

**Report on the Chicago Deanery
for the Annual Diocesan Assembly in Mogadore, OH, October 7-9, 2024**

1. The Chicago Deanery is composed of 23 communities: 16 parishes, 2 Missions, and 5 chapels.
2. Missionary work in our Deanery includes the efforts being made by Fr. Tom Mueller with two Chapel outreach efforts in Waukesha and Plymouth, WI. Both are based out of Ss. Cyril and Methodius Parish in Milwaukee. The patroness of the chapels is St. Mother Maria (Skobtsova) of Paris; and
3. Fr. John Thetford and St. Matthew Parish in Green bay have established a chapel in Waupaca. Deacon led Vespers and Typicas are being done one weekend a month along with a Saturday Divine Liturgy every two months.
4. Fr. Tom Mueller and Protodeacon George Potym directed the Deanery Winter and Summer Youth camps on February 17-19 and June 29-July 2 with help from lay counselors Helen Metanchuk and Pat Labun. The camps were well attended and featured a variety of activities including: Archery, cross-country skiing, team building exercised and an amateur show with religious education and worship. Youth attending these camps are forming friendships which help them to experience Orthodoxy across parish boundaries.
5. The Deanery celebrated Sunday evening Lenten Vespers on the Sundays of Great Lent, starting on the Sunday of St. Gregory Palamas. We also celebrated the first bridegroom service of Holy Week on Palm Sunday evening at Holy Trinity Cathedral in Chicago. Archbishop Daniel presided at the service and spoke. Participation of clergy was good and services were well attended. Homilies were based on St. John Climacus' Ladder of Divine Ascent.
6. A Paschal Deanery Clergy family gathering took place on Sunday, June 9th at St. Joseph Church. The dinner was catered and St. Joseph parish was our generous host. Priest families were asked to bring a side dish or dessert.
7. Fr. Daniel Greeson has been assigned as the new rector of St. Peter and St. Paul Parish in Burr Ridge, IL taking the place of our new full-time chancellor, Fr. Herman Kincaid.
8. We express our condolences to Matushka Alexandra Fedec and the family of Archpriest Alexis Fedec. Fr. Alexis, pastor Emeritus of St. Nicholas Church in Kenosha, WI, fell asleep in the Lord on July 14 at age 86 after a brief illness. Because of a scheduling conflict that prevented Archbishop Daniel from presiding at services, the Dean and other clergy led them. Visitation and the Funeral for a Priest took place at St. Nicholas on Friday, July 19. Divine Liturgy took place the next day. Interment took place at St. Tikhon Monastery Cemetery on Friday, August 9th. May Fr. Alexis' memory be eternal!

Respectfully submitted,
Archpriest Alexander Kuchta, Chicago Dean

Reports of parish rectors/ priests in charge follow :

St. Makarios – Hyde Park, IL

Fr. Philip Maikkula reports that St. Makarios Mission continues our work on the Chicago's Southside and at the University of Chicago. This year saw the design and construction of a new portable iconostasis along with the commissioning of some new icons. We have had two weddings so far this year with a third expected in December as well as several baptisms, which suggests our small mission is slowly growing. We have expanded our physical footprint by adding a new Sunday School room and bathroom. We have also been working to support our music ministry by forming a new Director of Music position which comes with a small stipend.

St. Matthew Orthodox Church - Green Bay, WI:

Fr. John Thetford reported that St. Matthew parish is more regularly sponsoring meals at local shelters, and more engaged with other local organizations in other ways. We also are finishing our nave's iconography this October, a project which has spanned many years and phases. Finally, we are remodeling the second floor of our hall to create overflow seating for coffee fellowship as this has become an urgent need recently. Things are very positive overall!

St. Macrina the Younger Chapel - Waupaca, WI:

Is a chapel of St. Matthew. They continue with regular Deacon-led Vespers and Typica one weekend a month, and Divine Liturgy once every two months on a Saturday. This year a few Holy Week services were held as well. While still being a small rural community, some growth is happening. We had our first baptism in July 2024 and also have some new inquirers.

