

**Report on the Chicago Deanery
for the Annual Diocesan Assembly in Phoenix, AZ, July 14, 2025**

1. The Chicago Deanery is composed of 24 communities: 16 parishes, 3 Missions, and 5 chapels.
2. We presently have 26 priests, 9 retired priests, 15 deacons of which 2 have “transitioned from active liturgical service.”
3. Clergy changes:
 - a. On August 1, 2024, Protodeacon Robert Northrup was released from his attachment to St. Panteleimon parish in Argo/Summit, IL and was attached to St. Joseph parish in Wheaton.
 - b. On January 18, 2025 Deacon Nicholas Denysenko was ordained to the Holy Priesthood and assigned as second priest at Protection of the Virgin parish in Merrillville, IN.
 - c. Deacon David Kenny was released to the OCA’s Bulgarian Episcopate under Archbishop Alexander on December 31, 2024
 - d. At his request Archpriest Joseph Kopka received a blessing to retire effective January 14, 2025
 - e. Archpriest Herman Kincaid was assigned to Holy Trinity Cathedral effective April 8, 2025
 - f. Protodeacon John Coleman in his transition from active service and formerly assigned to St. Joseph parish is now attached effective on May 7, 2025
 - g. Protodeacon Thomas Keith in his transition from active service is now attached to Holy Trinity Cathedral, effective May 7, 2025
4. Holy Dormition Orthodox Mission, comprised of members of the Moldovan Community in greater Chicago has been blessed by Archbishop Daniel to be established. The community, being led by Archpriest Sergiu Prisacaru is very early in the process of establishment.
5. A presentation on Diocesan restructuring and formation of a variety of Diocesan Departments was made by our Vice-Chancellor Fr. Esteban Vasquez. Our Diocesan website is to have a page dedicated to each of the departments.
6. Fr John Segvich and Protinica Michelle Jannakos are trained facilitators for the OCA Office of Pastoral Life's Thriving in Ministry program and are forming peer-learning groups for priests and clergy wives in the Chicago Deanery.
7. Fr. Tom Mueller and Protodeacon George Potym directed the Deanery Winter and Summer Youth camps on February 15-17 and June 28-July 1 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.
8. 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 the theme of the “Eight Tempting Thoughts”
9. A Paschal Deanery Clergy family gathering took place on Sunday, May 18 at St. Peter and Paul Church in Burr Ridge. This was a pot-luck affair. 25 adults and children, representing 8 parishes attended.

Respectfully submitted,
Archpriest Alexander Kuchta, Chicago Dean

Reports of parish rectors/priests in charge follow:

Holy Trinity Cathedral – Chicago – Priest Alexander Koranda

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.

St. Makarios Mission – Hyde Park, IL – Priest Philip Maikkula

Things continue to grow slowly and steadily at St. Makarios Mission. In the last year we had three weddings and three baptisms. We created a stipend to pay our choir director and allow greater focus on musical excellence. We completed further beautification projects including repairing walls and ceilings, painting, and commissioning and installing new iconography. A new bathroom was also repaired for use. We are expecting 5 new babies before the end of 2025 and are facing the challenge of outgrowing our space.

St. Matthew Orthodox Church - Green Bay, WI – Priest John Thetford

Our parish has been doing well numerically, with new record attendances of 160+ at Palm Sunday and then 170+ at Pascha midnight. We received 16 new people during Holy Week and will receive a few more around Pentecost. The increased numbers have also thankfully brought along more income, which we have used for a handful of small projects that we had been needing to do, such as interior painting, new appliances in our kitchen, and a remodel of our upstairs space into an additional hall seating for 50 people plus a new library space. Additionally, we also were able to increase our charitable efforts locally in terms of sponsoring meals at the shelters, and also in terms of financial giving, and look forward to upping that even more in the coming 12 months.

St. Macrina the Younger Chapel - Waupaca, WI – Priest John Thetford

Our outreach in central WI continues to see slow but gradual growth, adding a few new regular attendees in the Lenten-Paschal season, and with a baptism of a catechumen scheduled in late May. After receiving a hierarchical blessing in early 2025 to explore relocating out of Dn. Spyridon Roegner's living room by renting space from an existing church, we continue to take our time looking at options in order to make the best choice (there are a lot of little church buildings in this part of rural Wisconsin).

St. Nicholas of Myra - McHenry, IL – Archpriest Volodymyr Kovalchuk

Over the past year our parish 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 2 weddings, 5 baptisms, 1 reception into Orthodoxy from heresy, and 2 funerals. Our choir continues to develop its skills and has added 1 tenor and 1 bass member. We have helped several people fulfill court-ordered community service obligations. We have beautified our narthex, nave, and sanctuary and altar with additional icons and furnishings from Ukraine. We installed a simple permanent zvonitsa with 3 bells from Ukraine near the entryway of our church. We progressed further on efforts to get Father Volodymyr's green card, and our finances have been improving a little.

