



THE LIGHT OF ORTHODOXY

Archdiocese of Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania

Orthodox Church in America

Summer 2023 Edition

August 1

Procession of the Wood of the Lifegiving Cross



Troparion, Tn 1: O Lord, save Thy people, and bless Thine inheritance! Grant victories to the Orthodox Christians over their adversaries. And by virtue of Thy

Cross, preserve Thy habitation!

August 6 Feast of the Transfiguration Of our Lord



Troparion, Tn 7: Thou wast transfigured on the mountain, O Christ God, revealing Thy glory to Thy disciples as far as they could bear it. Let Thine everlasting Light also shine upon us sinners, through the prayers of the Theotokos. O Giver of Light, glory be to Thee!

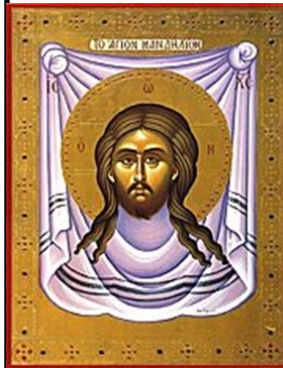
August 15 Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos



In giving birth thou preserved thy virginity, in falling asleep thou didst not forsake the world, O Theotokos. Thou wast translated to life, O Mother of Life, and by thy prayers, thou didst deliver our souls from death.

August 16

Translation of the Image not made by Hands



Troparion, T 2 We venerate Thy most pure image, O Good One, and ask forgiveness of our transgressions, O Christ our God. Of

Thine own will Thou wast pleased to ascend the Cross in the flesh to deliver Thy creatures from bondage to the Enemy. Therefore with thanksgiving we cry aloud to Thee: "Thou hast filled all with joy, O our Savior, by coming to save the world."

August 29

The Beheading of St. John the Forerunner



Troparion: Tn 2: The memory of the righteous is celebrated with hymns of praise, but the Lord's testimony is sufficient for

thee, O Forerunner. Thou wast shown in truth to be the most honorable of the prophets, for thou wast deemed worthy to baptize in the streams of the Jordan Him whom they foretold. Therefore, having suffered for the truth with joy, thou hast proclaimed to those in hell God who appeared in the flesh, who takes away the sin of the world, and grants us great mercy.



FROM THE DESK OF ARCHBISHOP MELCHISEDEK

The Transfiguration of Christ and Our Salvation

One of the most important – yet most obviously neglected – Church observances if the Church year is the Feast of the Transfiguration, observed yearly on August 6. The importance of this feast is that understanding its observance in a knowledgeable fashion, is indispensable for understanding what the Orthodox Church teaches about Salvation. Whereas much of the world which claims to be Christian, limits the discussion of Salvation to a kind of legal maneuver, Orthodoxy sees the matter in a more comprehensive manner.

The matter goes back to our understanding at what happened in and from the act of creation. At the beginning of the book of Genesis, we are told that God created heaven and earth, that the Spirit of God was moving over the primeval chaos. Then, God spoke His Word, and the world and everything in it was created. In their description of the act of creation, the Scriptures fall in to a kind of rhythm wherein we are told that God made one thing and another thing, and each time He observes it and sees that it is good. At the end of this process, however, God pauses and says: “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them.” Whereas everything else in the world was simply ‘good’, ‘man’, that is the human being, was created “in the image and likeness” of God – that is, he was created to be “like” God. Because they were temporal, created beings, the man and woman – created in God’s image – would have to realize His likeness over the course of time.

As the narrative progresses, we are told that the man and woman are named, respectively, Adam and Eve, that they are placed in a garden, named Eden, in which they are to live, and which they are to cultivate. Furthermore, they may partake of the fruit of all the trees in the garden except one – a tree in the middle of the garden which they are not to touch upon the penalty of death. As the narrative unfolds, we are introduced to the serpent, who turns out to be the ‘satan’ – “the one who divides”. We discover that He is an expert, in his skill, at dividing by a lie, and persuades the woman to pick fruit from the forbidden tree and share it. What is the lie? It is that God has forbidden the fruit because He is afraid that they – who were created in the “image and likeness of God”, will become (by some kind of misappropriation) “like God”. The result of that persuasion, is that the man and woman are divided from each other and the God Who created them. The end result is that they are expelled from the Garden.

