

Archdiocese of Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania
Eastern Deanery Report, 2022

The **Eastern Deanery** consists of the following active parishes:

1. Holy Ascension Church, Colver
2. SS. Peter & Paul Church, Altoona V. Rev. Andrew Matychak, Rector

3. Holy Assumption Church, Central City
4. SS. Peter & Paul Church, Pine Hill Rev. Elijah Bremer, Rector

5. Holy Trinity Church, State College Rev. Ignatius Hunter, Acting Rector; Rev. David Smith,
Associate
 Priest; ProtoDn. Mark Oleynik, attached

6. Chapel of the Holy Spirit, Beavertown Rev. David Smith, Administrator

7. Nativity of St. John Church, Philipsburg (Chester Hill) *Administrated by the Dean*

8. Nativity of the Virgin Mary Church, Osceola Mills Archimandrite John-Jacob (Piruta), Rector

9. St. Michael Church, Irvona
10. Nativity of the Theotokos Church, Madera V. Rev. Alexander Cadman, Acting Rector

11. St. Michael Church, Portage
12. SS. Peter & Paul Church, Vintondale V. Rev. Gregory Tsjouman, Rector

13. St. John the Baptist Church, Johnstown (Conemaugh) V. Rev. George Johnson, Rector

14. St. John the Baptist Church, Black Lick (Blairsville) *Administrated by the Dean; V. Rev. Andre Alexiev,
Attached*

15. St. Nicholas Church, DuBois V. Rev. Mark Meholick, Rector
16. SS. Peter & Paul Church, Urey

Some notable events in the life of the Eastern Deanery include the following: Fr. Alexander Cadman was transferred from St. Nicholas Church in DuBois to St. Michael Church in Irvona and The Nativity of the Virgin Mary Church in Madera as Acting Rector. Fr. Mark Meholick, Dean, gave a lecture on the Theology of the Icon at Holy Trinity Church, State College, in March. Deanery clergy concelebrated the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts on April 7 at Holy Trinity Church, State College. Deanery clergy were invited to concelebrate Matins and Divine Liturgy of Midfeast of Pentecost at St. John the Baptist Church in Black Lick.

St. Mary's Church of Madera and St. Michael's Church of Irvona hosted *The First Annual Orthodox Family Picnic* for all Orthodox parishes in Clearfield County. The picnic took place on Sunday, August 28 and included food, swimming, sports relays, and music. It was a very enjoyable day for all who attended. St. John the Baptist Church hosted a Parish Picnic on Sunday, September 18 beginning with an Akathist and followed by food, fellowship and music.

Respectfully submitted by Archpriest Mark Meholick, *Dean*

2 October 2022

St. John the Baptist Orthodox Church – Black Lick – Archpriest Andrei Alexiev

Over the past year, I made a married couple catechumens. God willing, they will be received into the church on Lazarus Saturday next year.

Repairs have been done to the church roof, a new roof was put on the rectory. Plans for the near future include an energy efficient cooling-heating system for the rectory. This should help with the utility bills in the colder weather. Also, a new entrance to the church hall, which will enable people to avoid the stairs is in the works.

Our picnic on September 18th was a success, people from the St. Michael Serbian Orthodox Church, which I also serve, came as guests. There was cordial interaction between members of both churches, leading us to hope for more joint events in the future.

I was to have been tonsured a monk by Archbishop Peter (ROCOR) at Sts. Sergius and Herman Monastery in Upper Michigan. His Eminence postponed the tonsuring because of the death of Archpriest Martin Swanson in St. Louis. His Eminence presided at Fr. Martin's funeral, instead of the feastday at Sts. Sergius and Herman. As soon as the tonsuring is rescheduled, I will inform the dean and diocesan authorities.

St. Nicholas – DuBois – Archpriest Mark Meholick

St. Nicholas Orthodox Church in DuBois, Pennsylvania has continued as an Orthodox Christian witness to the greater DuBois area. Since my last report to the Archdiocesan Assembly, Fr. Alexander Cadman who was attached here was assigned as Acting Rector for St. Michael's in Irvona and St. Mary's in Madera. We were blessed to have him as long as we did for his service when I served at our sister parish of SS. Peter & Paul in Urey.

On February 4 & 5, our Parish Council President, Reader Victor Lahnovych and I traveled to St. Tikhon's Monastery where we received a portion of the relics of St. Alexis of Wilkes-Barre from the Abbot Fr. Sergius. In April, we held our annual Easter Bake Sale. In May, our parish hosted a cross-country bicycle team of 25 university students called the Illini 4000:

“ Illini 4000 is a non-profit organization that documents the American cancer experience and raises money for cancer research and patient support services through an annual cross-country bicycle ride from New York City to San Francisco. We operate out of the University of Illinois and are completely student-run. To ensure as much of our fundraised dollars as possible go towards the great organizations we contribute to; we rely on the generosity of communities nationwide to host our team for the night as they pass through each city on their journey.”

In July, Subdeacon Christopher Meholick and I represented our parish at the *All American Council* in Baltimore. On July 23, the infant Annysia Lahnovych was baptized. On August 13, the child Vitaly Maksymenko was baptized. On September 16-17, we held our annual Rummage Sale as a fund-raiser used to pay our property tax on the rectory. On September 27, our parish hall served as headquarters for the DuBois Area Life-Chain event. On October 1, the infant Anthony Nichols (great-grandson of Fr. Theodore & Matushka Mary Shomsky) was baptized. As of this writing, our parish will host a Red Cross Blood Drive in our parish hall (October 10) for the third time. Throughout the year, we've continued to rent our parish hall to exercise groups, funeral repasts, and other functions to supplement our income.

On Sunday, October 2 we held our annual parish meeting. Some of our main concerns are repairing two leaks on the roof, air conditioning, and a new roof for the rectory. Our main source of income comes from the tithes and regular contributions of our parishioners. Several people who have been attending the Divine Services on a regular basis are contemplating becoming Catechumens.

Nativity of St. John the Baptist – Philipsburg – Archpriest Mark Meholick, Administrator

No full time Priest assigned to St. John's since June 30, 2020

- 1) No Reader Services as parishioners decided they would rather go where Communion is served. Many now attend The Nativity of the Virgin Mary at Osceola regularly and have become involved in that Church family.
- 2) October 17, 2021 – Father Shomsky served Liturgy. Lunch followed.
- 3) February 13, 2022 – Father Thomas served Liturgy. Lunch followed.
- 4) February 27, 2022 – Father Thomas served Liturgy. Lunch followed.
- 5) March 13, 2022 – Father Thomas served Liturgy. Lunch followed.
- 6) March 20, 2022 – Father Mark served Liturgy and facilitated our Annual Parish Meeting. Lunch followed
- 7) March 27, 2022 – Father Thomas served Liturgy. Lunch followed
- 8) April 16, 2022 – Father Mark served Liturgy on Lazarus Saturday with Confession prior. Lunch followed. This was the last time we had Confession at St. John's.
- 9) May 22, 2022 – Father Ignatius served Liturgy and Vespers the night before. Lunch followed
- 10) June 24, 2022 – Father Ignatius served Liturgy on the Feast Day of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist. Lunch followed.
- 11) July 10, 2022 – After Father Thomas's return, from out west, he agreed to serve Liturgy the second and fourth Sunday of every month at The Nativity of St. John for the rest of 2022 starting on this day.
- 12) August 1 2022 - funeral for Joseph Demchak, a long-time member of St. Johns, with Father Mark serving. Lunch was provided by the family at the Church Social Hall following the procession to the cemetery.
- 13) Thomas Demchak continues as Council President, Reader, serving in the altar when a Priest is available, Property Manager and many other duties
- 14) George Sura continues as Church Treasurer, creates the Donation Teller Report, creates the Attendance Report, works at the Candle desk along with many other duties such as ordering supplies for the Church, but George would like to pass the Treasurer duties on to someone else as he is in his 90's.
- 15) Judy Everly continues as Church Secretary, creating documents as needed, performs data entry of the Donation Teller Report into the computer, enters the Attendance Report into the computer and sing in the choir
- 16) Karen Stine continues as George's helper at the candle desk and President of the St. Ann's Guild.
- 17) Bonnie Fetcenko continues to serve as the St. Ann's Guild Treasurer, sing in the choir and prepare the music for Liturgy
- 18) Thomas Everly continues to bake the Prosphora for every Liturgy
- 19) Rhonda Demchak continues as custodian keeping our Church clean and beautiful
- 20) The Email Phone tree is used to relay important news and service schedule changes
- 21) We pray that Our Lord will bless our parish as we strive to hold St. John's together considering that we have not had a full-time OCA Priest since June 30, 2020 to provide all sacraments. Many parishioners are now attending other Churches for their spiritual needs and regular Church services, availing themselves of General Confession at The Nativity of the Virgin Mary in Osceola the first Saturday of every month. We, also, lost our Choir Director and husband whom moved to Philadelphia. We fear our numbers will dwindle as parishioners move on to other Churches, but are blessed to have the seven dedicated parishioners mentioned above. May God great them Many Years!

