

July 2017



SAINT INNOCENT ORTHODOX CHURCH

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July 2017 Newsletter

Parish Report for St. Innocent Orthodox Church

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Every year I am asked to give a report on our parish for the Diocese of the South's annual assembly. Here is what I submitted for this year.

This past year things have been going well at St. Innocent Orthodox Church. Sunday attendance has continued to hover around 50-60 people and at times this swells to 70 or so. Of course, at Pascha the church is full. This year we have added a few inquirers and catechumens. We continue to have sporadic visitors; it seems that God is always sending people to us.

The day to day ministries of the parish continue. Church school is still going well and is divided into three groups. The choir meets regularly for practice and continues to grow in talent and ability. The prison ministry still meets weekly at Central State Prison in Macon. In prison our typical gathering has around 12



attendees. This year we updated our website to be mobile friendly. We continue to post sermons and classes on YouTube. We continue to have adult education classes on Sundays. Fr. Theophan continues to be regularly invited to the local colleges to give presentations on Orthodox Christianity. Fr. Herman from St.

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Tikhon's Monastery gave our well attended Lenten retreat this year.

This past September we celebrated our 20th anniversary (since the founding of St. Innocent Mission). Archbishop Alexander joined us for our celebration and served the first Hierarchal Liturgy since the consecration of our church by Archbishop Dmitry in 2004. As part of this anniversary event we released a mini documentary which featured interviews with a few of the original founders. We also published a 20th anniversary magazine which gave a historical narrative of our past, present, and our future hopes and dreams. It was a blessed weekend.

This past year our main priority has become doing the work necessary to design and finance a permanent parish hall. We completed the design and financing work after Pascha and with Archbishop Alexander's blessing, construction of our new parish hall will start this (current) July and should take around ten months to complete. The plan is to have our fellowship hour at a local parishioner's house and possible other families will host as well. We have always felt constricted by our fellowship space. Church School and classes are often held at odd times to accommodate our lack of space. With the new parish hall, it is our hope that we will be able to host events and do greater outreach to our area.

As we head into our 21st year it is our hope that God would continue to grace us, guide us, send us spiritually hungry people and help us to do His work in the Middle Georgia region.

Many Years!

Birthdays 5--Radu Malcoci
6--Evan Lee
7--Jacqueline Stephens
12--John Hintermaier
17--Pavel Osobov
22--Jacob Hintermaier
28--Sandi Wilcox

Anniversaries

16--Thomas and Susan Kehayes

Announcements

- On Sunday, July 2nd we will have an Outreach Committee Meeting. Please come if you are interested.
- Before the trailer can be removed we will have to empty the current parish hall and store our stuff. On Saturday, July 8th we will have a work day to pack, store and clean the parish hall before it is removed by Mod Space.
- On Sunday the 9th we will pass the offering plate at the end of the Liturgy to collect donations and pledges for the Building our Future/Parish hall fund.
- On Sunday July 9th we will have a Molebin for the Beginning of Work immediately following the Liturgy. Bring extra food if you can, this will be the last Sunday of fellowship in our current parish hall.
- The trailer is scheduled to be removed July 12-15th.
- Andrew and Jessica will be married in Atlanta on Sunday, July 16th!
- We will have porta potty bathrooms, one for men and one for women, after the trailer is removed.
- The construction is scheduled to take 10 months which means we will be without a parish hall until May next year.
- Fr. Theophan will be in Chattanooga TN at the DOS Assembly July 24-28.
- On Sunday July 30th we will serve the Baptismal Divine Liturgy. Many (6 or so) in the Savage family will be baptized!
- Confessions are heard ***every Saturday after Great Vespers*** or before Sunday Liturgy between 9:15- 9:40am. There is no need to schedule an appointment unless it is outside of the above times.

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Parish Hall Project- Concrete ways you can help:

Over-all Project

- Please continue to pray for our community and the project; that God would bless and order the construction process.
- Please take a look at the Building our Future Capital Campaign flier and consider pledging. Give your best gift. Any money contributed towards this the Parish Hall project will reduce debt load.

Trailer removal:

- We have to pack and move everything in the trailer which is a lot of work.
- Do you have any free room for us to store things that require a temperate environment? Let Fr. Theophan know.
- Do you have any boxes you can give for storage? Bring them to church as soon as you can.
- Are you good a packing? Come anytime the first week of July and help pack the trailer.
- On Saturday and Sunday July 8-9th will be our last weekend in the trailer. On Saturday the 8th we are going to move everything out of the trailer. Come help us pack and move all of our belongings. We are going to need all the help we can get.

Fellowship space

- Once the current parish hall is removed we will not have any dedicated fellowship space. Olivia has offered her home and Fr. Theophan is in discussion with Mt. Zion about using their space once in a while. Would you will willing to host a coffee hour at your home?

That our God will bless the good intent of His servants and that He will be well-pleased that we may begin favorably and finish quickly, without any obstacle, unto His glory, by the power, activity and grace of the Most-holy Spirit, let us pray to the Lord.

That He will grant assistance unto the workers that labor in this work, and direct the work of their hands; and that He will speedily bring it to fulfillment, by the power, activity and grace of the Most-holy Spirit, let us pray to the Lord.

That He will grant assistance unto His servants that, their efforts may be with ease, by the power, activity and grace of His Most-holy Spirit, let us pray to the Lord.

