

Northwest Deanery Report, November 2021  
V. Rev. William J Evansky, Dean  
V. Rev. Thomas Soroka, Associate Dean

We are grateful for the many deacons and priests who are leading the Divine Services in the parishes that are vacant or are in need of assistance.

We welcome the newest priest to our deanery, Fr John Mikita, who has been appointed as Dean of the St Alexander Nevsky Cathedral. We also welcome Fr Deacon John Skowron who is newly ordained and attached to St Nicholas in McKees Rocks.

We are grateful to God for the remarkable recovery of Igumen Patrick (Carpenter), Rector of St Mary Church in the Southside of Pittsburgh. Fr Patrick had both legs amputated, only several months apart. He continues to rehabilitate and serve his parish with limited assistance from local clergy.

---

St. Alexander Nevsky Cathedral  
*Allison Park, Pennsylvania*  
sanocpgh.org  
V. Rev. John Mikita, Dean  
Protodn. Michael Wusylko, Attached  
Dn. Stephen Boyd, Attached

After nearly a year under the blessed leadership of our Chancellor, Fr. Bill Evansky, and under the wise guidance and steady pastoral hand of Fr. David Vernak, the Cathedral experienced another transition after my family and I, after 14 years in the Archdiocese of the South, returned to our home diocese and home parish. Since the Feast of Dormition this past August we have begun our service as cathedral dean. During our as of yet brief tenure the main focus has been to ramp up parish life since the pandemic and the transition period without a full time priest. We have focused on balancing ambition with discretion as we patiently rebuild and strengthen foundations. It is my prayerful hope and goal for St. Alexander Nevsky's to continue to be a growing, joyful, and faithful parish for its members as well as a resource to the whole Archdiocese as a cathedral. I especially want to point out and thank Protodeacon Michael Wusylko and Deacon Stephen Boyd for their faithful service and guidance during the transition; Roy Glisan for his tireless work and steady hand as council president; Eileen Glisan for her faithful leadership at the Women's Choice Network and the whole community of cathedral members who actively support and participate in that ministry; Frank Namisnak as well as Fran and Dr. Paula Balog for ensuring the optimal functioning of the rectory and temple; Anne Hershey for leading Church School; Matushka Mary Wusylko for leading our pierogi making and ministry of support for several outside groups; Lory Nescott for continuing her faithful leadership of the choir; Ray Steeb who serves on Diocesan and Metropolitan Council; and everyone who gives so much in faithfulness to the Lord.

St. Andrew Church  
*Lyndora, Pennsylvania*  
standrewlyndora.com  
V. Rev. William J Evansky, Acting Administrator  
Dn. Seraphim Truckley, Attached

St Andrew Church has been serviced by various Orthodox clergy of the Archdiocese and is having weekly services and activities.

---

Holy Ghost Church  
*Ambridge, Pennsylvania*  
holyghostoca.org  
V. Rev. William J Evansky, Rector  
Rev. Gregory Thompson, Attached, (Leave of Absence)  
Dn. Peter Ilchuk, Attached  
Dn. Matthew Stahoviak, Attached

Despite the ongoing threat from COVID-19, the Holy Ghost Church in Ambridge has worked to continue the parish's spiritual life and parish activities - while taking prudent precautions to protect the health and well-being of the parish's members. Included in this effort has been the parish's outreach programs locally, on the diocesan level, and nationally. The parish's faithful continue to provide hot meals several times a year at the Center for Hope, a non-denominational Christian organization that provides programs, a food pantry, and meals to families and residents living within the Borough of Ambridge and the surrounding towns and townships that comprise the large Ambridge Area School District. Parish volunteers prepare hot meals at the parish's Youth Center facility, box them in take-out containers, and distribute those meals in the parking lot of the Center for Hope located at a former Ambridge school building. The parish also provides funds for the families of the neighborhood near the church on Maplewood Avenue to purchase school supplies materials for the children. Likewise, the parish distributes gift cards to the families of the neighborhood annually prior to Christmas so the parents can purchase additional gifts for their children at Christmas. The Holy Ghost Ladies Altar Society and the parish also continue to financially support the St. Cyril of White Lake Orthodox Food Pantry at our diocesan parish on Southside, Pittsburgh. The parish generously supports the St. Nicholas Project of the Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America (FOCA) each November, a project that provides funding for the married seminarians of our Orthodox Church in America's seminaries to provide extra Christmas gifts for their wives and children. The parish has established a special fund to anonymously support the families of the parish suffering financial hardships due to the loss of jobs related to the pandemic and maintains its own food pantry in the church hall to provide emergency food items to our membership. In-person church school/teen group classes also resumed in October along with the monthly adult education "Sunday Dialogue" series. We also rejoice that the parish's liturgical life has returned to the pre-pandemic level.