Christ the Savior - Chicago, IL – Priest John Kennerk

We have seen a steady stream of inquirers of the past year. Due to the location of our parish, we also regularly host international visitors. This year we've been especially focused on two projects. This first is the formation a master plan for the parish grounds that include necessary renovations and possible expansions. The second is a thorough review of our administrative practices and parish archives. We continue to offer a full cycle of services to our faithful. We've also continue to offer social outings and an annual pilgrimage to Dormition Monastery.

St Joseph - Wheaton, IL – Priest John Segvich

In 2024 our parish community marked 35 years of proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ through worship, fellowship, stewardship, and discipleship in DuPage County. The highlight of our anniversary year was Divine Liturgy and a celebratory pig roast on September 8. Fr Herman Kincaid, our chancellor, joined us for the day. A new parish council was installed early in 2025 and we are tightening our focus on strategic planning for the next phase of parish life. Processes are being put into place to optimize parish operations and administration. Strengthening community life remains a priority. We launched a young adult group earlier this year that has already gathered several times for spiritual formation and fellowship. Similarly focused groups for the men and ladies of the parish are being formed. Notably, we have expanded our Christian service and humanitarian efforts by designating a parish charity of the month. Evangelization of our local community remains a priority and we now have 15 inquirers and catechumens at various stages of preparation for reception into the Church. Finally, we hope to seek Archbishop Daniel's blessing to move forward with a project to continue to beautify the temple in the coming months.

St. Nicholas – Joliet, IL – Archpriest Mykola Bodnarchuk

This past year has been marked by both spiritual growth and community engagement at St. Nicholas Parish. The sacraments administered included 3 baptisms, 7 Chrismations, 7 receptions into the Orthodox Church, and 1 Wedding.

In the area of missions and community outreach, the parish raised \$310 for Thanksgiving meals at Morning Star Mission in Joliet and continued to offer regular Bible Study classes and Young Adult meetings. Our Church School program remained active, complemented by the choir, reader program, and altar server education. Parishioners benefited from access to educational resources in the parish library. To reach more faithful, Divine Liturgy was streamed online, and sermons were additionally recorded in Ukrainian.

Several seasonal and special events enriched parish life: First Confession, a Back-to-School Backpack Blessing, the St. Elijah Car Blessing, the children's St. Nicholas Day pageant performance, and a community Movie Night. High school graduates received the parish's annual scholarship, and parishioners gathered for Mother's Day and Father's Day lunches. We honored our departed loved ones through Memorial Day grave blessings. A joyous Hierarchical Liturgy and Anniversary picnic were celebrated, and our Church School children organized a Spaghetti Lunch Fundraiser, raising \$81 to donate to a local charity of their choosing. Additionally, St. Nicholas joined with sister parishes in Joliet to serve Joint Pre-Sanctified Liturgies during Great Lent, strengthening our unity and shared witness.

In terms of maintenance and improvements, the church replaced its garage door and motor, installed a new air conditioner, and upgraded the church printer. Beautification efforts included planting flowers, cleaning up the church and cemetery grounds, and removing rust and repainting pipes. Liturgical enhancements included new white altar covers and new vestments for the priest. The parish also updated the church audio/visual system and replaced the bell system.

Holy Apostles - Bloomington-Normal, Illinois - Priest David Gresham

We received 11 new converts into the Church since June and currently have 8 catechumens and several serious inquirers. Average Sunday attendance has been increasing by 16% to 20% annually since 2022. The parish has been very active in charity and alms-giving since June supporting the St. Vincent DePaul Food Pantry, Home Sweet Home (homeless help), Birthright of Bloomington, and the Baby Fold (family/children services). After several failed attempts over the years, we finally now have a functioning OCF chapter at Illinois State University, with 12-15 active members meeting weekly, going on retreats, etc. Next up for the parish: multiple upcoming building improvements.

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

By God's grace, to the best of our ability, the Orthodox liturgical ascetical life remains the center of all our labors here at St. Elizabeth's. It is the axis around which everything at the parish turns, and the sacred culture into which our inquirers are invited to immerse themselves. In the past year the Lord has enabled us to continue to offer the divine services 5-6 days a week, bearing witness as best we can to the supreme importance of the 'one thing needful' - being with the Lord. And this humble labor is bearing fruit. Parishioners are engaging more fully in the life of repentance, Orthodox who move to our area become members of St. Elizabeth's, Orthodox students at Notre Dame drive an hour to make St. Elizabeth's their home, inquirers continue to find our parish, we have candidates who are anticipated to be received into the catechumenate this summer, and the parish's finances are stronger than ever. Every person who comes to Sunday Liturgy is offered a free, home cooked meal in the parish hall. We give thanks to God for the blessing to 'labor and serve' for yet another ye

