

Saint Mark Orthodox Church

Archdiocese of Washington DC – Orthodox Church in America

President's Report

April 26, 2022

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We have just completed a blessed, prayerful Holy Week and a joyous Pascha. While the services were not as well attended as before the forced shutdowns, the attendance was good. Our choir in particular was very close to full strength. We were missing several choir members from past years due to people moving out of town or finding new parish homes during the covid situation, but we also gained several new members who helped bolster those who were continuing. It was so uplifting to have five Baptisms and a Chrismation during the Holy Saturday services.

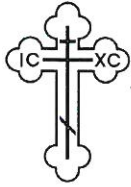
In a related and exciting development, our “most valuable player” Sharon Carter (Administrative Assistant, Parish Treasurer, IT expert/YouTube coordinator/faithful choir member for weekday services) is now adding another job description: Choir Director! Sharon has directed several services in the past couple of months and has been doing very well.

A year ago, we remained under attendance limits and mask mandates. This year, we had no such limits and masks are no longer required. Several parish members contracted covid, but thankfully the virus has not been widespread within our parish community. We were able to hold our annual Food Festival in November 2021. Given the uncertainty we faced at the time with lingering covid fears, it must be considered quite a success.

The All-American Council of the Orthodox Church in America remains scheduled for July 18 – 22, 2022 in Baltimore. The OCA is looking for volunteers to help out with this event.

Our 50th Anniversary Committee, under the leadership of co-chairs Sarah Borger and Jerry Marti, is continuing its good work to prepare for our Parish celebration this coming September. The Committee will report on its progress at the Semi-Annual Meeting.

The Pew Committee, under the leadership of Tom Jenkins, signed a contract for the new pews. Tom will answer any questions on this at the upcoming meeting. It appears that the new pews may be installed before the 50th Anniversary celebration. We also intend to have a contract signed before the meeting for the installation of new carpet throughout the entire church, including the Altar area and the choir loft.



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The Iconography Committee began meeting again and is moving ahead with another phase of iconography. This too will be described at our meeting by Paulina Masick, who has worked tirelessly to keep this project advancing.

There have been some disappointments. Several families joined other parishes during the covid restrictions. Several families and individuals moved away from the DC area when they discovered that they could work remotely.

We continue to be blessed in many ways. Several new families have moved into the area and joined our parish. There have been numerous catechumens. A year ago, I reported that overall donations had declined. This year it is my pleasure to report that 2021 ended up with increased donations, and the first few months of 2022 have also been strong. The new pews and carpet will be a significant expense for which additional donations will be welcomed. Our loan comes due in one year. I have been in discussions with our bank about extending the loan now so that we don't face a time crunch next year.

We continue to live stream all our services. With virtual meetings we have been in community even though we are not physically together. Our coffee hours have returned, enabling greater fellowship.

If you know of anyone who has stopped attending, give some thought to contacting them to encourage their return. We read that attendance is down at most churches since the shutdowns began. Perhaps a kind word, or a show of concern, will encourage someone to return to the Church. We need to do this out of love for others. If we truly believe our Faith, then we want others to be part of the Body of Christ for their own joy and salvation (and not because we selfishly want our "numbers" to improve).

With love in Christ,

Wayne G. Tatusko

Parish Council President