

**NEW JERSEY DEANERY**  
**THE DIOCESE OF NEW YORK AND NEW JERSEY**  
Report to the 2022 Diocesan Assembly

Wednesday, November 2, 2022

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

Our deanery currently consists of twenty-seven parishes, missions, and institutions; all of them are being served by priests. In several cases, priests or deacons are assisting, or have assisted, parish priests who are physically limited in what they are able to do. We currently have two retired priests who are available to substitute for priests who need to be away from their parish's altar for a Sunday or a weekend. We pray that vocations are answered. We implore the faithful of our parishes to encourage young men to serve in the altar and to consider eventually serving the Church as members or the clergy.

As stated in last year's report, the major challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic appear to have subsided, but some continue to be a factor in parish life throughout the deanery. A handful of parishes continue to implement precautionary liturgical practices. Most parishes have essentially returned to "normal". However, in most every deanery parish there are people who are not yet comfortable returning to the Divine Services and the fellowship activities. We pray for the day when all the faithful will feel sufficiently confident to return to parish life, especially the sacramental life that is so essential to all Orthodox Christians.

The frequency of meetings for our deanery clergy has still not returned to a regular level. Zoom meetings continue to be an option, but ideally, future meetings must take place in person and on a regular basis. As Dean, I see this a major challenge and responsibility. I ask my brother deanery clergy to help make this happen.

On the Sunday of Orthodoxy this year, the Vespers for the day was served at Holy Resurrection Church in Wayne. It was at the Sunday of Orthodoxy Vespers in 2020, held at the same church, that the deanery had last gathered liturgically prior to the pandemic. Nearly as many clergy and faithful attended this year's service as had assembled for that large pre-pandemic gathering. Bishop Alexei, the soon-to-be elected and installed Bishop of Sitka and Alaska, presided and preached at the service, and delivered an inspiring talk on the Diocese of Alaska at the fellowship meal that followed.

In August, Archbishop Michael hosted a Clergy Picnic for the deanery clergy and their families at the rectory of Ss. Peter & Paul Church in Passaic. Those who gathered enjoyed the hospitality of Father Maryan and Matushka Svetlana Chaykivsky. However, the relatively low turnout indicates that the goodwill among deanery clergy still needs to be somewhat strengthened and rebuilt after our time spent apart from each other.

The diocesan practice of holding annual Parish Council Conferences and Church School Workshops resumed this year. Two parishes – St. Vladimir Church in Trenton and Holy Assumption Church in Clifton - hosted the Parish Council Conferences for our deanery clergy and faithful. Holy Trinity Church in Yonkers (NY) and Christ the Saviour Church in Paramus welcomed attendees for the Church School Workshops.

The Diocesan Youth Day activity was also reactivated, and a good number of deanery clergy, youth, and adult volunteers traveled to TreEscape Aerial Adventure Park in Vernon Township, NJ, for a day of fun and fellowship. Other diocesan activities, including a camping weekend for young adult men and a retreat for teens, are scheduled for this year but have yet to take place as of the writing of this report.

In July, deanery clergy and lay delegates gathered in Baltimore, MD, with others from throughout the OCA dioceses, for the All-American Council. Ideally, deanery parish delegates will report on the council when their next Annual Parish Meetings convene.

In pastoral changes, Father Leonid Schmidt, at his request, was released from his duties as Rector of Christ the Saviour Church in Paramus, NJ; Father John Morris was released from the NY State Deanery and assigned as Acting Rector of the parish. Deacon John Holoduek was ordained to the Holy Priesthood in September. Father Kyrill Riggs was granted retirement and was released from his responsibility as Rector of St. John the Baptist Church in Spring Valley; Father John Holoduek was assigned as Acting Rector of the parish. Archimandrite Joseph (Hoffman) continues to experience physical challenges this year; the Church of the Holy Transfiguration is receiving assistance in conducting the Divine Services from various deanery clergy. Father Daniel Skvir continues to be assisted by Father Alexander Smida in the pastoral duties at Holy Transfiguration Chapel in Princeton.

One hundred years ago, two events occurred that impacted our deanery. Sts. Peter and Paul Church in Bayonne was established, and Father Paul Shafran was born. May God grant Many Years to the faithful of Sts. Peter and Paul Church on the celebration of the parish's 100-year Anniversary! May God grant Many Years to Archpriest Paul Shafran on the occasion of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth.

As a deanery, we continue to strive to serve God and witness to His Good News. We pray that He continues to guide us in our efforts, and we give thanks to Him for providing the leadership of His Eminence, Archbishop Michael who shepherds us along the journey to His Heavenly Kingdom.

Respectfully submitted,

Archpriest Gary Joseph Breton, Dean