

# O. N. E.

## ORTHODOX NEW ENGLAND

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## Celebrating First Anniversary of His Grace, Bishop Benedict



**Right:** His Grace, Benedict, vested for the first time as a bishop on Dec. 2, 2023.

### Fr. Joshua Mosher

When His Grace, Bishop Benedict spoke to the Annual Diocesan Assembly in October, 2024, he first reminded those gathered, "I addressed you last year, hoping you would not elect me! But I still love you."

That love was reflected in Bishop Benedict's active leadership in his first year since his nomination on Oct. 28,

2023, and his consecration on Dec. 2. He has visited most of our parishes, he had, in his own words, "an amazing experience" at Youth Rally, and has been diligently learning the perspectives and contours of this diocese.

This special issue celebrates His Grace's first anniversary as our bishop. **ONE** +

## *Diocesan Assembly in Rhode Island*

### Fr. Joshua Mosher

Delegates from across New England gathered for the Annual Diocesan Assembly in Cumberland, RI, Oct. 26-27, 2024, with renewed energy under the leadership of His Grace, Bishop Benedict. In the bishop's report, he noted many signs of fresh growth. Land in Vermont has been donated for the eventual foundation of a monastery in New England, a hope of many successive bishops. He has convened a new Diocesan Choir with singers from across New England [which sang for the first time at a Hierarchical Divine Liturgy on Jan. 1, 2025, at Holy Transfiguration Church]. He gave thanks to God that 155 were led into the Church through Baptism or Chrismation, compared with just 52 funerals in the diocese.

Chancellor Fr. John Kreta celebrated that diocesan membership reversed a years-long decline and now exceeds 2019 levels. The search continues for a permanent bishop's residence, and the budget has been thoroughly adjusted to meet the new responsibility of a resident bishop of our own. He welcomed Barry Migyanko, formerly of the OCA Chancery, who serves as a part-time assistant to the bishop and is skillfully improving the standard of diocesan administration.

Both bishop and chancellor emphasized the importance of clergy health and well-being. Fr. Kreta highlighted the new Financial Health Initiative of the OCA Office of Pastoral Life. He noted research that high percentages of clergy families have significant financial stresses.

*"Assembly" continued on page 11*

**Left:** Protodeacon Paul Nimchek leads the petitions for the opening prayers of the Diocesan Assembly, with His Grace, Bishop Benedict presiding.

**Right:** Fr. John Kreta presents a copy of the diocesan icon to Bob Popadick in thanks for his zealous service to the diocese.



# *Anniversary Liturgy in Hartford*



On Dec. 2, 2024, His Grace, Bishop Benedict presided at a Hierarchical Divine Liturgy on the occasion of the first anniversary of his consecration. Clergy and faithful from many churches across New England gathered in celebration. Fr. John Kreta, Diocesan Chancellor, said at the end of the service, “We prayed heartfelt prayers for a new bishop, and we are so grateful to God for giving us the shepherd and archpastor we needed. At your enthronement, I recalled the love in the diocese for previous bishops. You have already manifested that great love for all of your diocese. We ask the good Lord to grant you many years.”



Bishop Benedict responded, “Don’t stop praying. I need it. Through those prayers, I am granted ability to serve this diocese.”

**ONE** +



**Top:** His Grace, Bishop Benedict stands with the clergy and faithful of Holy Resurrection Church, Claremont, NH.



## The joy was palpable

Xenia Sheehan

“For thou shalt make him most blessed forever, filling him with the joy of thy countenance” (Ps. 20:6 LXX, D. Sheehan’s translation in *The Psalms of David*).

Over the thirty-five years that I’ve been a member of the Orthodox Church, I’ve attended a number of parish churches and been blessed to live in and around several monastic communities. So I’m no stranger to hierarchical liturgies. Bishop Job was probably my first. My earliest memory of him is his outlasting my son Rowan Benedict at Youth Rally in consecutive roller coaster rides. Bishop Job was such a dear friend, mentor, and model to that generation of

kids, and a truly humble and fun-loving man.