This leaves God with a choice; He can either ‘wipe the slate clean’ and start over – i.e., He can destroy His creation and create anew looking for better results from the second (or third, or fourth, etc.) time around, or He can restore it, from within, to its intended glory. Having chosen the latter course, He is committed to the restoration of the human beings to the image and likeness in which they were created, by breaking down the “middle wall of partition” (Eph. 2:14) which came into place as a result of the first sin of disobedience.

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FROM THE DESK OF ARCHBISHOP MELCHISEDEK

Continued from Page 2

During the historical process which resulted in breaking down the wall of separation, He chose a man, Abraham, from whom he formed a people, who after having wandered throughout the Middle-east, were settled into their own Kingdom, from whose royal family of David, He selected a virgin maiden to bear the Second Person of the Holy Trinity as a human being, Who, in turn suffered a human death to go to Hades – the kingdom of death – to destroy it.

In the Feast of the Transfiguration, we commemorate two events which took place in Hebrew History which were decisive in the achievement of human salvation. The first was the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai as recorded in the book of Exodus ch. 24-34, which record how, when Moses descended from the mountain with the tablets of the law, “the skin of his face” shone with the uncreated light (Ex. 34:29ff). The second is recorded in the Third book of Kings (I Kings 19) where the Lord meets the Prophet Elijah on Mt. Horeb in a “still, small, voice”. (I Kings 19). Thus we sing at Vespers of the Feast;

“O Christ our God, Who was transfigured in glory on Mount Tabor, showing to thy disciples the splendour of Thy Godhead, do Thou enlighten us also with the light of Thy knowledge and guide us in the path of Thy commandments, for Thou alone art good and lovest man.”

St Nicholas in McKees Rocks holds annual Vacation Church School

32 students, Kindergarten through 8th grade, attended the annual Vacation Church School at St Nicholas Church in McKees Rocks. Entitled “Wildlife Wonders,” the students learned about the role of animals in the world created by God. The younger students learned about the creation of animals in the six-day creation of the world, Daniel in the lion’s den, doves and birds in the Bible, and St Seraphim and his friend, the bear Misha. The older students prepared a newscast video on the subject of animals being used by God in miraculous ways. They had to discuss which scenes to record, then do their own research, write scripts, create rudimentary costumes, and then film the entire “newscast.” The sessions were three hours a day for four days, included games and lunch, and were led by Matushka Joni Soroka and Rachel Hauenschild, as well as many parent volunteers. A great time was had by all!



**ARCHDIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH
AND WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA
ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA**

OFFICIAL CHANGES

CADMAN, ARCHPRIEST ALEXANDER, who had been Acting Rector of the St. Michael Church, Irvo-na, PA, and the Nativity of the Theotokos Church, Madera, PA, is appointed Rector of those parishes effective February 1, 2023.

CURCHIN, IGUMEN CONSTANTINE, is accepted into the ranks of the clergy of the Orthodox Church in America by His Beatitude, Metropolitan TIKHON effective December 1, 2022, and transferred to the Archdiocese of Pittsburgh and W PA where he awaits assignment.

KERSTETTER, SUBDEACON JOHN, was ordained to the Holy Diaconate at the Chapel of the Holy Spirit, Beavertown, PA, on May 6, 2023, by His Eminence, Archbishop MELCHISEDEK. He is attached to the Holy Altar at the Chapel of the Holy Spirit, Beavertown, PA.

MEHOLICK, SUBDEACON CHRISTOPHER, was ordained to the Holy Diaconate at the St. Nicholas Church, DuBois, PA, on July 22, 2023, by His Eminence, Archbishop MELCHISEDEK. He is attached to the Holy Altar at the St. Nicholas Church, DuBois, PA.

NELKO, ARCHPRIEST ANDREW D., is accepted in retirement into the Archdiocese of Pittsburgh and W PA effective November 1, 2022, from the Diocese of the Midwest (OCA). He is attached to the Holy Altar at the St. Alexander Nevsky Cathedral, Allison Park, PA.

PARKER, PRIEST JOHN, who had been Acting Rector of the St. John the Baptist Church, New Kensington, PA, is appointed Rector of the parish effective May 1, 2023.

SIDOR, ARCHPRIEST JOHN, retired, reposed in the Lord July 3, 2023. +MEMORY ETERNAL!+

VUKELIC, SUBDEACON MARK, was ordained to the Holy Diaconate at the St. Alexander Nevsky Cathedral, Allison Park, PA, on June 4, 2023, by His Eminence, Archbishop MELCHISEDEK. He is attached to the Holy Altar at the St. Nicholas Church, Weirton, WV.

