



The Cleveland Deanery

Orthodox Church in America - Diocese of the Midwest

V. Rev. Nicholas Wyslutsky, Dean

Phone: (330) 608-2092 Email: clevelanddeanery@gmail.com

Report to the Diocesan Assembly October 2024

Glory to Jesus Christ. As we prepare for our upcoming assembly there is much to be thankful for in the Cleveland Deanery. 17 parishes some older some newer each with its own set of accomplishments and struggles. A thriving campus mission community serving both the college students as well as providing an Orthodox experience for the people of the community. The deanery is composed of seasoned older clergy as well as those new to ministry in the Church as well as a number of retired clergy forming a balance of approaches and opinions helping all to continue to grow and thrive.

Our deanery Clergy meet quarterly to discuss parish life and other challenges faced by ourselves and our faithful. We continue the tradition of a Lenten mission service the 3rd Sunday of Great Lent and those who can attend the Sacrament of Holy Unction on the 5th Sunday. A tradition is growing to gather together for the Altar Feasts of each parish and bring together the faithful more as a deanery family. This past year two of our Clergy Wives Matushka Michele Tomas, and Matushka Elizabeth Wyslutsky have put together a Deanery Clergy wives group meeting several times both in person and virtually. We look forward to their group growing and creating a strong bond for our clergy wives to share and grow in their ministry.

Sadly, our deanery has experienced the tragic fire the historic St. Theodosius Cathedral. It was a heart wrenching event for the entire deanery. Thankfully Fr. Cizmar together with his parish faithful have risen to the challenge and are striving daily to bring the cathedral back to its former beauty.

We are truly blessed to have such a beautiful assembly of Parishes and faithful. Below are some highlights from our parishes and their work in the Cleveland Deanery.

Archangel Michael Orthodox Church, Broadview Heights, Ohio

Archangel Michael continues to be one of the most active, thriving, and dynamic parishes in the OCA, let alone the Cleveland Deanery. With 400-plus adults and well over 100 children, we have a ministry for every age group and purposely channel those energies into outreach and charity.

We continue to support numerous local and national causes, including our seminaries, IOCC, Zoe House, and St. Herman's House of Hospitality – where we serve at least one meal a month in rotation with the other Orthodox Churches in our area.

This year, we added a new parish ministry: "The Solos." Made up of widows and widowers, this group is designed to meet the needs of those who have lost spouses, giving them an opportunity to meet, share their feelings with like-minded individuals, promote healing in a Christian context, and to participate in social activities such as going out to eat or to a show.

Our parish will again play host for the annual IOCC Banquet and the IOCC Wine Tasting Dinner, and His Eminence, Archbishop Michael will be our guest speaker at the annual Fr. Prislopsky Memorial Dinner Lecture. His topic will be, "The Road to Nicaea: Factors Leading to the Convening of the First Ecumenical Council."

Perhaps the biggest event during this past year occurred over March 8-10, as our parishioner, Rd. Michael Herzak stepped down as Chairman of St. Tikhon's Seminary and was honored with a banquet at our facilities. Four hierarchs, along with noted clergy and dignitaries, attended this weekend event and concelebrated liturgy on Sunday, including His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon; Their Eminences, Archbishops Daniel and Michael; and His Grace, Bishop Irinej.

In addition, as the Priest-in-Charge of St. Vladimir's Chapel and Camp, we had three well attended weeks with well over 150 children participating, but an outbreak of stomach flu during the third week caused me to call and cancel Archbishop Daniel's impending visit that week. Still many thanks to the Camp's directors, Protodeacon Daniel and Mat. Catrina Kovalak, and the dedicated counselors and staff for their continued dedication and commitment to the youth of our Church.

Holy Assumption, Canton, Ohio

Holy Assumption, Canton has enjoyed a year with many blessings. Our demographic leans younger, and we were blessed with 6 weddings in the last 12 months. The joy of these has been the prevailing atmosphere in our community. Fr. Aaron has been the priest for almost a year and a half and the Parish has also resumed many fellowship activities especially created for men and women groups which had been stalled since the pandemic. The Faithful have responded enthusiastically to opportunities to get together outside of the Liturgy. Our Liturgical life has been rich, with growing efforts to have Vigils for Great Feasts and Sunday Matins occasionally. Many newcomers continue to visit the Parish, with both Orthodox Christians moving to town and joining our community and non-Orthodox inquirers seeking to join us as Catechumens.

