

St. Mary Antiochian Orthodox Church celebrates 110th anniversary

St. Mary's will celebrate its 110th anniversary Friday through Sunday.

The committee will hold a covered dish event at 6 p.m. Friday in the church hall. On Saturday at 5 p.m., there will be Great Vespers with the Rite Rev. Bishop Thomas, auxiliary bishop of Charleston, Oakland and the Mid-Atlantic, the Very Rev. David Hester and former pastors of St. Mary's, followed by a Middle-Eastern dinner in the church hall with both American and Middle Eastern music. Sunday at 10 a.m., the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy will be celebrated with the Rite Rev. Bishop Thomas, the Very Rev. David Hester and visiting clergy followed by a coffee social in the church hall. At 4 p.m. Sunday, parishioners will gather at the Mohegan Sun Banquet Center in Palms Township for the grand banquet celebration.

St. Mary's traces their roots directly back to first century Antioch, the city in which the disciples of Jesus Christ were first called "Christians" (Acts 11:26) to the original church established by saints Peter and Paul. The Orthodox Church is the oldest Christian group in the world.

St. Mary's is a parish of the Self-Ruled Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese of North America in the Diocese of Charleston, Oakland and the Mid-Atlantic. St. Mary's is one of the oldest Antiochian Orthodox parishes in America, founded by St. Raphael Hawaweeny, Bishop of Brooklyn, in 1864. It is sixth in his list of parishes. The parish is now 110 years old. Its first pastor, the Rev. Michael Saba, began his work in March 1964; the same month St. Raphael was consecrated bishop of Brooklyn.

The chronology of pastoral leadership includes: the

Very Rev. George Kartout, 1967-1972; the Very Rev. Zina Xanthopoulos, 1972-1977; the Very Rev. Abdallah Khoury, 1977-1999; the Very Rev. Constantine Abou-Adal, 1929-1931; the Very Rev. George Mitchell, 1931-1940; the Very Rev. Anthony Sakey, 1940-1945; the Very Rev. Nicholas Husson, 1945-1951; the Very Rev. Herbert G. Nahas, 1951-1986; the Very Rev. Edward Hughes, 1986-1989; the Very Rev. Mark Sabady, 1989-1994; the Very Rev. Thomas Zain, 1994-1997; the Very Rev. John Whitney, 1997-2000; the Very Rev. David Hester, 2000 to present.

In 1969, a new church was erected at its present location, 905 South Main St., Wilkes-Barre, under the leadership of the Very Rev. Herbert G. Nahas. At the present time, St. Mary's

Antiochian Orthodox Church has some 250 parishioners, and the parish is noted for the active involvement of its people. The parish has an active parish council, church Sunday school and teen SOYO group, women's group — the Ladies of St. Mary's, senior citizens group — Father Nahas Senior Citizens, and the Fellowship Group. All of these organizations work for the growth and welfare of the parish. By their commitment the parish of St. Mary's continues to grow and prosper in its Orthodox faith.

There are 21 members of the Order of St. Ignace who come from St. Mary Orthodox Church. These members are involved in all activities of the parish.



From left, are the Very Rev. David Hester and Anne Hester.