

# +Frackville Deanery+

## **2017 Diocesan Assembly – Frackville Deanery Report**

Archpriest Timothy Hojnicky, *Dean* + Priest Stephen Vernak, *Assistant Dean* + Archpriest John Onofrey, *Secretary/Treasurer*

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The Frackville Deanery is comprised of ten parishes which are all serviced regularly by either assigned clergy or visiting clergy. Currently St. Mary's in Coaldale is without a permanently assigned rector, but retired and guest clergy have been covering since July. I am especially thankful to Fr. Paul Ropitsky for filling in when needed. Our Deanery brotherhood tries to meet quarterly to discuss matters of the deanery and to encourage fellowship among the brethren. We had four Lenten Mission Vespers throughout the Deanery with His Eminence, our Archbishop Mark, present when he was available. Below are submitted reports from the respective parishes to give a snap shot into the life of each community.

### **St. Mary's Church: Coaldale, PA (1909) - [www.stmarysnativity.org](http://www.stmarysnativity.org)**

*No Assigned Rector*

*Archpriest Paul Ropitsky, Attached*

Each Sunday Divine Liturgy is held with thanks to Fr. Paul Ropitsky, guest clergy, Archpriest Timothy Hojnicky, and His Eminence, Archbishop Mark.

#### Highlights during the past year:

Held our Patron Saint Dinner in September at Capriotti's in McAdoo

Every Sunday after Divine Liturgy, Coffee Hour was held in the Church Hall with coffee, soda, food, and fellowship. Birthdays and Wedding Anniversaries were recognized and celebrated

Each month the Good Samaritans sent cards and sometimes gifts to the Shut-ins

Bi-monthly Parish Newsletter was mailed

Held two successful Fish Dinners – during December and April

Recognized two high school graduates in June

Church Website was updated – directions are available to encourage optimum use

Collected Boyer's Rebates and Redner's Tapes for Building Fund

Repaired church furnace and repainted the Rectory

Donations made to Panther Valley Summer Food Program, OCMC, IOCC, and Agia Sophia

We continue to pray for a permanent priest for our parish

### **Holy Ascension Church: Frackville, PA (1915) - [www.haoca.org](http://www.haoca.org)**

*Archpriest James Jadick, Rector*

Our parish has accomplished the following in 2016:

- Successful completion of renovation project to entrance of church, including elevator - now fully handicapped accessible.
- Working with OCMC for a member of our parish to travel to Albania and help open an Orthodox Seminary
- Held successful food festival, pascha sale, pierogie sale and holiday cookie sale

- Assisted a local family with financial difficulties and allowed them to retain his home.
- Working with 3 catechumens
- Revamped Church School to Parish Education Program for both young and adults - better received and attended
- Bi-monthly Parish newsletters
- Monthly coffee hour "Chat & Chew" - program to raise awareness of various topics and encourage discussion among members.

### **Christ the Saviour Church: Harrisburg, PA (1963) - [www.christthesaviourhbg.org](http://www.christthesaviourhbg.org)**

*Priest Stephen Vernak, Rector*

*Archpriest Daniel Ressetar, Pastor Emeritus*

- *10 baptisms; 6 chrismations; 2 marriages; 11 burials*

#### *Other Highlights*

- **Jan 17th:** 8th Annual River Blessing. Archbishop MARK, celebrant
- **Mar 18 - Mar 19th:** Hosted the Philadelphia District OCF Retreat
- **May 8:** Parish Feast Day (St. Thomas Sunday). Archbishop MARK, celebrant. Also visiting were Fr. John Maxwell, Fr. Paul Fetsko, & Dn. Mikel Hill
- **May 11, 15, 18:** Adult Education Ministry held a series of well attended talks on the Liturgy. Fr. Victor Gorodenchuk gave the keynote: "Byzantine Liturgy: Evident History and Hidden Meaning"
- **July 14 -15:** Parish Service project to Epiphany Orthodox Church in Huntingdon
- **July 19th:** 4th Annual Parish International Day, following Pentecost Liturgy
- **Sept 16 - Oct 5:** Fr. Theodore Jurewicz returned to continue with Phase 3 of our iconography project
- **Oct 16 & 19:** Sr. Vassa (Larin) visited our community for Divine Liturgy, and again on Wed evening for a public lecture entitled "Scripture in Orthodox Liturgy and Everyday Life"
- **Nov 13:** 3rd Annual Eritrean/Ethiopian Fellowship following Liturgy
- **Nov 22, 29, & Dec 6, 13:** Adult Education Ministry provided a four part series entitled "God With Us"
- **Dec 11:** Church School presented its Annual Nativity Program!