YORK, SUBDEACON NICHOLAS, was ordained to the Holy Diaconate at the Orthodox Monastery of the Transfiguration, Ellwood City, PA on May 27, 2023, by His Eminence, Archbishop MELCHISEDEK. He is attached to the Holy Altar at the Intercession of the Holy Virgin Church, Carnegie, PA.

ZHIRSKY, ARCHPRIEST MICHAEL, is released in retirement from the Archdiocese of Pittsburgh and W PA to the omophorion of His Eminence, Archbishop DANIEL, and the Diocese of the Midwest (OCA) effective May 16, 2023.

Approved for distribution:

Archpriest William J. Evansky, Chancellor

Archdiocese of Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania Orthodox Church in America

(25 July 2023)

St Nicholas Continues Iconography Renewal Project



St Nicholas Church in McKees Rocks continued adorning the walls of the temple with new icons painted by master iconographer Fr Theodore Jurewicz of Erie PA, working along with his son, John, of Chicago, who is also an accomplished iconographer. Beginning in December, 2022, the front areas of the ceiling were prepped to receive the major figures of the icons. Massive scaffolding filled the Church as the workers pasted the painted canvas figures and then painted around them to complete the large icons of the Nativity of

Christ on the northern ceiling, the Resurrection of Christ on the southern ceiling, and the Outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost on the eastern ceiling of the nave. The icon project will temporarily pause for work on the domes and roof in the summer of 2024, and then resume after completion of the repair work. The project which has been underway for 10 years, includes virtually every wall and ceiling surface of the temple, and is about 80% complete.

Parishes of Clearfield County

Join for Second Annual Orthodox Family Picnic

On Sunday, July 30, members from St. Nicholas Church in DuBois, Ss. Mary and Michael Parish in Irvona and Madera, Nativity of the Virgin Mary and Nativity of the St. John the Baptist Churches in Osceola Mills and Chester Hill, Ss. Peter and Paul Church in Urey, and Ss. Peter and Paul Church (UOCUSA) in Elmora gathered at Curwensville Lake Recreation Area for the second annual Orthodox Family Picnic. The afternoon included games, activities around and on the lake, and plenty of food shared “potluck” style in one of the park’s pavilions. Ss. Mary and Michael Parish served as this year’s host, providing the hamburgers, hot dogs, condiments, and non-alcoholic beverages. Fr. Mark Meholick and the newly ordained Dn. Christopher Meholick performed the musical entertainment. It was a great way to build connections with fellow parishioners from around the area. The ultimate goal of the gathering is to further cooperation and begin to establish ministry and outreach partnerships between the many Orthodox communities that surround the headwaters of the West Branch of the Susquehanna River.

During the picnic, plans were laid for next year’s event, which will tentatively be held on Saturday, July 13, 2024, following the Ss. Peter and Paul fast on both the old and new style calendars. Holding it on a Saturday will allow for a pan-Orthodox celebration of Great Vespers to conclude the day of fun and fellowship.



TWO MEN FROM THE ARCHDIOCESE ENTER ST. VLADIMIR SEMINARY THIS FALL



Alex Listvinsky Enrolls in MDiv Program

Reader Alexei Listvinsky, a member of St Nicholas Church in McKees Rocks, has been accepted in to the Master of Divinity program at St Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary in Crestwood NY beginning the Fall 2023 semester. The three year program prepares men to serve the church as Orthodox clergy. A native of California, Alex was raised in the Orthodox faith by faithful parents. He graduated from Penn State University with a degree in Computer Science and was active in the OCF at Holy Trinity in State College PA. He completed an internship at PNC in Pittsburgh and after his graduation, he was employed by them in the area of cybersecurity. At St Nicholas he is a tonsured Reader, one of the lead altar servers, and is active in the men's group and Bible study.

On July 9, Alex, address his fellow parishioners about his reasons for choosing to go the seminary. He said that he had been considering this decision for five or six years. It was the parable of the talents which inspired him to undergo studies in order to serve God in the Church. He also acknowledged that he was honored to be called by the parish to pursue the priesthood. After his talk, a collection was taken to assist Alex in his tuition. Including several gifts from out of state, the parish collected \$13,000 which was given to Alex with God's blessings for much success.