St. Michael's – Portage – Archpriest Grigori Tsjouman

On Tuesday, March 8, sponsored by the Portage Ministerium, St. Michael's Orthodox Church in Portage opened its doors for the purpose of offering prayers for the people of Ukraine. More than 80 people from our area came to the church to pray. Voluntary donations received were sent to our central church for the purpose of Humanitarian Aid for the people of Ukraine. V. Rev. Father Grigori Tsjouman and the parishioners of St. Michael's Church wish to thank everyone for their support and generosity.

Holy Trinity Church – State College – Priest Ignatius Hunter

We had one man tonsured a reader and another made subdeacon. We have engaged K&W Engineers and Consultants to undertake a site survey on our behalf to help us figure out how we might make our facilities fit our needs as a parish community. But the study is ongoing, so there's no definite outcome to report yet.

In general, things are going very well. Lots of inquirers and college students around now. I am estimating I will have somewhere around 10 or 12 catechumens by year end. God be praised.

Chapel of the Holy Spirit – Beavertown (State College) - Priest Ignatius Hunter / Priest David Smith

- As previously reported, construction of the Altar proper was completed by October 2020; dimensions are 12' deep and 24' wide
- CHS continues to offer a healthy liturgical fare, serving (Vespers) Liturgy at the 12 Great Feasts; serving Great Vespers (with Litya) on festal occasions, as well as serving Akathists
- CHS continues to beautify the nave with iconography supported by special offerings from the congregation
- A baptismal font was purchased as was a new chalice/diskos/spear set
- A Bishop's chair is in place
- We continue to participate in the OCMC SAMP which is an expression of our desire to go outside of ourselves. Offerings above and beyond our monthly commitment have been employed to support pregnancy centers, food bank, and the local homeless shelter. Our intent this year is to assist the Diocese of Alaska and the Diocese of Mexico with those additional offerings. Having been blessed we desire to bless in return.
- We presently have a candidate awaiting ordination to the Holy Diaconate for which we give God thanks
- This past year we received by either Baptism or Chrismation three of our four catechumens. Lord willing, the fourth will be received by the end of the year.
- Currently, we have 16 sacramentalized adults, 5 sacramentalized children, and 1 catechumen. We also have 2 inquirers.
- 2021 average attendance for Liturgy was 19; as of this writing, 2022 average attendance is 23.
- With the expansion of our Sunday School/catechetical offerings, the adults have been compelled to relocate to the rectory (not church owned) while the children utilize the nave.
- With that in mind, we would like to seriously entertain the adding on of the north and south transepts to provide additional space for such undertakings and for expanded fellowship. The construction of a parish hall in the future remains our hope.
- In conjunction with HTOC, we are making progress in assuming a more "independent" life, though we are short of the perquisite 25 adults to be classified a mission. We have been taking on more budgetary line items once supported by HTOC as well as establishing a separate bank account (with HTOC oversight in place). (Line items such as the Archdiocese apportionment and AAC/Sobor funding are two big moves.) We are presently fashioning a set of By-laws for future implementation once we are granted independence as a mission of the OCA.
- Stewardship remains, by the mercy of God, strong and healthy. We have been blessed with souls committed to tithing or those who are stretching themselves. At our founding in 2008, we were mandated by the Council of HTOC to maintain 6 months of operational expenses in reserve (which we have been able to do).

It is with the profoundest gratitude we thank the Archdiocese and Holy Trinity for their ongoing support of this humble missionary effort. Without the spiritual and financial backing (making the loans available), without the support of our mother in State College, and without the intercession of the Theotokos, the Orthodox Christian Chapel of the Holy Spirit would not be a reality today!