---

St. Gregory Church  
*Homestead, Pennsylvania*  
stgregoryrussianchurch.org  
Rev. Evgeni Peykov, Rector

Despite the pandemic and all challenges that came with it, we were able to not close at all our doors. Not even a single parishioner got sick of Covid-19. We had 2 baptisms and only 1 funeral during the last year. Our Christmas and Pascha bake sales were very successful as well. We do not have new official members joining our congregation, but we do see new visitors who started to come on a regular basis. We are extremely thankful and pray to God to bring even better times to "St. Gregory".

---

Intercession of the Holy Virgin Church  
*Carnegie, Pennsylvania*  
hvroc.org  
V. Rev. George York, Rector

Words are inadequate to sum up the love, dedication, faith, tenacity of the members of this congregation. In our parish history, wars, plagues, the Great Depression, were nothing in comparison to the disaster that the COVID caused the entire world at the same time and continues its assault on humanity. Yet everyone stayed true and continued to maintain our spiritual home through prayers and financial support. The first week of September this year gave all of us another nail biting experience with the aftermath of Hurricane Ida and the possibility of another flood impacting the Carnegie area like it did in 2004.

Major Projects:

Garden Vinyl Wall installed

Parking lot repaired and paved

Leaf guards on the shed and back porch of the parish house

Parish Life continued under COVID:

- Reorganization of the Parish Education Program
- 9 catechumens are in the Orthodox Inquiry Class taught by Subdeacon Nicholas York
- Celebration last Fall of the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the construction/consecration of our present Church building in 1920 along with a Commemorative Book done by Michael Sherba
- installation of WI-FI in the church to be able to broad cast our services and for laptop accessibility
- Digitalization of Parish Financial Records
- The sacred items from the closed Saint Nicholas Church in Duquesne have been given to our parish to protect
- The complete makeover of our front gardens
- Donation of food items and clothing to those in need
- Special Collection during the month of September 2021 to benefit Father Patrick after his double amputation

---

St. John the Baptist Church  
*New Kensington, Pennsylvania*  
saintjohnnewken.org  
Rev. Nikolai Breckenridge, Rector  
Dn. Joseph Rabickow Jr. Attached

St. John the Baptist Church in New Kensington has had a busy year. Fund raising events such as our two Slavic Food Festivals (which have been transitioned to drive-tru events, to much success), Perogie making, Stuffed Cabbages, Pies, and Kolachi Rolls have been ongoing even during COVID-times. After a half a year break, we resumed Adult Education Classes together with the institution of serving a Divine Liturgy at least one other day of the week other than Sunday. Our classes have focused on many topics related to the differences between Orthodoxy and heterodox confessions. Currently, there has been an influx of inquirers who have shifted the focus of classes to more catechetical material, which has also been appreciated by long term members. We are looking forward to another year focused on our spiritual lives and deepening our religious education.

---

St. Mary (Holy Dormition) Church  
*Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania*  
stmaryorthodoxchurch.net  
Igumen Patrick (Carpenter), Rector  
Protodn. Joseph Balkunowa, Attached

2020 and 2021 have seen both challenges and blessings for St. Mary Orthodox Church. These two years have encountered the Covid Pandemic and extreme medical surgeries which cost Igumen Patrick his legs. Despite the adversities encountered, the Church has not stopped working or growing. The parish has lost two beloved parishioners who transferred into the Kingdom of Heaven, and has gained three families. The Church has seen the largest ever 'Get Stuffed With Love Program' with 4500+ meals prepared in house and delivered to those in need in our community by the Pittsburgh Police. The St. Cyril of White Lake Food Pantry has provided food assistance biweekly to thousands of people. The Church installed a handicapped restroom and new handrails in the rectory and handrails into the Church building. The Church has also completed the repainting of the Church building with some needed spot pointing, and has added new Icons in the Church. Igumen Patrick has continued to mend and has returned to serving. While down he has overseen needed Church projects and engaged in numerous catechetical classes, marriage counseling with new couples and outreach counseling to other amputees.

