



Your Eminence, brother clergy, and lay delegates and observers to the Diocesan Assembly,
Glory be to Jesus Christ!

It has been quite a year up in the North Country. When our diocese was meeting this time last year, our mission was figuring out how to only allow ten people at a time to worship in our small chapel located in a parishioner's home at the time. That gave us the extra drive to push into the new building as soon as possible - and we did. We celebrated the Nativity of our Lord in what is now our church building. We started off using the vacated space from the previous congregation until the paperwork all went through and slowly took over and began to set down some roots. We are now feeling at home in the building. It went from an old Congregational Church that we were using to what is now an Orthodox Church with only some echoes and shadows of the former occupants. However you slice it, you know you are walking into an Orthodox Church from all the familiar sights, smells and sounds.

We thought that we were walking into a fixer upper and would spend every dollar and hour on renovating the building. But to our surprise, and to our benefit, the church was move-in ready. Considering the building is 150 years old, it is in great shape - they don't make them like they used to. We thought that major work was going to need to be done in order just to worship there, but we were wrong. We have been checking off small projects each month and the few big things on the list are getting prioritized. We might call upon our diocesan brothers and sisters this summer for an Operation Potsdam to take a few things from the 19th into the 21st century - stay tuned.

Our finances are in a good place - thanks to the support from the diocese. There is approximately \$36,700 in our building fund and \$40,400 in our checking account. Right now, the monthly expenses are just under our monthly income, with the diocesan support going primarily to priest travel expenses.

Since we now are in a real, fully functioning, building that we own, there has been little stopping us from spreading the Good News of our Lord and the good news that we are there. We have attended two local festivals and many people stopped by to learn more about us. We have had people come to services simply to check us out, because they have been waiting for us to get into an actual church building, or because they are inquiring about the faith. All of this is really only possible since we are now in the "new" building.

Our numbers are small, but those that are here are dedicated to the Church. I would only expect our numbers to increase the more we focus our efforts on doing the Lord's will and having our doors open to the greater community. Our blend of music tries to make anyone, no matter what cultural background, feel at home at St. Olympia's. We have Great Vespers and Divine Liturgy every weekend and we were able to have quite a full Holy Week as well.

We are the only Orthodox Church in St. Lawrence county - the biggest county in NY and one of the least populated. God-willing, we can spread the word and give the people the church that they need.

In Christ,

Father Paul Fedoroff