

## **Northwest Deanery Report, November 2023**

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. Thank you to everyone who helped out over the past year. We also welcome Deacon Nicholas York of Carnegie into the ranks of the clergy. Axios!

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### **St. Alexander Nevsky Cathedral**

*Allison Park, Pennsylvania*

sanocpgh.org

V. Rev. John Mikita, Dean

Protodn. Michael Wusylko, Attached

Dn. Stephen Boyd, Attached

This past year at the cathedral we chrismated four new converts and continue to see an increase in interest in Orthodoxy in young folks in their twenties, male and female. We are averaging about 89 people in attendance on Sunday's. We have continued to hold adult education as well as book studies at various times throughout the year. Pierogies remain as popular as ever - we make a few hundred dozen on several Saturdays during the year and donate all proceeds to various groups outside the parish, especially seminaries, seminarians, monasteries, WCN, soup kitchens, etc. We have increased our activity in Orthodox Christians for Life, holding regular monthly moliebens and continued support of and participation in Women's Choice Network. We have also been increasing our social activities with men's and women's nights at the rectory and festal celebrations, like Oktoberfest, throughout the year at coffee hour.

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### **St. Andrew Church**

*Lyndora, Pennsylvania*

standrewlyndora.com

V. Rev. William J Evansky, Acting Administrator

Dn. Seraphim Truckley, Attached

The following have taken place at Saint Andrew this past year:

- One Baptism
- The Blessing of a marriage
- Two funerals
- During the last four months, five converts (four members of a family and one additional individual) enrolled in Catechism classes that are being taught at coffee hour.

The Sisterhood has a Pokrov luncheon every year at a local restaurant to commemorate the Holy Theotokos.

This was the third year that Saint Andrew Church held our annual Awards Program recognizing the faithful with commemorative certificates. The Program was held after Liturgy during a covered dish social.

Fr. Michael Sochka and Deacon Seraphim Truckley visited the sick in nursing homes and hospitals. Some major projects were completed in 2023:

- Painting
- Cleaning of the canvas icons
- Cleaning of the iconostasis

- Remodeling of kitchen in the church hall

Archbishop MELCHISEDEK blessed our newly remodeled kitchen.

We would like to express our deepest appreciation to substitute Archpriests Andrew D. Nelko and Michael Sochka, as they continue to provide their services to our church. We are profoundly grateful to them.

### **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

In addition to his pastoral duties, Fr. Bill continues as Archdiocesan Chancellor/ Northwest Dean / FOCA Pittsburgh District Spiritual Advisor

Additional church leadership roles from the Ambridge parish:

- Dn. Matthew Stahoviak – Active in providing liturgical coverage for the diocesan parishes without an assigned priest / Frequent deacon for the Archbishop during Sunday Archpastoral visits
- Pdn. Peter Ilchuk – Protodeacon for His Beatitude, Metropolitan TIKHON /
- Orthodox Church in America All-American Council Manager
- Mat. Danielle Ilchuk - Pittsburgh District FOCA Lieutenant Governor
- Mat. Debbie Evansky - Pittsburgh District FOCA Recording Secretary / Parish Church School Coordinator
- Omelan Mycyk - Archdiocese of Pgh and W PA Administrative Assistant at the chancery
- Nicole Yakich - Archdiocesan Youth Committee member
- Joseph Lear - Pittsburgh District FOCA Auditing Committee member

### Parish Life

- Church School/Teen Group 2023-2024 academic year has begun with 23 children enrolled (K-12th Grade).
- Parish metrical records for calendar 2022 include: one new member (transfer); one Baptism; one convert; eleven funerals; one wedding // current adult census = 139.
- Parish again participated in the Ambridge Festival of Churches at the downtown borough park with a food booth and Orthodox educational materials distributed.
- Continued monthly “Sunday Dialogue” education sessions for parish teens and adults with Fr. Bill to discuss questions about the Orthodox Faith, comparative religion studies, and current moral issues.
- Periodic evening Bible Studies during the year.
- Continued outreach dinners at the non-denominational Center for Hope in downtown Ambridge + provided food bank supplies throughout the year of household and non-perishable food items to Ambridge, nearby Leet Twp., and the St. Cyril of White of Lake Orthodox Food Pantry (Pittsburgh).
- Once again held a very well received pre-Nativity children’s program in the church nave.
- Provided four Orthodox 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.