---

St. Michael Church  
*West Deer Twp (Curtisville), Pennsylvania*  
V. Rev. Alexander Poshyvajlo, Rector

---

St. Nicholas Church  
McKees Rocks, Pennsylvania  
orthodoxpittsburgh.org  
V. Rev. Thomas Soroka, Rector  
Dn. Luke Loboda, Attached  
Dn. John Skowron, Attached

St Nicholas Church is located directly outside of downtown Pittsburgh. Our mission: *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.*

The following highlights summarize the parish life and accomplishments in 2021 to date:

- Liturgical Services: At the beginning of 2021, two Divine Liturgies were offered (Saturday and Sunday) for the faithful to have adequate space. We returned to our normal schedule during Holy Week of 2021. Daily Matins with Office Hours (on Tuesdays and Thursdays) began again in February 2021.
- Church Beautification: The iconography project for the entire bottom half of the church has been completed, with the addition of new icons covering the walls of the children's room and the candle kiosk. 2022 will begin the work of new iconography on the entire ceiling of the church.
- Educational Programs: Our educational programs continue with Church School for school-age students (preschool through 12<sup>th</sup> grade) in six classes. Our Vacation Church School was attended during the summer by 40 students up to Grade 8, learning about the theme of Spreading the Gospel. Bible Study is held twice a month for adults. A comprehensive catechism class is held for catechumens who are preparing to enter the Orthodox faith.
- Clergy: We were blessed to another one of our parishioners, Fr Deacon John Skowron, ordained to the Holy Diaconate by Archbishop Melchisedek in June.
- Charitable Endeavors: We host a monthly food pantry for those in need in the neighborhood. We also host a yearly Community Day, inviting our neighbors to be with us in worship and fellowship. We were also honored to spearhead a fund drive to aid Fr Patrick Carpenter which raised over \$30,000. We also give gifts through
- Homeschooling Support: We host the St Macrina Homeschooling Co-op which brings together families from across the Pittsburgh area to share in a day of learning and fellowship.
- Outreach and Evangelism: We have upgraded our video and audio equipment to livestream the Sunday Divine Liturgy in a more professional format. We are honored to be the home of four popular podcasts on Ancient Faith Radio. Fr Thomas is heard frequently on WORD-FM in Pittsburgh on "The Ride Home with John and Kathy." While we were unable to have our yearly Symposium which attracts attendees from around the tri-state area, we will continue the yearly Symposium again in 2022 on the theme of Orthodox Christian Iconography.

St. Nicholas Church (*Inactive*)  
*Duquesne, Pennsylvania*  
V. Rev. William J Evansky, Acting Administrator

---

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

Saints Peter and Paul of Crossingville Pennsylvania celebrated its 100th year this year! The preparations began the year before and the question was asked: Do we want this celebration to be just a trip down memory lane? The answer was No. The parish decided then to put its efforts toward an outreach event for local families as the main focus of the celebration, inviting those in attendance to see where we began and where we are headed. The idea of the event was to allow visitors to see our worship space and explore what Orthodoxy is with an interactive description of the various aspects of Orthodox worship and our newly dedicated "Theotokos Icon Garden" -- revealing the lives of the saints, as well as a tour of our new Children's Education program space. The day included a pet and playground blessing, as well as a food truck, musical entertainment, a 'bounce house' and family games finally ending the Saturday with Great Vespers. We celebrated the Divine Liturgy with our Archbishop and had a luncheon with a compiled video of history and interviews of the past and present. It was a wonderful weekend and has already brought numerous visitors and one new inquirer, Glory to God! The parish plans to continue these types of events throughout the year. Glory to God for all things!