St. Nicholas of Myra - McHenry, IL

Fr. Volodymyr Kovalchuk reports that over the past year Saint Nicholas of Myra Orthodox Church in McHenry, Illinois has continued to serve the Ukrainian diaspora in the Chicago area by providing a spiritual refuge for them in a familiar cultural context. As a result, many young families and others continue to come to our services and participate in the life of the parish. We performed one wedding and six baptisms. Our choir is developing its skills. We have beautified our narthex, nave, and sanctuary with additional icons, handmade furniture, and chandeliers. We added a public address system allowing services can be heard in our refectory, and we are planning to install a simple permanent zvonitsa near our entryway for church bells. Administratively our by-laws were approved, we received our EIN, and applied for Father Volodymyr's green card; our finances have been stable.

Christ the Savior - Chicago, IL

Fr. John Kennerk reported that Archbishop Daniel visited us on our patronal feast day of the Holy Mandyllion. We hosted the miracle-working icon of St. Anna. We hosted a men's retreat and parish Pig Roast and Square Dance. We're engaged in an extensive research project to understand our usage of parish grounds, culminating in a master plan for grounds improvements. We're continuing to grow our Catechesis of the Good Shepherd program by encouraging our catechists to gain more training. We have had a regular flow of inquirers and visitors, which have led to multiple baptisms and chrismations.

St Joseph - Wheaton, IL

Fr. John Segvich reports that Fr Joseph Kopka underwent a third serious spinal surgery late this summer and remains on a medical leave of absence until year-end. Associate Priest Fr John Segvich was appointed Priest-in-Charge in July 2024. The parish celebrated its 35th anniversary this fall with a pig roast. Notably, we continue to attract 20-40 year olds. Attendance at Saturday Vespers has grown and often exceeds 30 parishioners and guests. Community outreach via food and clothing drives, assisting at the local food pantry, and providing funds to various organizations remains a priority. We are blessed with a mix of about 10 inquirers and catechumens at various stages of faith formation.

St. Nicholas – Joliet, IL

Fr. Mykola Bodnarchuk reported that 8 Baptisms, 2 Chrismations, 1 reception into the Church and 1 funeral took place during the past year.

Missions and Community Outreach included:

Fund raising to sponsor Thanksgiving Day Meals at Morning Star Mission in Joliet;

A youth gathering with over 20 participants; A Backpack Blessing event; Prophet Elijah Car Blessing in July; Children's St. Nicholas Day performance; Donation of proceeds from the parish feast day to a local nonprofit, Team Nicholas, in Joliet; a Movie Night for the community; a Bible Study Class; Award of an Annual Scholarship to High School Graduates; Distribution of homemade Christmas cookies to the homeless.

Maintenance and Improvement projects included:

Launch of a new parish website; Parish children planting pussy willow bushes; Church and Cemetery Grounds Clean-up; and painting of the interior walls of the church.

Holy Apostles - Bloomington-Normal, Illinois

Fr. David Gresham reports that in January we had 16 catechumens, most of whom were brought into the Church by Lazarus Saturday. Since Pascha we already have 9 catechumens again and another 5 or 6 serious inquirers. Sunday attendance has increased significantly to an average of 72, including children. Tons of children under 7 years old. We've begun renovating our formerly-Jehovah's-Witness space. Current stage: replace nave carpeting with faux wood laminate and paint walls. Next stages: change and augment altar area including a new iconostasis, adjust lighting, and add onto the building for fellowship space and classrooms. Began an OCF chapter at Illinois State University that seems to be working currently with 8 members (finally! After several attempts over the years to get one started.).

St. Elizabeth the New Martyr Orthodox Church - Chesterton, Indiana

At St. Elizabeth's, our first and most important task continues to be prayer, 'on behalf of all and for all.' This past year we have continued our humble effort to cultivate and bear witness to the sanctifying culture of the Church. In addition to offering services 5-6 days a week, there has been church school for children, catechism for adults, book study groups, and noted guests at the parish. We completed the first phase in a major landscaping project, which included planting trees, bushes, and flowers. We also built the first section of a footpath around the church building. During the Nativity Fast we received converts. In the spring, an air-conditioning system was installed - to the rejoicing of all. Thanks be to God, the past year has seen increased participation in confession and increased financial stability for the parish. Record-breaking attendance was seen throughout Great Lent and Holy Pascha. By the grace of God, we continue to receive donations for much-needed building improvements and renovations. In September and October we plan to demolish and rebuild our long-neglected wheelchair ramp. In the area of beautification, we have solicited plans for the next phase of iconography, which will adorn the apse.

