

ST. PAUL THE APOSTLE CHURCH, DAYTON, OH.

The Dayton area has been particularly hard hit by the economic downturn and continues to be one of the leading metropolitan areas in the U.S. for job and population losses. Despite that fact, the parish showed a small increase in membership over last year. This year we are aware of several families relocating out of the area. Financially donations to the parish are very strong and the parish has remained on firm financial footing. The parish has been exploring making use of more technology for ministry purposes and this year has been experimenting with using Skype to enable shut ins and even former parish members now living far away from the parish to "attend" our adult discussion groups. The adult study groups have had some modest success with topics including a study of Islam and of the book THE SHACK. The parish did keep the Year of St. Paul as decreed by the Ecumenical Patriarch and Pope of Rome and among the events done for this year was a play written by a parishioner on the life of St. Paul performed by the youth of the parish in June. During the Fellowship hour we had a once per month potluck in which parishioners were asked to use recipes from a specific geographical location which St Paul visited on his missionary journeys. The parish hosted a choir workshop for the deanery in March which was very well attended led by David Drillock. The parish continues to donate each month a minimum of \$800 to various charity causes, additionally the parish youth participate each year in the Souper Bowl charity collection and the parish through an Angel Tree project provides Christmas gifts to needy children each December. There were 2 women's retreats held during the year and the youth group made a trip to a monastery to give the teens an experience of the monastic vocation. Last September the Ensign Media Corporation filmed the Divine Liturgy in our parish to include in a documentary they are making on worship in America which is set for publication in late 2010.

ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE ORTHODOX CHURCH KOKOMO, IN

Diocesan Assembly Annual Report, 2009

Here are some of the highlights of our year at St. Thomas, submitted by Matushka Becky Lashbrook, on August 21, 2009.

Brian and Becca Whirledge were married in December, 2008, by Fr. Philip and Fr. Matthew Wade, of St. Mary's Orthodox Church. The wedding took place at the Greek Orthodox Church in South Bend, IN. Brian was a catechumen at St. Thomas here in Kokomo while he was a student at Indiana Wesleyan.

Fr. Philip underwent a procedure on his heart called heart ablation on Mar. 11, 2009. The surgery was to correct the atrial fibrillation problem that had been causing his heart to

jump out of rhythm from time to time, and the problem had been increasing in frequency. It was apparently a success, because his heart has been in good shape ever since the procedure. Praise be to God!

The prison ministry that St. Thomas has been working on got off the ground this spring. Four of our parishioners (including Fr. Philip and Matushka Becky) were trained as volunteers at the Miami Correctional Facility, in Bunker Hill, IN. On April 22, 2009, we held our first service at the prison, a combined morning prayers and third hour liturgy. We were given 1 ½ hrs. to meet, on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of each month. We usually have 3 to 4 offenders present at our meetings, although we are now corresponding with 9 men by mail. (Some of them are not allowed to come to our meetings, because of a division in the prison.) Most of the men have been participants in the prison ministry up in Michigan City, IN at Indiana State Prison, and were transferred to MCI for whatever reasons. We are excited about the response we've gotten from the participants, and look forward to expanding our ministry over time.

We have received 4 new catechumens this spring, two couples. They are all excited about Orthodoxy, and are eager to experience all the fullness of the church. They ask a lot of questions, read a lot of books, and are an encouragement to all the faithful here at St. Thomas.

Fr. Philip and Matushka Becky happily became grandparents for the first time on July 8, 2009. Carolyn and Joshua Hodges, of Lima, OH, are the proud parents of Isaiah Joshua Hodges. He was baptized at St. Stephen's church in Lima by both of his grandfathers, Fr. Philip and Fr. Mark, on July 26, 2009.

July, 2009, brought the annual Haynes Apperson Festival to downtown Kokomo. Our church sets up a tent every year, and displays books, icons, and other Orthodox materials. It brings people in who ask lots of questions, giving us the opportunity to share our faith.

