

## MICHIGAN DEANERY REPORT TO THE DIOCESAN ASSEMBLY

OCTOBER 2-4, 2012

As reported last year, 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, 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. 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 Orthodox Detroit Outreach). 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.

### **PARISH UPDATES**

**Holy Ascension, Albion** – His Grace consecrated the altar on the Patronal Feast day. All deanery priests participated. Fr. Joshua Frigerio reports the single restroom was remodeled into two restrooms and everything was repainted. He laments “the usual get-christmated-move-away-for-work-revolving-door” syndrome seems to be his calling at Holy Ascension. On a curious note, the past eleven births/baptisms have all been males - eleven boys under age three.

**Holy Trinity, Detroit** – Fr. Lev Kopistiansky has phased out general confession and phased in a molieben for the sick with anointing, replacing one of the Wednesday Vespers each month. Fr. Lev adds:

- Our sisterhood who in the past has participated in projects such as 'support a seminarian' has agreed to help support Ohio teacher Olivia Morton as she commits to being a long-term missionary in Guatatmala City. Financial support will take place in increments as Olivia gives us her progress reports.

- More people in the parish are participating with the 'Orthodox Detroit Outreach' organization

in the Detroit Metropolitan Area. The latest and ongoing project is the making of peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and also in the distribution of the sandwiches to the needy at specified locations.

- Every year it appears that more and more church school children attend St. Vladimir Summer Camp in Ohio! The children put on 'Summer Camp Fund Raisers' throughout the winter months to prepare themselves financially. No free rides for them.....they must work for their trip.

- The Artistic Choir Director for the 'Inter-Orthodox Choir of Metropolitan Detroit' is none other than our very own Matushka Victoria. She and several of our parish choir singers along with other key music committee members from other local parishes are in the beginning phases of preparing for a 'Nativity Benefit Concert ' here in Detroit. Yours truly is the spiritual advisor for the Choir.

- We have been blessed to have had five infant baptisms so far this summer!

- Lastly.....Everyone looks forward to our Annual Parish Picnic' which is held the last Sunday every year in July! It was again, this year, well attended and was great fun for all. I like to call our picnic just a 'good-old back yard bar-b-cue'.

**Ss. Peter and Paul, Detroit** – Crises take no holiday for our cathedral parish. In April Guide One Insurance informed the parish that they were being dropped from coverage in mid June. The ramifications from having no insurance were enormous. The federally funded Head Start program, Vista Nuevas, cannot operate in a facility that is uninsured, jeopardizing a significant portion of annual operating income. The bonding debt agreement also requires property coverage to avoid default. Fortunately, after much scrambling, the council was able to secure coverage at only a slightly higher premium rate from their former carrier Church Mutual. As dean I once again celebrated the Patronal Feast Day Divine Liturgy on June 29. The three other metro Detroit parishes also joined in the celebration. Following the Divine Liturgy newly established community garden beds were blessed. Members of the parish in cooperation with the new Orthodox Outreach Detroit have applied for a Diocesan Parish Health Grant to continue and expand the garden effort.

The cathedral parish is served each Sunday by Fr. Alexandru Partioc, a retired Romanian priest attached to the OCA Romanian Diocese. Local pan-Orthodox clergy also fill various pastoral and sacramental needs. By God's Grace and a herculean effort from a handful of faithful the Mother Church of Orthodoxy in Michigan survives and serves both the faithful and the neighborhood.

**St. Demetrius, Jackson** Fr. Dusan Koprivica reports:

This year's Relay for Life 24 hour walk a thon, St. Demetrius Church raised \$8500. a new record for us. In addition, Jovanka (our teenage daughter and parishioner, who also is the Captain of the

Jackson High Swim Team) organized a swim meet with alumni and called it Swim for a Cure, and raised \$1300, which was put under the umbrella of our St. Demetrius Team. Grand total \$9800.

We joined in on the Arts Armory Tours and Jackson Prison Tours, and Tour buses come to our church to view and learn about Orthodox iconography. We call it "Prison to Paradise" Tour. It is the Highest rated tour for the City of Jackson. So far 8 tours came through this summer (so over 400 people came through our church), with 4 more booked for the Fall, and 2 for next summer. Our parish once again prepared and served the meal for before Vigil at Dormition Monastery before their Feastday.