### **Holy Ascension Church: Lykens, PA (1912)**

*Dn. Seraphim Reynolds, Administrator*

The past year has been very encouraging for the folks here in Lykens. The Parish was slated to close in August of 2015. Since that time, many contacts have been made with people in the community, many of which did not know that we are here. Especially, we have seen the return of a few folks to the Parish, one man in particular that has not been in the Church since 1956! Glory Be to God! While trying to maintain a regular schedule, we have the following Services and Meetings:

- Divine Liturgy on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of the month
- Obednitsa w/Holy Communion on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the month
- Obednitsa w/Holy Communion on the 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the month (when that occurs)
- Reader's Vespers every Wednesday.
- Reader's Vespers on Saturdays before Sunday Services.
- Akathists on the Fridays of Lent
- Intro to Orthodoxy Discussion Group

The Parish also has a page on FaceBook where folks can see our schedule and other happenings. We pray that God will strengthen us as we continue to reach out to the folks of our community.

### **Holy Trinity Church: McAdoo, PA (1910)**

*Priest Mircea Airinei, Rector*

Holy Trinity Orthodox Church has 20 members with 11 children, 1 nursing home patient, and 3 shut-ins. This year we celebrated the 115<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Holy Trinity Orthodox Parish with Divine Liturgy, a presentation on the history of the O.C.A. with Alexis Liberovsky, the O.C.A. archivist, and festivities including a bounce house for the children. We had one person received through confession into the Orthodox Faith. There were two funerals, and Holy Unction was served during Great Lent and Advent. We continue to have lectures on a monthly basis with special guest speakers Fr. Steven Voytovich, Dr. Harry Boosalis and Alexis Liberovsky. Our free community meals once a month are steadily growing in number. The remodeling project is well under way with painting outside and in the basement. The sister of mercy, Marina, came from Belarus to our parish for support by means of fundraising for the St. Elizabeth Convent. Our parish had a St. Nicholas presentation this year with gifts for 15 children present. Finally, we went caroling and had food bags for the shut-ins.

### **Holy Apostles Church: Mechanicsburg, PA (2004) - [www.holyapostleschurch.org](http://www.holyapostleschurch.org)**

*Archpriest Timothy Hojnicky, Rector*

*Dn. Seraphim Reynolds, Attached*

This past year was one filled with much joy, and stress, and activity! We are currently in a very exciting and challenging time in the life of our community! As usual, this year has been a busy time at Holy Apostles! Here are a few notable highlights of the past year:

- *2 Baptisms, 3 Chrismations, 1 Funeral.*

#### *Other highlights:*

- In May, we welcomed Fr. Thomas Soroka, who visited the parish and gave an excellent and informative presentation: An Orthodox Perspective on Islam. This year, Fr. Chad Hatfield, Chancellor of St. Vladimir's Seminary, will be with us for a weekend retreat.
- In June, our parish held our 5th Annual Vacation Church School, with the theme: "Superheroes of the Bible."
- Deacon Seraphim was given the blessing to wear the double orar on our feast day 6/20 – AXIOS!
- Some youth activities included a Youth Charity Luncheon, a St. Nicholas Day Tree Trimming Celebration, participation in the Annual Diocesan Winter Teen Retreat, and a Kids Lenten Mini-retreat.
- Our Church School began again on September 11, with over 42 children participating (5 classes)!
- We presently have 10 catechumens preparing to enter into the Church.
- The biggest event was the Opening of our New Building on October 1. We were blessed to have His Eminence, Archbishop Mark, present who presided over the event.
- We held our annual Dinner and Dance & Silent Auction in October and it was a successful fundraiser for our building fund, as well as a time of fellowship for our community.
- We held an open house where 140+ guests came and heard our choir sing as we welcomed the community to see the progress.
- We continue to ask everyone for their prayers, and thank you all for your support!

