

Kansas City Deanery
Report to the Diocesan Assembly
October 31, 2011
Fr. Timothy Sawchak, Dean

Deanery clergy changes

- Fr. Thomas Succarotte was granted retirement on December 31, 2010 and continues to live in the Madison, IL area.
- Fr. Nicholas Finley was assigned as Rector of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary Church in Madison, IL effective February 20, 2011.
- Fr. Joshua Lollar was ordained to the Holy Priesthood on June 19, 2011 and then attached to Holy Trinity Church in Overland Park, KS and assigned as Priest-in-charge of St. Nicholas Mission in Lawrence, KS
- Fr. Michael Kuzara re-located to Joplin, MO. He was attached to the Nativity of the Virgin Mary Church in Madison, IL and effective August 22, 2011 is attached to Holy Trinity Church in Overland Park, KS.

St. Nicholas Mission—Lawrence, KS

<http://www.saintnicholaschurch.net/>

Fr. Joshua Lollar

Fr. Joshua arrived in Lawrence on June 24th of this year and celebrated the Resurrectional Vigil and Divine Liturgy for the first time with the St. Nicholas community on the 25th and 26th. In addition to the cycle of weekend services and major feasts, we try to celebrate vespers and liturgy at least once during the week. Fr. Joshua has begun an adult education series called “The Spirit of Christian Practice,” which will examine some of the basic practices of the tradition from the perspective of the theology of the Church Fathers. Fr. Joshua is involved with the OCF at the University of Kansas, which is in Lawrence, and has recently secured an appointment as lecturer in the Religion Department at KU, where he will begin teaching in an adjunct capacity starting Spring 2012. A number of our home-schooling families are participating in a “co-op” that meets twice a month at Holy Trinity in Kansas City. The meetings consist of a liturgical service and a variety of classes for the children, including art, chemistry, and “fun Russian.” We also participate in a local program for feeding the poor one Saturday a month.

St. James the Brother of the Lord Mission—North Kansas City, MO

<http://www.stjamesnorthland.org/>

Fr. Timothy Sawchak (Priest-in-charge), Fr. Michael Medis, Fr. Christopher Rowe, Fr. Gregory Dye, Fr. Thomas George

St. James in North Kansas City, Missouri has faithfully been served by as many as four priests from the Kansas City Deanery, under the leadership of Fr. Tim Sawchak. Now the mission's lease has ended in their Storefront worship space, where they've been since 2004. St. James was just recently offered to worship in the church of a Serbian mission, St. Michaels in Kansas City, Kansas. The Serbian mission has also offered St. James space to store their icons. Details of

servicing the missions and priestly compensation are currently being discussed between the two groups.

Holy Trinity Church—Overland Park, KS

www.holy-trinity-church.org

Fr. Timothy Sawchak (Rector), Fr. Christopher Rowe (Associate Pastor), Fr. Gregory Dye (Attached), Fr. Michael Medis (Attached), Fr. Thomas George (Attached), Dn. Stephen Beasley, Dn. David Neff

- Icons of 4 seraphs and 4 archangels (Michael, Raphael, Gabriel and Uriel) were installed in the dome of the church in the middle of October, 2010.
- February 6: We had our annual Chili Cook-off for Souper Bowl Sunday.
- February-April: We hosted Dave Ramsey's Financial Peace University and plan to do so again in 2012.
- June 3-5: Hosted Fr. John Behr, Dean of St. Vladimir's Seminary who met with the Orthodoxy Clergy Brotherhood of Kansas City and led a discussion of his book, "The Mystery of Christ."
- June: We sent financial aid to two families in Joplin, MO after the tragic tornado in May.
- June 20-24: A group of 7 people from the parish went on a retreat to Dormition Monastery in Rives Junction, MI.
- July 12-18: 21 people from Holy Trinity participated in the Archbishop Job Project Mexico trip.
- July 31-August 6: Holy Trinity had 2 priests, 29 campers and 12 counselors at the Eastern Orthodox Youth Camp. Bishop Matthias is planning to attend the camp in 2012.
- We currently have 15 catechumens.
- Holy Trinity began hosting the St. Michael the Archangel Home Schooling Co-op on September 9th. The group meets at Holy Trinity on the 2nd and 4th Fridays of the month. The co-op currently has over 35 children.
- Bishop Matthias will be with us the weekend of November 18-20. He will be the speaker at our Fr. John Platko Thanksgiving Retreat on November 19.

Nativity of the Virgin Mary Church—Madison, IL

<http://www.nativityofthevirgin.com/>

Fr. Nicholas Finley

The parish is making an effort to offer continued opportunities for education and to grow the parish community.

- 2011 has seen significant change in the life of the parish. Very Reverend Father Thomas Succarotte has retired after serving the parish for over 30 years.
- Rev. Nicholas Finley has been assigned as rector moving from Holy Protection of the Virgin Mary, Royalton, to Nativity of the Virgin, Madison.
- Fr. Thomas continues to reside in the area and participate in the life of the parish community.
- 4 baptisms – three infants and one adult.
- There are two weddings coming up in the life of the parish.
- There has been a concentrated effort to work for the organization and good order of the parish throughout the past several months with a parish clean up scheduled for this month of September at the writing of this report.

- The parish was honored to be visited by the then Bishop Elect Matthias who is now our diocesan Archpastor. Vladyka visited in March, it was a joy to meet him.
- Very Reverend John Matusiak was gracious toward our parish in restoring the parish icons of the twelve great feasts.