Later, I’d watch him enter a church and stand patiently in the center to suffer the long, meticulous process of vesting at the hands of nervous and inexperienced subdeacons (my husband Don among them), piece by piece receiving from his people the accoutrements of a hierarch that would reveal him—slowly, naturally, and profoundly—as the living presence of Christ in our midst.

Over the years, I seem to have slipped into taking this transformation for granted and becoming less aware of the miracle that was taking place in this moment, perhaps not even thinking about it. But last Sunday, as Bishop Benedict served his

Top: Bishop Benedict leads prayers with Father Andrew Tregubov to his right and Father Ambrose Powell to his left.



first hierarchical liturgy at Holy Resurrection in Claremont, NH, there it

was again—Joy Himself—real, palpable, and everywhere present.

Bottom: Bishop Benedict ceremonially enters Holy Resurrection Church.



I don't have the words to properly convey my experience of this. To the extent it was a feeling, I felt it in my heart as a solid fullness.

Remembering it, I can almost feel it still, and I am reminded of a time very early in my Orthodox life when, angry with my mother for her scornful atheism, I excused myself, left the room to go stand before my icons in prayer, and Christ, as an icon floating in the air, told me that I must stop clawing at her for a love she couldn't give. Rather, I must receive His love and give it to her. Then He filled my heart with His love, and I found I was able to do that!

A decade later, during my mother's last illness, we were listening

together to Brahms's Requiem when suddenly she sat straight up in her bed, fixed her astonished gaze toward an upper corner of the room, raised her arms, and passed on.

Dr. Mary Ford writes in her forthcoming book, *The Gate of Heaven: Theosis and Temple in the Gospel According to St. John*, that "Jesus is Himself the 'place of God's presence,' where His glory will be revealed. He is Himself the new house of God/gate of heaven, the Logos tabernacling among us (as in John 1:14)."

This tabernacling of the Logos in Christ, and through Him in each of us, is imaged and actualized liturgically in the vesting of the Bishop after he has entered into the church. Or so I understood it last week, recognizing it by the Joy that filled our temple as this humble man was raised up by us to be Christ's presence among us.

We are blessed indeed in our new bishop, Benedict, who seems to have the humility to know and thereby teach us, his flock, that, in all our inadequacy, we, too, can be clothed in God's glory as we learn to forego the temptations to pride. And it comes to us then as surprising and palpable joy (a phrasing for which I owe thanks to our Deacon Greg Uhrin).

As C.S. Lewis wrote in *Surprised by Joy*: "I doubt whether anyone who has tasted it would ever, if both were in his power, exchange it for all the pleasures in the world."



**Right:** Bishop Benedict presides at the Divine Liturgy in the sanctuary of Holy Resurrection.



*Their proclamation has gone out into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the universe. ~Ps 18:4*

Many Years to Your Grace Benedict  
from the farthest reaches of  
your Diocese of New England!

Christ the Savior  
Bangor, Maine



To His Grace  
Bishop Benedict

May God richly bless your  
episcopal ministry in the  
Diocese of New England!

We look forward to many  
blessed years of laboring with  
you in the fields now ready for  
harvest.

Axios!

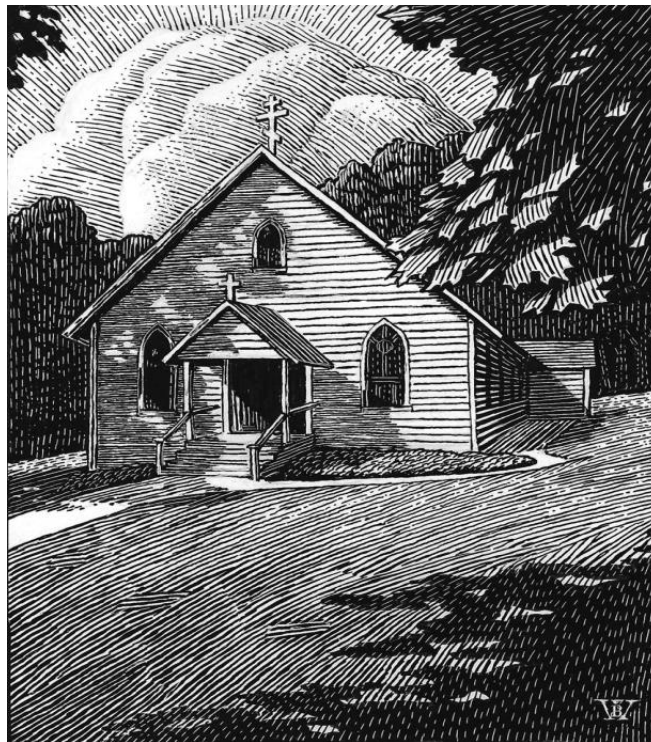
From the Clergy and Faithful  
of Holy Trinity Orthodox  
Cathedral, Boston





