

MINNEAPOLIS DEANERY REPORTS

St Mary's Cathedral in Minneapolis

This has been a wonderful and busy year for St Mary's Cathedral. Our church life is very, very rich in liturgical, educational, fellowship and outreach activities and ministries. To document these would exhaust the scope of this report. Those who are interested have only to visit our web-site at stmarysoca.org from time to time. We thank God that St Mary's has the resources to invest in community and outreach ministries and we are blessed by our wonderful volunteers and general good-will of our parishioners in support of them.

Archpriest Andrew Morbey is Dean. Priest Stacey Richter has been an associate priest - however in August he will be transferred to another parish, in Ohio. Fr Richard Flom is attached, as are Deacons Alexey Duapy, Paul Gavrilyuk, Mark Griffin, David Kostick and Benjamin Tucci. We anticipate the ordination of Reader Gregory Krutchek to the diaconate in the near future. We will be reviewing the pastoral needs of the Cathedral over the next months. Our seminarian Nicholas Hubbard graduated from St Vladimir's Seminary in May and is in a clinical pastoral education program on the east coast. As of this writing we anticipate our subdeacon Jason Ketz entering the MDiv program at SVS in September.

Things are so busy that we have picked up on an idea from an OCA Parishes Ministries conference several years ago and created the position of Parish Ministries Coordinator. Mary Jo Rusinak does a wonderful job!

May was an exceptionally busy month. We welcomed Metropolitan Jonah and Archbishop Job as we celebrated the 100th Anniversary of the Repose of St Alexis (Toth). This was a big event bringing many people to the Cathedral over two days. The celebration included the inaugural annual St Alexis Lecture (delivered this year by His Beatitude) and an absolutely splendid luncheon. The annual northeast Minneapolis Art-A-Whirl brought over 450 visitors to the Cathedral over three days. We had a well articulated program of church tours, iconography exhibits, concerts (both choral and balalaika), literature, a 'russian tea room' - as well as making our parking facilities open to the event. We were very sorry that the efforts of many volunteers and innumerable hours in planning for the annual FOCA Basketball Tournament - and the event itself, of course - were rendered fruitless by the lack of participation of other parishes (largely due to the current national financial situation). The Art Program was able to continue and we had many splendid submissions. May also saw a mission team from St Mary's, led by Fr Stacey, go off to Guatemala and the well-known Hogar Raphael. There is much enthusiasm for mission, service and outreach at the Cathedral!

Speaking of making our parking facilities available for Art-A-Whirl, we have made one of our parking lots available to a large local Ecuadorian volley-ball club. Friday through Monday evenings through the summer months see up to three games and six teams - plus family and friends - at the Cathedral. Our experiment with Spanish language Vespers a few years ago was not successful, but here at least we have begun to make a connection and invest in the good will of a large local ethnic community. Our State Representative stopped by to thank us for this! Again this year St Mary's hosted a block party for Neighborhood Nite Out. We had over 150 people gather for dinner and a balalaika concert, games and activities, refreshments, church tours.

The interior phase - some call this the third, others the fourth - of our renovation project is underway. Our capital campaign has had truly extraordinary success, thank God, but this phase has felt the impact of the financial crisis. Nonetheless the first part of this particular phase was realized successfully. It involved air-conditioning the Cathedral and replacing the heating plant - both new boilers and building and mechanicals. The next segment will be perhaps the most obvious and inspiring phase, as it deals with the iconographic program. Dimitri Schkolnik is our iconographer.

The Cathedral continues to support many inter-parish activities, for example the Minnesota Eastern Orthodox Clergy Association services and activities, the 100th anniversary of the Cornucopia, WI parish, celebrations in Clayton, WI, a large group tour (including His Eminence) to Slovakia.... We constitute the largest portion and support of the University of Minnesota OCF.

I would be remiss if I did not mention our monthly charitable collections for a 'balanced portfolio' of international, national and local Orthodox and non-Orthodox worthy causes. This is in addition to our support of the many OCA church related needs. Another noteworthy event is the re-invention and re-opening of our splendid Olive Shoot Cathedral Shop (check them out at stmarysoca.org/oliveshoot).

Of course, not everything is roses. But I think it fair to say that St Mary's continues a wonderful tradition of volunteerism, support for worthy causes, and a substantial contribution to ministry and mission. But we are poised - yes, poised - to do more. Our participation in the recent Urban Parishes Summit has helped focus a growing interest among our parishioners in doing even more in outreach ministry.