Saints Cyril and Methodius - Milwaukee, WI

Fr. Elijah Mueller reports that the parish has partnered with a new OCA monastery in Hanover to assist with their needs. We have also begun exploring setting up a fourth parish chapel community with good mission potential in Janesville, WI. Initial services were well-attended. There are many catechumens and a great deal of continuing ed for all in the Milwaukee community. We are beginning some work on the building, starting with the hall and hoping eventually to make many improvements in the temple. We are only 3 years away from our 100th anniversary of our founding and 5 years away from the 100th anniversary in the present building.

St Maria of Paris Chapels Ministry - Waukesha & Plymouth, WI - Outreach of SS Cyril & Methodius, MIKE

Three years ago, Fr. Thomas Mueller established a chapels ministry serving two chapels in areas west and north of Milwaukee: Holy Nativity in Waukesha and St Maria of Paris in Plymouth. Waukesha is a city of 75,000 in a county of 400,000. Plymouth is a town of 10,000 an hour north of Milwaukee. Both

chapels meet in downtown Episcopal churches. They share a common pastorate and treasury. People of both chapels receive a monthly Messenger with teaching, schedule, and financial report. We are restoring and updating our chapels web site. We are blessed to have a well-managed and up to date Facebook page. We met recently to implement a better effort to get the word out.

Holy Nativity in Waukesha has added 6 new members this year, three of them received by chrismation. We have had 2 Liturgies per month, but we hope to move to three Sunday services monthly, perhaps one a Typica if necessary. This liturgical consistency is essential for growth.

St Maria of Paris in Plymouth, remains the small nucleus with which we started. But this chapel exists to provide needed services and pastoral care for this flock, to whom I am personally committed. We hope to have a small conference next May on the life and writings of St Maria of Paris.

If anyone knows of Orthodox or seekers at large in Waukesha County or Milwaukee's western suburbs or north of Milwaukee, tell them about us, please - Fr Tom Mueller, 1309 N 42 St Milwaukee WI 53208, (414) 861-5801

St. Herman of Alaska Chapel – West Bend, WI

Fr. Gregory Madlom reports that the chapel has expanded and is now leasing the entire lower level of their building. The last year and a half there has been a great deal of interest in Orthodoxy. Last year we baptized a family of five; this year five Baptisms and two Chrismations. In addition, we have had five more taking classes at this time. Being scattered over a distance, gathering is difficult. But have noticed is the desire to be together. After Liturgy, the faithful will often visit for an hour and often more.

Holy Resurrection – Palatine, IL

We continue to receive people who have expressed an interest in the Orthodox Christian faith. Classes for catechumens have been functioning on an almost year-round basis for many years. Our latest challenge involves the demolition of the oldest part of our parish complex and construction of a new building with new space for classrooms, kitchen, and restrooms, with additional space for social activities. Fundraising has been very successful with parishioners donating nearly \$500k. As anyone who does a project like this knows these projects always take longer and cost more. We hope to obtain permits for demolition and construction soon. We know that there will be some disruption to regular parish life as we begin this work, but we are all very excited as we take this next step in parish development.

Saint Peter and Saint Paul Orthodox Church - Burr Ridge, IL

This has been a year of transition for Saint Peter and Saint Paul. At the end of June Fr Herman Kincaid was relieved of his duties at Saint Peter and Saint Paul and beginning in July was appointed by Archbishop Daniel as the chancellor of the Diocese. The patronal feast was a splendid celebration presided over by Archbishop Daniel. In attendance were many local clergy and the new incoming rector, Fr Daniel Greeson, as well as faithful from the parish as well as neighboring churches. The new rector was installed at the beginning of August. The Greeson family has been warmly received by the parish and gives thanks to God for a smooth transition. Catechism classes will begin in September following coffee hour on Sundays. In October following Wednesday daily vespers an adult continuing education class will begin in conjunction with Fr Esteban from St. Panteleimon. Saint Peter and Saint Paul will be working to increase weekday services and other educational events with local OCA parishes this fall.