Saints Cyril and Methodius – Milwaukee, WI – Archpriest Elijah Mueller

Saints Cyril and Methodius in Milwaukee, WI is beginning to see the conversion to the Orthodox faith of people from diverse backgrounds and experiences: single men, single women, and families. In addition to the people with western European ancestry, these newcomers derive from Latino and African-American communities. The religious backgrounds include Pentecostal, Roman Catholic, Seventh Day Adventist, and some Evangelical Protestant churches. Their occupations include firemen, policemen, primary school teacher, and facilities & operations maintenance.

We have a full schedule of services and opportunities for education. We have two weekly Bible studies, one weekly Fathers study, and individual weekly instruction for newly received members who wish to receive further catechesis.

The parish has been recovering from some setbacks with establishment of a nearby ethnic parish that siphoned off many people, a decline during and after the Covid pandemic, and the growing use of English in some of the traditionally more non-Anglophone parishes.

We serve Orthodox students through our university campus chaplaincies by providing weekly vespers, education, spiritual counsel, Confession, and a monthly meal hosted by Mat. Rebecca. We have developed the choir, the director, and chanters through classes offered online and the recruitment of new members. We continue to host the St. Macrina Summer Conference and have developed a parish connection to St Herman's Seminary, through Fr. Elijah and Mat. Rebecca who are now members of the faculty, by sponsoring a showing of the Sacred Alaska movie at a university movie theater, and sending seminarian support monthly.

St Maria of Paris Chapels Ministry - Waukesha & Plymouth, WI - Outreach of SS Cyril & Methodius, Milwaukee, WI - Archpriest Thomas Mueller

These two chapels were established in 2021 to serve present and former parishioners who were distanced from parish life in Milwaukee because of travel, work, or family concerns. While we have experienced slow growth, especially in Waukesha, the focus has been on caring for those who were hanging on to their Orthodox faith and practice with difficulty. We now have three Sunday Liturgies per

month in Waukesha and one in Plymouth, with other services as may be possible. Our liturgical singing is good, our finances stable, and pastoral care is committed and earnest. We observed the 80th anniversary of St Maria (Skobtsova) of Paris' Martyrdom (1945 – 2025) this spring in a little conference in Plymouth. It focused on "her witness to love in her life and death." (I am available to present this conference elsewhere if there is interest.) Our website: stmariachapels.com

St. Herman of Alaska Chapel – West Bend, WI, Archpriest Gregory Madlom

The most important thing I can say is that the faithful have come to trust each other to be willing to share some of the most personal concerns of their lives. We have had several new members and another Chrismation in the next several weeks. And a wedding in the near future. We began renovations of our worship space nine months ago. While not yet completed what has been accomplished has added much beauty to our worship space.

Holy Resurrection – Palatine, IL – Archpriest Alexander Kuchta

Since last year, we have continued with our normal liturgical, educational, and charitable efforts. There is an excellent spirit of cooperation in our parish to accomplish parish goals. Among our programs, we have a Church Growth Team which is established to encourage growth in numbers of catechumens and to welcome Orthodox Christians from other areas both near and far. An ongoing effort has to do with improvements to our parish facilities—demolition of the oldest parts of our complex and preparations for construction of a newer educational and social area with a new kitchen, bookstore, library, and restrooms. The main challenge for us is to accommodate the requirements of Cook County Building and Zoning to obtain a permit for work. We remain hopeful for resolution of permit issues that have prevented the start of work on this project.

Saint Peter and Saint Paul Orthodox Church - Burr Ridge, IL – Priest Daniel Greeson

This year we had a strong class of catechumens, many of which were received on Lazarus Saturday. We continue to have a strong stream of visitors and inquirers. We now have a strong developing community of young adults, both single and married. We hosted a Canon Law Conference for the OCA in October which was attended by various clergy from all of the dioceses of the OCA. We have also been steadily working on our livestreaming and YouTube channel presence. We have been working on our audio quality, uploading sermons and catechism classes, and of course providing regular streaming services. We continue to increase our subscribers and have regular comments made for how helpful the sermons and classes are. We look forward this year to expanding adult education opportunities, networking with other young adults in nearby parishes, and developing our nascent brotherhood in order to foster Christian fellowship, mentorship, and leadership.

Holy Theophany Mission – Walworth (Williams Bay), WI – Archpriest John Jones

Holy Theophany continues to expand its membership and also the number of people who visit us. Note that we are located in a semi-rural area in Walworth WI. Attendance at our Sunday Divine Liturgy now averages around 40-45 people, with 50 or more at times. The age range of adults is expanding from a predominately older population when we became a mission to a greater number of young and "mid-range" adults; hence, we are developing a base of younger members of the community who can serve as leaders in future years.

