

Kansas City Deanery Report to the Diocesan Assembly October 7-9, 2024

Priests

1. Fr. Timothy Sawchak, Holy Trinity—Overland Park, KS
2. Fr. Christopher Rowe, Holy Trinity—Overland Park, KS
3. Fr. James Dank, St John of Kronstadt—Lincoln, NE
4. Fr. Michael Kuzara, Joy of All Who Sorrow—Joplin, MO
5. Fr. Basil Ferguson, St. Thomas Church—Springfield, MO
6. Fr. Joel Wilson, Annunciation—St. James, MO
7. Fr. Ephraim Tauck, Theotokos “Unexpected Joy”—Ash Grove, MO
8. Fr. Nicholas Finley, Nativity of the Virgin Mary—Madison, IL
9. Fr. Matthew McDonald, Archangel Michael—St. Louis, MO
10. Fr. Michael Medis, St. Nicholas—Lawrence, KS
11. Fr. Justin Mathews, Holy Trinity—Overland Park, KS
12. Fr. Anthony Roeber, Archangel Michael—St. Louis, MO

Deacons

1. Hierodeacon Theodore (Niklasson)
2. Deacon Brent Beasley, Holy Trinity—Overland Park, KS
3. Deacon James Mullin, Theotokos “Unexpected Joy”—Ash Grove, MO
4. Deacon John Eller, Annunciation—St. James, MO
5. Deacon Justin Hickman, St. Raphael—Quincy, IL

Retired Clergy

1. Fr. Peter Bodnar
2. Fr. John Pawelchak
3. Fr. John Zabinko
4. Fr. Christopher Philips

+Fr. Moses Berry fell asleep in the Lord on January 12, 2024. Archbishop Daniel presided at the funeral services in Ash Grove, MO on January 15-16. May his memory be eternal!

Parish Highlights in 2024

- Theotokos “Unexpected Joy”—Ash Grove, MO (Fr. Ephraim Tauck, Dn. James Mullin)
 - St. Symeon's School for Children has really taken off, with 19 children coming (that's good for around here!).
 - Attendance is climbing steadily, which is good, but more so, there seems to be a new zeal in the Church. Evening services are well attended. Many of the people are starting engage with the *praxis* of the Church in a way that they never have before, and there is some really beautiful fruit because of it. Many are tasting the sweetness of repentance. The quantity is up, but more importantly, so is the quality!
 - We are finally forming a choir of sorts! There is even talk of weekly practice!
 - We received 22 devout souls into our number during Holy Week, with a miraculous 23rd on Holy Thursday. The 23rd, baby Sylvester, was born at 22 weeks, weighing less than a pound. He was baptized *in extremis* with some holy water from St. Nektarios. St.

Nektarios brought him through his 8% survival chances, and he is well and fine now, with several miraculous recoveries from different surgeries.

- **Annunciation—St. James, MO (Fr. Joel Wilson)**
 - We held a fall retreat with Andrew Gould in October, 2023 discussing beauty and culture, and had a wonderful turnout.
 - By God’s grace, Subdeacon John was ordained to the Holy Diaconate on December 3, 2023 by Archbishop Daniel.
 - In the beginning of 2024, we began a video series depicting life of the Annunciation community to share with the public.
 - We held our second Family Camp in Saint James at the end of May, 2024, with families coming from Missouri, Arkansas, and Ohio.
 - After a year of negotiations, and with the blessing of Archbishop Daniel, we purchased 15 acres of land for the church next door on July 3, 2024. We put in a 1/4 mile driveway in August, and raised an additional \$100k in three weeks to be able to fund our new building. (We are hoping to have our new building constructed and ready to use for worship and social space done by March 1, 2025.)
- **Nativity of the Virgin Mary—Madison, IL (Fr. Nicholas Finley)**
 - Commissioning of 2 new icons for the “local level” to be hung on the north and south walls at the back of the Church – St. Mary of Egypt, and St. John the Russian
 - Tuckpointing needs addressed – work complete prior to Pascha 2024
 - New digital microphone installed for sound system to enhance livestream capability – to date has been a good addition to our livestream suite.
 - Brian Prince – Parish Council member has been developing strategies to enhance our findability on the world wide web.
 - Parish Council has started this spring to discuss relatable aspects of “Reclaiming the Great Commission” by Father Evan Armatas as a way to develop capability to welcome people to our parish and possibly to embrace the Orthodox Faith.
- **St. Raphael Mission—Quincy, IL (served by Fr. Germogen Tucker)**
 - 6 new converts received through baptism or chrismation.
 - 7 catechumens scheduled for baptism/chrismation late 2023 early 2024.
 - Building project in full swing with Iconostasis almost complete and plans for kitchen well under way,
 - Justin Hickman was ordained to the Diaconate on Dec. 17, 2023.
- **Protection of the Virgin Mary—Royalton, IL (served by Fr. John Pawelchak)**
- **St. John of Kronstadt—Lincoln, NE (Fr. James Dank)**
- **St. Thomas Church—Springfield, MO (Fr. Basil Ferguson)**
 - We continue to see many visitors with a number of them becoming members ultimately.
 - Archbishop Daniel's visit to the parish in early April of this year was especially important to the parish.
 - Last October we took our first parish pilgrimage to St Tikhon's Monastery for a few days, which was very successful. We will be going to Dormition Monastery in Rives Junction, MI in September.

- We had a small but good group of kids go to camp this year, which they all enjoyed.
- **Joy of All Who Sorrow—Joplin, MO** (Fr. Michael Kuzara)
- **St. Nicholas Church—Lawrence, KS** (Fr. Michael Medis)
 - Liturgically, benefited by Archbishop Daniel’s visit on July 21. He provided help such as tinting of our East side windows for less distractions in worship, along with help with our altar’s Tabernacle.
 - Building and grounds we now have a new liability insurance policy for the building. We have a working bathroom on the grounds.
 - University of Kansas OCF continues to grow with up to 20 students involved.
 - Started a Saturday Catechumen/Seeker’s Class before Vespers two times a month.
 - Upcoming projects include tree trimming, parking additions and a church sign.
- **Holy Trinity Church—Overland Park, KS** (Fr. Timothy Sawchak, Fr. Christopher Rowe, Fr. Justin Mathews, Dn. Brent Beasley, Dn. James Kallail)
 - Archbishop Daniel was with us on December 16-17, 2023. Fr. Christopher Rowe received the Jeweled Cross, Fr. Justin Mathews was made Archpriest, and Justin Hickman (from our parish in Quincy, IL) was ordained to the Holy Diaconate.
 - At a parish meeting in June, it was agreed to pay an architectural firm to produce a Master Plan for expansion of the current building and parking.
 - Archbishop Daniel blessed the new chapel dedicated to St. Maria of Paris at Reconciliation Ministries in Kansas City, MO on July 20, 2024.
 - The parish continues to see a steady stream of new people each week.
- **Archangel Michael Church—St. Louis, MO** (Fr. Matthew McDonald, Fr. Anthony Roeber)
 - The basement remodel should be completed by the time of this Assembly. That project remediated the asbestos in the basement, replaced all plumbing, repaired backflow regulator pit, and installed new commercial flooring.
 - We currently have eight catechumens with an expected five to come in at Christmas. Three by baptism, two by chrismation.
 - We officially have new choir directors. We’ve started to update music, hold weekly choir rehearsals, and prepare to serve vigils for Saturdays and all major feast days.
 - Fr. Matthew was one of four resident priests at the Eastern Orthodox Youth Camp in DeSoto, KS in late July.