St. Theodosius Cathedral, Cleveland, Ohio

Last year Great Lent classes were given by Paul Finley. Fr. Jan had other lenten catechesis in Dormition and Nativity Fast. We held a number of parish activities, including a wine tasting, a picnic, a luncheon at the church for larger feasts, etc.

On Memorial Day, we remembered our veterans at our cemetery as always. We prayed panichida, and I'm glad we have a new veteran legion that continues to accompany our services.

In September, we honored the feast of St. Theodosius, our holy father, and welcomed His Eminence Archbishop Daniel.

More than eighty residents of the Tremont area toured St. Theodosius Cathedral as part of the Tremont Historical Tour. We frequently conduct numerous church tours for a variety of groups, including residents of nursing homes and high school students. Other events that took place at the Cathedral included services, celebrations of all church feasts, Kiev Chant classes, a Christmas cookie walk, St. Herman's House luncheon ministry, and book study.

St. Gregory of Nyssa Orthodox Church, Columbus, Ohio

In the summer of 2024, St. Gregory of Nyssa's Outreach program that supports the parish's neighbors in need with food, clothing, and toiletries received a \$5,000 grant from the Gordon-Flesch company through its program to support organizations that help their local communities.

The parish's Scholarship committee and Charities ministry continue providing multiple scholarships for college students as well as support for students attending both St. Tikhon's and St. Vladimir's seminaries.

St. Gregory's continues to have a steady of influx of inquirers with a number of those being eventually received into the Church.

The parish council is continuing to assess plans to help make the parish more handicap accessible as well as provide a narthex to the parish building.

St. Nicholas, Mentor, Ohio

This year has been a transitional year. On December 31, 2023, Archpriest Andrew Clements retired after decades of active ministry. I began my appointment as rector on January 1, 2024.

Liturgy. The parish has an active liturgical life. After Theophany I made forty-one visitations to bless homes. During the Fast we kept evening and morning services on a regular basis. During Holy Week we offered services at least twice each day. Major feasts of vigil-rank are observed with two services: Great Vespers with Lity, and Divine Liturgy. Lesser feasts are kept by offering a Moleiben, Akathist, or Divine Liturgy. St Nicholas will offer its first Vigil service for the Feast of the Exaltation on September 14. Average Sunday attendance is 142.

Sacraments. Seven people have been brought into the Church: five infants, and two adults. Three funerals have been served, and one crowning. Almost all parishioners have been to confession since January. Outside of Fasts, confession is offered most Saturdays. During fasts, confession is offered before most evening services and after most morning services. Service. Divine Liturgy has been served at St Herman's House twice. During the Great Fast, parishioners prepared and froze meals for St Herman's. Parishioners have also served dinner there. Another meal preparation is being planned. Also during the Fast, the Church School did a bottle drive during ZOE, and a ramp was built for a parishioner who had been homebound. In August a fundraiser was done for the St Nicholas Uganda Children's Fund. There was a record turn-out.

Education. Almost all services include preaching. Catechetical reflections are included in bulletins for weekly instruction. The Church School met regularly until the beginning of summer. A home school co-op met regularly on Friday mornings until the summer. A class on confession was offered before the Great Fast. For catechumens and all interested parishioners, a weekly adult education was offered starting in February. They have started to resume on a bi-weekly basis. In the summer, a parishioner ran a book club for children and teens. A Vacation Church School was offered in July; the week concluded with a Divine Liturgy. A youth group for children meets periodically. A youth group for teens has been newly formed and is taking shape. The rector and a member of the parish council participated in the Parish Forum.

Various. The office space at St Nicholas has been put back into use. A deep cleaning of the temple was done before Pascha. After Pascha, with the approval of the parish, the parking lot was resurfaced. On August 24, a deep clean-out of the parish was performed. This cleared out much space for use. There is on-going work to beautify the altar of the Church; most items for this have been donated. A complete overhaul of the website has started and continues to be in progress. Many resources have been added. In order to facilitate better organization and communication, sign-ups for parish ministries are gradually being moved online.