*With Great Joy and Thanksgiving to Almighty God,  
we congratulate  
His Grace, the Rt. Rev. Benedict,  
Bishop of Hartford and New England  
on the first anniversary of your elevation  
to the Holy Episcopacy.*

*May the Lord God protect, guide and strengthen you  
for Many Fruitful Years  
as the Spiritual Father and Bishop of New England.*



*All Saints of America Orthodox Church  
Salisbury, CT*

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SAINT PETER AND SAINT PAUL  
ORTHODOX CHURCH

**WWW.STSPP.ORG**

**118 Carew  
Street,  
Springfield  
MA 01104**

*Parish Council, Faithful*

*With joy and  
thanksgiving we  
extend our  
heartfelt  
congratulations  
to*

*His Grace,  
Bishop*

*Benedict,*

*on the first  
anniversary of  
the ordination.*

*We pray that our  
Lord continues to  
bless and guide  
You in Your  
episcopal  
ministry.*

*May God grant  
You Many Years  
of health,  
wisdom, and  
spiritual strength  
as You shepherd  
the flock  
entrusted to Your  
care.*

## Assembly from 2

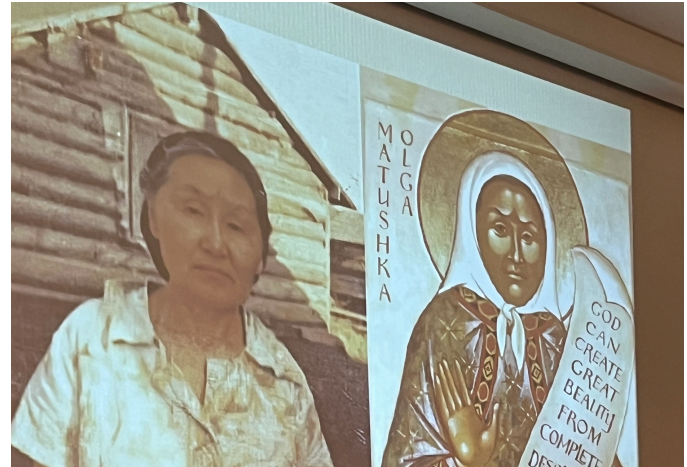
**Right:** A slide from Fr. Steven Hosking's presentation, showing a photo and an icon of St. Olga of Alaska.

Fr. Steven Hosking delivered an inspiring presentation on the life and context of Saint Olga of Alaska, whose glorification was announced after the Assembly. As an adult, the saint lived as a mother, midwife, healer, matushka, storyteller, craft maker and teacher. She learned English herself and taught teachers' aides English as well. She knew and sang the entirety of many services, including Holy Week, by heart. Fr. Steven shared a new icon of St. Olga, with the words, "God can create beauty from complete desolation." Slides of the presentation will be published at the diocesan website, [dneoca.org](http://dneoca.org).

His Grace asked the diocese to recognize the tremendous efforts of Bob Popadick, who put in innumerable hours to analyze, report, plan and explain the finances of diocese. He gave Bob a copy of the diocesan icon, asking that he remember the diocese in his daily prayers.

The Diocesan Assembly was led through that complex financial analysis, to understand the current state of the diocesan budget and the implications of different plans for funding and purchasing a residence for Bishop Benedict.

For several years, the Fair Share mandates for each parish have not been adjusted for inflation, and now on top



of this we have sole responsibility for the support of our own bishop. The Assembly agreed to authorize raising the cap on withdrawals from investment accounts from 5% to 10%—recognizing this higher level is not sustainable and not intended for more than five years. It also committed to planned increases to Fair Share, starting in 2025.