Reader Evan Ashmore Enrolls in MDiv Program



Rdr. Evan Ashmore of Holy Trinity Orthodox Church in State College, PA is enrolled to begin the three-year Master of Divinity program at St. Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary this fall. Evan has served Holy Trinity in a variety of ways including liturgical functions as a reader, singer in the choir, and altar server, as parish campus minister for the Pennsylvania State University Orthodox Christian Fellowship, and as parish council vice president as well as providing occasional formal instruction of catechumens, assistance to the choir director, assistance with the parish's charity ministry, and weekly bulletin preparation. He obtained a bachelor of science degree from Penn State University in 2014 and professionally worked in crisis counseling, mental health crisis intervention, and suicide prevention for seven years before moving on to work in locksmithing and security in 2021. Joining him in his seminary journey is his wife Amber (Mary in baptism) and their two sons ages four and two. While his work after seminary is yet undetermined, Evan is open to serving in parish ministry, chaplaincy, counseling ministry, university campus ministry, youth ministry, academia, or other work as he is equipped, the Lord reveals, and His Church needs.

REDEDICATION OF ST. MARY CHURCH, MADERA PA

Over the weekend of July 22-23, 2023, Archbishop Melchisedek rededicated the temple of Nativity of the Theotokos Church in Madera. His Eminence's visit marked the official end to the first phase of a \$50,000 renovation project to renew and beautify the 114-year-old church. On Saturday night following Great Vespers, a special molieben was served, which contained the two rededication prayers from the Great Book of Needs. Many of the contractors and laborers—some of them hired, but mostly volunteers from Ss. Mary and Michael Parish (the combined worshipping community that alternates services between Nativity of the Theotokos Church and St. Michael the Archangel Church in Irvona)—were in attendance and therefore blessed along with structures they fashioned.

The renovation project, coordinated by Madera Church Council President and Vice President Gregory Sidorick and Nicholas I. Sidorick, consisted of many improvements to the temple. In order to create more worship space for the growing community, two small cliroses on both sides were removed and replaced with ornate hardwood flooring and steps leading onto the ambon and into the sanctuary. In addition, all of the original plastered



walls in the nave were improved with a layer of insulation and drywall. (This makes the building more energy efficient, but also drastically improves acoustics, as sound now effortlessly reverberates off the now-completely-even walls.) The choir loft was expanded by more than a foot, and a beautiful wooden choir rail was installed. New lighting fixtures were added throughout as well. Finally, the entire church was repainted using a color scheme that not only restores the blue color of the ceiling but also harmoniously complements the hand-painted iconostasis.

Interceding for all those in attendance, Fr. Alexander Cadman, Rector of Ss. Mary and Michael Parish, intoned, "Look upon these Thy servants to whom it has seemed good to renovate this house for their dwelling in the dominion of Thy Power, and to rear it through the work of their hands." Many of the non-Orthodox craftsmen who attended Great Vespers and the molieben that followed remarked on how moving the prayers and singing were. All stayed for the reception afterward, which featured punch, meats, and cheeses. Their children enjoyed cooking S'mores and mountain pies over a firepit.



The Rededication Weekend concluded with His Eminence presiding over the Sunday Divine Liturgy, followed by a celebratory potluck. A special collection was taken to create a building fund to save for future projects, which will include new exterior doors, a piscina with running water, and a storage shed.

ORDINATION TO THE DIACONATE OF EVAN KERSTETTER

On Saturday, 6 May, the Orthodox Christian Chapel of the Holy Spirit attained another milestone in her short history as an Orthodox mission. Reader Evan (John) Kerstetter was ordained to the Holy Diaconate by the hand of His Eminence, Archbishop Melchisedek. The Chapel (as we are affectionately nicknamed) is located at Beavertown, PA approximately 50 miles northwest of Harrisburg, in Snyder County, at the eastern-most point of the Archdiocese, and has been in existence since 2008 when a small core of former Lutherans was corralled by Fr. John Reeves (of blessed memory).

Deacon John and his wife, Matushka Elya (Irene) started attending the Chapel in the Fall of 2016 and was received into Holy Orthodoxy in September 2017. Deacon John was tonsured as a Reader approximately a year later. Being a talented musician in his own right, Deacon John quickly took the lead in heading up the choir in which he served up until his ordination. He also is a key catechist, leading adults in a variety of studies with his current offering being that of the Monastic Wisdom of St. Joseph the Hesychast.