### **SS. Peter and Paul Church: Minersville, PA (1910)**

*V. Rev. Michael Hatrak, Rector*

Along with liturgical services our activities include a Pre-Lenten Dinner and a Thanksgiving Dinner along with holiday bake sales and participation in Minersville's Spirit Day and Food Drive. We continue with our Charity Fund collection at the cross and donate to a different worthy cause every three months. The first three months of the year are always for the Minersville Food Drive.

- 1 Baptism
- 2 Funerals

### **St. Michael Church, Mount Carmel, PA (1907) - [www.stmichaelsorthodoxchurch.org](http://www.stmichaelsorthodoxchurch.org)**

*Fr. John Edward, Acting Rector*

#### Community Outreach

- St. Michael's continued helping local organizations this year; most notably by providing non-perishable food donations and occasional cash donations to the local food banks and to God's Chuck Wagon, a mobile soup kitchen. The parish continued to help the Lower Anthracite United Way to assist children in the area by collecting back packs and school supplies and helping fill them at the United Way; and, once again collecting over 30 coats and cash to assist with the children's coat drive. St. Michael's received \$250 from the Diocese to help local charities in the coal region and matched the donation with \$500 that was distributed to several groups during our annual picnic, during which we recognized local groups for the services they provide.
- The parish continues outreach with the local nursing home (Serenity Gardens) where one of our parishioners resides. For Mother's Day, pink carnations and a note were provided to all the women at nursing home. In September, we had a cook-out for the residents and served 100 hamburgers and hotdogs to all residents and workers. For Veterans Day, the parish wrote out cards and provided flag pins for every resident that served their country. For Christmas, the parish wrote out Christmas cards, baked cookies, and provided handmade candy boxes. We continue to have Saturday Vespers once per month at Serenity Gardens. During December, parishioners also remained after Vespers and sang several traditional Christmas carols. In January of 2016, we held our first Community Soup Day and opened the church to all to enjoy a free bowl of soup, dessert, and coffee.
- In May of 2016, the parish set up a booth at the Anthracite Heritage Festival of Arts in Shamokin and handed out education brochures and prayer cards.
- In October 2016, we held an open house on a Saturday before Vespers. A discussion on Orthodoxy and the history St. Michael's Orthodox Church was provided.
- Four articles were provided to the local newspaper to highlight Orthodoxy and our community outreach.
- Our pierogie projects continue to serve as a great community activity and provide the opportunity for parishioners from several different denominations to work together and enjoy fellowship. A lunch is provided to all who join us for the project. The individuals from the community who help the parish during projects were invited to the Annual Parish Picnic and Nativity activities.

### Educational and Parish Activities

- The bulletin has been used as a means to educate the faithful on aspects of the Divine Liturgy service, Orthodoxy, the Sacraments, the lives of saints, and Christian values.
- Father John Edward, and parishioners made a significant effort on visiting the sick and parishioners in the local Nursing Home.
- Father John conducted Bible Study on the last Sunday of each month after Divine Liturgy. His focus the past year has been on "Who is Jesus?" and Orthodoxy.
- On April 10<sup>th</sup>, His Eminence, Archbishop Mark, attended the Lenten Mission Service.
- On Palm Sunday, we held a Youth Education program and created a Living Icon of the Raising of Lazarus. Since August, the parish has held monthly Youth Education Programs. During the summer, we recognized one high school graduate and presented to her an Icon to acknowledge her accomplishment.
- On July 24<sup>th</sup>, we held the annual parish cookout following Divine Liturgy that was celebrated by His Eminence Archbishop Mark. It was well attended.
- In November, large banners were printed that listed both living and departed veterans associated with the parish. The banners were hung outside the church, as well as, in the church hall. Parishioners provided breakfast after Divine Liturgy to honor our Veterans.
- In December, the parish held its fourth annual Christmas Sing-A-Long. Parishioners also wrote out Nativity cards for the sick, for friends of the parish, and for those who had not been attending services.