The proposed deficit budget for 2025 provoked searching discussion of the state of stewardship in the diocese. There was widespread recognition that we need to challenge our parishes and members to be better stewards of what they have. We should be freely giving so that we don't have to draw extra funding from the diocesan endowment.

Fr. Mark Roosien shared an inspiring account of how his predecessor, Fr. Steven Belonick, introduced a plan at Holy Ghost Church, Bridgeport, to dedicate 10% to charity and outreach. It took ten years, but they now have the full 10% allocated. Fr. Mark said the challenge changed the whole attitude from thinking of contributing to the church as a burden to minimize to a gift, an act of joyful

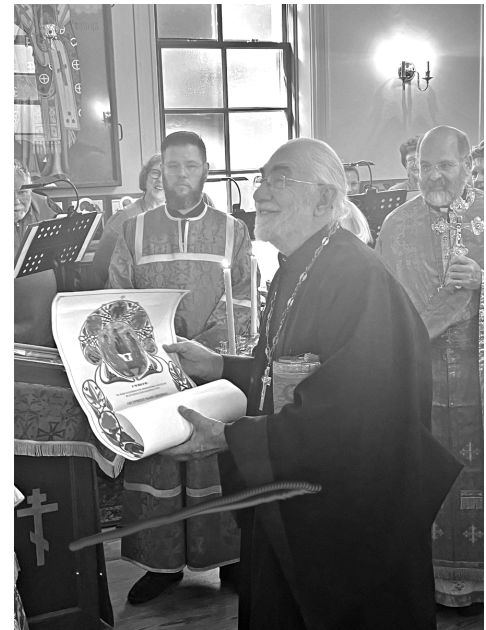
Top: Fr. Mark Sherman receives a gramota for his devoted service, at the Liturgy during the Diocesan Assembly, at Holy Dormition Church, Cumberland, RI.

thanksgiving. Many in the discussion expressed the hope that our diocese would embrace this kind of vision for giving.

The budget passed, but the Acting Treasurer, Deacon Jordan Vargas, was asked to include with the annual notice of each parish's Fair Share an invitation to voluntarily contribute a modest free-will offering to close the deficit.

The Assembly was surrounded by prayer and worship, as always, but now with His Grace presiding. The heart of the Assembly each year is the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy, at which Bishop Benedict led the clergy and faithful from across New England in joining the work of the Assembly to that of the Church throughout all ages, as well as the everlasting offering of praise before the throne of God.

As the Assembly concluded, the charge from the report of Chancellor Fr. Kreta remained worthy to recall: "I look forward with great joy and anticipation to see all that God will guide us to in the coming months and years, as we continue



the work given all of us for the building up of the life of the Diocese of New England.... Let us always remember, 'Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord, you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ'" (Col 3:23-24).

**ONE** †

Bottom: Mka. Cindy Voytovich leads the choir at the Liturgy.





## Stewards of the New England Diocese

### “\$25,000 in '25”

The 2025 budget for **Stewards of the NE Diocese** is **\$25,000**. The 2024 Youth Rally was a huge success with over 70 diocesan youth participating. The total cost for the rally is over \$50,000. An additional \$20,000 is needed to subsidize the registration fees.

Notice the new logo above for **Stewards of the NE Diocese**. The logo emphasizes the important areas of **Youth Rally, Missions, Seminary, Scholarships, and Charities** supported by Stewards donations. The budget is an aggressive **\$25,000** for this fiscal year. Be ready to support **Stewards of the NE Diocese** in 2025 so that we reach and even exceed our budget goal.

The 2025 mailing of **Stewards of the NE Diocese** envelopes will be in February. Early donations can be mailed to the address below (checks made out to **Diocese of New England**) or they can be made online through PayPal on the Diocesan website, <https://dneoca.org/stewardsofnewengland>.

Thank you for your support.

