

**Report for the Chicago Deanery
For the 2023 Annual Diocesan Assembly**

Dean's Report:

- a) Fr. Joe Kopka had a cervical laminectomy in January and is slowly recovering;
- b) Jonathan Lincoln was deposed from the priesthood by the Holy Synod in April;
- c) St. Nicholas Church in McHenry, IL and Mitered Archpriest Volodymyr Kovalchuk were received into the Diocese on April 23 (Thomas Sunday) by Archbishop Daniel;
- d) Fr. John Kennerk was assigned to Christ the Savior and started serving as Great Lent began;
- e) Fr. Joseph Whittaker was assigned to St. Nicholas Church in Kenosha, starting his service there on Pentecost Sunday;
- f) The Deanery hosted a full complement of Sunday Lenten Vespers services;
- g) On Sunday, May 7 We had a Deanery Paschal family gathering hosted by Holy Resurrection with 15 people attending;
- h) Because it has been difficult for Fr. Kopka to manage the Deanery checkbook, Fr. Joseph, Fr. John and I decided it would be best to transfer duties to Fr. John. In accordance with Diocesan Bylaws (Article VII, C, 1.) at the September 2023 Deanery meeting there was a motion to approve a unanimous ballot to elect Fr. John Segvich to the position of Deanery Treasurer. This was moved, seconded, and approved;
- i) The Summer Deanery Youth camp was held in July, directed by Fr. Tom Mueller and Protodeacon George Potym with some additional assistance by laypeople. The camp was well attended. There was a variety of activities and also an educational component. Plans for a Winter Camp are taking shape.

Short reports from Deanery Parishes:

Holy Trinity Cathedral – Chicago

Priest Alexander Koranda

Holy Trinity Cathedral celebrates its 120 year of the consecration of the temple. During this year, we have taken on several large projects including renovating the rectory kitchen, putting a new HVAC system in the cathedral, and on September 5, we will be remodeling the courtyard outside of the cathedral. We still look to accomplish putting in a new parking lot fence and lighting, as well as remodeling the sacristy. We continue to be blessed under our full liturgical calendar with six catechumens and three inquirers looking to join the Church.

St. Joseph – Wheaton, IL

Archpriest Joseph Kopka, Priest John Segvich

Fr Joe underwent two serious spinal surgeries earlier this year and was initially out of commission for 3 months. Recovery is still ongoing, Special thanks to Fr John Segvich for doing a yeoman's job in my absence. In May, we had an archpastoral visit from Archbishop Daniel. Clergy awards, subdiaconal ordination, Reader's tonsure and a festive meal topped the wonderful weekend. We have procured the artistic service of iconographer Anya Dankova, who is working on the completion of the second tier of our iconostasis. She has amazingly been able to faithfully imitate the iconographic style of the late Fr John Matusiak. Our Catechumenate is growing with the addition of our 7th seeker this year.

Holy Apostles - Bloomington-Normal, IL

Priest David Gresham

Attendance is up about 40% from two years ago. Average Sunday attendance is about 70 (including children, and we have a lot of children), but jumps up to 89 maybe once a month. Currently we have 8 catechumens and 7 serious inquirers, which will be 11 catechumens and 4 inquirers on the 17th of this month. Holy Apostles was blessed with our first visit from Archbishop Daniel this summer at the parish's 25 anniversary celebration. Renovations are underway to make a kitchen for the parish. We are at the beginnings of planning to build an actual Orthodox church worship space beside the current building, which was a Jehovah's Witness hall before we purchased it in 2019...oh, and we paid off the mortgage on the new building this summer.

