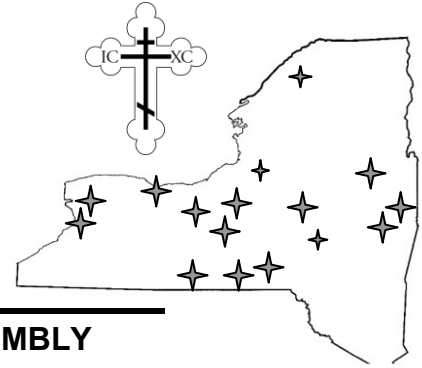


**New York State Deanery**  
Diocese of New York and New Jersey  
Orthodox Church in America



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**REPORT TO THE 2014 DIOCESAN ASSEMBLY**

Your Grace and Delegates to the Assembly,  
Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ!

27 October 2014

The past year was very active and positive in the life of the New York State Deanery, thanks to the vision and Archpastoral ministry of Bishop Michael and outstanding work, cooperation, goodwill, and sacrifices of our priests, deacons, and laity.

Our thanks go to Father Ken James Stavrevsky for his hard work to improve the communications in our deanery and for maintaining our beautiful diocesan website, probably the best in OCA! May God continue to bless him and his efforts.

We 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! May God bless and renew you in working out your salvation by reaching out to contribute your time and talents in the service to God and your church.

In spite of challenges, the deanery continues to be very active and focused on the growth of parishes and missions through ministries, outreach, education and evangelization. For example, the following has occurred:

Saints Peter & Paul Church in Endicott hosted the Diocesan Diaconate Formation Program every Saturday from January through end of May. Our diocesan students/graduates are doing great and are actively involved in service (*diaconia*) and witness (*martyria*) in their home parishes, deaneries, and the diocese.

Bishop Michael hosted a Christmas Social get-together for clergy and families of the deanery on Sunday, 29 December 2013 at Brothers 2 Restaurant, Endicott NY. It was a wonderful occasion for fellowship and celebration of the Nativity of our Lord with our Archpastor.

During the Theophany season, the Great Blessing of Waters at Cayuga Lake was hosted by Holy Apostles Mission in Lansing NY.

The New York State Deanery Family & Youth Retreat (7-9 February 2014) welcomed Bishop Michael as over 110 people participated in the three-day event at Greek Peak Resort in Cortland NY. The main theme challenged all participants, young and old, to compare and contrast the Kingdom of God with the kingdom of this world, and our place as being "in the world but not of the world," especially as it relates to peer-pressure and temptations. The atmosphere was one of trust, mutual acceptance, and love by time spent in conscious awareness that the Lord is present in all that is happening. The retreat concluded with the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy celebrated by His Grace at Holy Apostles Mission in Lansing.

Distinguished Diocesan Benefactors (DDBs) from throughout the New York State Deanery gathered on Sunday, 9 February, in Endicott NY for an Appreciation Dinner. During the year 2013, DDBs contributed a record-breaking total of \$145,194 to support vital ministries; the work of the Church is being funded as never before! There are visible “fruits” of their labors and efforts as mission parishes are being established and supported, seminarians are receiving scholarships, and struggling parishes are being revitalized. We ask for your continuous generous support of DDB Program,

The 4th Annual Diocesan Altar Servers Retreat (14 February to 16 February 2014) was held at Saint Basil Academy in Garrison NY. Over 45 participants were present for all or part of the weekend. Altar servers and clergy came from each of the three deaneries -- New York City, New Jersey, New York State -- as well as from the Moscow Patriarchate and Carpatho-Russian Diocese. Bishop Michael led the retreat together with four Priests, two Deacons, a Sub-deacon and Reader.

On Sunday, 9 March, Bishop Michael led the celebrations of the “Triumph of Orthodoxy” in Endicott. Dozens of local clergy and hundreds of faithful participated in services and a Lenten meal, graciously hosted by the parish.

A deanery meeting and Lenten Retreat (10 April) with a Continuing Clergy Education Program was held in Syracuse NY.

Saturday, May 3rd - NY State Deanery Evangelization Conference on the subject of Sharing the Orthodox Christian Faith in America was held in Elmira, with more than 50 participants (including 8 clergy), conducted by Fr. Andrew Stephen Damick. Presentations were outstanding, including many practical aspects of possible parish outreach and evangelization programs and tools that could be implemented by individuals and parishes, both small and large, to reach out to the un-churched and lapsed (former) parishioners, and to revitalize our witness to the communities surrounding our churches and missions.

- Saturday, June 14th - NY State Deanery Parish Council Conference on the subject of Church Vitality was held in Endicott, with more than 40 people in attendance (including 10 clergy), conducted by Fr. John Reeves. Presentation was well received and facilitated important and lively discussions.

- Tuesday, June 17th through 19th - large number of NY State Deanery clergy participated in Continuous Clergy Education Symposium, held at St. Tikhon's Theological Seminary, that provided outstanding presentations as well as opportunities for fellowship and discussions.

