



Orthodox Church in America
DIOCESE OF THE MIDWEST

1 September 2020
Beginning of the Liturgical Year
№. 118

2020 SEMINARIAN APPEAL LETTER

To all Rectors, Priests-in-Charge, Deacons, Monastics and Laity of the Midwest,

Glory to Jesus Christ!

The Pandemic related to COVID-19 has had a big impact on Church life in the Orthodox Church in America, especially our seminaries. Our two seminaries in the lower 48 closed down campus-based programming. Students completed the remainder of the school year taking on line classes. Plus, students were not allowed to attend church services at either seminary. This was tough on everyone, but especially students and their families, as they couldn't attend church anywhere and could only view live-streamed services.

The good news is that both Saint Tikhon's and Saint Vladimir's Seminaries are resuming their campus-based instruction and worship this coming year. Appropriate protocols have been instituted to maximize student and teacher safety, and the safety of the monks from St. Tikhon's Monastery.

We currently have one new student from the Diocese of the Midwest (DOM), Andrew Prather, from St. Nicholas Mission in Pella, Iowa, starting at St. Vladimir's this coming year. There are three more persons that are seeking to begin studies for the following year.

Here is a summary of our current student population:

St. Tikhon's Seminary

Deacon Matthew McDonald (3rd year student)

Deacon Peter Simko (3rd year student)

Payton Saunders (2nd year student)

Jacob Ponomarenko (2nd year student)

Matthew Pings (2nd year student)

Support Our Seminarians Month

September 1, 2020

Page 2

St. Vladimir's Seminary

Andrew Prather (1st year student)

During the past year, **Fr. Ephraim Tauck** completed his M.Div. studies at St. Tikhon's. He is now assigned as Acting Rector of Theotokos of Unexpected Joy Orthodox Church in Ashgrove, MO. **Aaron Rutz** completed his M.Div. studies at St. Vladimir's. He has secured a Chaplaincy Residency position in an Eastern Pennsylvania Hospital. He is committed to returning to the Diocese of the Midwest to eventually seek ordained ministry once his circumstances allow for it. Finally, **Deacon Matthew McDonald** completed a 6-week internship at Archangel Michael Orthodox Church in St. Louis, MO.

Once again I am asking all of our parishes in the Diocese to contribute to our Annual Support Our Seminarians Drive we inaugurate at this time of the year. I have received thank you notes from many of our students expressing their appreciation for the financial support they have received from the Diocese of the Midwest. Through this drive, our goal is to provide students and their families with a minimum scholarship of \$1,000 per semester to assist them in their studies. Students are unable to seek employment while at seminary. Seminarian wives have children to care for along with their seminarian husbands making it difficult for some to seek employment.

So even during the COVID Pandemic, I would ask you to be as generous as possible in supporting our seminarians this upcoming year. You can make your contributions to your parish, which in turn would remit those collections to the Diocese. Any checks you submit to the parish should be noted with the words "Support our Seminarians." If you wish to make your donation to the Diocese, make out your check to "Diocese of the Midwest" and note that the check is for "Support our Seminarians." Mail it to the Chancery (the address is included in the letterhead at the bottom).

Thank you for your generosity and kindness. The blessing of the Lord be upon you.

With love in Christ,



+PAUL

Archbishop of Chicago and the Midwest