

Kansas City Deanery Report to the Diocesan Assembly 2021

Priests

1. Fr. Timothy Sawchak
2. Fr. Christopher Rowe
3. Fr. Joshua Lollar
4. Fr. James Dank
5. Fr. Michael Kuzara
6. Fr. Basil Ferguson
7. Fr. Joel Wilson
8. Fr. Ephraim Tauck
9. Fr. Nicholas Finley
10. Fr. Matthew McDonald
11. Fr. Michael Medis
12. Fr. Justin Mathews

Deacons

1. Hierodeacon Theodore (Niklasson)
2. Deacon Brent Beasley
3. Deacon James Mullin

Retired Clergy

1. Fr. Peter Bodnar (awarded a Synodal Gramota for 40 years of service on October 1, 2021)
2. Fr. John Pawelchak
3. Fr. John Zabinko
4. Fr. Moses Berry
5. Fr. Christopher Philips (retired May 29, 2021)

Deaths

1. May 23, 2021: Deacon Edwin Aasen in Lincoln, NE

Annunciation—St. James, MO (Fr. Joel Wilson— 7 years): The beginning of the year was pretty slow for us. Over the summer things began picking up in terms of attendance, and within the last 45-60 days we have had added over 30 new people - all solid attendees so far - with several more looking to move here. We now have over 40 kids between the ages of 0-14. Within that number, we now have 14 catechumens and 2 inquirers.

We also had Andrew Gould come and do a site plan and a presentation for us on Dormition. His suggestions were spot on for everyone. We also figured out how to deed 2.3 acres of ours to the church and we're hoping to begin clearing some trees this fall on the church property.

St. Nicholas—Lawrence, KS (Fr. Joshua Lollar—10 years): Highlight: Easily moving outside and inside for liturgies during the pandemic with very little interruption to community life. Goal: Add a bathroom to the church building and vault the ceiling in the nave of the church.

Nativity of the Virgin Mary—Madison, IL (Fr. Nicholas Finley—10 years): This past year, at Nativity of the Virgin Mary, Madison, IL; we have completed renovations on our previous parish rectory which has been transformed into our new Parish Hall. We are thankful to God that He has blessed this effort and provided us with such inviting space in which to gather in fellowship and love especially at the conclusion of the Divine Offices. In the coming year, we hope to rekindle our efforts to minister to those in need through our food pantry, and possibly enhance our live stream of divine services to those who make use of this ministry.

St. Thomas—Springfield, MO (Fr. Basil Ferguson—2.5 years): A notable highlight of this past year has been the many new catechumens who have come to the church.

For the coming year we hope to find our stride again (after the past year's irregularities). Part of that includes integrating the many newcomers with older members, plans for building improvements, church school restarting, reviewing our Greek Festival, and a number of other things.

Archangel Michael—St. Louis, MO (Fr. Matthew McDonald—4 months): In the last year,

- May 29, Fr. Matthew McDonald is assigned acting rector, Fr. Christopher Philips retires.
- We had one baptism.
- We had one funeral for a non-parishioner.
- In Oct 2020, the congregation numbered approximately 11 regularly attending parishioners with no catechumens. Since May 2021 the congregation has grown to 18 regularly attending including 4 catechumens. We have an additional 13 that may be classified as sporadically attending. Neither the 2020 or 2021 numbers count the priest's family. If the priest family is included in the numbers, the parish has doubled in size since May.
- The parish has worked towards beautifying our worship experience with replacing worn objects (ie gospel), introducing new music and singers, including new help in the altar, and working to keep the space cleaner.
- The parish has worked to become more family friendly by including play areas for the children, and a cry room for mothers.

Our goal over the next year is to double the size of the parish again (God willing). We will continue to beautify our space and worship.

Joy of All Who Sorrow—Joplin, MO (Fr. Michael Kuzara— over 10 years): On August 5 we closed on our new church building . In 2 and a half days we celebrated our first Liturgy. It seemed that every obstacle which were many in the 11th hour the door was opened.. The church needs some upgrades. (heating and cooling etc.) The church is in a amazing location 1218 e. 32nd st, Our present goals are to develop our Sunday school programs and outreach to the community This has been a complete unfolding of the will of God much to the surprise of all, myself included. Please pray that the Light of Orthodoxy burns bright in a city that so needs it..

Please keep Fr. Michael in your prayers. He will have a procedure for prostate cancer on October 13.

St. John of Kronstadt—Lincoln, NE (Fr. James Dank—33 years): During the first quarter of this year in spite of the strict mask mandate and Covid restrictions and losing several families over the last year, we have had a pretty steady stream of new people attending Saint Johns and inquiring about our church. In April of this year I lost my younger brother, Mark. At the same time I had some serious health issues that have since been resolved. In the month of May we lost our beloved ProtoDeacon Edwin.

At the end of June and for the most part of July my wife and I took four weeks off. During that time Fr. Tim and Fr. Chris from the Kansas City deanery graciously filled in for me doing Sunday services.

At the beginning of August our son Gregory and his wife Melanie both became sick with Covid. As Melanie recovered our son was admitted to the hospital. Greg spent the month of August and part of September in the ICU with 12 days on the ventilator. At one point during his illness the doctors called and told us to prepare for his death. During the time of his illness the support, prayers and financial help he and his family received from our friends and Orthodox Christians from all over the world, was truly overwhelming. He is continuing to recover.