Prior to being received into the Church, Deacon John first became acquainted with Orthodoxy while attending Eastern University in St. David's, PA, where he majored in Biblical Studies. It was there that a professor with whom he had formed a close relationship first introduced him to Orthodoxy. He also studied early Christian history; patristic, liturgical, and sacramental theology, being especially persuaded by the writings of Ss. Ignatius of Antioch, Athanasius the Great, and Gregory Nazianzen. St. John Damascene's "Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith" and "Three Treatises on the Divine Images" were also particularly formative. Deacon Evan began praying the Orthodox Morning and Evening Prayers regularly and religiously, cultivating a meager but meaningful Orthodox rule of prayer. Upon graduation from Eastern University, he served in several pastoral capacities at Niemons Independent Church located in Richfield, PA, just over the mountain from the Chapel. During his time at Niemons, he deepened his growing Orthodox faith and interest by attending the Antiochian House of Studies in Ligonier, PA from which he graduated with a Master's degree in Applied Orthodox Theology in 2020.



Deacon John and Matushka Irene (nee Troup) have three children, ranging in ages from two years old to six: Ambrose, Lucia, and Aletheia. Fr. Deacon is employed at Cherry Hill Hardwoods and Matushka is a fulltime mother busily homeschooling and tending to the needs of her family. Deacon John and his family live in McAlisterville, PA (again, just over the mountain from the Chapel) where they have a smattering of livestock and an expanding garden.

It is truly a blessing for the Chapel to now have actively serving at her Altar both a Priest and a Deacon, thus allowing for a fuller expression of prayer and worship as the Church. Pray for us that the Lord may add daily to His Church all who are being saved! And, if you're ever in the area, please be sure to pay us a visit.



ORDINATION TO THE DIACONATE OF MARK VUKELIC

Mark Vukelic from Holy Transfiguration in Steubenville, OH was ordained to the diaconate on Pentecost, June 4 at St Alexander Nevsky Cathedral by His Eminence, Archbishop Melchisedek. Deacon Mark has been attached to St. Nicholas in Weirton, WV.

ORDINATION TO THE DIACONATE OF CHRISTOPHER MEHOLICK

Sub-deacon Christopher Meholic was ordained to the holy Deaconate by His Eminence, Archbishop Melchisedek during Divine Liturgy at St. Nicholas Church on Saturday, July 22, 2023.

Deacon Christopher was born on December 22, 1960 in DuBois, Pennsylvania. A son of Ronald Elias Meholic (who fell asleep in the Lord in 2006) and Katherine Ann Meholic of Sykesville, Deacon Christopher served Christ's Holy Church as an altar server and choir member of St. John the Baptist Church in Black Lick, PA from 1974 – 1983. In 1983, he accompanied (the late) Fr. Job (Ossacky), who was elected Bishop of Hartford to his assignment in New England. During Archbishop Job's time in New England, Deacon Christopher served as the Archbishop's Sub-deacon, traveling to the various parishes throughout the Diocese and assisting the Archbishop with everything from packing vestments, driving, and whatever chores needed to be done at the Chancery.

It was also during this time in New England that Deacon Christopher met his future wife, Kira Lukashevich, daughter of Walter Lukashevich (who fell asleep in the Lord in 2021) and Virginia Lukashevich, who resides in Reynoldsville. They were married at SS. Peter & Paul Orthodox Church in Meriden, Connecticut by (then) Fr. Thomas Pleska (now, our Archbishop Melchisedek). In 1993, Chris and Kira moved to Western Pennsylvania, first residing in Sykesville and now in Reynoldsville. They are blessed with two children, Marina and (Reader) Nicholas Meholic.

In 2020, St. Nicholas parish in DuBois moved from 108 N. Third Street in DuBois to our present location at 301 S. State Street. Deacon Christopher has continued to serve the parish throughout the years as Sub-deacon, Cantor, and coordinating maintenance and improvements of the church building and grounds. We have been blessed in that our new temple is handicap accessible and is equipped with a newer heating system, a fully equipped kitchen and spacious social hall. After rebuilding the entire altar area floor, we are now in the midst of building the iconostasis. At present, we are raising funds to repair two leaks in the roof and to revamp the air conditioning system.



ORDINATION TO THE DIACONATE OF SUBDEACON NICHLAS YORK



Holy Transfiguration Monastery hosted the ordination to the Diaconate of Sub-deacon Nicholas York on Saturday May 27, 2023. Archbishop Melchezidek presided over the Hierarchical Liturgy. Deacon Nicholas' father, Archpriest George York, pastor of the Intercession of the Holy Virgin Church in Carnegie, served along with Archpriests David Lesko, William Evansky, Lawrence Daniels, John Kluchko, and Rajko Kosic and Protodeacons John Olyenik and Peter Ilchuk with several sub-deacons. Deacon Nicholas is assigned to the Intercession of the Holy Virgin Orthodox Church in Carnegie.

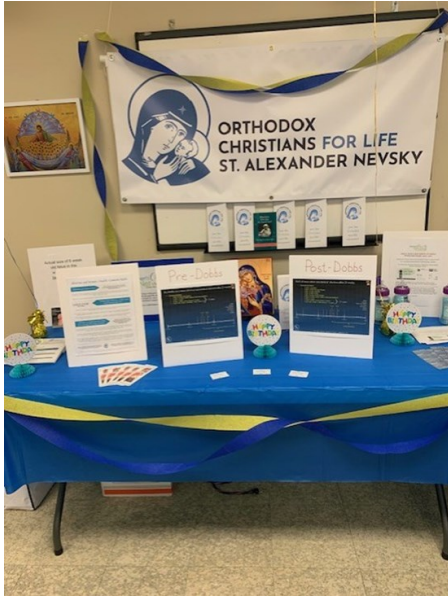


encounter. embody. engage.

Save the Date: Archdiocesan Youth and Parent Retreat December 8-9, 2023

On December 8-9, 2023, the Archdiocese of Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania will coordinate and sponsor a pan-Orthodox retreat for youth in grades 6-12. A track for adults (parents, clergy, and youth workers) will take place concurrently at a location to be announced this Fall. Conducted by Orthodox Youth Ministries, a ministry of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops, this “3-E-treat” will allow participants to encounter Christ, embody His Church, and engage the world in His Name. Friday night will draw everyone together for a meal and discussions about one another’s experiences in the Orthodox Church; Saturday will be a day-long retreat consisting four sessions, all tied around the question of how Orthodox Christian faith informs and transforms the way we live our lives. More information will be forthcoming soon.

OCLife Ministry at St. Alexander Nevsky



With encouragement from His Eminence Archbishop Melchisedek, and support of Father John Mikita (Dean), St. Alexander Nevsky Orthodox Cathedral in Allison Park launched a new parish ministry of Orthodox Christians for Life (“OCLife”) last year. OCLife is a “nonprofit organization dedicated to equipping the Orthodox community to strengthen its commitment to the sacredness of human life from conception to death, illuminating the Church’s teaching on life issues through education and engagement” (<https://www.oclif.org>). Originally founded in 1986, the organization was revived in 2020 to continue its critical mission. The need for an organization that is dedicated to educating and engaging the Orthodox community on the topic of abortion has never been greater than it is today.

As an affiliated parish ministry of OCLife, our mission is to cultivate Orthodox pro-life involvement in our church and the Pittsburgh community. Together we will...

- PRAY for abortion vulnerable women and men, all those participating in abortion, and for an end to abortion.
- EDUCATE our parish to raise awareness about bioethical issues and create a culture of life.
- SERVE our local community by supporting organizations that help women in unplanned pregnancies.



The focus of our service work continues to be our partnership with our local pregnancy center, Women’s Choice Network (“choice” means choice for life), as we have done for the past eight years, to serve our local community and assist families in need. In May our parishioners prepared 50 gift bags with items for new moms and babies. One of the ways in which we engage in prayer is through a monthly Molieben service for victims of abortion. We recently commemorated the first-year anniversary of the Dobbs decision (overturning of Roe v Wade) and celebrated the 64,000 babies that have been saved in this first year. (We had vegan cupcakes with tags on them to mark the event.)

It is our hope that other parishes in our archdiocese will also form OCLife ministries so that we can bring our parishioners and resources together around this critical cause. Information about launching a parish ministry can be found on the OCLife website: <https://www.oclif.org>, or contact Eileen Glisan (eileenglisan@gmail.com) if your parish would like assistance



ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS FOR LIFE

Announcing: Bus trip to Harrisburg, PA, to participate in the Pennsylvania March for Life on Monday, October 16, 2023 Sponsored by: The Orthodox Archdiocese of Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania; planned by the Orthodox Christians for Life Parish Ministry of St. Alexander Nevsky Orthodox Cathedral, Allison Park, PA Travel Details: Bus will depart from St. Alexander Nevsky (park in the adjacent McCandless Swim Club Parking Lot-- 8300 Thompson Run Rd., Pittsburgh, PA 15237) at 6:00 a.m. and will leave Harrisburg at approximately 2:15 p.m. to return. Additional details will be sent to registrants. Attention fellow Orthodox Christians from other geographical areas! Let's plan to meet at 11 am to the right of the main stage located at the front steps of the PA Capitol. Look for the Orthodox Christians for Life Banner! We will have a short prayer service immediately following the march. Registration: Tickets are \$30/person (remaining costs defrayed by the Archdiocese). To register: Complete the form below in its entirety and send it with your check (made payable to the Archdiocese of Pittsburgh/Western PA--please write "bus trip" in memo line) to Eileen Glisan, 634 Water View Dr., Cranberry Township, PA 16066. Deadline: Monday, September 18, 2023. Bus can accommodate 56 people—first come, first served! Written parental permission is required for unaccompanied teenage minors. Questions?: Contact Eileen Glisan (glisan@live.iup.edu; 724/272-1552)

