

**REPORT OF THE MICHIGAN DEANERY TO THE
50th ASSEMBLY OF THE DIOCESE OF THE MIDWEST**

The Michigan Deanery consists of six parishes. Four of them are in metropolitan Detroit in southeast lower Michigan, and the other two extend west from Detroit along interstate 94. For years the Michigan Deanery of the O.C.A. has worked in accord with other Orthodox parishes of various jurisdictions in the COCC (Council of Orthodox Christian Churches) which shares worship and educational and charitable activities. The St. John Chrysostom clergy association is the overseeing body of the COCC, and the Orthodox Christian Women of Michigan (OCW) forms a distaff body of additional Christian education and outreach. The two western parishes of the deanery in Jackson and Albion also interact on various occasions with Orthodox Christians nearer to their parishes.

With the COCC

Along with the Lenten Sunday evening Vespers series sponsored by the COCC, the St. John Chrysostom Clergy Association meets on the Feast of St. John (November 13) as well as the third week of lent for a Divine Liturgy, luncheon and retreat talk delivered by a guest speaker. The COCC choir, which includes a number of our deanery singers, performed a concert for the benefit of the IOCC. Mat. Vicki Kopistiansky directed the program as well as the Lenten Vespers. Fundraising events (annual dinner dance, donkey basketball game) support charitable causes. The COCC has sponsored choir and church school workshops and has recently begun efforts to provide hands on work for local homeless shelters and food distributions. The COCC also acts as an information clearinghouse for parish events.

The Orthodox Christian Women of Michigan hold monthly meetings with speaker presentations on interesting topics throughout the year. They sponsor an annual retreat at the Dormition of the Theotokos Monastery in Rives Junction, MI. An on-going food basket collection and distribution is also a part of their ministry.

Holy Ascension Parish – Albion, MI

Fr. Joshua Frigerio reports:

- His Grace Bp. Matthias celebrated the Patronal Feast of the Ascension at the parish. Next year on the Feast there are plans for His Grace to consecrate a new altar table.
- Six parishioners participated in the Archbishop JOB Memorial Mission trip to Project Mexico.
- The faithful shared the joy of the baptism of a set of triplets recently, a real percentage jump for a small community.
- Another significant record was set when Father recently celebrated the fourth marriage of the summer.
- For a number of years the parish faithful have spent a “family camp” week at a local campground in August.
- The church’s interior was repainted this year and the roof was replaced.

Holy Ascension parish attracts students from two nearby conservative Christian colleges. One of

the on-going parish dynamics is that students encounter the Holy Orthodox Church, are catechized and Chrismated and then graduate and leave the area.

Holy Trinity Parish – Detroit, MI

Fr. Lev Kopistiansky reports:

- January: Parish New Year's celebration sponsored by the Brotherhood.
Pot Luck luncheon
Beer and Wine taste testing.
Sisterhood's Winter "Chili Fest
12-14 different pots of chili from people sharing their favorite recipe.
- February: Holy Trinity Annual "Souper-Bowl Sunday" sponsored by the Brotherhood. Church school children also raise funds for needy families.
Annual "Meatfare Madness Sunday". Faithful look forward to this delicious pork tenderloin event.
- March: Forgiveness Sunday rite of forgiveness and Blini.
Fr. and Matushka Vicki were in charge of organizing the pan Orthodox Sunday Lenten vespers series. Vicki directed the choir for the services.
Inter-parish childrens pysanki making class. Many children and adults from sister parishes participate in this annual event. Sponsored by our church school teachers.
Annual brotherhoods "fish and chips" luncheon.
- April: Hosted Bishop-Elect Fr. Matthias. Saturday vespers-lenten luncheon and greeting was well attended.
Hosted one of the COCC (Council of Orthodox Christian Churches) Sunday Lenten vespers. Packed house!
- May: "Recognition Sunday". Consisted in honoring our church school children and First Confession class with lunch and certificate awards. Eight children had their first private confessions this year.
Our Annual Parish "Patriotic Sing-a-long" for Memorial day.
- June: Parish grounds beautification project, a lot of grooming!
- July: Annual "Parish Picnic". As usual took place on church grounds. Lots of activities for children and adults.

Ss. Peter and Paul Cathedral – Detroit, MI

Ss. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Detroit is the mother church of Orthodoxy in the state of Michigan. Now in its 104th year, the cathedral has been without a resident rector since November of 2009. At that time the sixty or so faithful who remained were left with nearly three quarters of a million dollars in debt from the remodeling of the parish hall as well as various operating debts. In early 2010 the parish rectory was sold to reduce the debt by some two hundred thousand dollars. Since about that time the cathedral has been serviced on Sundays and occasional Feast days by Fr. Alexandru Partioc, a retiree from the OCA Romanian Episcopate. The administration of all pastoral care and sacraments are shared by Fr. Alexandru and the clergy brethren of the deanery and beyond.

