

Report on the Chicago Deanery for the 2022 Annual Diocesan Assembly

Parishes of our deanery have done their best to return to a more normal state of operations. We would hope that an increasing number of vaccinations and resolved Covid infections makes this safer. At the same time, the pandemic continues and we still face challenges that this presents. Some developments over the past year:

- Archangel Michael Parish in Burbank, IL was closed by Archbishop Paul after remaining members of the community voted to dissolve the parish. A committee has been formed to prepare for the sale of the property. One unresolved issue is whether or not the Diocese ought to maintain the chancery office and hierarch's residence there.
- On October 24, 2021, Holy Trinity Cathedral was blessed by Archbishop Paul after renovations were completed. The cathedral also celebrated their 130th Anniversary on Pentecost with Metropolitan Tikhon being the main celebrant.
- Holy Resurrection in Palatine celebrated their 51st anniversary in October, which was postponed from 2020.
- The Annual Deanery Winter Youth camp was cancelled due to rising Covid rates. A summer camp is in the works for early July as of the writing of this report.
- A list of reliable catechetical sources was compiled and distributed to deanery clergy at our last deanery meeting on November 9.
- St. Elizabeth the New Martyr parish had been wonderfully served by Fr. John Russin following the sudden repose of Fr. Stacey Richter. Archbishop Paul ordained Deacon Anthony Saunders who was a student at St. Tikhon Seminary for the parish. Fr. Anthony has begun his duties at St. Elizabeth in early June.
- The deanery had a regular schedule of Sunday Lenten Vespers services, which were well attended.
- Fr. Vladimir Wendling, pastor of St. George Cathedral in Chicago retired as of June 1st. Deacon Nicholai Lochmatow was ordained by Archbishop Peter of the ROCOR (Archbishop Paul was in attendance, concelebrating the Liturgy) with the understanding that he would be "loaned" to our Diocese for St. George parish. Fr. Nicholai will be released to the OCA if after a year of service at St. George things are going well.
- Fr. Constantine Bodien has departed from St. Nicholas Parish in Kenosha, WI and was released to the Diocese of New England to serve at All Saints Church in Hartford, CT. St. Nicholas parish is still vacant and is being served by Fr. Thomas Muller and Deacon Jan Farral.
- Our deanery held our annual post-Pascha family gathering, after a two-year hiatus. We were hosted by St. Joseph parish in Wheaton with a catered meal, which they sponsored. We had about 30 people present.

We have two Orthodox outreach efforts taking place in Wisconsin and Aurora, IL:

Fr. Thomas Mueller has been conducting a chapel ministry, with SS Cyril and Methodius Parish being the home base for this work. He reports: There are two chapels, both part of "St Maria of Paris Chapel Ministries." They share my pastoral care and a common treasury, (\$4500) supported by stewardship participants and friends. Some of that treasury also supports urban outreach at SS Cyril & Methodius.

The larger group (13 active members and some additional participants), is Holy Nativity Chapel in Waukesha. Waukesha is the county seat of Waukesha County, an exurban county just west of Milwaukee County; it has 400,000 plus population, with no Orthodox parish. We have one Sunday Liturgy and often a feast day service in Waukesha, where we meet in a room of a Park Headquarters building just east of downtown. We celebrated the baptism of a 4 year old girl (the first) whose grandparents and father had been connected to SS Cyril and Methodius but had become quite inactive due to distance. There are efforts being made to move the location of services to St Matthias Episcopal Church, which would make the chapel much more visible, and present a more churchly atmosphere to inquirers.

The other chapel, St Maria of Paris Chapel, is in Plymouth, a small city in Sheboygan County, 55 miles north of Milwaukee. This group is very small, four families, usually just represented by the wife or mother of the family with some children. There is a real need for pastoral care in this area. I feel blessed and humbled to be able to minister to these people. Here it's not about numbers or mission potential but rather pastoral need. We meet at St Paul's Episcopal Church in Plymouth, where the vicar and parish have been very hospitable to us. Again, one Sunday Liturgy and an occasional weekday service (for instance during Holy Week.)

Fr. Mueller plans to continue this ministry as long as his strength and vitality hold out. He receives no compensation at this point, other than a mileage reimbursement. He noted that most of the chapel members have connections to SS Cyril & Methodius, but have been constrained from active participation there because of distance, work schedules, or family responsibilities. He says, "This is the very recipe for a chapel ministry."

Fr. Joe Kopka reported on outreach effort in Aurora, IL: Mission / Outreach efforts in the Aurora, IL area began in August 2021, under the auspices of the DOM Mission Committee and shepherded by the clergy of St Joseph Orthodox Church in Wheaton. In March of 2022, the mission effort, informally given the patron St Maria of Paris, secured a new location. The Bureau Gravity building, 56 S LaSalle St in Aurora has provided use of space every Sunday afternoon. Great Vespers are served at 3pm. Though heavily advertised in several venues, attendance has been limited to parishioners of St Joseph's, attracting no new people. Exploratory efforts are underway to find possible joint outreach scenarios with St Athanasios Greek Orthodox Church in Aurora. Services will be on hiatus in June and July.

Finally we note the passing of two beloved figures of our Deanery:

- Matushka Carol Ann Janeček, the wife of Archpriest Frederick J. Janeček, fell asleep in the Lord on Monday, February 14, 2022. She reposed surrounded by her husband, and son, John Frederick, shortly after receiving Holy Communion with awareness and devotion. Services and burial were held on February 21 at Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Milwaukee. May Matushka Carol Ann's memory be eternal!
- We lost our beloved Archpastor, Archbishop Paul, who reposed after a brief and devastating illness, early on Pascha morning. Funeral Services took place during Bright Week (Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday) at Holy Trinity Cathedral in Chicago and Holy Transfiguration Church in Livonia, MI. Burial took place at Holy Dormition Monastery cemetery. May Archbishop Paul's memory be eternal!

Respectfully submitted,

Fr. Alexander Kuchta

Archpriest Alexander Kuchta
Chicago Dean