- Saturday, 21 June 2014, college students, clergy, and laity gathered at Holy Apostles Mission Parish in Lansing NY for “The Fields are White for Harvest: Welcome to College Ministry.” Father John Diamantis (Chairman, Diocesan Department of College Ministry) remarked: “It is appropriate and inspiring for us to meet at a mission parish for this conference since the spirit of missions, which the Apostles had, is embodied in this community and permeates every aspect of what we all will be doing with college ministry. More than just a way of keeping our own students connected to the Church, college ministry offers a fantastic opportunity to reach the un-churched and lapsed.”

Sunday, July 27th - NY State Deanery Clergy and Families Picnic was held in Auburn, hosted by His Grace Bishop Michael. It brought together 30-40 priests, deacons, Matushki, and children for the purpose of strengthening our bonds of clergy brotherhood in the deanery with each other, and our Archpastor.

Saturday, August 9th - NY State Deanery Sunday School Teachers and Parents Conference was held in Watervliet, addressing the crucial need of educating our youth, and involving them in singing and worship of the church.

Youth and clergy from NY State Deanery parishes and missions were actively involved in St. Tikhon's and St. Andrew's Summer Camps (during July and first week of August), as camp directors, counselors, and campers; especially from Rochester, Endicott, Lansing, Buffalo, and few others, in substantial numbers.

September 3rd-4th - ANNUAL CLERGY CONFERENCE. Priests and deacons from across the farthest reaches of the diocese -- downstate NJ (Mays Landing) to upstate NY (Buffalo) -- gathered with Bishop Michael in Clifton NJ, at Assumption of the Holy Virgin Church, for the 2014 Diocesan Clergy Conference. Nine accredited hours of Clergy Continuing Education [CCE] were available to meet the annual requirement of twenty CCE credits established by the Orthodox Church in America for all clergy. In addition, priests and deacons enjoyed and benefited from fellowship in prayer, unity in study, spiritual renewal, and a strengthening of brotherly affection among pastoral ministers.

Recent Parish Anniversaries were celebrated in NY State Deanery:

- Rochester NY, 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary
- Endicott NY, 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary
- Cohoes NY, 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary
- Buffalo NY (Saints Peter & Paul), 120<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

May God grant clergy and faithful of these parishes Many Years!

Pastoral Changes:

Father Igor Burdikoff, Rector of Christ the Savior Church in Ballston Lake, has been granted retirement and attached to Christ the Savior parish. We offer our gratitude to Fr. Igor for his many decades of faithful service to the parish, deanery, diocese, and the OCA! God grant him health, salvation, furtherance in all good things, and preserve him for Many Years!

Father Matthew Markewich was assigned as Acting Rector of Christ the Savior Church in Ballston Lake and we welcome him into our deanery and the diocese, and wish him and Matushka with children every success, as they begin their service in the parish.

An alarming number of priests in NY State Deanery parishes are dealing with health issues, illnesses, and problems; both chronic and acute:

- Father John Udics (recovering from triple bypass much slower than anticipated)
- Father Ken James Stavrevsky
- Father Stephen Mack
- Father Jason Kappanadze
- Father John Chupeck
- Father Herman Schick (retired)
- Father David Edwards (OCA, Canada) serving mission station in Potsdam
- Father Igor Burdikoff (retired)

We ask for your continued prayers for their recovery and health.

Those priests mentioned above are assisted in serving their parishes by the ministry of our deanery Deacons, to whom we express our gratitude for their faithful work: Rev. Proto-deacons Michael Speck (Auburn), Andrew Boisvert (Binghamton), Stephen Sweet (Rochester), and Deacons Michael Burdikoff (Ballston

Lake), Mark Bohush (Syracuse), Gregory White (Elmira), Simeon Peet (Endicott), Dimitrios Richards (Herkimer), and Dr. Mark Hoepflinger (Buffalo).

In addition, we are grateful for selfless ministries of Father Timothy Holowatch and + Fr. John Bohush (both from Endicott), who assisted and continue to help in our deanery parishes in Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, Lansing, Oneonta, Cohoes, Watervliet, Elmira, Potsdam, Ballston Lake, and Herkimer, when Rectors are sick, recovering from surgeries, away on vacations and family emergencies, and when our parishes are vacant or between assignments of Rectors. Thank you Fathers for your commitment and love, through which hundreds of faithful in our deanery are touched, and numerous priests are helped in the time of need.

**MEMORY ETERNAL!** Father John Bohush (Saints Peter & Paul Church, Endicott NY) fell-asleep in the Lord on Monday, 8 September. Well-known and beloved throughout the diocese, especially in the NY State Deanery for his extensive travels and labors assisting parishes during times of pastoral need, Father John's passing was sudden and heartbreaking. We offer our love and condolences to Matushka Joanna and children (John-John and Tatiana), and the Bohush and Pianovich families.

We have also welcomed Father Terry Baz into our deanery, (accepted into the OCA and our diocese), and Father Vladimir Kantor (Diocese of Mexico, OCA), both residents of Syracuse, who assisted in our deanery when 4 to 6 deanery parishes needed to be covered simultaneously, on the same weekend. We are very grateful for their willingness to help!

Currently, every parish and mission in NY State Deanery is being served by full-time priest or covered on a short and long term basis, when emergencies arise. While being able to fill all the pastoral needs of NY State Deanery with the help of attached priests and deacons, we must begin to recruit younger priests aggressively from seminaries, other dioceses, and jurisdictions.

#### Missions

Endicott NY - We plan to start Slavonic Divine Liturgies on Saturdays, beginning in mid-November, in an effort to minister to numerous Slavic background Orthodox Christians residing in two-hour radius area around Triple-Cities. There is no church (including ROCOR and MP) that addresses the needs of recent Orthodox Christian immigrants (Ukrainian, Russian, Belorussian, Carpatho-Russian, Bulgarian, Serbian, and Polish), and that celebrates Divine Services and especially the Divine Liturgy fully in Church Slavonic. To implement this, we have prepared music and rehearsed all the services in Church Slavonic, appointed and prepared second choir director; professional base, soprano and alto singers fully fluent in music and language (native Russian speakers), and working on the plan to advertise beginning of this mission to Slavic people through targeted mailing, personal contacts, and the word of mouth.

Potsdam NY - Mission Station is being served by Father. David Edwards (OCA, Canada) and +Father John Bohush (Endicott), and we have received the request to cover services there from mid-November through February. Mission chapel is located in a wonderful solarium of founding member of the parish (chair of music department in the university), whose property borders the campus, and is fully appointed with iconostasis, icons, altar and proscomidia tables, and all other needed liturgical implements, as well as space for coffee and fellowship hour. Attendance varies from 15 to 25 people with number of university and college students coming for the services, during school year. We will need to look for a mission-minded priest who would be willing to move there and to work to grow this mission in this excellent university town, in the northern corner of NY State Deanery, close to Canadian border, where no other parishes exist.

Oneonta NY - Saint Innocent Mission has finally severed its ties with Holy Myrrhbearers Convent and moved to Oneonta's downtown. It is probably the most significant step in growing the mission

and expanding its ministries and outreach, most especially to university and college students. Father Timothy Holowatch served at the mission on Sunday in July (Father David Poling, Matushka and their three children were away to the conference) and reported attendance of over 25 people with a lot of children, wonderful spirit, and an excellent sounding choir. The church is fully set up and functioning, including coffee and fellowship hour; and now that it is separated from the convent, it will have a more welcoming atmosphere for younger families with children, catechumens, educational and social programs, outreach; and much easier accessibility for college students participation.

Lansing NY - Holy Apostles Mission is doing great, under the leadership of Father James Worthington, and has more than doubled in last year and a half. As the cornerstone and the vision of the mission from it's very inception, it is centered on Liturgical Services and on robust ministry, education, outreach and service to utterly broken, the hungry, and the sick; providing for spiritual and fellowship needs of university and college students who are away from their home parishes (Cornell University and Ithaca College), and aspiring to live and to follow a call - to give all for the Gospel of Christ. Services including Vespers, Morning and Evening Prayers, weekday Divine Liturgies, Moliebens, and others, are celebrated six days a week, in addition to Sunday and Feast-day Liturgies. As part of its mission and vision, Holy Apostles is very actively engaged in local community, both civil and ecumenical, as well as in Fellowship of Orthodox Students on two campuses. The rectory situation (housing for Father James and family) is good and stable, however, the mission is at the point of outgrowing its current facilities (rented old and small Roman Catholic church), especially for coffee and fellowship hour, and educational and outreach programs (as we are limited by the amount of time on Sundays); and we are actively pursuing other viable options for next stages of mission's growth and expansion.

Our Deanery clergy and lay representatives participated monthly in a meetings of Diocesan Council, assisting His Grace in implementing his vision for our diocese, as well as meetings of Council of Presbyters, Diocesan Court, and meetings of the Chancellor and Deans with Bishop Michael, to facilitate clergy transfers, filling vacancies, and resolving other administrative, canonical, and legal issues.

Diocesan Administration reorganized by Bishop Michael, with the assistance of Chancellor, Deans, Diocesan Council, and Council of Presbyters are functioning efficiently, with an overall goal of strengthening and growing the parishes and outreach ministries in our diocese.

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!

All the parishes, missions and camps of the NY State Deanery were visited by His Grace, Bishop Michael, on regular basis and often multiple times. We are grateful for His Grace's Archpastoral care, love and kindness.

//signed//

Father Alexey Karlgut, Dean  
New York State Deanery