Also in July, 2009, our church sent 4 young people to church camp in Mitchell, IN, held by St. John the Forerunner Orthodox Church of Indianapolis. All of the girls love camp, and have nothing but good to say about their experience there. They also came home glowing with camp songs in their hearts, and special memories made worshipping and fellowshiping with friends, old and new. We are so thankful to all the camp staff who work so hard to make camp a blessing to all, year after year.

St. Thomas parish took time this month to spruce up the nave and sanctuary. We set aside two Saturdays to take down and clean all the icons, as well as wash down all the walls and ceilings, polish the brass, etc., then to paint the entire nave and sanctuary, which was no small job, considering the height of the ceiling. The wall color is a beautiful shade of blue, which seems to make the colors in the icons even more vibrant. We had a good turnout to help both of the work days, and enjoyed working together.

Lizzie Daily, one of our parishioners who recently graduated from high school, represented St. Thomas on a mission trip to the orphanage in Guatemala this month. She

is planning to spend the winter working at an orthodox shelter for the homeless in San Francisco, CA. We are proud of Lizzie, and know that she will go far in spreading the love of Christ wherever she goes.

ST. GREGORY'S COLUMBUS, OHIO

The parish continues to flourish. We moved through our 25th Anniversary Year with a number of memorable events. The insights, joys and challenges presented to us have left an imprint on our parish life and planning. Our task as we see it is to renew commitment and continue to devote ourselves to worship and from there to the enlivening the Gospel in our personal, parochial and outreach programs.

Fr. Kevin Greenwood sought and obtained release from his position at St. Gregory's by the time of Forgiveness Sunday this year.

Fr. Mark Lowery retains his associate status at St. Gregory's but has at the same time enlarged his commitment to Christ the Savior Church in Byesville. He is with us through the week, but celebrates Sunday liturgies in Byesville on all Sundays but the second.

Chaplain James Sizemore returned from a tour of duty in Kuwait. His responsibilities within the service have grown and finds that it is not possible to be with the parish on many weekends. As he is able however, he will continue to work with the chapel group in Athens, Ohio.

We have two additional clergy who are with us on most Sundays. Protopresbyter Paul Herbert, retired Carpatho-Russian Diocese, and Fr. John Stavropoulos, Greek Metropolis of Pittsburgh, are with us on most Sundays.

Reader Joseph Shaluha was ordained to the Subdiaconate this past year. His Eminence has given the Rector, Fr. Daniel Rentel, permission to guide Joseph through his diaconal training. Currently he works very closely with the OCF at the Ohio State University.

Our choir has recorded a concert performed in conjunction with our Anniversary Year and will go on sale shortly.

Our neighborhood outreach program continues to enrich parish life. The Rector is in the process of creating an appropriate program for entry into the Church for our neighborhood friends.

This year during the Great Fast our whole Church School committed to a program associated with Project Mexico. Stewardship lessons, social, political and historical insights into the life of our neighbors to the south were shared in all the classes. Students worked at a variety of projects at home and in an around the Church to raise money to buy 'bricks' to build a house. They raised \$1,000 to enable programs and outings for their young counterparts in Mexico. The whole parish involved itself creating for us new ways to extend the arms of charity. For the upcoming Lenten season, we are building plans to be of service to the Church and children in the Republic of Georgia.

We struggle on Parish Council to find ways to meet our assessment responsibilities. A transient population continually changes the numbers of those who are assessed. Parishioners tend to assume that their pledge to the parish also covers the larger

Church assessments. We have reached the conclusion time and again that a tithe on our Operating Fund would simplify the work done by our treasury and would most likely meet or exceed what now goes to the Larger Church through the every member assessment.

Respectfully submitted,

Archpriest Daniel Rentel

ALL SAINTS OF NORTH AMERICA
ORTHODOX MISSION
COLUMBUS, OHIO

All Saints has been looking for property and has had a donation of land and a barn but due to the economy has been unable to get a bank to finance a building project. In the meantime, All Saints has been busy going through the diocese's parish health inventory. It was a useful process to promote the continual improvement of the mission. The mission council has also determined its strategic plan is deficient in many ways and is going to be developing a new plan this fall.