Name _____

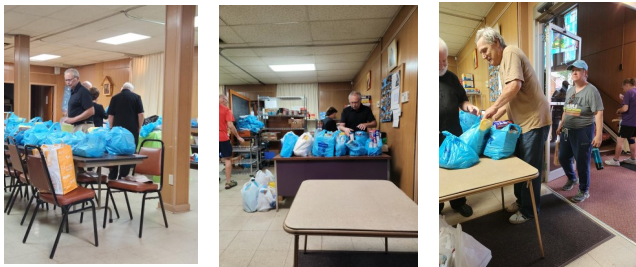
Parish name/city _____

Cell Phone _____ Email _____

(An email confirmation of registration will be sent.) Number of people registering _____ Total amount enclosed \$ _____

ST. CYRIL OF WHITE LAKE ORTHODOX FOOD PANTRY TURNS 15

Thanks to your faithfulness, the St, Cyril of White Lake Orthodox Food Pantry is entering it's 15th year of service at St. Mary Orthodox Church, Southside Pittsburgh. Open on even numbered Thursday of each month, the food needs of families are met. Numbers are increasing, but by your donations, they constantly are met. Thank you and God bless you. May God also richly bless our volunteers and many donors.



Biweekly, bags packed with frozen meat. Bread, canned goods, cereal, peanut butter and jelly, and much more are distributed. These photos are from our most recent distribution.

How can you help? Donations of funds, non-perishable foods, and volunteers are always needed.

Tenth Parish Development Forum Hosted in Parma OH



The 2023 Parish Development Forum was held at Holy Trinity Church in Parma OH in mid-July. With 90 registrants, including attendees from both the Greek and Antiochian Archdioceses and the Ukrainian Church of both US and Canada this Tenth Forum was the largest in-person Forum thus far. The Forum, co-sponsored by the Archdiocese, welcomed attendees from the following Archdiocesan parishes: Holy Ghost (Ambridge), Holy Resurrection (Belle Vernon), St. John the Baptist (Canonsburg), Ss. Peter and Paul (Edinboro), St. John the Baptist (New Kensington), St. Mary's (Pittsburgh), St. Nicholas (McKees Rocks), and St. Nicholas (Weirton).



Speakers

Important speaking contributions were delivered by

Scott Thumma, Hartford Institute of Research in Religion, -- *Landscape of Religion in America*,

Fr. Adam Roberts, Antiochian Archdiocese -- *Leadership and Personal Purpose*.

Steven Christoforou FOCUS North America -- *Meeting the Needs of Young People*.

Fr Jonathan Bannon (ACROD) -- *Welcoming New Persons to the Parish*

A pre-Forum *field trip* was taken to assist with meal service at St. Herman's House of Hospitality an Orthodox Outreach operated by FOCUS Cleveland.

Project 2030

In service of the Forum's theme, "Our Parish and the Future", a significant portion of the Forum agenda was given to longer term focus on defining the strengths and 'muscles' necessary for Orthodox parishes to flourish in the future. Three key areas of necessary parish health and vibrancy were selected.

Clergy Laity dynamics as a key to maintaining functional leadership and minimizing internal friction.

Attracting and Integrating Converts as a means to bring more persons to Christ.

Connecting Parish Ministry with the Neighborhood as a means of becoming less insular to encourage ministering to others.

To explore these topics attendees broke into facilitated small group discussions to identify obstacles, necessary resources and tools and target outcomes.

Orthodox Convert Survey

In support of the 'Attracting Converts' segment in the Forum agenda, attendees received the results of the *2023 Orthodox Convert Survey* which included responses from 773 persons who had embraced the Orthodox faith as adults. Almost half the total survey respondents had converted since the beginning of the pandemic.

More responses were received from persons who converted at a parish in Pennsylvania than any other state. According to His Eminence Archbishop Melchisedek parishes in the Archdiocese collectively have more inquirers and catechumens than at any time in the past decades.