A list of activities include:

Number one on the list of what we have been doing this past year is that we have been able to open the doors for Divine Liturgy every Sunday AND at other times, such as:

Memorial Saturday with our Bishop-Elect and now Bishop Matthias

SS Peter and Paul Day with our Dean

Some Great Lenten services during Great Lent with our Visiting Priest

Monthly activities:

Nov. Anniversary Dinner

Dec. Cookies with Santa (Headstart and Neighborhood Children)

Jan. Annual Meeting

Feb. Souper Bowl Dinner

Potluck Dinner

March Blini

April Memorial Luncheon with Bishop Matthias

June Strawberry Social

July Rummage Sale

July Attendance at the Diocesan Urban Summit in Columbus

Sept. Hosting a luncheon and Church tour for the Orthodox Christian Women

Sept. - June Church School Classes for our few children

Oct. Movie Mania

Periodic Activities

Christmas and Pascha Cards

Bake Sales

Arts and Crafts Sales

Pierogi Making and Selling

Roll-up Sandwich Sales

On-going Activities

Headstart Program for neighborhood children

Food Collection, most distribution to Headstart families

Cell Phone Recycling

Inkjet Cartridge Recycling

Our church members were involved with:

Project Mexico

COCC Inter-Orthodox Sunday Evening Vespers

Orthodox Christian Women of Michigan

Aside from trying to pay our daily bills, we have encountered:

Church Roof Leaks

Lower Social Hall Flooding

School Heating/Cooling Motors Down and Out

Repeated elevator problems

The faithful of Ss. Peter and Paul Cathedral have worked tirelessly to continue as a parish community. It has been a difficult struggle.

St. Demetrius Parish – Jackson, MI

Fr. Dusan Koprivica reports:

Our new first floor Fellowship hall was completed within one year, 98% of the structure paid for from generous donors. We sent 8 people to Bishop Job Memorial Project Mexico Mission trip. We teamed up with the Jackson Arts Tour, "tourist" visit the Old Prison, Ella Sharp Museum, and visit our church (because of the beautiful frescoes, and now handicap accessibility) last year 2000 people went through the tour. It is a free will offering. We hope to receive donations. We will be selling "icons, candles and baklava" as "fund raising" items for the church for the tour groups coming through.

We still are part of the Relay for Life Cancer Walk. We help out preparing the meal for Dormition Monastery Vigil on their feast day. We continue to collect canned goods every week to donate to the Jackson Food Pantry, and we also collect Cleaning products for another organization.

We had the Dormition of the Theotokos Fresco Completed this past winter on the southwest wall of our sanctuary, and we commissioned another fresco.

Holding steady on our membership, however it looks like we will be losing a family shortly due to poor economic conditions (so far within these past 3 years 5 families with kids left out of state). Many strangers come and ask for rent money, unfortunately we have to refuse them because we are helping our own parishioners "survive" the economy. Having canned food on hand every week (because we are collecting every week) helps us give food to those asking for a hand out.

Visiting a few prisoners - one on request from an Orthodox family from Detroit, and one who with the help of another Orthodox prisoner that was at the prison but was transferred, is learning Orthodox Christianity. With the help of Fr. Andrew Lowe, from the Patriarchal parish in Grand Rapids, we have been making huge strides in making the Orthodox Christian Religion "legal" in the Michigan Prison System. Now, Orthodox literature (i.e. Life of St. Moses, Orthodox Study Bible ...) prayer ropes, crosses, and icon prints and bringing in Holy Communion to prisoners is considered a "legal" activity for an Orthodox priest to do now. Remember, Orthodox Christianity, just a few years ago, was not an officially recognized "religion" in the State of Michigan, so these little things that Fr. Andrew Lowe and I are doing, by the instigation of one of my parishioners who was sent to prison that got the ball rolling, is ground breaking, Thanks be to God.

God has been blessing us and keeping us busy, and we pray that the economy starts turning for the positive and our converts to be able to stay and work in Michigan!

We raised \$5200 in early August for the Relay for Life Cancer Walk. We held Liturgy under our tent (for feast of Transfiguration). Our picture was in the paper (of us having Liturgy) at the Relay. We had a great turn out, and many people checked us out.

Holy Transfiguration Parish – Livonia, MI

Fr. John Wehling reports:

- The biggest news for the parish this year was the retirement of Fr Michael Matsko after 25+ years of ministry to the parish. We had over 300 people, including Bishop Matthias attending

Fr. Michael's retirement picnic. The newly renovated social hall was blessed and dedicated to the Archangel Michael, and a large icon of the Archangel Michael was commissioned. May Fr. Michael and Matushka Yvonne have a blessed retirement and may God grant them many blessed years!