Holy Theophany Mission – Walworth (Williams Bay), WI

Fr. John Jones says that the mission is continuing to modestly grow. Our attendance at Sunday liturgy now averages between 35-40. We had 1 baptism, 6 receptions, and 1 marriage. We are slowly developing a younger population in our parish (20s-50s). We are slowly increasing Parish Outreach

programs. We received a several thousand dollars from the Renaissance Fund in Chicago which has helped us to make people aware of our presence in the area through promos on the local radio station—the only effective way to reach people in our semi-rural area. The Website has had a major overhaul. The community, thankfully, very much identifies with Chrysostom's description of the church as a spiritual hospital.

St. Nicholas – Kenosha, WI

St Nicholas is continuing on a positive trajectory. We have a new cohort of catechumens, a group of regular inquirers, and new visitors just about every weekend. We have also seen the return of a number of parishioners who had previously removed themselves from the parish community. Most encouraging has been the increase of young families and children that are now invested in the life of the parish. This has prompted the launch of High School religious education classes, and we are working towards establishing Sunday school classes for the younger children. On a more somber note, the parish recently mourned the passing of long-time Rector of St Nicholas, Fr Alexis Fedec. He faithfully served our community for 30 years. The memory of his life and service will continue to bless all of those who knew him.

St Panteleimon Orthodox Church - Summit Argo, IL

With thanksgiving to God, St Panteleimon Church celebrated its 85th anniversary on Sunday, 24 September 2023, in the presence of the Chicago-Tikhvin Icon of the Mother of God (whose revered wonderworking original was once kept at our parish). Our Father and Archbishop Daniel presided at the divine services, and an unforgettable gathering of area clergy, parishioners, and many friends old and new took place at a local banquet hall. Since then, St Panteleimon Church has continued to operate chiefly as a Sunday morning Eucharistic community for our small commuter congregation, with other liturgical and educational ministries planned collaboratively with nearby SS. Peter & Paul Church in Burr Ridge. Taking advantage of the proximity of our liturgical spaces, we are presently working to palpably increase the regular cycle of services in our geographical area through shared planning and resources. The goal is to create increased possibilities for a meaningful, regular liturgical life outside of Sundays and Great Feasts in our Southwest Chicago region.

Protection of the Virgin Mary – Merrillville, IN

Since last summer, PTVM has seen a dramatic increase in inquirers and catechumens. We seem to have first time visitors almost every week. We added a monthly Saturday class for catechumens in addition to our ongoing Monday evening Bible Study and twice-monthly weekday Faith Enrichment sessions. Going into this school year, we have expanded our Church school from three classrooms to four to accommodate a steady increase in the number of children over the last couple of years. We also added new full-wall fresco icons in our nave of Christ the True Vine, the Tree of Jesse, Theophany, and Transfiguration.

St. George Cathedral – Chicago, IL

Fr. Nikolai Lochmatow reported: In 2023, we initialized a campaign to restore our sinking front steps. To raise the necessary funds, our parishioners donated for the purchase of twenty-two new icon medallions, choosing saints that are particularly meaningful to Orthodoxy in North America, or to their own families. The icons were painted by the renown iconographer Father Theodore Jurewicz and his son, John Jurewicz (who painted the icons at Christ the Savior on LaSalle and New Gracanica Monastery). John is installing the icons on the two main transverse arches which support the roof of the cathedral, and surrounding them with a beautiful traditional ornament. The rear arch, closest to the choir loft, is already completed. God willing, the front arch, near the Altar, will be done in October. With

the proceeds, the front steps and concrete pad leading to the elevator were restored. We plan a commemorative book detailing the project to be released in 2025, concurrent with the 110th anniversary of the parish.

In 2024, we were greatly honored to receive the Most Holy Mother of God in Her Chicago-Tikhvin Icon. Our cathedral served as the culmination point of the Cross Procession from Holy Trinity Cathedral through the streets of Chicago to Saint George, where His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon, along with his brother hierarchs and clergy, served a moleben and enjoyed a festive reception in our parish hall. Our parishioners were delighted to join over two hundred faithful venerating this holy icon in its first visit to Saint George!

Our parish membership is growing, thanks largely due to the current influx of Ukrainian and other Eastern European immigrants. For this reason, we are blessed by His Eminence, our Archbishop Daniel, to observe the feast days according to the Julian calendar, and to use the Church Slavonic language in our services. Our members have Russian, Ukrainian, Belarussian, Serbian, Bulgarian, Polish and Georgian heritage, in addition to local Americans who are drawn to the truth and beauty of the Orthodox faith.