- Parish physical plant improvements continue in an orderly manner using a constantly updated planning cycle for the parish's four buildings (church, educational center, youth (event) center, and rectory - - including a beautiful new church lawn sign installation.
  - Hosted two sisters from the Holy Transfiguration Monastery (Ellwood City) for talks.
  - Continued our Simply Social restaurant night-outs for parish members and guests.
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### **St. Gregory Church**

*Homestead, Pennsylvania*

stgregoryrussianchurch.org

Rev. Evgeni Peykov, Rector

2023 had good and challenging times for St. Gregory. On the good side we had successful Christmas and Pascha bake sales last year. We are definitely seeing increased demand for our baked goods. One of our parishioners donated time and labor and repaired the roof, painted the ceiling above the choir, and did various other urgent little jobs around the main church building and the parish house..

On the challenging side St. Gregory will need soon a roof replacement.

We participated in the Homestead prayer walk in late August, we donated cash and goods to support Ukraine.

Thanking God for His continued blessing upon St Gregory parish.

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### **Intercession of the Holy Virgin Church**

*Carnegie, Pennsylvania*

hvroc.org

V. Rev. George York, Rector

Dn. Nicholas York, Attached

The parish has the following ongoing projects: upkeep of the Memorial Cross and Garden, refurbishment of the church domes, upkeep of the parish house, and a free parish library. Several successful fundraisers were held including a Christmas festival, the parish Christmas card, Kolbassi sales, Easter Chocolate cross sales, outreach to Orthodox in other states and countries, and the Sunday School assembled emergency kits and contributed money to help the earthquake victims in Turkey. Additionally, a Christmas Angel Tree helps the underprivileged and fruit baskets are sent to parishioner's homes who are hospitalized.

The parish serves services on Saturday evenings, Sunday morning, and the major feasts of the church as well as Lenten services.

A major celebration was the ordination of Deacon Nicholas York on Saturday, May 23 at the Monastery of the Holy Transfiguration in Elwood City. A banquet was held in his honor on Sunday, June 11 following the Divine Liturgy which was attended by parishioners and well-wishers.

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### **St. John the Baptist Church**

*New Kensington, Pennsylvania*

saintjohnnewken.org

Rev. John Parker, Rector

Dn. Joseph Rabickow Jr. Attached

St. John the Baptist Church continues to pursue the life in Christ as a community. In the past year we hosted a number of food festivals as both fundraisers and outreach to the local community. Members remain steadfast in their participation in the life of the divine services, with weekly Daily and Great Vespers, an ongoing bible study of Genesis, and a number of continuing catechesis groups. Additionally, we've seen an increased attendance at Certain, festal vesperal Liturgies, followed by a fellowship meal. Finally, Our choir director continuously works on strengthening the beauty of our worship, now holding monthly rehearsals.

In the last year we've seen growth in our membership as well. On Lazarus Saturday we baptized three young men in the Allegheny river. Right now we have several catechumens as well as brand new inquirers attending consistently; it seems like every Sunday we see new faces. We've also seen an increase in parish stewardship regarding meals for fellowship, cleaning of the temple, and participation in parish events like our Apple Bake-off and upcoming Chili cook off.

For ongoing instruction and community building of the faithful, we've hosted a number of guest speakers and fellowship events, including: The "A Christian Ending" retreat, co-sponsored by the diocese; two parish bowling nights; "Man of God" movie night and discussion; "An Evening with St. John Chrysostom" by Dr. David Ford; a men's night fellowship cookout; and a visit by the St. Tikhon's seminary mission choir and dean, where the faithful gave generously to support the cause of the seminary.