St. Elizabeth – Chesterton, IN

Priest Anthony Saunders

Services continue to be offered 5-6 days a week. We currently have three catechumens scheduled to be received during the Nativity Fast, and a handful of inquirers who have expressed interest in becoming catechumens. We continue to receive donations toward various parish projects - i.e. liturgical furniture, 3 sets of priest vestments, repair of outdoor shrine, replacement of outdoor Cross, gas grill for feast days, miscellaneous building maintenance, etc. We have many new people at the parish - visitors, inquirers, lapsed Orthodox returning to parish life, and others. Our coffee hour is now simply referred to as 'lunch' - with some gentle encouragement, the amount and quality of food offered has dramatically improved, and some folks routinely stick around hours after liturgy has ended.

Holy Resurrection – Palatine, IL

Archpriest Alexander Kuchta

Parish life is pretty much normal, with the usual celebration of weekend and festal services. Along with all of the regular features of parish life, we are presently working on a proposal to demolish the oldest part of our parish complex and build a new educational/social space. We hope for a parish vote on this project this fall. We are also bringing Sister Vassa (Larin) for a visit to our parish on Saturday, October 28 for a presentation on her book "Praying in Time" with a book signing.

St. Matthew – Green Bay, WI

Priest John Thetford

We continue to see a steady stream of new people, and have seen pretty good attendance this summer. We continue making many small improvements both to the building as well as with the educational programs, e.g., we started a new section of Sunday School this year, and have a new curriculum for all levels. Regarding growth, in every aspect of the term, the challenge seems to be not "getting people in the doors" or "getting them to come to services", but to come to a place where they feel that they are members of the community. How do we move from the attitude of "coming to Church to get what I need as an individual" to "I am a member of the 'we' of the Body of Christ in this parish"?

St. Nicholas – Kenosha, WI

Priest Joseph Whittaker

Things are going well at St Nicholas. We have four new catechumens and a steady stream of inquirers. This was a trend that was already happening while Fr Tom Mueller was filling in at the parish, and thank God, the trend is continuing. Overall, there is a general optimism and excitement in the Parish right now.

Christ the Savior – Chicago

Priest John Kennerk

Fr. John has been at CtS for 6 months now. There has been substantial work done on the rectory in anticipation of our move. The faithful have been welcoming and patient with our transition. There are no major announcements at this time, but I do welcome everyone to consider attending our parish pig roast and square dance in Marengo on Sept 30.

St. George Cathedral – Chicago

Priest Nikolai Lochmatow

Sunday attendance has roughly doubled, from 15-20 last year to an average 35-40 currently. We have also been serving Vigil and Liturgy for the major feasts, as well as an akathist to our patron saint on most Thursday evenings. We are currently in the middle of a fundraiser to repair the sinking front steps. Parishioners are donating for twenty new icon medallions, focusing on the saints of North America, the price of which will simultaneously cover the cost of the masonry repair work.

St. Nicholas – Joliet, IL

Archpriest Mykola Bodnarchuk

7 Baptisms, 3 Chrismations, 2 weddings and 2 funerals (non-parishioners) have taken place over the last year. Missions and community outreach activity has included: Missions and Community Outreach: Sponsored 115 meals for Thanksgiving for homeless people in Joliet; a Youth gathering with 20+ participants; a backpack blessing; car blessings in July; Children's St. Nicholas Day performance and money raised from parish feast day being donated to a nonprofit, Team Nicholas, in Joliet. Maintenance and improvements include: Missions and Community Outreach: Power washing the church and sidewalks; painting of the church cupola and creation of a new music book for Divine Liturgy.

St. Nicholas – McHenry, IL

Mitered Archpriest Volodymyr Kovalchuk

Our parish was founded on April 23, 2023. The parish is in honor of Saint Nicholas in the city of McHenry. The parish consists of 99% Ukrainian emigrants. According to the agreement of His Beatitude Onuphrius and His Beatitude Tikhon and with the blessing of Archbishop Daniel, our parish is called the Ukrainian Orthodox parish within the Orthodox Church of America, where we are under the omophorion of Archbishop Daniel. The first visit of Archbishop Daniil took place on April 23, where the Bishop brought antimins and holy myrrh, and the Divine Liturgy was performed. Bishop Daniil's second visit took place on July 30. We have evening services and liturgies every Sunday and major holidays. There is a Sunday school. The parishioners are approximately 40-50 adults and 15-20 children. Every Sunday we read the akathist before the Divine Liturgy, there are twenty who read the psalter every day. We have already adopted the church charter and handed it over to Archbishop Daniel for his blessing. The building in which the church is located is private property, we are negotiating how to buy it for the church.

Archpriest Thomas Mueller – Various Ministries

While still assigned to SS Cyril & Methodius in Milwaukee, I am only present there on occasional Sundays. I have several outreach ministries and temporary assignments that I fulfill on Sundays and many feast days. Since 2021, I have served Liturgy twice a month for chapel communities in Waukesha just west of Milwaukee (county seat of Waukesha County, co. pop. 400,000), and Plymouth, a small city in Sheboygan County, 50 miles north of Milwaukee. These chapels are outreach ministries of SS Cyril & Methodius, servicing people associated with the parish who have not attended regularly due to distance, job, or transportation issues. We reach out to the larger communities in which we have these chapels; but starting them in 2021 during Covid has made for slow progress in attracting new people. I

also served as administrator at St Nicholas, Kenosha, basically a half-time, fully engaged part time pastorate from June, 2022 to May 2023. There were 6 adult baptisms or chrismations and 2 infant baptisms during that time. This was a peaceful, harmonious time at St Nicholas.

Holy Theophany Orthodox Church (Mission), Walworth, WI

Priest John D. Jones – Priest-in-charge

We have experienced an increased growth in interest in our community and the Orthodox Faith this year. In addition to the baptism of a parishioner's child, we have had one adult reception with conversion. It is very likely that within the next few months, we will have about six more, including a family of 4, and one adult baptism. We are also attracting younger members to our community (20s-mid 50s). The community, thankfully, very much identifies with Chrysostom's description of the church as a spiritual hospital.

Ss. Cyril and Methodius - Milwaukee, WI

Archpriest Elijah Mueller

No baptisms or weddings this year. 4 catechumens. We are furthering campus ministry with Marquette, MSOE, and soon to open up at UWM. We have opened the rectory to house university students, at present mostly from Marquette, including a theology doctoral student. We continue to improve liturgical arts, around music in particular. We have started hopefully to institute regular monastery pilgrimages to both St Gregory Palamas in Ohio and an unexpected call to a new skete, All Saints of Mt Athos in Hanover, IL, to participate in the blessing of their grounds.

St. Luke – Palos Hills, IL

Archpriest Paul Jannakos

- 1) Completed a five-year projected Strategic Plan for the parish that identified 16 action items related to its own internal family life (education, youth, elderly, etc.) and 10 action items related to how the parish will engage with the community at large (philanthropy, etc.).
- 2) Conducted a Motions in Ministry workshop on Sunday, September 10th in order to help all members of the parish invest in the life of the parish - with over 80 ministries/responsibilities.
- 3) Sent 5 mission and charity teams so far for 2023 for IOCC and YOCAMA.

St. Peter and St. Paul – Burr Ridge, IL

Archpriest Herman Kincaid

Our parish is seeing an increase in catechumens and inquirers. We continue to install iconography to adore the walls of our parish. We are actively researching ways to reach out and serve the surrounding community of Burr Ridge. These include meetings with community organizations and the local government.

St. Panteleimon – Summit Argo, IL

Priest Esteban Vázquez

We are celebrating our 85th anniversary in 2023 with Archbishop Daniel's first archpastoral visit and a banquet. Over the past year, we have made several improvements to the church & rectory. We continue our ministry as a Eucharistic community through the faithfulness and stewardship of our people, while closely collaborating with our sister parish in Burr Ridge to do joint festal services and adult education.

Respectfully submitted,

Archpriest Alexander Kuchta, Chicago Dean