### **Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church: Saint Clair, PA (1911)**

*Archpriest Michael Hatrak, Rector*

- Weekly liturgical services.
- 4 Funerals

### **St. Herman of Alaska Church: Shillington, PA (1973)**

*Archpriest John Onofrey, Rector*

As St. Herman's Church in Shillington begins its forty-fourth year, we are pleased to report that 2016, was a very successful year. The parish is led by Fr. John & Matushka Stephanie Onofrey who have served St. Herman's for thirty-one years. We also enjoy the spiritual guidance and inspiration from Fr. Michael & Pani Anne Marie Slovesko, and Fr. James & Presbyteria Angela LaLiberte, who in retirement, have been an additional blessing to the parish. We also enjoy having Fr. Joseph Toroney and Fr. Stephen Janos, as priests attached to our parish. Fr. John and the Church serve Orthodox Christians that reside in five counties in Southeastern PA. Although we have lost a few members over the past few years (marriage, job replacement, transfer to other parishes), we are happy to report that for 2017 we have an increase in our membership, officially from 97 to 103 adults, plus 22 children. This total of 125 souls has increased unofficially to 108 adults and 23 children, 131 souls, after the 2017 Membership list was compiled and submitted.

St. Herman's Church, along with its full cycle of Divine Services, is also very busy participating in Diocesan and Frackville Deanery services, celebrations and events, as well as local Pan-Orthodox, Ecumenical and Community events. The parish welcomed with great joy, two pastoral visitations by His Eminence, Archbishop MARK, during Holy Week, at the Vespers Divine Liturgy on Thursday, and on the weekend of November 12-13. During the November visitation, His Eminence Chrismated two Catechumens.

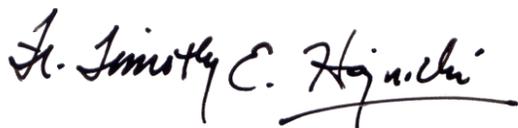
Financially speaking, St. Herman's Church in Shillington has had another successful year. Parishioner donations have been very positive, and our Church was able to go beyond the 10 percent Tithing level with the new Diocesan program. This financial stability was maintained, despite two major maintenance expenses. In November, the parish had to repair and install new shingling on the Church Roof, estimated at \$22,000, but with a final cost of \$32,000. In December the heating system needed approximately \$3,000 in maintenance and repairs. For 2017 the parish council will be addressing the challenges of escalating Health Insurance expenses and the Clergy compensation guidelines as defined by the Diocese. Although we are limited in our resources, the parish does its very best going beyond its doors, with outreach programs. St. Herman's consistently supports Holy Transfiguration (Convent) Monastery in Ellwood City, as well as a Group Home in Berks County at Christmas time and our new program needy families in the Lancaster-Lebanon County areas.

A very important aspect of life at St. Herman's Church in Shillington is Parishioner Fellowship and Agape. Every Sunday following the Liturgy, the Church Hall is filled with great food and fellowship. This togetherness and parishioner unity has been augmented and enhanced by the Agape Meal after the Paschal Celebration, our annual Parish Family Picnic, the Pre-Advent Harvest Dinner, the St. Nicholas Sunday Dinner, Theophany Eve Holy Supper, as well as parish projects and yes, Pierogie and Ethnic Food sales. An important area of our parish is Religious Education, this has been a very difficult struggle. Every Sunday during the school year, St. Herman's has classes for three age groups of our Children and an Adult Discussion Group with Fr. John. Attendance for this important facet of Church Life could be better, however we continue struggling to educate the faithful, of all ages. It is with great joy, that we are able to report the institution of a weekly Bible Study. Every Tuesday, Fr. John leads a group of parishioners and guests, in the examination of the Holy Scriptures.

To conclude, Fr. John and the Faithful of St. Herman's Church in Shillington, are looking forward to the challenges of the New Year of 2017. Hopefully and Prayerfully with the Blessing and help from our Lord, we will not only maintain those high standards achieved over the past forty-four years, but increase and elevate them to a level, *"well pleasing to God"*.

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Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fr. Timothy C. Hojnicky". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Archpriest Timothy Hojnicky, *Dean*