We have six people who are taking catechumenate classes. Since last September we have had 2 adult reception and 3 baptisms. We will have a baptism on Saturday May 17 and a wedding on

June 29. There has also been a significant increase in the number of people who inspect our google map info as well as our website.

There is a very strong sense of Christ-like community and mutual support among our parishioners. Participation in our outreach projects continues to be very strong.

St. Nicholas – Kenosha, WI – Priest Joseph Whittaker

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. With the increase in children, this calendar year we have begun Sunday-School classes for elementary aged children in the parish. While St Nicholas is on a positive trajectory, there is still a lot of work to be done and room to improve. Moving forward, our parish will need to make progress in establishing a culture of parishioner involvement in the life of the church, stewardship, and community engagement.

St Panteleimon Orthodox Church - Summit Argo, IL – Priest Estaban Vazquez

No report received.

Protection of the Virgin Mary – Merrillville, IN – Priest Jacob Van Sickle

7 Chrismations, 3 baptisms

Dn Nick (Denysenko) ordained a presbyter and upgraded from attached to assigned to our parish

Reader Philip (Sokolov) attached

Orthodox Clergy Association of Northwest Indiana rebooted with historic Sunday of Orthodoxy Vespers at Sts Peter & Paul Macedonian Church in Crown Point; Fr Jacob elected Vice President of Association
Hired a part-time parish secretary (new position)

St. George Cathedral – Chicago, IL – Priest Nikolai Lochmatow

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. We have also gained a part-time deacon, Deacon Nikola Tambur, who lives on the property together with his wife Vera, and children, Sophia and Nicholas. Deacon Nikola functions as Archbishop Daniel's kileynik and is available to travel with him to local parishes. When not traveling, Deacon Nikola beautifies the Divine Services at Saint George in English, Church Slavonic and Serbian.

In 2025, our iconography project continues! We are pleased to report that John Jurewicz has completed the traditional toweling, along with a blossoming vine painted over gold leaf, around the perimeter of our temple. Additionally, our historic Pochaev Icon of the Mother of God is in process of restoration. We were further blessed to receive a reliquary, made here in the Chicago area by Ukrainian refugees, which now contains the relics of Saint Amphilochius of Pochaev, Saint Alexis Toth, and Saint

Tikhon of Zadonsk. God willing, we will continue the beautification of our temple toward the end of this year with the installation of a Pantocrator Icon of Our Lord in the dome, together with eight prophets.

St. Luke – Palos Hills – Archpriest Paul Jannakos

1. Adult education every Wednesday night - good response both within and without the parish.
2. Mission charity trips to Florida, North Carolina and Ghana.
- 3 Continued growth with new catechumens. Matushka Kincaid is our catechist.
4. Ministry retreat with Fr Justin Matthewes in January.
5. Women's retreat in April on staying physically and spiritual healthy.
6. Fr Paul celebrated his 40th anniversary of ordination on March 3rd.
7. Installed new etched Icons on windows in the Church.

St. John of Chicago Chapel – New Lennox, IL – Archpriest Andrew Harrison

St John Chapel is one of several outreach ministries of St Luke parish We have 38 attendees – 30 adults and 8 children The owners of the church building which we occupy, the New Lenox Area Historical Society, continue to refurbish the church which was built in 1898. Plans include restoring the hall. When completed, these areas will be available for our use. Our ministries include: Chapel Choir – Lynn Betsanes; Director; Greeters – Don Smith, Lead Greeter; Altar Servers – Luke Mattaliano, Lead Altar Server; Readers – Joshua Mattaliano, Lead Reader/Chanter; Prosphoro Bakers – Ashley Mattaliano, Lead Baker

Highlights since September 2024

Fr Andrew baptized one infant and two adults, and Chrismated one adult. Thirty people worshiped together at Paschal Liturgy, the largest number so far. Traveled to Streator, IL (where St. John served as pastor) and blessed graves at the Russian Orthodox cemetery and then gathered together for lunch. Parishioners made and served soup during Great Lent. Donations were given for IOCC missions.

Outreach and Evangelization

Maintained website at <https://SaintJohnofChicago.com>; Posted photos and videos to our FaceBook page at <https://Facebook.com/stlukeorthodoxchapel>; Attended IOCC mission trip to Erwin, TN to repair home damaged by Hurricane Helene; Ministered to inmates at Indiana State Prison

Education

Gave children's sermon and icon class; hosted weekly online Bible Study

Upcoming Events

Currently ministering to two adults for upcoming Chrismation and a couple in preparation for their marriage; Installing a stair lift so elderly can attend services