Our church continues to maintain the cycle of services of vespers on Monday Wednesday Friday and Saturday and Divine Liturgy on Sunday. We are looking to continue to grow and recover from all the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and its affects on our church financially and as a community.

We are looking to reestablish our regular Sunday school activities. and to continue our charity work in our city of Lincoln with fundraising for the friendship home, a shelter for women and children, and continuing to help feed the poor at Matt Talbot kitchen through the collection of food in our food baskets..

Theotokos “Unexpected Joy”—Ash Grove, MO (Fr. Ephraim Tauck—just over 1 year, Hierodeacon Theodore (Niklasson), Deacon James Mullin—2 years)

St. Raphael Mission—Quincy, IL (served by Fr. John Pawelchak)

Protection of the Virgin Mary—Royalton, IL (served by Fr. John Pawelchak)

Holy Trinity—Overland Park, KS (Fr. Timothy Sawchak—16 years, Fr. Christopher Rowe—16 years, Fr. Michael Medis—15 years, Fr. Justin Mathews—5 months, Deacon Brent Beasley—ordained at Holy Trinity in 2008): We currently have 16 Catechumens and 6 inquirers. We are about to complete re-lamping the church with LED lights. Our charitable efforts throughout the Church have remained robust throughout the time of the Pandemic, including our 8th year of putting together School Kits for IOCC and adopting a mission priest from OCMC (Fr. Joseph in Ghana). We were blessed to have Mother Alexandra from Holy Resurrection Monastery in Niangua, MO visit with us in January of 2021. Fr. Thomas George, who had been assigned at Holy Trinity since 2008, re-located to Western Pennsylvania in August after the repose of his mother.

Holy Resurrection Monastery—Niangua, MO (Mother Alexandra):

Holy Resurrection Monastery
224 Hospitality Rd
Niangua, MO 65713

November 1 is the one year anniversary of the reestablishment of Holy Resurrection Monastery. Monastic life has been restored, Divine Liturgy is served the second and fourth Sundays of the month, the main floor of the residence refurbished, many guests hosted for the day or overnight, the grounds cleaned and maintained, roofing and various leaks repaired, website and online store launched and maintained, and a small onsite Gift Shop with icons, candles, Lampadas, prayer ropes, books open to guests. Currently, the downstairs is in process of being repaired: electrical wiring, drop ceiling, left over painting, closets, and organization. By doing the minor construction, painting, plumbing, and electrical repairs, only material costs were incurred. A team from St Luke's in Palos Hills recently painted the three bedrooms and the floor downstairs. Outside, they repaired the staircase and extended the deck in front of the Chapel, and assisted with landscaping. One other important item is that the Winter electric heating costs were outrageous. There was one gas heater already installed. A second was installed on the other side of the main residence before the Arctic blast last year, and one more will soon be installed downstairs. While natural gas has been the same cost per unit as electricity in Webster County, Missouri, it is more efficient in terms of BTUs produced, direct delivery to specific areas of the residence and guest quarters, and thus more cost effective. The electric furnace remains as a backup. The final leak above the altar area has been solved and only requires future, regular maintenance to clean a drain pipe. Unfortunately, the water shorted some electrical fixtures but those can be switched out now that it is dry up above.

Future projects include stripping, sealing and staining the front porch and back stairs, deck and wood in front of the Chapel, furnishing the downstairs rooms, furnishing the monastic community room, area carpets with padding in the Chapel, removing a few dead trees from the property, clearing the North side woods, and developing a prayer path. There is still a need for a Plashchanitsa.

The monastery has been offering 100% beeswax liturgical candles for sale since last year. Orders can be made via the website holyresurrectionmonastery.org, phone 417-943-2070, email hrmnuns@gmail.com. \$11.75 per pound. If there is a special need or size, simply ask. Your orders help to support the monastery.

Over the past year, several parishes and many faithful have provided spiritual, physical and financial support. So grateful! Please keep the monastery in your prayers in terms of vocations. There is interest and visits are occurring, yet only God knows the timing. As this possibility of women joining the monastery moves closer to reality, there will be an increased need of support and for the monastery to provide health insurance and other essentials. Any one wishing to donate may do so by mail or via the secure portal on the website. There is also an online prayer form.

Thank you to His Eminence, Archbishop Paul and all who have generously supported the revitalization of Holy Resurrection Monastery in the Diocese of Chicago and the Midwest. I pray for continued blessings, and that God willing, we may see other growth in the next year.

"Christ is Risen, my joy!"

Mother Alexandra

Charitable Foundation: Soon, a religious nonprofit will become reclassified by the IRS as a private foundation. As such, we will be required to distribute 5% of our assets **annually**. In November, our Board of Directors will establish rigid guidelines for funding distribution to benefit the Kansas City Deanery. We intend to establish scholarship programs at St. Vladimir's, St. Tikhon's, and St. Macrina's Orthodox Institute to benefit our local candidates. We will donate equally (\$3,000-5000+ annually) to each of the parishes and monasteries that fall under the Kansas City Deanery. These funds are offered to encourage internal and outreach growth at the sole discretion of the person blessed by Archbishop Paul, or his successor, to lead our local spiritual communities. Any excess amount needed to fulfill the 5% annual distribution requirement will be granted to Archbishop Paul or his successor for special projects of his preference within the Midwest Diocese of the Orthodox Church in America. Our long-term goal will be to encourage other affluent Orthodox Christians across America to follow our example within their local region.