

2024 ANNUAL PASTORAL REPORT

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Glory to Jesus Christ!

On behalf of the parish council and our entire parish family, I express my sincere and heartfelt thanks and appreciation for your continued love, support, prayers, generosity, and stewardship for our parish and for all that you do to assist myself and the parish family in carrying out and fulfilling the work that has been entrusted to us of living, proclaiming and sharing The Gospel Message of Our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ and for our making SS. Peter and Paul Church a loving Spiritual Parish Home for all who want to come and know Christ, live Christ, love Christ, and follow Christ!

We express our heartfelt gratitude for your faithful support. Your generosity allows us to look to the future with hope and confidence. Thank you for continuing to aid our church family through your benevolence. Just under \$60,000 – And, it has only been slightly over one year, but we exceeded the Capital Project Fund goal of \$50,000!!! As reported over the course of this year, we have worked or continue to be working on several major projects.

- Church basement library and Sunday school room clean-up and restoration after flooding.
- Nearly completed basement restoration after flooding in the rectory including electrical updates, new dry wall, paint, ceiling tiles, and soon flooring.
- Cutting and removing hazardous trees in the church cemetery.
- Cleaning and painting of the church domes, which was a major Capital Improvement project; shed, and rectory porch.
- Restoration of brick masonry on rectory front porch.
- Restoration of stained-glass windows (amt. not covered by insurance) that were vandalized.

We will continue to ask for donations that specifically go into the Capital Project Fund. There are still numerous repairs and maintenance of our beautiful church, rectory, and cemetery that need preservation and protection. Thank you for your continued support and contributions.

In addition, in collaboration with Binghamton University, Professor Sina Saneiya and some of his students from the Earth Science department, the Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) has been employed to scan the length of our cemetery. They will provide us with images of where our loved ones are buried and allow us to maintain up-to-date and accurate visual representation of the whole cemetery. Thank you to Deb Darling for spearheading this project!

We want to thank His Eminence, Archbishop Michael, for visiting our parish multiple times a year, giving awards to our Readers Paul Holowatch, Alexey Karlgut, Michael Karlgut and Andrew Karlgut of the right to wear Orarions, as blessed Subdeacons. Congratulations to them! His love, humility, service, and providing an icon of a true servant leader inspires us all in serving our church and our people. But special gratitude we offer to Archbishop Michael for his tireless efforts to raise funds for our St. Olympia Mission. Special Christmas charity concert with world renowned musicians - The Soul of Romanticism – took place on Sunday, December 29th. A reception was held following the performance. All the profits were donated to the relief from catastrophic flood of hurricane Debbie to Saint Olympia Orthodox Mission in Norwood/Potsdam, New York. Through sponsorship, donations large and small, and sales of tickets for the concert, we were able to raise and donate \$20,000.00 on that evening! Thank you and God bless you all!

We also hosted New York State Deanery Parish Councils Conference and New York State Deanery Altar Servers Retreat during this past year. Over 100 participants came from around New York State and enjoyed our parish

hospitality! Thank you to all that helped with providing multiple and delicious meals and assisted in set up and clean up for those events! May God Bless you!

Throughout each year we have a very active liturgical life where clergy and laity join together in praising and worshipping Christ, experiencing the life of God's Kingdom here and now. We celebrate a complete Great Lent, Paschal, Nativity, and Theophany cycles; Major and Minor Feasts, Baptisms, Chrismations, Weddings, Anniversary and Healing Prayer services, Blessing of houses, Soul Saturdays, Funerals, Panikhidas (memorial services), Blessing of the Cemetery and of the graves, in addition to the Divine Liturgies, Great Vespers and Matins.

All of these services, events and ministries take place in our beautiful church, that is lovingly maintained and beautified which in itself is a great feat of love, effort, and dedicated labor by volunteers, expertly coordinated by Dick Sura, Dave Williams and volunteers. In addition to the parish church and the rectory, parking lots, driveways, lawns and bushes, outstanding care is provided for our departed loved ones in our parish cemetery.

Throughout the year, the church, hall, Sunday School rooms and library/board room is cleaned, vacuumed and washed on a weekly basis. During Lenten and Paschal seasons, this is done multiple times each week. The above involves cleaning, painting, fixing and repairing the heating equipment, elevator repairs and servicing, lighting fixtures, kitchen equipment, refrigerators and freezers; additionally, the exterior lawns and greenery are lovingly maintained. For the holiday seasons of Nativity and Pascha, the church is lovingly and beautifully decorated with Christmas trees, seasonal decorations, and flowers. The maintenance and beautification of our church and parish properties requires incredible effort from the entire parish community. This is clearly evident and commented upon by visitors to our parish.

I would like to thank for their selfless and sacrificial service Fr. Timm Holowatch, Fr. Nikolay Khalimonov, all of our Deacons, Subdeacons, Readers and altar servers who enable us to expand our services and outreach ministries in our parish and beyond. Thank you and God bless you for your love and service to our people!

Thanks to our Sunday school coordinators, volunteer teachers and staff, as well as parents, for being responsible and active, and all parishioners that truly make our youth a priority in the church! May God bless you and reward you with manifold riches for your love for our kids!

Thanks to our choir under the direction of our choir director Matushka Tatiana Khalimonov, who make all our services so beautiful, to our hard workers of bake sales, fundraisers, educational, and social activities that throughout the year work with outstanding commitment and love; to all volunteers of our outreach ministries - God sees your love and giving - you will hear the promised words of our Lord: "Well done, good and faithful servant!"

And finally, I express our gratitude to our parish council and its president Joe Darling for their faithfulness, love, kindness, stewardship, and for enabling and facilitating proper Christian functioning of our parish on day-to-day basis, and for their labors of love during past and extremely challenging year, and to all of our beloved parishioners and friends for your generosity, faithfulness and support!

May God grant you all Many Years!

Be assured of my prayers that the Lord will bless you, your families, and your loved ones with the light and Joy of His presence during this holy season and throughout the New Year.

With love in Christ,

Fr. Alexey