We have a continuous donation to the food bank every month, along with a continuous donation to the Linen Closet (Toilet paper, cleaning supplies, etc. for the needy)

Our parishioners sponsored an Orphan (from Project Mexico) for Christmas. Our plan for the coming year is to sponsor an orphan for their education for a year. We are having a Project Mexico Reunion for the Michigan Deanery.

**Holy Transfiguration, Livonia** – Fr. John continues to host the deanery Late Vocations Diaconal Program at the parish.

Priest John Wehling, Rector  
Protodeacon Jacob Frimenko

1. HTOC hosted the annual conference of the Brotherhood of St Moses the Black in August of 2011 with Bp Matthias was the keynote speaker
  2. Janet Ames and Val Gregory guided the Church School to another good year
  3. Several children participated in a class to prepare them for their first confession in Great Lent
  4. Active youth program involving education, worship, charitable work, and fellowship (Snyder's last year)
  5. Midweek services throughout year (Vespers and Liturgy, Wed. and Thur.)
  6. "Intro. to Orthodoxy" class on Wed. evening following Vespers
  7. Midweek adult ed. following Liturgy on Thursday morning
  8. Cookie Walk once again a big success
  9. Parish garden continues to involve a number of parishioners
  10. Begun involvement with Orthodox Detroit Outreach, a charitable ministry in the Metro area
- Men's group meets regularly to make kits for the homeless and distributes them to a shelter in Detroit
- Hosted pan-Orthodox Lenten mission Vespers
- An active retirees group meets monthly
- Lenten retreat was held, speaker was Igumen Sergius of St Tikhon's Monastery
- Six men made a pilgrimage to St Tikhon's Monastery in July 2012
- Hosted several local clergy and faithful from OCA, MP, and ROCOR parishes for our patronal feast in August 2012

Metrical Info from June 2011 to present:

Baptisms w/ Chrismation: 10

Chrismations: 7

Marriages: 2

Funerals: 4

At present we have one catechumen.

Submitted by Priest John Wehling

August 2012

**St. Mark, Rochester Hills** - Three children were baptized and one adult was chrismated this Paschal season. His Grace made his first Archpastoral parish visit September 21-23. During that visit the church, built in 2000 was consecrated.

In June several parishioners were involved in the “Urban Mission 2012” program hosted by St. Raphael of Brooklyn Mission (Romanian OCA) in Detroit. Also in June the parish offered its first meal service at Grace Center of Hope, an urban rescue mission facility located in Pontiac, MI. This food outreach replaced our annual MCREST for the homeless meal.

September began our second year of teaming with Hamlin elementary school. Along with weekly tutoring support in classrooms we provide weekly food assistance to several of the neediest households as determined by the school principal. Most of the food is surplus or nearly expired acquired from the food service program at nearby Oakland University. With the help of resources from last year’s Parish Health Grant we managed to provide for the families throughout the summer.

The Christmas food and gift distribution has grown annually from 111 families in 2009 to 211 families in 2011. Each household receives what amounts to a week’s worth of groceries. Local agencies and school social workers provide lists of children in the homes who receive specific gifts according to age and gender. Those from the parish who manage it continue to aspire to bigger and better fruits.

New this year was a collection in June for Diocesan Seminarian support, a “Baby Bottle Drive” collection for a crisis pregnancy center and a parish Ministries Fair. The fair highlighted the various ministries which are done by members of the parish, both “as St. Mark Parish” and independent of the parish’s identity. Along with information, the event focused on opportunities and encouragement to join in. We see this becoming a regular event in the parish’s life.

Regular activities continue:

- Christmas day caroling at the nursing home;

- OCMC SAMP support, four priests last year
- Project Mexico Pantry Partners food drive
- Red Cross Blood Drives
- CWS CROP Walk
- IOCC Lenten appeal
- Advent alms distributed locally through the Rochester Neighborhood House
- Monthly support for a disabled Orthodox priest and his family
- Education for both adults and children
- And, of course, the liturgical and sacramental life of the parish

Thanks be to God it was a good year.

In Christ,

Very Rev. Andrew Yavornitzky  
Michigan Deanery Dean