Archpriest Andrew Morbey

St Herman's

We completed our fourth annual pilgrimage to Holy Dormition Monastery in Rives Junction, MI. Around 20 faithful from the parish, give or take a few, regularly go on this pilgrimage at the end of July, when we help the mothers and sisters prepare for their patronal feast and the many guests they expect. The impact that this connection with the monastery has had on St Herman's parish life has been significant. Towards the end of the summer, we were blessed to welcome Deacon David, newly ordained to the diaconate at St Tikhon's, whom Archbishop Job has assigned to our parish. Dn David and his family will be living in the Twin Cities while he pursues certification as a paralegal. Dn David is looking to be ordained to the Holy Priesthood when the time is right. He hopes his certification as a paralegal will give him a measure of financial independence and stability and so broaden his opportunities for service to Christ's Holy Church.

Fr Paul Wesche

Holy Trinity in St Paul

Downs: struggling with clergy health insurance. Ups: Community stable, group working on building accessibility plans; Welcomed Deacon Christopher Maciolek & family back from St. Tikhon's for the summer, and thus had two priests and two deacons serving together for several liturgies this summer... fun. Completed the next major phase of iconography installation.

Fr Jonathan Proctor

Holy Trinity in Clayton, WI

No report submitted

Holy Assumption (Lublin);

The parish has received three new families in the past year. Currently there are two catechumens. For the first time the annual dinner will be held "off campus" at the Lublin Village pavilion. Liturgy is celebrated twice a month. With a blessing from the Archbishop, Pascha services were held beginning at 9:30pm due to the

number of elderly people. Attendance was very good. Fr. Thaddeus Wojcik is the servicing priest.

St. John the Baptist (Stanley);

Service are held once a month. Attendance remains consistent. Fr. Thaddeus Wojcik is the servicing priest.

St. Mary (Cornucopia);

Service are held once a month. After twelve years Fr Christopher Wojcik asked to be relieved of serving the Cornucopia Church. Fr. Thaddeus was asked by the Dean to service the parish. This year St. Mary's celebrated its centennial on two separate months. In July approximately 150 people overflowed the little church and upwards of 250 people attended the dinner. In August His Eminence and several clergy celebrated a Liturgy for an ongoing centennial celebration.

Archpriest Thaddeus Wojcik

St Peter the Aleut, Minot, ND

Since last year two new families have moved to Minot, although they don't attend regularly, we are happy to see them whenever they come. We also gained a family in Bismarck where I serve once a month. It also shows how important our parish is as the only Orthodox Church in a large and remote area, if we were not here, these people would have no Church. Everything else is "status quo".

Igumen Anastassy, Rector

Holy Myrrhbearers Mission in St Cloud

No report submitted

Christ the Savior Mission in Anoka

But we didn't even have a festival this year.....

Fr Andrew (Brian) Jaye

Holy Cross in Chisago Cities, MN

Fr Robert McMeekin has served Holy Cross faithfully since its founding. He has developed Parkinson's, however, which has reached a point that he has felt it necessary to request Archbishop Job's blessing to leave active service in December. The faithful of Holy Cross, therefore, are beginning a transition process under the guidance of Archbishop Job and the Dean to assess their situation and their goals before a new priest is appointed to serve them when Fr Bob steps down.

Report submitted by Fr Paul Wesche (Dean)

St Elizabeth in Eagan

This summer, St. Elizabeth Mission was able to raise its monthly giving to levels outlined by the bank as a requirement for financing. Without going into details, this was no small accomplishment. Since then, we've met with two banks.

For each loan requirement we meet, the banks seem to add an additional one or two new requirements. The goal posts keep moving, corroborating common knowledge that the banks are simply not lending money right now. We were actually told that if we came to the bank two years ago, with the same balance sheet and number of giving units, they would have financed the project. Part of our problem, they say, is that a disproportionately small number of parishioners are carrying the load for the entire community.

We are currently working with a third bank that seems promising, but the paper work is burdensome and time consuming. So...in the mean time, we are out of space at the funeral chapel. With the delays and disappointments seeking financing, we may need to find larger space to rent in Eagan. The good news is that our finances are such that we can afford something bigger--so we're considering looking. The building committee plans to open this discussion at our next parish meeting.

Thanks be to God for all things. As our community reflects on the real poverty and economic suffering in the world today, we beg God for the humility to see our small setback in its proper perspective.

In Him we place our hope.

