

## **Introduction to St. Luke Serbian Orthodox Church by Fr. John Vitko**

Founded in 1961 by Serbian Orthodox Christians, through the years, St. Luke has evolved into a multicultural parish. About a third of our parishioners are of Serbian descent, about a third are from other Orthodox cultures (eastern European and North African), and about a third are traditionally non-Orthodox Americans who have converted to Orthodoxy.

We are a warm, welcoming community with an average Sunday attendance of 65 people, whose family events are folded into our worship. Our coffee hours after Liturgy further contribute to that sense of community. They typically run over an hour, with buffet meals provided by our St. Luke Sisterhood and other parishioners. We have been blessed with over 20 young children, with more on the way. Over the past 5 years, we have been especially blessed with 29 Baptisms and Chrismations and by one of our young men, Maxim Romanchak, becoming a novice at St. Tikhon's Monastery.

Our facilities are located on 5 beautiful acres in McLean, VA, where outdoor events, including Easter egg hunts, youth activities, and parish picnics are held. The building is fully handicap accessible, including ADA compliant restrooms.

We continue to grow spiritually through an expanding cycle of services, weekly Bible study classes, monthly Saturday morning men's prayer breakfasts, an Orthodox book club, a prayer ministry, and additional ministries that enable us to offer our parishioners' diverse gifts up to God.

Our Faith in Action (FIA) effort reaches out to those beyond our parish doors. Locally, FIA supports food pantries and pregnancy centers, the Northern Virginia Family Services (NVFS), and outreach to shut-ins. We reach out nationally through the Fellowship of Orthodox Charities United to Serve (FOCUS) and Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF), and internationally through the International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC) and the Orthodox Christian Mission Center (OCMC).

Our budgets reflect our spiritual priorities. We participate in a proportional giving system to support the Diocese, have increased our charitable contributions to 5% of our budget, and as requested at the OCA's 16th All-American Council, have allocated 1% of our budget to support our seminaries.

We thank God for our many blessings and pray for His continued guidance as we seek to draw closer to Him individually and as a parish family.