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Tenth Parish Development Forum Hosted in Parma OH

Continued from page 13

A few key findings include:

An increasing proportion of converts are men. Almost 75% since 2019 are men.

The median age of recent converts is 31,

Though most converts come to Orthodoxy from Evangelical, Mainline Protestant and Catholic traditions there has been a slight increase of receiving persons not previously affiliated with Christian bodies in recent years. (Up to almost 20%).

Of those converting since 2019 over 45% agreed that the pandemic influenced their decision to seek a new faith in some direct or indirect way.

Virtually all recent converts were significantly influenced by online podcasts, websites, and other online personalities.

When asked what they found attractive about Orthodox Christianity there were of course many responses. One simple summary used answers starting with the letter “s” including: “scriptural”, “sensory”, “sacramental”, “sacred”, “saints”, “stability”, “singing”, “self-discipline” and “(not) shallow”.

When asked about the attractive qualities of Orthodox parishes the qualities most mentioned were: English liturgy; proximity; priest – no pressure/good teacher; people – welcoming encouraging; children welcome; and diversity.

The number one turn-off of converts was “ethnic-insular qualities of the parish”.

Full Summary Available.

In the opinion of many participants, the Survey’s summary makes “fascinating reading” and can be a useful foundation for “guiding parish outreach efforts”. The survey results, including many verbatim comments, can be found at on the Archdiocesan website. (<https://www.ocadwpa.org/files/Parish%20Development/Parish-forum-2023/2023-Convert-survey-slides-as-posted-at-DOWPA.pdf>)



Positive Qualities of Selected Home Parish: Orthodox Convert Survey

HOLY GHOST CHURCH HOLDS SIMPLY SOCIAL EVENING

Recently parishioners from Holy Ghost in Ambridge gathered together for another installment of their 'Simply Social' evening. This informal event promotes fellowship and community by getting to know your friends from the church in a pressure free social setting.



Scout's Eagle Project Beautifies Osceola Mills Parish

Jeremiah Sidorick, currently a Life Scout with Troop 57 in Houtzdale, PA, dedicates his Eagle Scout service project to beautifying the Nativity of the Virgin Mary Church in Osceola Mills. Like his parents Jason and Miranda, Jeremiah is a member of the community of the faithful there in Osceola Mills. To date, his projects include repairing, stripping and staining the church sign and the outdoor Shrine, as well as improving the landscaping around these two areas. He will also be converting the cross in the church cemetery to a three bar cross. When asked about his project, Jeremiah says, "It has been an honor to do these projects and to beautify our church grounds."



50th Anniversary of Ordination of Archpriest Andrew Matychak



On August 19th, his Eminence and the faithful of Altoona and beyond gathered to honor the 50 years of pastoral service of Archpriest Andrew Matychak.

Fr. Andrew was born in a small town in eastern Pennsylvania, he was the oldest of three children, all of who were very active in their parish which was dedicated to St Vladimir in Lopez, PA. (Many may know his sister as Mother Christophora, the Abbess of the Monastery of the Holy Transfiguration in Elwood City for the last 25 years). At a young age, he served in the altar and often spoke of becoming a priest.

The Fall of 1973 was quite eventful for Father Andrew. Prior to his diaconal ordination he married his beautiful bride Georgette, a western PA native from Sewickly. Two weeks after that, he was ordained by Archbishop Kiprian at St Tikhon Monastery Church in South Canaan, first to the Holy Diaconate, and then the next Sunday to the Holy Priesthood. He was assigned as pastor of not one, but three parishes. First, Holy Ghost Church in Ambridge, then by mid-December, he was assigned to serve the faithful of both SS Peter and Paul Church in Altoona, and Holy Assumption Church in Ganister. A few years later, the bishop also assigned him as the Rector of Holy Ascension Church in Colver as well.

In addition to his ministry within those three parishes, Father Andrew and Matushka Georgette ran a private school called Harbor House which touched the lives of many young people in Altoona, then later the children of those students. Sadly, Matushka Georgette fell asleep in the Lord in May 2019. May her memory be eternal!

On Saturday, August 19, the faithful of SS Peter and Paul, as well as the greater Eastern Deanery, gathered together to celebrate the Divine Liturgy with His Eminence, Archbishop Melchisedek. Following the service, the community moved to a nearby restaurant for a celebratory dinner in honoring of Archpriest Andrew's and Matushka Georgette's service to God in Blair County, PA.