- Vacation Church School was well attended in the Summer of 2010; the kids went to Dormition Monastery on the last day of VCS.
- Church School ran from Sept. 2010 to May 2011. Debbie Lindholm stepped down this year after many years of overseeing the program. We thank her for her years of service. Janet Ames and Val Gregory will oversee Church School for 2011-12.
- The parish continues to tend a community garden which is producing lots of good food as well as building community among those who come out Wednesdays and Saturdays to weed and harvest.
- The parish has adopted a ministries model of administration and this is helping parishioners serve God and the Church by using their gift and talents accordingly
- We are in the midst of a capital campaign to pay for the recent renovation of our fellowship hall as well as continuing to sponsor icons in the Temple. We had added a number of new icons this past year as we work to complete the middle level of the Nave.
- This fall we will begin midweek services and adult education and enquirer's classes: Wednesday evening Vespers followed by enquirer's classes/adult ed.; Thursday morning Divine Liturgy followed by Bible Study.
- We are in the process of coordinating with Focus in the Detroit area to be more engaged in almsgiving and works of mercy in our area.
- We sponsored gifts for 11 needy families at Christmas.
- The annual cookie walk just prior to Christmas served as both a funder raiser and outreach to the community, bringing in many visitors.
- The Lenten Youth retreat was held March 5.
- The parish helped sponsor the OCMC trip of parishioner John Sedor to South Africa.
- The parish helped sponsor the Project Mexico trip of parishioner Joanne Sedor.
- The parish is hosting Brotherhood of St. Moses The Black national conference.
- The parish built and decorated a memorial flower garden near the west entrance to the Temple.
- The parish held an American Red Cross blood drive in our social hall September 24.
- The rectory was renovated in preparation for the arrival of the new rector.
- The parish hosted a workshop with Dr. Al Rossi of SVS on internet pornography and chastity on Sunday, October 2nd.

5 Baptisms * 3 Chrismations * 4 Weddings * No Deaths

St. Mark – Rochester Hills, MI

Fr. Andrew Yavornitzky reports:

Along with the usual services, meetings, Church school and adult classes, parish dinners and social events

- The parish helped to send 18 members and six "friends" to the Archbishop JOB memorial mission trip to Project Mexico.
- Lighting, sound and cosmetic improvements were made to the parish hall.
- We were recently awarded our third and fourth Diocesan Parish Health grants.

- We are continuing to add iconography in the temple.
- We participated in the July Urban Ministries Summit.
- Our long awaited and repeatedly sidetracked Church consecration has been rescheduled for September 2012.
- We annually prepare and serve a dinner to participants in a rotating homeless shelter program.
- Each Christmas day following the Divine Liturgy we visit a local nursing home (our first mission site) to sing carols and distribute gifts.
- We are in our third year of assembling and delivering Christmas food and gifts to needy households. Last December 132 homes received a week's worth of groceries, up from 111 the previous year. We expect to increase again this December. In this project we are joined by faithful from nearby Orthodox parishes.
- We annually participate in the local CWS CROP WALK.
- We annually offer Lenten alms to the IOCC. This past year we also supported the Japanese tsunami special appeal.
- Our advent alms are directed to the Rochester Neighborhood House for charitable use locally. In addition we joined in the special "back to school" supplies drive for needy children serviced by the Neighborhood House. We have recently seated a representative on the Neighborhood House's advisory board.
- In 2010-2011 we sponsored three mission priests through the OCMC SAMP program.
- We hosted two Red Cross blood drives at the parish.
- We send monthly support to a disabled Orthodox priest and his family.
- An effort was begun to work through the parish development process offered through the diocesan Parish Health facilitator. Our church construction bond will be paid in May 2013, and it is necessary to begin now to invest in parish development and ministry so that the "extra cash" in June 2013 is not simply sat on or kept in parishioner pockets.

To that end we:

- formed a stewardship committee to work in co-operation with the parish council to address some of the emerging issues involved with this "Transition to Ministry"
- will hold our first parish wide "Ministries Fair" on Sunday following the 50th Assembly in an effort to encourage more parishioners to actively engage in Gospel directed works of love (cf. Matthew 25:31-46)
- began a partnership program with the elementary school two doors down (an early site of St. Mark Mission) to provide tutoring, mentoring and food assistance to needy students and families
- are striving to increase and/or expand the ministry and outreach efforts listed above

In Christ's Love,

V. Rev. Andrew Yavornitzky
Michigan Deanery Dean