SAINT JOHN THE FORERUNNER
ORTHODOX CHURCH
INDIANAPOLIS, IN

2009 has been a year of stepping out of the proverbial boat. We have embarked on a 1.2 million dollar building program in the midst of a major economic downturn. We invited Fr Anthony Scott to come and do an analysis and teach us about our stewardship of time, talent and treasure. We were challenged not to live in the House of Fear, but rather the House of Love and Grace. We are in our quiet phase and have almost half of the money we need to build a new Temple and fellowship/education space. *(Does anyone know anybody who might be interested in investing some time and money in an inner-city Orthodox Church? Let us know!)* We plan on staying in the inner city of West Indianapolis to maintain the Sacrament of Presence. We have a great design that gives us a beautiful setting in which to worship and do the work of being the Body of Christ.

Our Heavenly Father has added to His Church and we have at present six catechumens. Vacation Bible School, Church School and St John Summer Camp are effective means of engaging our young people. We've had folks go on Real Break, Project Mexico, the Orphanage in Guatemala, and other missionary activities.

We are collaborating with our neighborhood center in meeting the needs of our neighbors and put together 65 boxes of food and necessities to be given out to families in crisis. As a result of the Urbana Parish Summit, we are in the process of reevaluating our outreach to those who come to us for help. We hope to find ways of supporting our neighbor in need to find healthier ways of growing as human beings physically, psychologically and spiritually.

Our seventh anniversary of coming into communion with the Holy Orthodox Church in America has come and we are still filled with holy joy and awe. I am still walking around bumping into the walls – what happened? Thank you Lord Jesus!

CHRIST THE SAVIOUR CHURCH,
BYESVILLE, OHIO

In spite of the recession, and being located in an area of Ohio that was already rather depressed economically, the parish has seen several people move into the area for work-related reasons. Although some of these folks have maintained official membership in “home” parishes, they maintain regular involvement in the worship at the Christ the Saviour Church. We also have had one Chrismation, on Holy Saturday, the husband of a long-time member. We anticipate the baptism of the yet-to-be-born child of a new transfer member in the fall.

Because of the increased numbers, and increased attendance during Great Lent, when Liturgy was served every Sunday, the schedule of serving the Divine Liturgy is being increased to all but one Sunday a month, beginning in August, 2009.

CHRIST THE SAVIOR/
HOLY SPIRIT ORTHODOX CHURCH
CINCINNATI, OHIO

After losing a large number of parishioners to work-related relocation, our parish membership has now stabilized at 115 adults and about 65 children, with 55 of those children being pre-teens. This past summer was somewhat uneventful, though our parish sent a Mission Team to the Hogar San Rafael Ayau Orphanage in Guatemala City in June. Our parish also helps support two of our members who are involved in a local prison ministry known as Kairos. And one of those men was sponsored to attend a SCOBA-organized Prison Ministry Conference in Denver, Colorado in July. We hosted His Eminence, Archbishop Job, on July 12. His Eminence then stayed for the marriage of one of our parishioner's later on that same day. Our parish rector, Fr. Steven Kostoff, celebrated his twentieth year of pastoral ministry in the parish earlier in the summer.

St. Stephen the First Martyr Orthodox Church, Crawfordsville, IN

The year 2009 has been extremely interesting for our parish. We have seen the completion of our temple with iconography in the dome (check out the pictures on our website). New families have come to join us. Babies have been baptized, making the future of the church brighter. Holy marriages have been performed and there are some in the planning stages. The parish has discussed community outreach programs. With God's leading, some of these will become reality in the coming year. The parish remains solvent, despite the poor economy. We currently sponsor at seminary two young families from our parish, although this a bittersweet experience as we miss them greatly. Priest Father David had two major surgeries this year and is slowly returning to a somewhat normal state. As always, God has been good to our parish. We give Him glory for our strength and growth and seek forgiveness for the sins and weaknesses that set us back. Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory forever!