, and served 4 funerals since last year’s report.

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
Rev Nikolai Breckenridge, Rector

saintjohnnewken.org

Deacon Joseph Rabickow, Jr, Attached

St. John the Baptist Church in New Kensington has had a busy year, as well as a sad one, with the loss of our Pastor Emeritus, Archpriest Paul Ziatyk (may his memory be eternal!). Fund raising events such as our two Slavic Food Festivals, Perogie making, Stuffed Cabbage Dinners, Pies, and Kolachi Rolls have been ongoing. We are in the midst of Adult Education Classes focusing on the basics of Orthopraxis, and will be covering the book of Acts soon. We also instituted a greater focus on liturgical life in the parish, with Vespers every Tuesday and Thursday evening at 5:00 PM, and Matins on Wednesdays at 9:00 AM. We are looking forward to another year focused on our spiritual lives and deepening our religious education.

St Mary Church, Pittsburgh
Igumen Patrick (Carpenter)

stmaryorthodoxchurch.net

Protodeacon Joseph Balkunowa, Attached
Reader Michael Daniels

St. Mary Orthodox Church continues her faithful labor as an outpost of the Orthodox Faith in the center of Pittsburgh Pennsylvania where we maintain a daily Vespers, the Divine Liturgy on all Sundays and major Church Feasts, and a strong emphasis on community outreach. In the past year, the following major tasks have been undertaken to the Glory of God.

- 1) Aide to Transfiguration Monastery in Ellwood City PA and to the Nativity of the Theotokos Monastery in Saxonburg PA
- 2) Aide to St. Sophia's Orthodox School in Johnstown PA
- 3) Active participation in the Pittsburgh Police community stuffed animal drive to assist first responders care for children in need
- 4) Weekly provision of food assistance to over 42000 people through the St. Cyril of White Lake Food Pantry – including over 100 Nativity dinners distributed
- 5) 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
- 6) Provided assistance to fire victims locally, hurricane and flood victims on a national level
- 7) Installed mural of the choir of Saints in our Church choir loft
- 8) Installed new handrails in the Church
- 9) Restored the use of beeswax candles for the faithful in the Church
- 10) Installed a state of the art closed circuit tv system and sound system to provide real time broadcast of the Divine Services in the Church Hall
- 11) Updated our parish website
- 12) Provided training to upcoming funeral directors on the Orthodox Faith and Orthodox funeral practices