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**St. Mary (Holy Dormition) Church**

*Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania*

stmaryorthodoxchurch.net

Igumen Patrick (Carpenter), Rector

Protodn. Joseph Balkunowa, Attached

2022 - 2023 has seen many a time of growth and change here at St. Mary's Orthodox Church. Beloved church laborers Serge Daniels, Edward and Elizabeth Oleniacz fell asleep in the Lord. Seven new people were received into the Orthodox faith through Baptism and/or Chrismation. Four babies were born. The calendar year 2022 ended with a successful 'Get Stuffed With Love' Thanksgiving Event with the Pittsburgh Police and Rotary Clubs with over 3500 meals served. The Food Pantry remained in regular operation serving between 40 and 60 families every two weeks. Our Liturgical Schedule has returned to normal, and efforts are underway to further expand it. Alex Carson was ordained to the subdiaconate by Archbishop Melchisedek. The parish is in preparation for its Annual Spaghetti Dinner (Nov. 4) and this year's Get Stuffed With Love Thanksgiving Program.

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**St. Michael Church**

*West Deer Twp (Curtisville), Pennsylvania*

V. Rev. Alexander Poshyvajlo, Rector

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**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 parish life and some accomplishments in 2023 to date:

- Liturgical Services: We offer Saturday Cathedral Vigil and Sunday Divine Liturgies, all major and some minor feast days and the eves of feasts, daily Matins with Office Hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and Wednesday Vespers before Bible Study twice a month. We also hold daily services during the Great Lenten period.
- Church Beautification: The iconography project has continued with three new large murals on the ceiling of the Nativity, Resurrection, and Pentecost. The iconography project is now paused for dome work, repairing leaks in the roof.
- Capital Projects: We have contracted with an architect, Gus Kayafas, to provide possible solutions to our ongoing issue with building leaks. After a parish meeting, it was decided to move forward with engineered drawings and a bidding process for new domes for the Church.
- Educational Programs: Our educational programs continue with Church School for school-age students (preschool through 12th grade) in five classes (33 registered students). Our Vacation Church School was attended during the summer by 35 students up to Grade 8, on the theme "Wildlife Wonders: Animals in the Bible." Bible Study is held twice a month for adults. A comprehensive catechism class is held for catechumens. We held our annual St Nicholas Symposium on the subject of "Christian Iconography and the Second Commandment." Attendees from as far as Louisville KY learned from the four speakers from a theological, philosophical, practical, and experiential perspective.
- 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 are donating a portion of the proceeds of our Slavic Food Fest to benefit Ukrainian refugees in Poland. Several of our parishioners have played a leading role in organizing the planned St Constantine Classical School in Pittsburgh and our parish has participated in the fundraising activities. The new headmaster, Jesse Cone, and his family, are members of our parish.
- Outreach and Evangelism: Our Sunday Divine Liturgy is streamed on Facebook and YouTube. 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."

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### **SS. Peter and Paul Church**

*Crossingville, Pennsylvania*

orthodoxcrossingville.org

Rev. Daniel Mathewson, Rector

"Blessed be the Name of the Holy Trinity, Most Holy Theotokos save us!" ... What a prayer prayed by our beloved St. Pasiros of Mount Athos!

The Holy Trinity and His name have been glorified and magnified in our parish this year. Being able to hold regular weekend services and festal day services as well as many other weekly services throughout the year has brought forth the fruit of new believers with 13 new to our parish this year. We have seen the power and working of His Might in the fruit that has been brought forth through the Holy Church here in Crossingville.

The Holy Mother of God has also been blessing us with many children, as we have seen 3 newly born and other new families have brought children. We have prayed many Akathists to the Holy Theotokos throughout the year, in addition we have asked her special intercession for our children. We have also been continuing to teach and encouraging fuller participation in the Divine Liturgy and all the Holy Services of the Church and guiding children to look to the Theotokos for strength. She has also blessed our Catechist led Orthodox Atriums for all ages, where discovery of the faith is encouraged and guided.

Prayer is our focus, and we have also been seeking to gently shine the light of the Gospel on our community through a "Come and see" approach. Our website and social media presence has attracted regular inquirers and our yearly "Family Open House", St. Nicholas Day event, and various other special events have also attracted new members. These are tools, but we find the Grace of the Holy Spirit is the real one who draws people to the Holy Faith. You can find our more about the Lord's work up north in the Archdiocese by going to our website:

[www.orthodoxcrossingville.org](http://www.orthodoxcrossingville.org)

Glory to God for all things!