



Orthodox Church in America
Archdiocese of Pittsburgh
Saints Cyril and Methodius Orthodox Church
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Right Reverend Bishop Melchisedek

Archpriest Michael Senyo, Rector

Legacy Parish Assistance Program Report
October 2022

The renewal and growth initiated during the “pandemic” and now entering into a third year continues, as the parish has, basically, been re-born and renewed. This has been achieved through the assignment of a full time clergyman and financial assistance from the Archdiocese through the Legacy Parish Assistance Program (LPAP).

The strength of this renewal is based upon a foundation of consistent celebration of the divine services, which began with the training of servers, readers and singers through regular classes and practices. People come from near and far to attend, and the keeping of the cycles of the Liturgical seasons has been crucial to this renewal and in drawing new people into the Faith. The choir has grown with singers from within the parish, together with the good willed assistance of others from our diocesan parishes. The building of a small and good choir has been a great joy and has not only prayerfully enhanced the services, but has also inspired a more “congregational” type of singing, especially of the Liturgy. Singing is lead from the Kliros and not from the loft.

Following the liturgy, we have Trapeza/luncheon every Sunday and often following major feasts. Other times, we might gather at a local restaurant for fellowship and discussion. The increased fellowship and sharing of people’s stories has helped with our growth in meeting people from all “walks of life” and other religious and life experiences. Our parishioners love to share their stories of their journey to the Faith, which makes inquirers and visitors feel comfortable instead of ‘out-of-place’.

We have been pleased to welcome our Deanery Clergy for services, meetings and luncheons, as well as other clergy, including Fathers Mark Meholick and Alexander Cadman, together with faithful from other Archdiocesan parishes who come to our

divine services and events. We are very much grateful for their love and support. Our Archbishop makes several annual visits, which are a great joy and consolation to our community. Our beloved retired clergy, Father George Yatsko and Father Samuel Smolic and Matushka Marsha, are a great part of our community life. We are grateful to them for their support and pray for their good health and continued service to our community and the Archdiocese.

With a number of converts to the faith, most emphasis is placed on adult education, which informally takes place after Matins each Tuesday and Thursday, and at designated times during the year, especially during the Fall/Nativity Fast period. This year's course will be "Against Modern Heresies." Parishioners are also encouraged to attend functions at local Orthodox parishes and within the Archdiocese and Deanery.

Having a very small number of school age youth, but not lacking young adults, Matushka Susanne assists families with "home schooling" in the faith --- providing religious education materials and support. Father Michael instructs all catechumen and inquirers on a one to one basis. Matushka Susanne also assists the catechumen in learning the routines and nuances of the parish. The growth of a quality bookstore and library continues. Books and other items for the use of parishioners and inquirers are stocked in the Kiosk in the Church vestibule. Our library is located in the Church Hall.

The cleanliness, safety, security, and good order of temple, hall and grounds are a continual concern and receive the needed attention. While the location of the parish within the city of Jeannette is not anyone's idea of Paradise, we cooperate with fire, police, and code enforcement officers to help maintain our neighborhood's "quality of life." We cooperate with county redevelopment and city efforts to tear down abandoned buildings in the neighborhood, and we pray that the abandoned building next to the Church will be demolished soon. This year, the parish completed renovation of the restroom to a modern, clean and acceptable standard for public use. Repairs and renovations to Church and rectory took place, including street signage for the Church. A comfortable, clean children's area for education and needed 'Liturgy breaks' was set aside and renovated, which coincided with the restroom upgrades. Inspired and encouraged by Father Thomas Soroka and his kind and wonderful community in McKees Rocks, we continue with the rather difficult task of finding ways to reach out effectively to our immediate neighborhood.

Our web site (jeannetteorthodox.org) was rebuilt and upgraded this past year by one of our talented parishioners. The facebook page is updated nearly every day and enjoys a following both nationally and internationally.

Community presence:

The Fall Festival in Jeannette provides us with the opportunity to outreach, sell food and offer literature and an opportunity to meet Father Michael and our people. Open Door Sundays were held in September. We continue to explore more opportunities via the plentiful community festivals in the Laurel Highlands.

The parish cemetery is well maintained and is an asset to the community and not a cause for drama and anxiety. The main Cross has been repaired and painted. Other than grave-digging, all work is accomplished by volunteers.

Needs and Prospects:

Continual infrastructure updates and repairs on an old building have impeded planning for long term financial stability. Roof leaks and damage to the ceiling of Church have, hopefully, been abated and repaired, mostly using in-house talents and muscle.

Accessibility for the elderly and disabled is problematic and must be rectified. Increased parking space is needed. Despite problems with drugs, blight and generational poverty, the city is growing and being renewed by new businesses, development in family owned housing, and the cultural and historical amenities of nearby Greensburg and the Laurel Highlands.

The parish is drawing from Monroeville, Export, Murrysville and Latrobe. Real growth and stability must be a patient process, and transitions are, by nature, difficult; but by all indications, the LPAP has been absolutely essential in growing the Orthodox Christian mission and witness here in Jeannette and Westmoreland County with its financial support.

Financial stability is still not in the immediate future, especially considering the present economic realities related to lockdowns and international affairs. Continued stewardship education and supportive incentives, such as the LPAP, grants, and bequests are being introduced and encouraged. This would be a full time job in and of itself.

The Community of Saints Cyril and Methodius in Jeannette is grateful to keep the memory of the ever-memorable Archbishop Kyrill. We are also grateful to our

Archbishop, our Chancellor, and the faithful of this Archdiocese who initiated this program and who continue to support it. All of us involved in the administrative portion of this program understand that this is a work-in-progress. Great strides have been made and perhaps there have been some mistakes. By God's mercy, we continue to be ever forward and upward in our shared mission.

Metrics since 2020:

Baptisms: 12; Adult Chrismations: 8; Crownings: 1; Funerals: 0.

Archpriest Michael Senyo
Rector