

October 29, 2006 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

Official Membership is currently **130** adult members and **46** children—**TOTAL 176** (down only one from 177 total members on the 2005 Census)

Our new parish census for "2007" shows a **net gain of 4 adult members**.

Our **catechumen** currently are: **three (3)**: Jennifer Capparuccini, Robert Barbarita, and Joseph Elliot. Lord willing, these three will be received into the Church very soon too.

Baptisms were **five (5)**: Infant Ruth Tesfaye (06/24/06), Infant Luke Conover (06/25/06), Infant Sophia Wennberg (08/19/06—by Fr. Timothy Hojnicky, her uncle), Infant Jordan Michael Madanat (10/01/06), and Adult Norman Edwin Fox (09/09/06).

Chrismations were **three (3)**: Melissa (Sophia) Capparuccini (03/24/06), Jeffrey (Thomas) Kusumi (10/21/06), and Robin (Photini) Kusumi (10/21/06)

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

Weddings: Norman Edwin and Yelena Fox (09/10/06—by Fr. Andrew J. Anderson). With the bishop's permission, two other weddings were performed at St. Michael's by visiting clergy: Stephen and Katherine Blazo (05/19/06—by Fr. Samuel Kedala, OCA priest of Wantage, NJ); Boris and Yelena Batula (05/20/06—by Fr. Sinisa Jovic, Serbian Orthodox priest of Phila., PA)

Deaths and Funerals: **four (4)**, Irene Scarloss (Susan Skomorucha's mother), Jozef Spinski, Ruphina Sonin (Michael Sonin's mother), Edward Madanat (Michael Madanat's uncle). "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 2005-2006 **Sunday School** year began in September, with 38 students in four classes. It was a **superb** year, with **excellent** teachers who were very well prepared for their classes. (The senior class even has held special classes on an occasional Friday evening.)

In June, the weeklong 2006 **Vacation Bible School (VBS)** movie-making event was again a smash hit—thank God. All the students again enjoyed producing their third home-made movie, this time entitled "Soul Wars: Episode Two – The Pharaoh Menace" on the life of the Prophet Moses. Seminarian Paul Scott returned to help Fr. Andrew produce and film the movie. Thanks also goes to Mrs. Lynn Sulpizi and her crew of volunteers.

The **Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF)** continues to be our real parish outreach. We love our college students and their friends. They returned their love to us by painting the railings for the parish. The club had a very active year, led by Basil and Cindy Peck, OCF lay advisors, and Melissa Capparuccini, OCF President 2005-06. (see their separate report)

During **Great Lent**, the Parish family was again invited to stay after the Friday Presanctified Liturgy for the love-meal and to hear the life of a saint.

Library Development Our librarian, Ellen Gundersen, together with her helpers, 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

This year "**The Basics of Orthodoxy**" class was replaced with individual **tutorials** for inquirers and potential converts, using the same basic content. Tutorials are arranged according to the work schedules of the catechumens. This year, the **Bible Class** was temporarily dropped due to lack of attendance.

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

This past year Mary Lewis continued to lead a team of volunteers to reach out in a systematic way to our fellow parishioners. Twelve (12) individuals are benefiting from this new ministry within the parish on a regular basis. (see separate report)

Our Dover Outreach

The Bible Study/Spiritual Discussion Group meets in Helen McNally's home in Harrington once a month. Fr. Andrew gives Holy Communion to the Dover ladies at the same time.

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." Our many visitors report that our parish welcomes them warmly. Some tell the priest: "Fr. Andrew, you have a very friendly parish."

Capital Campaign

Our "EXPANDING HORIZONS: Building for God's Kingdom" Capital Stewardship Campaign is paying off. Over \$374,000 was pledged, and already \$332,000 has been placed into our Building Fund. After expenditures on architect, civil engineering (surveys, forest and wetlands studies) and minor project management (for cost estimation), we currently have \$280,753 in our Building Fund account. More and more is being added to it each day. May 2007 is the official end-date for our capital campaign pledges to be paid in full. Please try your best over the next six months to reach our goal of \$374,000 by May 2007! Thanks to all who have given!

Earlier this year we conducted **a second pledge drive**, during May, June, July, for our **future mortgage**. These "white card" pledges equaled \$2,363 per month, which is enough to get another \$250,000 from the bank for a mortgage loan. Added together, the capital campaign pledges and the "white card" mortgage pledges have helped our parish define a realistic budget of mid-\$500,000's for our Building Program. Thanks to all for their stewardship and generosity!

Building Committee

Much has transpired over the past year. Last fall our Bishop TIKHON urged us to embrace a more modest project and asked for a budget. Throughout this past year, the Building Committee and Parish Council have worked hard to define a limited scope project based upon a realistic budget (which was arrived at through a second pledging event). We are now at the point that we can hope to re-start the civil engineering process that was halted last October 2005. (see separate report)

OCMC Missions

The parish is financially supporting the salary of two African Orthodox clergymen: \$600 for one priest and \$300 (half a year's salary) for a second priest. They are depending on us. Currently, we have not yet fulfilled our 2006 promised commitment of support. Please help if you can.

Project Mexico

Praise God! This year, for a second time in four years we had an "official" parish team which participated in Project Mexico's efforts to build a modest, sturdy little home for a very needy family. Debra Hines was the team leader. This is the **fourth year in a row** that members of St. Michael's parish have participated in the efforts of Project Mexico!

Perogie Bakers

Our well-trained group of perogie bakers worked very hard preparing for the November 2005 Bazaar, which raised over \$3,000 for kitchen equipment for the new building. Currently the group is hard at work preparing for the November 2006 Bazaar. They have created a real ministry here. A large group of over 25 volunteers regularly attend. Thank you, Pierogie Bakers!

Communication

Our Parish Newsletter—"St. Michael's Communicator"—came back into production this past year, with Fran Wilson as the volunteer Editor, assisted by Elizabeth and Peter Melnik. Many good issues have been published. Thank you! We will need a new editor shortly, because Fran Wilson is moving soon.

Choir Practice

The choir prepared during Lent for Pascha, and prepared again for the visit of Bishop TIKHON. They did superb! The hard work paid off. There have been no rehearsals for the last six months. Fr. Andrew is working on plans to use our youth (high school and college) to form a St. Michael's Junior Youth Choir. Hopefully this project (in planning stages now) will bear fruit in 2007.

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). This is a healthy sign of Christian love within the parish family. Again, our Sunday School students (and adults) collected \$281.99 in coins for missions in their Lenten **OCMC coin boxes**.

Christmas Giving Opportunities

This past 2005 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 2005.

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 Bowling 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. Parishioners attended St. Tikhon's 2006 **Monastery Pilgrimage**. Once again this summer, the parish went to Philadelphia for the **street procession** of the **St. Anna weeping icon**. Once again, our **Christmas Sunday School Play**—on the life of St. Nicholas--was a fun activity, enjoyed by all.

Our new Bishop's First Parish Visit

This past spring (May 6-7, 2006), we were blessed to have the first pastoral visit to our parish by our new hierarch, His Grace Bishop TIKHON. The entire parish sprang into action and prepared well to receive him. The bishop came early on Saturday afternoon and met with current and previous Parish Council members, members of the Building Committee, Sisterhood, Brotherhood, and youth. After Vespers there was a dinner at the hotel restaurant, open to all the parish. Sunday morning there was a full hierarchical Divine Liturgy. The choir was well prepared and did a great job! Mrs. Melnik prepared a tasty luncheon following the service which was enjoyed by all. The little children had their egg hunt. The Parish gave the bishop a gift watch and the Sisterhood offered the bishop a special Easter Egg. Thanks goes to all who cooked, cleaned, served, sang, or had some role to play in the big hierarchical weekend.

Annual Parish Picnic

This past September 2006 we tried something different with the Parish Picnic. We took it off-premises to Delcastle Park. It was extremely successful! Lots of parishioners came, as well as lots of visitors. As a result, the Parish Council has been asked to organize **two Park Picnics** next year.

The new Brotherhood

A effort is being made to form a "Brotherhood Organization" within the parish. So far the men have held two "Men's Night Out" as well as organized the Mother's Day Luncheon. Well done, Men!

The Sisterhood

The ladies of the parish continue to be most valuable service to the parish. The Sisterhood's Atlar Guild offered the church a beautiful set of gold altar covers, which Cheryl Zabowski sewed. (see their own separate report).

The Volunteer Drive

Volunteers are needed: for Parish Council, the Building Committee, Building and Grounds Committee, and the K.I.T. "Keeping In Touch" Outreach committee. Also, the Fellowship/coffee Hour needs a coordinator, the "*Communicator*" newsletter will need a new editor when Fran Wilson moves, the Sunday School needs a coordinator, and a coordinator is needed for the Church Cleaners.

Office Projects

The Spring 2006 Edition of the parish's "**Members and Friends Directory**" was issued. Vice-President Ed Torvik has been faithfully tested the new Orthodox **parish management software package** which was purchased and installed on the church computer (known as "Deacon 99"). Our Sunday **Bulletin** is being mailed (or emailed) 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

Thank you to the college OCF and high school students who helped Fr. Andrew paint the **rusty railings** last fall (thus saving the parish hundreds of dollars) and thanks to Stefan Stankov for painting the railings again this fall! Volunteers **waxed** the basement floor twice this past year and steam-cleaned the nave carpet. Thanks! Elizabeth Melnik kindly painted the entire **basement** and the stairs. Thanks! The hole in the nave ceiling was patched, along with some other minor repairs. A volunteer still cares for the church lawn (for free). Thanks! A volunteer sprayed for poison ivy. Thanks! A new snow removal contract was signed (because our previous snow-plower is out of the business). We only had a fair turn-out for our Fall and Spring clean-ups. Last year we failed to rake all the leaves, so in the Spring the poison ivy began to take over the back yard. Let's all work together! We need more helpers to come out to help with the clean-up days. Thanks to all who helped beautify the House of the Lord this past year.

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

New white gold covers, new gold icon stand covers. (Thank you ladies of the Sisterhood!). New library books and library shelf. (Thanks, donors!) New hand-carved wooden icon kiot (cover) for the St. Alexis reliquary icon (thank you Pierogie Bakers!). New icon of SS. Boris and Gleb (thanks, donor). New purple vestments for Lent (thanks to those who gave in memory of the late James Wilson). New computer and software for the church money-counting room (thanks to donors). Many other smaller icons and various gifts. (Apologies if anyone's gift was missed.)

By God's Grace, since October 2005, 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 prosphora, 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, Rector