Fr. Marc Boulos

St Nicholas in Pella, IA

- If the Lord wills that all would go according to plan, Fr. Bartholomew & Amber's third child should be born during this Assembly (hence, Fr. Bartholomew's absence from this Assembly).
- We baptized two babies since last Assembly (the younger from a family Chrismated a year before, the elder Fr. Bartholomew & Amber's). The grandmother of the younger is now a catechumen.
- We have been blessed with a young family of three that moved to Iowa from Atlanta.
- We continue to participate in the Pella ministerial association's schedule of churches providing services at the local nursing facilities. (We serve a *Molieben* about twice each year.)
- We joined St. George Greek Orthodox Church (Des Moines) for Sunday of Orthodoxy Vespers and Fr. Bartholomew also concelebrated their patronal Vespers.
- Weekly services include Vespers (with the appending of the matins Resurrectional Gospel reading) and Liturgy, each followed by Q&A time with the priest, and increasing number of festal Vespers and Liturgy celebrations (as opposed to a Vesperal Liturgy).
- Our annual St. Nicholas day celebration drew a large crowd of visitors, as usual, in 2008.
- The town "Tulip Time" festival proved more profitable this year due to better weather and higher attendance. It takes a tremendous effort and commitment to successfully engage this three-day undertaking.

- One of our parishioners is planning to go on a short mission trip to the Hogar orphanage in Guatemala next month.
- Fr. Bartholomew and lay representative Spyridon Roegner regularly participate in the Minneapolis Deanery Pastoral Missions Council.
- We now have a parish seal (for embossing baptism/chrisamation, etc. certificates).
- There is much love in our community and sincere desire to grow in the Faith.
- Fr. Bartholomew continues to work a FT side job.
- “It is good for us to be here.”

in Christ,

Rev. Bartholomew Wojcik

Rev. Bartholomew Wojcik
 Priest-in-charge
 St. Nicholas Mission Church

Mission Station in Ames, IA

A group of 3 families (6 adults) comprises the core of a group of Orthodox faithful that has been coming together for prayers and fellowship for almost two years now. They are served by the deanery; but because the deanery now has only one available priest, they have been served also by about three priests from the Antiochian archdiocese, with the blessing of Archbishop Job and Bishop Mark of Toledo. Thanks to this arrangement, Fr Elias of the Antiochian Archdiocese, under Bp Mark, came and served Holy Friday and Pascha services with the Ames faithful and several guests and visitors. A Roman Catholic parish generously allows them space in for the Ames faithful to celebrate the Divine Liturgy when they are able, which is about once a month. The seed of this fledgling mission station was the OCF at Iowa State University. This next year, the faithful comprising this mission station’s core group plan to hold a Reader’s Service each Sunday when there is no Deacon or Priest to serve, in order to establish a regular rhythm of prayer and worship as the basis for the community’s spiritual life.

Submitted by Fr Paul Wesche (Dean)

St Nicholas, Chisholm, MN
 & the Mission in Grand Rapids, MINNESOTA

A Dean’s visit to St Nicholas parish in early summer confirmed Fr Greg’s judgment that St Nicholas will likely have to be closed, joining St Peter and Paul in Bramble, MN that was closed decades ago, but whose building still stands, tended by one of the surviving families. The once thriving parish in Chisholm on the Iron Range of Minnesota is down to four members. They are elderly, and the parish shows little if any promise of revitalization. The Archbishop and the Dean have encouraged Fr Greg to begin a mission in Grand Rapids, *Minnesota*, about 30 minutes drive west of Chisholm. That mission has been going for over a year now and shows promise. The mission averages over 20 worshippers each Sunday that the Divine Liturgy is served in the chapel of a funeral home there. Fr Greg serves St Nicholas one Sunday a month, and he serves the mission in Grand Rapids, *Minnesota* the other three Sundays of the month.

Submitted by Fr Paul Wesche (Dean)

St Andrew's Chapel in Minocqua, WI

St. Andrew's Orthodox Chapel, Minocqua, WI, is still struggling to exist and to expand. Circumstances within the area have not improved economically. This has had a profound effect on the local population and our little community as people are forced to move out of this resort area and seek jobs in other communities, counties or states.

We did gain one new member since our last report.

Our brightest spot in all this is that one of our members is enrolling in the online Reader's Course offered by St. Arseny Orthodox Theological Institute of the Archdiocese of Ottawa, Canada (OCA) and located in Winnipeg. His Eminence, Archbishop JOB, has given his blessing for Janet Miller to pursue this course of study with the understanding that she would not be tonsured a Reader upon successfully completing it.

Having someone here trained to help me and future Priests continue servicing Orthodox Christians in this region is vital. Both my wife and I are advanced in years and find that our fading energies and stamina are beginning to curtail our efforts. Should Janet fulfill her potential in this area and successfully complete the Reader' Course, she will be a valuable contributor to the liturgical life of St. Andrew's Chapel.

Our adult membership stands at 15 at this time.

We are getting out-of-state Orthodox summer vacationers coming to worship with us.

In Christ,
Fr. Vladimir Lecko