St. John of Kronstadt Church—Lincoln, NE

<http://kronstadtchurch.org/>

Fr. James Dank, Deacon Edwin Aasen

Attendance: Great Vespers - The average attendance at Great vespers is around twenty. Matins on Sunday morning is well attended. Our average attendance on Sunday Liturgy is seventy to eighty. There is a core group of parishioners who attend on Sunday, around fifty, but each week it varies with those who live out of town.

Other Services held: We have some kind of service every day. Vespers on Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday nights and Matins Tuesday and Thursday mornings.

Visitors: We have a steady stream of visitors at St. John's, all are greeted by our greeter also by me before the liturgy begins. Catechumans: We have no catechumens presently, but several new inquirers, who have been attending liturgy.

Growth and Goals: Every day I spend time at the altar praying for each member and their intensions, for all new contacts and for all who have been with us and shall be with us. I believe each person who comes through our doors God has sent to us, not only for the salvation of their souls but for the salvation of our souls as well. Our parish has seventy families, and over two hundred souls. This year we have had nine adult receptions through chrismation, and four children baptized.

Our long term goal is to buy four pieces of property, one north and three to the east of the church and eventually tare down our old church and build a new one with plenty of parking.

This year our parish bought two pieces of property, one just north of the church and one on the east of the parking lot. We are well on our way to paying these off.

Outreach: Our men's group, the Father Arseny Society, is open to men of other denominations that are seeking to deepen their life in Christ. We have seven or eight men from other churches are all very interested in Orthodoxy.

Our bookstore coffeehouse was closed for a month this year and received a new face-lift, it is still our main missionary outreach in the city. We have various activities, lecture series and book studies open to the public.

Archangel's Michael and Gabriel Mission--Omaha, NE

Archangel's Michael and Gabriel Mission: The Mission is going well. Fr. Stephen Walenski, a retired Antiochian priest, is serving there on Sundays under my direction. I get up to visit as much as I can, and also attend their parish council meetings.

St Thomas the Apostle Orthodox Church—Springfield, MO

<http://www.saintthomasoca.org/>

Fr. Andrew Moore

St. Raphael of Brooklyn Orthodox Mission Quincy, Illinois

Fr. Thaddeus Nielsen

www.orthodoxquincy.org

Eight were received into the Church by Holy Baptism. Then Bishop-Elect Matthias visited here for our patronal feast. We are a warm group of talented people. The services are reverent and uplifting.

The financial support of our members has strengthened. We receive Orthodox visitors from across the country and local inquirers.

We gather and donate food to a local food pantry. We contributed to the Abp. Job Memorial Mission Trip to Project Mexico, to IOCC, our 3 OCA seminaries, St. Peter the Aleut Church in Minot, the Presentation Monastery, and to local charities that care for abused women and pregnancy issues.

An ownership change to the building we have rented for nearly six years will require us to move to a different rental space before October 1. We will use this as an opportunity to redouble our efforts to let the wider community know about us.

St. Michael the Archangel Orthodox Church—St. Louis, MO

<http://stmichaelstlouis.org/>

Fr. Christopher Phillips

New life is coming into the church, much to do with us renting the hall out to FOCUS North America. Every Sunday evening dinners are served to the needy, homeless and people in the neighborhood. The hosting of these dinners are shared amongst the Orthodox Churches in the St. Louis area. During the week the FOCUS center is open on Tuesday and Wednesday for career development, working wardrobe plus a food pantry. One Saturday a month volunteers meet to do home repair for the needy in the neighborhood.

Eric Shanburn is the local director for FOCUS in St. Louis and he and his wife, Jenny, are members at St. Michael's. Eric is very instrumental in helping to build the church here and works well with the young folks coming by.

This past year, St. Michaels received a \$7,000 grant from Christ the Savior Brotherhood for a kitchen remodel. We now have a better stove, new floor and a serving window between the kitchen and the hall. FOCUS also received a \$7,000 grant for their program from Christ the Savior Brotherhood. They also will be receiving a grant from the Diocese for a welcoming garden in the church yard, and will break ground this fall.

FOCUS also maintains a garden in the vacant lot next to the church, with the blessing of the owners. Food and flowers go directly to the tables here in the dining room.

The church Treasurer sent out a pledge solicitation to the parishioners this past year—this has helped somewhat. The parish budget continues to be subsidized by rental income. The budget should be in the black this year.

Theotokos “Unexpected Joy” Mission--Ash Grove, MO

<http://unexpectedjoychurch.org/>

Fr. Moses Berry

Theotokos “Unexpected Joy” Mission has been blessed with a peaceful and fruitful year. We now average between 25 and 35 people at Sunday Divine Liturgy and 10 at weekday liturgies (in a town of less than 1500). Attendance is up at evening services as well. This year to date we have had 5 baptisms, and our parish now has a subdeacon, James Mullin, who was tonsured in Detroit by Bishop MATTHIAS. Attendance at Pascha reached 80 – quite a crowd in a small church!

Some of us are beginning a study of Orthodox tradition and practice concerning preparations for burial. Possibly we could serve as a resource for other parishes who would like information.

We have a graduate student from Missouri State who’s investigating starting an OCF chapter. Three of us are faculty members on campus, so we could offer support to the group.

Our finances are stable; the parish is generous in its support of Fr. Moses, and we are able to offer charity to local people in need. We do not foresee any major facility expenses this year.

In October, we will celebrate our 4th annual Heritage Music Festival, which will part of a century celebration of our town, Ash Grove. The mayor asked if we could hold the festival to coincide with this event so that she could include it in the list of activities.

All in all, God has blessed us abundantly; our parish is a consolation and joy to those who worship together.