That He will appoint a Guardian Angel for this work and to the workers to drive away, invisibly, every contrary action of enemies, both visible and invisible; that He will grant assistance in everything, both that the work will progress in wisdom and that it will end in perfection, by the power, activity and grace of His Most-holy Spirit, let us pray to the Lord.¹

¹ St. Tikhon's Monastery (Trans.). (1999). *The Great Book of Needs: Expanded and Supplemented* (Vol. IV, p. 282). South Canaan, PA: St. Tikhon's Seminary Press.

Chairs in our Church



Once in a while there are problems that arise in any church community that are actually good. Recently, during the Divine Liturgy I turned around and noticed that the church was full of people. This meant that there were no seats for guests. A full church is a good problem to have! July 1st this year marks my 7th anniversary at St. Innocent. My first Liturgy after my placement at St. Innocent was on July 4th. At that time I turned around to bless the people and was greeted with about 10-15 faces. In general, our church is consistently filled on Sunday's, even during the summer months. There are thin Sunday's but even when it is thin we have over 30 people.

In classic culture, polite society, and even now in 2017, when all seats are taken in any given space it is considered a virtue to give our seats to our guests or those who have the most need. Traditionally, men and children, would vacate their seat for a lady, and elder, or a woman with child. Here is what I am saying in plain language. When the church is full we need to be mindful to give up our seats to those who need them more than we do.

Here are some other quirky things that happen in Orthodox Churches that I have seen as it relates to chairs. 1. People will put their "stuff" on or under a chair to mark it as their own...but never actually sit in the chair! If you stand for most of the service you don't need to mark a chair. 2. There are mystical boundaries

in many churches... I mean the rugs :) You can stand almost anywhere in an Orthodox Church that does not get in the way of the liturgical celebration. 3. Some fear standing in front of people who are sitting. I agree, normally this is odd, you do not want to obstruct others view. However, it is totally normal in the Orthodox Churches throughout the world where most of the benches line the back wall and side walls. In most of the world if you did not stand in front of someone, everyone would have to sit.

A few solutions to our chair shortage when the church is full:

- If you are able bodied, stretch yourself, work on standing for the entire service.
- If you do not need a chair - give it up for a guest. Give up your chair for our elders. Give up your chair for pregnant women.
- Children should feel free to sit on the floor if they need to. Parents can also sit on the floor if they like. This actually is fairly typical in the OCA. At St. Tikhon's where there were not many chairs it was common for people to sit on the floor during the sermon our announcements. The rugs are not boundaries.
- Move to the front where there is more space.
- Some would suggest that we should simply get more chairs. There is little room for more chairs. Our church was not designed to have pews. Even if we add a few chairs this is going to continue to be an issue.

If you are interested in the history of pews and sitting in Church here is a good article link. ["The History of Pews Is Just as Terrible and Embarrassing as You'd Imagine" by Luke T. Harrington](#)

Tentative July 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 6pm Great Vespers 6:45pm Confessions
2 9:40am 3 & 6 th Hours 10am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape Outreach Committee	3	4	5 6pm Daily Vespers	6 1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry	7	8 Parish Hall work day 6pm Great Vespers 6:45pm Confessions
9 9:40am 3 & 6 th Hours 10am Divine Liturgy Molebin for the Starting of a Good Work 11:45am Agape	10	11	12 <i>Trailer Removal</i> 6pm Daily Vespers	13 <i>Trailer Removal</i> 1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry 7pm Parish Council	14 <i>Trailer Removal</i>	15 10am Wedding rehearsal in Atl 6pm Great Vespers 6:45pm Confessions
16 9:40am 3 & 6 th Hours 10am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape 4:30 pm Wedding in Atl	17 <i>Fr. Theophan day off</i>	18	19 6pm Daily Vespers	20 1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry	21 6pm Paraklesis (Prayer Group)	22 6pm Great Vespers 6:45pm Confessions
23 9:40am 3 & 6 th Hours 10am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape	24 <i>DOS Assembly in Chattanooga TN</i>	25 <i>DOS Assembly in Chattanooga TN</i>	26 <i>DOS Assembly in Chattanooga TN</i>	27 <i>DOS Assembly in Chattanooga TN</i>	28 <i>DOS Assembly in Chattanooga TN</i>	29 6pm Great Vespers 6:45pm Confessions
30 9:40am 3 & 6 th Hours 10am Baptismal Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape	31 <i>Fr. Theophan day off</i>					

Tentative August 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 <i>Dormition Fast begins</i> 6pm Paraklesis	2 6pm Daily Vespers	3 1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry 6pm Paraklesis	4	5 6pm Vigil for Transfiguration
6 Holy Transfiguration 9:40am 3 & 6 th Hours 10am Festal Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape	7	8 6pm Paraklesis	9 6pm Daily Vespers	10 1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry 6pm Paraklesis	11	12 6pm Great Vespers 6:45pm Confessions
13 9:40am 3 & 6 th Hours 10am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape	14 6pm Vigil w/lamentations	15 9am Divine Liturgy Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos	6pm Daily Vespers	1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry 7pm Parish Council		6pm Great Vespers 6:45pm Confessions
20 9:40am 3 & 6 th Hours 10am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape Parish Update	21	22	23 6pm Daily Vespers	24 1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry	25	26 6pm Great Vespers 6:45pm Confessions
27 9:40am 3 & 6 th Hours 10am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape	28	29	30 6pm Daily Vespers	31 1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry		