

## October 30, 2005 Annual Parish Meeting Pastor's Review of the Year

Over the last 12 months, the *pastor* has been directly (and indirectly) involved in the following:

### Attendance and Church Growth

Attendance for the past church year (Sept. 2004 to Sept. 2005) had shown a decrease.

**Official Membership** is currently **126** adult members and **51** children—**TOTAL 177** (down from 201 total members on the 2005 Census) Several families and individuals moved away during the year.

**Our new parish census for "2005"** shows a **net loss of 10 adult members**.

Our **catechumen** currently is: **one (1)**: Melissa Capparuccini. However, Father Andrew has been working with Walt and Marg Turoczy, Jeff and Robin Kusimi, Joe Elliot, Norm Fox and others.

**Baptisms** were **two (2)**: Infant Mary Claire Wennberg (11/27/04), and Dana Elizabeth Pierce (01/06/05).

**Other members** joined the parish by transfer or were re-united to the Chalice by Holy Confession.

**Deaths and Funerals: three (3)**, two of which were from the parish: James R. Wilson and Emily M. Wujcik. David Roberts lost his mother, Wilma J. Roberts. "Memory Eternal!" Many parishioners have lost their parents, siblings, and friends over the last 12 months. Our sympathy to all!

### Liturgical Services, Confessions, & Counseling

Conducted a regular liturgical cycle of the Church Year.

Extra opportunity for **Confessions** and **personal counseling** time with the priest is given on Friday evenings (in addition to Saturday nights). In addition, Father spends much time counseling parishioners on the **telephone** as well as during scheduled office visits.

Our shut-ins were visited and were brought Holy Communion.

### Education & Youth Ministries

Our 2004-2005 **Sunday School** year began in September, with 42 students in three classes. (This was a reduction in number of classes, due to the difficulty in securing volunteer teachers.) We tried to rotate teachers, but it did not prove to be the best system, as consistency in subject matter was sometimes lost.

In June, the weeklong 2005 **Vacation Bible School (VBS)** was again a smash hit. The older students again enjoyed producing their second home-made movie, this time entitled "Soul Wars" on the life of the Prophet Elijah. The younger students studied the life of the Virgin Mary. Fr. Andrew helped with teaching responsibilities in both classes. We had some volunteers from within the parish, however we were very fortunate to have some "outside help"—Seminarian Paul Scott and Maria and Daria (cousins of Lynn Sulpizi). The help (from outside the parish) saved the day...making the program a success. Thank you friends! Thanks go to Mrs. Lynn Sulpizi and her crew of volunteers.

The **Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF)** has become our real parish outreach. We love our college students and their friends. On the University of Delaware campus we continue to be the guests of the Lutheran Student Association (LSA) and are currently using their "Paul's Chapel." For the 2004 Fall semester and 2005 Spring semesters, Fr. Andrew relied upon Basil and Cindy Peck to serve as lay assistants in this campus ministry. We are attracting a few more students from other Orthodox

jurisdictions. The OCF students went "on-the-road" and held gatherings with students from other OCF chapters from Universities in PA and in VA. They also had fun hiking and going to a monastery.

During **Great Lent**, there were video presentations (after the Friday Presanctified and love-meal).

**Library Development** Our librarian, Ellen Gundersen, has done a great job in selecting books for the expanded library. Ellen's efforts—and her helpers—are most appreciated.

### **Evangelism and Catechism and Bible Study**

Father Andrew's two-year course--"**The Basics of Orthodoxy**" continues to attract inquirers and potential converts. Currently it is being held on Thursday evenings. This year, we started having a **Bible Class** (on the opposite Thursday evenings). Attendance is about 7-9 on a good night.

### **"K.I.T" Outreach-- "Keeping In Touch" with our home-restricted parishioners**

This past year Mary Lewis offered to lead a team of volunteers (which has grown to eight members so far) to reach out in a systematic way to our fellow parishioners (in addition to the cards the Sisterhood and Parish Council send out, and in addition to any personal initiatives). Nine (9) individuals are benefiting from this new ministry within the parish on a regular basis. (see separate report)

### **Our Dover Outreach**

Due to lack of support, the Dover Outreach (which included a monthly Vespers Service) was reduced to a Bible Study/Spiritual Discussion Group meeting monthly in Helen McNally's home in Harrington. Fr. Andrew also takes Holy Communion to the Dover ladies once a month.

### **Capital Campaign**

Our "EXPANDING HORIZONS: Building for God's Kingdom" Capital Stewardship Campaign was a huge stretch for our parish—but it paid off. The campaign experts told us that a well-run capital campaign could generate between **2.5 to 3 times** our parish's annual income. We **achieved** this last year, by God's Grace and with parishioners' generosity. Over \$374,000 was pledged, and already \$200,000 has been placed into our Building Fund (after 17 months, halfway through the 3-year pledge payment time). Thanks to all for their stewardship and generosity!

### **Building Committee**

After the launching of our amazing Capital Campaign in May 2004, the Vision and Expansion Committee was re-mobilized as our Building Committee, with James F. Riley as the leader. Fr. Andrew attended almost all of these meetings over the past year. He has kept the bishop informed of all developments, because, as Orthodox Christians we know that we can do nothing without our bishop's blessing. The Building Committee has done a lot of work, culminating in several special Parish Meetings. (See their separate report)

### **Pierogie Bakers**

Our well-trained group of pierogie bakers worked very hard preparing for the November 2004 Bazaar, which raised over \$4,000 for kitchen equipment for the new building. Currently the group is hard at work preparing for the November 2005 Bazaar. They have created a real ministry here. A large group of over 20 volunteers regularly attend. Thank you, Pierogie Bakers!

### **Greeters Committee**

Dr. Nihmat Morjana leads this important committee, which has helped the Service Duty volunteers in welcoming all our visitors. This is most valuable—for the Lord said: "I was a stranger and you welcomed Me!" He also said: "I was a stranger, and you did **not** welcome Me."

### Communication

Our Parish Newsletter—"St. Michael's Communicator"—has been out of production for over one year, due to the fact that no one volunteered to take the editor's position after Grace Schulgin retired from serving that post for almost two years. Recently, Fran Wilson volunteered to start the newsletter up again, so hopefully it will once again be in print.

### OCMC Missions

The parish is financially supporting the entire year's salary of two African Orthodox clergymen: at \$600 each priest. They are depending on us.

### Project Mexico

This year, again no "official" parish team participated in Project Mexico's efforts to build a modest, but sturdy little home for a very needy family. However, Julie Newmeyer again returned on her own, taking Melissa Riley with her. Their example has spurred on a group of young adults to try for another mission trip in the summer of 2006, Lord willing.

### Choir Practice

The choir worked hard during Lent to prepare for Pascha, with the help of a professional choir directress, Anna Pyle. The hard work paid off. The Paschal Service sounded great! But there were no rehearsals for the last six months since Pascha. However, rehearsals re-started in mid-October.

### Charity Projects

So far this year, our **Good Samaritan collections** have provided much needed help in **designated Good Samaritan funds** as emergency assistance to parishioners (and to some needy families outside the parish—but mainly to our parish families). This is a healthy sign of Christian love within the parish family. Again, our Sunday School students collected coins for missions in their Lenten **OCMC coin boxes**. Over \$1,700 was raised in special collections to assist with **relief effort of IOCC** in the New Orleans region devastated by the **killer-hurricanes**. Food items (boxed and canned) were also sent to the empty food banks of the Gulf region.

### Christmas Giving Opportunities

This past 2004 Nativity Fast we donated to:

- 1) St. Tikhon's Seminary in the form of canned and boxed foodstuffs.
- 2) Several needy families received Thanksgiving baskets.
- 3) Sunday School students raised funds for the OCA Christmas Stocking Drive.
- 4) We also did the "Adopt-A-Family" project for Christmas of 2004.

### Seminarian Scholarships

The parish has provided both of our 2004-2005 seminarians—Fr. Timothy Hojnicky and Paul Scott with a scholarship gift of \$500 (each).

### Special Parish Gifts

Parishioners donated funds for a set of vestments for the new priest, Fr. Timothy Hojnicky, who was ordained at St. Michael's by Metropolitan HERMAN on January 29, 2005. Parishioners also donated to purchase a gift bowl and pitcher (with towels) for the installation of our new hierarch, His Grace TIKHON, to take place on October 29, 2005. Many Years, Master! Thank you to the kind donors for both gifts.

### Special Parish Events

The Sisterhood throughout the year held the series of delicious parish luncheons. Thank you, ladies (and men, too). We could not do it without you all! Each **fellowship/coffee hour** indeed is a special

parish event. This is a real **ministry** in which we welcome the strangers and visitors. **Family Fun Nights** were limited during this past year (only on one occasion did Fr. Andrew take the youth bowling--parents came too.) To continue having such youth events, more volunteers are needed. In September, 2005, we again held the **Annual Parish Picnic**, and we again took our annual **Parish Photo**. Over 30 parishioners attended St. Tikhon's 2005 Monastery Historic 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary **Pilgrimage**. Once again, our **Christmas Sunday School Play** was a fun activity, enjoyed by all.

### The Volunteer Drive

The effort to find assistants to help in some specific areas was not very successful. However, certain individuals have, on their own initiative, done things to improve the church. Thank you!

### Office Projects

The Fall 2004 Edition of the parish's "**Members and Friends Directory**" was issued.

Vice-President Ed Torvik has been faithfully testing the new Orthodox **parish management software package** which was purchased and installed on the church computer last year (known as "Deacon 99"). Our Sunday **Bulletin** is being mailed (or emailed) to **absent members** and to our **shut-ins** in an effort to keep them connected as part of the parish family.

The **Telephone Tree** (emergency parishioner notification system) was updated.

### Buildings and Grounds

Many major **plumbing** issues were fixed at the rectory. Thank you to those who donated to help defray the cost! We had the annual **inspection** of the Church and Rectory. Thank you to the college OCF and high school students who helped Fr. Andrew paint the **rusty railings** (thus saving the parish hundreds of dollars)! The **new icon of the Resurrection** in the Altar apse was mounted in time for Pascha, as was **the new icon of the Nativity** (both given in memory of the late Ed Hojnicky, Sr.).

### Acquisitions and Gifts: Thanks to all who gave so generously.

New white altar covers, new white icon stand covers, and new white curtain for the Royal Door. (Thank you ladies of the Sisterhood!). New library books and donations. New freezer for the church kitchen (thank you Pierogie Bakers!). New icon of the Nativity over the Table of Oblation. Many other smaller icons and various gifts. (Apologies if I missed anyone's gift.)

By God's Grace, since October 2004, a full cycle of regular services and feast day services have been assisted throughout the year by parishioners (and friends) who have offered to God their talents in singing, chanting, choir directing, and altar serving. Not to be overlooked are those who faithfully served cleaning, teaching classes, hosting coffee hour, doing service duty, helping with luncheons and the picnic, baking proshpora, and assisting in the one hundred and one ways required to run a parish. It takes a lot of work to be a community that prays and fellowships together. **Everyone has a vital role**. Even in the area of financial stewardship positive increases have been noted. Many folks have offered of their time, talent, and treasures to beautify the House of God and the rectory. **Thank you**, one and all, for your good efforts made out of your love for your church. May God reward each of you in His own way. **Let us all strive to continue to work together** in harmony, unity, and love for the upbuilding of Christ's Holy Church here in Wilmington. God bless you all.

Respectfully submitted,

*Fr. Andrew J. Anderson*

Fr. Andrew J. Anderson, Rector