

HOLY APOSTLES ORTHODOX CHURCH

345 Ridge Rd • Lansing NY 14882

September 15, 2023
Gr. Mtr. Nicetas the Goth

Dear Vladyka, fathers, brothers and sisters,

¶ The Lord continues to work in Lansing, NY. It hasn't been a year of "big events," outwardly, but things are happening quietly that we trust will soon bear fruit.

¶ Attendance at Sunday Divine Liturgy averages around 38 souls; Saturday Vespers around 10; and weekday Liturgies (typically one or two per week) also around 10. We also replaced our weekly Wednesday Matins service, which very few people attended, with a weekly Vespers service (also on Wednesdays), which has drawn a few more people. The population in our area is highly transient, and we see people moving to the area and moving away with some regularity. Over the past few years we've increasingly built up a base of people established in the area long-term, while continuing to serve the ever-transient population connected with the University.

¶ We've had two infant baptisms, with no adult converts received this year. But we have a group of seven catechumens and inquirers (not counting two young children), at various stages on the path toward joining the Church.

¶ Our building fund passed the \$100,000 mark around the end of last year, and is now at about \$115,000. We've developed a basic design for a new temple to be built; that "vision," while it will need to be fine-tuned into a final design, has been a great blessing in giving us a sense of direction. Less excitingly, but just as importantly, we've done a great deal of research on local zoning, codes and permits. We've looked at a few pieces of land, and while none of them have been quite what we need, they've helped us to refine our understanding of what we do need and how to work with it. So we've made a good deal of important progress, even if there aren't many major events to report. In the meantime, we

continue to meet in the old church building that we rent from All Saints Roman Catholic Church. While the need for a place of our own has become increasingly clear over time, we remain deeply thankful for this place, which has been a wonderful one in which to begin establishing ourselves. We continue to pray at every service for our building project, and to hold a moleben especially for this cause once per month, and we eagerly anticipate what God will bring about in his time.

¶ For several years we've had an annual practice of blessing Cayuga Lake on or shortly after Theophany. This year, we served the water blessing jointly with St. Catherine's Greek Orthodox Church in Ithaca, at a more visible location than where we had done it previously, and attracted some local media coverage by doing so. Blessing the lake, which is the most defining geographical feature of this area, has always been an important symbol (in a theologically-rich sense of that term) of our work to sanctify the place where God has put us; we were grateful also to be able to make it more of a public witness to Orthodoxy. This also reflects the ongoing effort to foster a spirit of cooperation, rather than rivalry, with our Orthodox neighbors at the Greek parish.

¶ We continue to be active in campus ministry at Cornell, which during the 2022-2023 academic year finally returned more or less to pre-COVID norms. Cornell OCF was able once again to bring guest speakers to campus, which has historically been an important part of Orthodox outreach at Cornell and which we hope to continue in the coming academic year. There is a lively group of students that meets weekly for prayer, fellowship, and discussions about the faith, travels regularly to monasteries, and participates in the life of both Holy Apostles and St. Catherine's. This is another area of cooperation between the parishes, since students attend both parishes and since both parishes' priests take an

active role in ministering to the students, including attending meetings. Our work is not to “claim” the students to grow the numbers of either parish – they leave after a few years anyway – but to make their time in college a time of spiritual growth, and send out better-prepared Orthodox Christians into the world to serve the Church wherever God may place them.

¶ We remain grateful for the prayers and support of everyone in the Diocese. Our parishes and missions

are not, or shouldn't be, just isolated entities each looking out for itself, but local presences of the One Church of Christ, all striving together to advance the work of his kingdom in this world. We're in that work with you, and grateful that you're in it with us, and grateful most of all that that work is carried on with the help of God.

In Christ,
Presbyter Joel Neyer Brady, Rector