St. Luke – Palos Hills

This year here was one of many blessings. First and foremost, and by God's grace, we celebrated our 40th anniversary of the parish. His Eminence, Archbishop Daniel joined us for the weekend, and along with a beautiful video that was presented at the banquet, 10 of the parishioners who founded the parish were honored for their service and sacrifice. In addition to this, Mrs. Aristeia Zekios was gifted by Archbishop Daniel with a Synodal Gramмота for having 64 years of teaching religious education.

Along with our children's education, Fr Paul Jannakos conducts weekly adult education classes that are well received not only within the community but online as well. With Mr. Rick Wolf as an assistant, Fr. Paul spent the previous 18 months on an in depth study of the book of the Acts of the Holy Apostles. Fr. Paul is now planning for the fall months of 2024 adult education by a series called "21st Century Orthodoxy: Always Relevant, Always the Same." Topics for these weekly classes will include, "Who is Jesus, What was His message, and Why does it matter?", "What makes Holy Tradition "Holy," "Who wrote the Bible and How to make sense of it," "Why does God allow suffering?", "What does the Church teach about salvation?", "Is the Orthodox Church misogynistic?", among many other topics.

St. Luke is also working forward with its Strategic Plan (adopted in 2023) which is helping to pave the way forward for our community during the next 4 years. Included in this is our commitment to continue supporting Orthodox educational and charitable programs (both local and international) from our St. Luke Endowment Fund. (Monies that the parish receives from the leasing of two cell towers on its property is devoted to the Endowment Fund).

This summer St. Luke also sent parishioners to serve in the YOCAMA program on the Navajo Native American Reservation in New Mexico and another mission group of young adults to Accra, Ghana, in order to assist the Ghanaian Orthodox Church with its annual summer camp (with over 300 children present!).

We are grateful to God for His many mercies.

St. John of Chicago Chapel – New Lenox, IL

Statistics: Number of attenders listed: 27 Average attendance on Sunday: 18 to 24 Baptisms: 7
Catechumens: 3

Services are held in an Old Historical Church owned and under renovation by the New Lenox Historical Association. Rent \$900 per month covered by St. Luke Outreach fund

We celebrate Sunday Matins & Liturgy and some feast days. Weekday Matins celebrated on Wednesdays, (When the chanter is able) Complete Paschal cycle, House blessings, Grave blessings, Common confession 5 times a year, Typica service when Fr. Andrew is travelling. Great blessing of Water January 6 and lesser blessing on August 1

Once a month we join in fellowship at a local restaurant. 6 people traveled to Streator IL in July to bless the graves of the former Three Hierarchs Parish (St. John's Birthday July 13), Hosted meetings of the New Lenox Clergy Association, and the Chicago Deanery. Support the Indiana State Prison ministry.

Charitable activities include a Fund raiser along with St. Luke to purchase shopping carts for the Navajo Reservation food pantry. 20 carts were purchased and delivered in May

Missionary activities included 4 persons going on a Mission trip in July to the Navajo Reservation under the auspices of YOCAMA, Hosted OCMC missionary Floyd Franz.

Our outreach efforts include a weekly newsletter send out by email every Saturday with the previous week's Sunday sermon attached. We maintain a Facebook page and website. Pamphlets and Sunday bulletins are displayed on the front door of the building. Online interactive Bible Study on Zoom every Thursday for one hour studying St. John's Gospel

We need: Choir singers and chanters. We have one chanter who does matins when he can. We have two ladies leading congregational singing. We had three, one moved. We could use air conditioning. A Church school program. We have 7 children. Using children sermons to meet the need now.

Holy Trinity Cathedral – Chicago

Holy Trinity Cathedral has a robust liturgical life and is active in ministry. Over the past year we have hosted the National OCA Clergy Retreat, the Fall Session for the Holy Synod, and most recently the 20th Anniversary of the Return of the Tikhvin Icon. We continue to serve the needs of others with a warm meal and other resources every Saturday throughout the year. We continue to serve as a community center for five twelve step programs and for other neighborhood meetings. The Cathedral community continues to preserve, restore, and upgrade the holy and historical site.