

**Holy Apostles Orthodox Mission
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Fr. Timothy E.

**A Mission Parish of the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania
The Orthodox Church in America**

Report to the Diocesan Assembly – December 4-5, 2009

Your Grace, Father Chancellor, Very Reverend, and Reverend Fathers, Brothers and Sisters of the Diocese of Philadelphia & Eastern Pennsylvania:

Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory Forever!

In the past year, Holy Apostles Mission has met its share of challenges and triumphs. We were about to start 2009, with a great financial hit as we learned literally in the final weeks of 2008, that due to budget restrictions in the National Church we would lose our Planting Grant. The faithful of the Mission were not deterred in this proposed setback. Almighty God rewarded prayer and faithful determination as \$60,000 miraculously was given anonymously to the OCA specifically for the Evangelization Department. This donation reissued the grants with more money (\$15,000 increased to \$20,000) and actually added an additional grant for another parish. In thanksgiving for this, our community decided to tithe this \$20,000 and gave more than \$2,000 away in charity. This spirit of charitable giving continues as the second Sunday of every month is designated for a special collection and a new charity is selected to be assisted by our parish.

A new event was held this year as a joint effort among all the Orthodox Churches in the Greater Harrisburg area. We gathered and processed to City Island in Harrisburg and blessed the Susquehanna River in honor of the Feast of Theophany in January. We learned real fast why the “dive in the water” tradition did not catch on in the Northern Orthodox countries... None the less, we threw a Holy Water Ice Cross into the frigid waters sanctifying the major waterway of our South Central Area. More than 100 souls braved the extreme cold, and from their excitement and enthusiasm, this will be planned as an annual tradition.

In February, Holy Apostles invited Fr. Martin Browne, Diocesan Treasurer, to give a presentation on tithing. It was decided that as a parish we would forego the old “head tax” system, and offer a tithe of our parish income to the Diocese. This plan will begin in January 2010.

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We were saddened this past winter as we had to deal with our first death in the parish. Faithful parishioner and founder of Holy Apostles Mission, Lillian “ Lubov” Husted fell asleep in the Lord just before the start of Great Lent. We pray that her memory be eternal!

Great Lent and Pascha, as usual, were beautiful with record attendances at all services. We had some extra special events with a Pan-Orthodox celebration of the Presanctified Liturgy, as well as Bright Week services at the local Churches in our area.

We were overjoyed to welcome Elizabeth Cindi Tomes into the Orthodox Church through the rite of Chrismation on Lazarus Saturday. Also, our new baptismal font was finally put to use with the Baptism of Luke Potteiger in September. Whether it is an adult or an infant child, we thank God for their entrance into the Faith and pray that He protect and preserve them for Many Years!

After Pascha, we convened a Vision Task Force to begin to compile data and look at our potential next step. The Vision Task Force met for four months regularly and a survey was proposed to the parish. The results of this survey were presented at our annual Dinner Dance on November 1.

This past year has also seen the development of some new programs and activities. We have begun the “ OBC” (Orthodox Book Club) which meets weekly. Also, a “ Mom’ s Group” has been formed that encourages fellowship among the mothers of young children of the parish and gives the kids an opportunity to get together as well. The newest program is “ Holy Scrap” a crafting group that meets regularly to share in various arts of crafting. All of these groups build fellowship and the spirit of Christian love within the community.

On June 20, 2004, the first Liturgy was celebrated in the lobby area of Mission Central, a United Methodist Disaster relief distribution center. Since that time we have nearly doubled in number, supported a full-time priest and acquired our own Church facility. This June, Holy Apostles officially marked the 5th Anniversary of the first Liturgy as a parish community. His Grace, Bishop Tikhon came to mark the special day with us and

2

***“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations...” St. Matthew
28:19***

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served the Divine Liturgy and a Molieben of Thanksgiving. On November 1, His Grace again came to lead us in a special celebration marking the anniversary. This event coincided with our annual Dinner Dance & Silent Auction. Through the hard work and support of the faithful of our diocese we were able to raise over \$17,000 for our building fund. May God, through the prayers of the Holy Apostles, strengthen the faithful of Mechanicsburg to continue the good work begun, for many years to come. Glory to God for all things!

Respectfully Submitted,

Fr. Timothy Hojnicki, *Rector*