St. Nicholas continues to do its best to follow the path set before us by the Lord. Over the past year we have been blessed with 19 new members who have come to the Church. It comes as the blessing for the continued work and prayers of our many faithful.

Celebrating the 106th year of our presence in the Akron area we continue to strive to bring the Church to ourselves and our community. Our blessings in a backpack program continues to feed over 50 school children over the weekends who may not have something to eat without our program. Our Annual health fair provides necessary information to our faithful as well as those in our community.

We are blessed this year to finally bring to completion of our 500 thousand dollar renovation program that provided a new Dome, Roof, Steps and parking lots for our Parish. Thanks to the hard work and generosity of our faithful we can now plan for the other areas that will need attention in the future.

Liturgically we strive to hold as many services as possible Weekend vespers and Liturgies as well as Feast day services accompanied by regular Akathists give us the opportunity to pray and refocus in an ever changing world.. We look forward to another Church School year. Weekly classes and our Book Study provide the entire parish community to learn and grow in the faith.

St. Innocent, Olmsted Falls, Ohio

Over the past year at Saint Innocent Orthodox Church, we hosted His Eminence, Archbishop Daniel, for our Fortieth Anniversary celebration, including a wonderful Hierarchical Liturgy with the ordination of a new reader and a new subdeacon, as well as a lovely banquet. We have continued to grow in numbers, with Orthodox faithful joining us and with the initiation of new children. Great and Holy Saturday saw the initiation of two adults, and we currently have ten catechumens with a few more interested in being enrolled soon. We considered expansion as a parish this year, but voted against making any structural changes at this time. Our seminarian graduated, was ordained, and is now serving as the rector in Saint Cloud, Minnesota.

We continue to have regular free community meals for our neighbors, as well as produce distributions during the warm months. We are regularly working on the beautification of our space, which included a new Cross and Corpus in time for Great & Holy Week. We are continuing to pay off a loan for our newly paved parking lot, and have greatly benefited from the generous pledges and donations of our parishioners. We have also fostered a warm relationship with Archangel Michael Cathedral in Sitka, a church built by our Patron Saint. Our parish donated over \$16,000 to their community in support of their ministry and labors for the sake of Orthodox Christianity in Alaska. We maintain a good relationship with our local community,

and blessed emergency vehicles for the Fire Department that serves us. We continue to count our blessings and seek to serve as emissaries of the Kingdom of God.

Holy Trinity, Parma, OH

In November 2023, our parish reached its 60th anniversary. Our main celebration came this year at Pentecost with full services for the feast, a meal together, and also Liturgy on Monday of the Holy Spirit followed by a potluck in our pavilion. We also have made a photo directory to mark our anniversary. Other community events include: Potluck for the Feast of St Nicholas, Outdoor blessing of waters at the Cuyahoga River and fellowship for the feast of Theophany, Lenten Soup Suppers, a Vehicle Blessing near the feast of the Prophet Elijah, and our annual church picnic.

Our liturgical life and services continue to be blessed, offering vigil and liturgies for major feasts. New Year's day liturgy with Vasilopita, house blessings were offered after Theophany, grave blessings at Memorial Day. We've offered outdoor vespers at Mid-Pentecost and Protection. This year parishioners commissioned a special icon of St Raphael with his relics. We also had our church iconographer come back to paint St Olga of Alaska, St Moses of Ethiopia, and Sts Ia and John of the Chinese Martyrs.

We've sought to support ministries through: annual Meatloaf Luncheon to help St Herman's House, monthly meals for St Herman's, receiving Fr Simon Menya from Uganda and donating to his ministry, summer rummage sale.

We've worked for education of the faithful through: a winter series on the Divine Liturgy, 2024 catechesis with 10 catechumens, regular church school, first confession classes for two boys, a monthly class for teen girls, and refreshing our church library. This year we received 2 adult catechumens into the church and had 3 infant baptisms.

Respectfully Submitted

V. Rev. Nicholas Wylitsky