

## **St. Michael's Orthodox Church turns 100**

Kelly Leighton Abington Journal Correspondent

The Spirit of Orthodoxy Choir will present a concert on Sunday, Oct. 19, at 6 p.m. at St. Michael's Orthodox Church in Jermyn, followed by a buffet reception.



Above, Spirit of Orthodoxy Choir, director Aleksei V. Shipovalnikov, shown here, is in its 11th year of spreading the spirit and messages of Orthodoxy through the music of the Orthodox Church.

This is just one of the events St. Michael's is hosting during a year-long celebration for their 100th anniversary.

The Spirit of Orthodoxy Choir is in its 11th year of practice. Directed by Aleksei V. Shipovalnikov, members of the choir come from several Orthodox churches in Pennsylvania, New York and New Jersey. In addition to these states, the choir has also performed in Massachusetts and Rhode Island, according to Diana Brotschul, 58, of Blakeslee. Brotschul serves on the executive board of the Centennial Committee and has been a member of the choir for about nine years.

"This promises to be a spiritually uplifting and musically rewarding evening," said Brotschul.

Tickets for the event cost \$10 and include the concert and buffet reception.

The choir has performed at several high-profile events. In August 2003, the group was invited to sing during St. Herman's Pilgrimage in Alaska. The choir also sang in New York City at St. Malachy's Church and at the Orthodox Cathedral of the Holy Protection, where concert proceeds benefited IOCC's Asia Disaster (Tsunami) Response.

According to Brotschul, to mark the anniversary of September 11 in 2005, the choir presented Orthodox Liturgical “Music of Remembrance and Hope” at Saints Peter and Paul Orthodox Church in Jersey City. Saints Peter and Paul Orthodox Church is the closest Orthodox Church to Ground Zero.

A month later, in October 2005, the choir sang at the services for the Sitka Icon in the Cathedral of the Holy Protection in New York City. This year, the choir performed at the State Theatre in New Brunswick, NJ, with featured Baritone soloist Anton Belov. The choir is also planning to perform a concert there next year.

Brotschul travels about 50 miles to attend St. Michael’s church regularly, as well as participate in the choir. “It is said that singing is like praying twice, and I love God, my church and singing praises to the Lord,” she said. “I can’t imagine sitting in church and not singing.”

St. Michael’s began celebrating its anniversary in June. Bishop Tikhon of St. Tikhon’s Monastery blessed a newly constructed archway to their cemetery on June 15. Additionally, there have been a series of monthly breakfasts to help the Centennial Committee raise needed funds. Also, St. Michael’s Centennial Committee sponsored an Indoor/Outdoor Flea Market on in September, according to Brotschul.

Upcoming events include a trip to the Millennium Theatre in Lancaster County to see “The Miracle of Christmas” in November. In December, there will be a Christmas play, a “yolka,” performed by children of the church. Also, groups will go caroling to nursing homes and visiting home-bound parishioners.

The 2009 calendar is being worked on at the present time, and one thing that the church is hoping to do is to sponsor a trip to Russia during the summer. The festivities will end with a Hierarchal Divine Liturgy followed by a grand banquet on Nov. 7, 2009.

For more information about any of the planned events or activities, visit [www.stmichaeljermyn.org](http://www.stmichaeljermyn.org) and click on the “Centennial News” button. To purchase tickets to the choir concert and reception, call 646-8261.