

**NEW YORK STATE DEANERY**  
**THE DIOCESE OF NEW YORK AND NEW JERSEY**

Report to the 2022 Diocesan Assembly

Your Eminence, brother clergy, lay delegates and observers to the Diocesan Assembly

Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory Forever!

His Eminence Archbishop Michael, at the beginning of the pandemic said: "How are we as Orthodox Christians to respond to this crisis? Certainly not with fear! Corona-phobia could be as disastrous for us as the virus itself. How many times in the Scripture do we read the words of Our Lord: "Do not be afraid!" Does He not promise us, "I am with you always... even to the very end of the world"!

Our Chancellor, Fr. Joseph Lickwar, in his report to the last Diocesan Assembly stated: "The formation of the Parish Guidelines during the Pandemic has been a coordinated effort of His Eminence and the Diocesan Council in conjunction with the Holy Synod. Lack of establishing and observing guidelines among other Orthodox Churches world-wide have been catastrophic. While individuals have had covid, our parishes have not been devastated."

In an almost unprecedented display of governmental authority, church attendance has been severely curtailed. Authorities have directed that all gatherings be limited to fewer than 10. For 2 years, most of the Church worship services have ceased altogether.

As pandemic eased over the course of the last year, tremendous amount of work was devoted by His Eminence, Diocesan Council, Diocesan Legal Committee, Parish Priests and Parish Councils to create and implement the Guidelines for Gradual Reopening of our parishes and missions.

Pastorally this has created and continues to create the most significant challenge for most of our clergy, young and old. I talk to my brothers on an almost daily basis, and am both concerned with and inspired by, their effort to "thread the needle", in their very local and varied contexts. The issues of extremely polarized politics, health perspectives, safety perspectives, and many others, were serious challenges in every Parish and Mission, during last year, that His Eminence, Chancellors, Deans and Diocesan Council worked very hard to address and to resolve.

All the parishes in New York State Deanery have recovered fairly well from the stresses of the pandemic and shutdowns. Attendance has bounced back, and finances have stabilized. There are still occasional challenges with some positive COVID cases, but nothing that has shut down the parishes completely. Fellowship after the Liturgies on Sundays, Sunday Schools, Adult Education Programs, Youth and Outreach Ministries were reestablished. Each parish has a handful of people that have not returned after the reopening, but catechumens and new attendees seem to be on the rise. All the church buildings, their antimensons, and sacred vessels are in good order, and many renovation projects have been undertaken.

In my last year's NYS Deanery report it was stated - Our focus going forward should be:

- Getting people back to Church who stopped attending in person during the pandemic;
- Restarting youth ministries and evangelism ministries that were greatly reduced or ceased during the pandemic;
- Getting people more involved in parish life (or returning to pre-pandemic involvement)

As a Deanery, we have achieved many steps toward the accomplishment of those goals. Our clergy, youth, laity, Sunday Schools teachers and parish councils' representatives have planned, implemented and participated in following Deanery and Diocesan events, since last Diocesan Assembly:

- Altar Servers Retreat held in Wayne, New Jersey

- Deanery Christmas Clergy and Families Dinner with Archbishop Michael, in Syracuse
- Sunday School Teachers Workshops in Elmira and Syracuse
- Parish Council Conferences in Syracuse
- Parish Council Conferences in Watervliet
- Clergy Conference in Wappinger Falls
- 1<sup>st</sup> Mission and Evangelism School in Wappinger Falls
- Distinguished Diocesan Benefactors Dinner in Buffalo
- Distinguished Diocesan Benefactors Dinner in Watervliet
- St. Andrew's Camp – Clergy, laity, families and youth campers of our Deanery participated
- Deanery Lenten Clergy Meeting with Archbishop Michael in Syracuse
- Deanery Clergy and Families Picnic with Archbishop Michael, in Lansing
- Camping - Mountain Men's Respite: Acquiring Peace in the Midst of Chaos – scheduled Oct. 21-23
- Teen Retreat – Camp Ramapo, Rhinebeck NY – scheduled Nov. 18-20
- Continued Diaconate classes preparing candidate for Ordination to Holy Diaconate, in Endicott
- Deanery has 4 Seminarians at St. Tikhon's Seminary – 1 First Year and 3 Second Year Students

In addition, Deanery parishes that applied for PPP Loans (during the pandemic) have all received them, and in the course of the last year, as instituted by government, applied for PPP Loan Forgiveness. All Deanery parishes have received PPP Loan Forgiveness.

Our Deanery clergy and lay representatives participated monthly in a meeting of the Diocesan Council, assisting His Eminence in implementing his vision for our diocese, as well as meetings of Council of Presbyters, Diocesan Court, and meetings of the Chancellors and Deans with Archbishop Michael, to facilitate clergy transfers, filling vacancies, and resolving other administrative, canonical, and legal issues. In spite of challenges of pandemic and closure and reopening of our parishes, the deanery continues to be very active and focused on the growth of parishes and missions through ministries, outreach, education and evangelization. Currently, every parish, mission and institution in the New York State Deanery is being served by full-time priest or covered on a short and long-term basis, when emergencies arise.

We are grateful for the ministry of our deanery Deacons, to whom we express our gratitude for their faithful work: Rev. Protodeacon Andrew Boisvert (Binghamton) and Deacons Michael Burdikoff (Ballston Lake), Mark Bohush (Endicott/Bronxville), Demetrios Richards (Herkimer), Sean McNulty (Rochester), Alexander (Scott) Anderson (Syracuse), David Donch (Auburn), Michael Speck (Auburn), Ivan Bazarov (Lansing), Jason Gagnon (Watervliet), Shawn Karney (Elmira) and Stephan Karlgut (Bronxville).

We want to offer our gratitude to numerous volunteers in our parishes, deanery, and diocese, whose selfless and often unrecognized labors makes all the difference in the life of our communities. Thank-you, and may God bless you!

We want to acknowledge and thank our deanery clergy wives for their quiet support and service, that almost always goes unnoticed and unappreciated. Thank you Matushki and may our loving Lord reward you bountifully for your faith, love, and sacrifices!

Ultimately, we thank His Eminence, Archbishop Michael, for his love, humility, service, and for providing an icon of a true servant leader, during these most challenging times:

“Axios! Many years, Vladyko!”. Eis polla, eti Despota!

//signed//

Father Alexey Karlgut, Dean

New York State Deanery