**Stewards of the New England Diocese**  
**PO Box 71**  
**Torrington, CT 06790-0071**

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With Prayerful Best  
Wishes from  
The Clergy and  
Faithful of  
Saints Cyril and  
Methodius  
Orthodox Church  
Terryville, CT

## ***VISION – MISSION – VALUES***

**Our Vision:** To receive, accept, make known and share God the Father's love in all its saving power, through Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit.

**Our Mission:** To make present in this time and place the fullness of the Orthodox Christian Faith, so that all persons might come to the knowledge of the Truth. We carry out this mission through worship, stewardship, education, nurture, fellowship, charity, and outreach.

**Our Values:** We are traditional: We value time-honored truths and morality. We hold to long-established patterns of worship, devotion, and service. We value every person, family, and community. We believe that life lived rightly has boundaries—there are things that we should do and things we should not; but within the structure provided by those limits there is the opportunity for boundless growth, creativity, and joy. Indeed, we affirm this apparent paradox: that the path to true freedom and eternal blessedness is to be a servant—to be a servant of God the Father, through Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit.

[www.terryvilleorthodoxchurch.org](http://www.terryvilleorthodoxchurch.org)

Wishing you many blessings as the Bishop of Hartford and New England!



*AXIOS! AXIOS! AXIOS!*



**The Diocese of New England is blessed that  
you are the Shepherd caring for the Faith.**

**Many Years!**

*John & Joan Skrobat*



**AXIOS! AXIOS! AXIOS!**

**Bishop Benedict,**

**May God grant you  
many years of service  
to Christ and His  
Holy Church in the  
New England  
Diocese.**

**Eis Polla Eti Despota!**

*Deacon Paul and  
Patricia Nimchek*

*Eis Polla Eti Despota!*

*With your Episcopal blessing,  
Archpriest Vasily & Matushka Nancy Gilbert*



**To His Grace Bishop Benedict: May God grant you many blessed and happy years as our Archpastor and Shepherd! May your tenure as ruling hierarch witness an abundant flowing of grace upon this God-protected Diocese.**

**Holy Ghost Orthodox Church, Bridgeport**





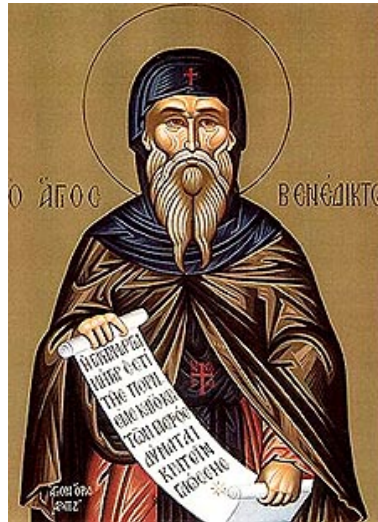
***May God Grant His Grace Bishop Benedict Many Years!***

***AXIOS! AXIOS! AXIOS!***

***In Christ's Love,***

***Your Family at All Saints Orthodox Church in Hartford!***

***Father Constantine Bodien, Rector  
Archpriest John Jillions, Retired***

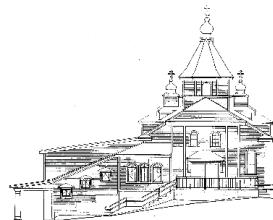


**Your Grace,**

Guided by Venerable Benedict of Nursia, we pray and celebrate God's gift of your leadership to all the faithful of our Diocese.

*You were enriched with God's grace;  
Your works agreed with your name,  
O Benedict, helpful servant of Christ God.  
Through prayer and fasting you were revealed to be filled  
with the gifts of the Spirit of God!  
You are a healer of the sick, the banisher of demons and  
speedy defender of our souls!*

**Holy Annunciation Orthodox Church  
Maynard, Massachusetts**



**Εἰς πολλὰ ἔτη, Δέσποτα!**

*We were blessed to have you at our church for your nomination, and again for your Great Lenten visitation, now as His Grace, Bishop Benedict!*



**Holy Transfiguration Orthodox Church**

285 Alden Avenue, New Haven, CT 06515

Archpriest Steven Voytovich, D.Min., Rector  
Archpriest J. Sergius Halvorsen, Ph.D., Attached  
Robin Milberg, Council President

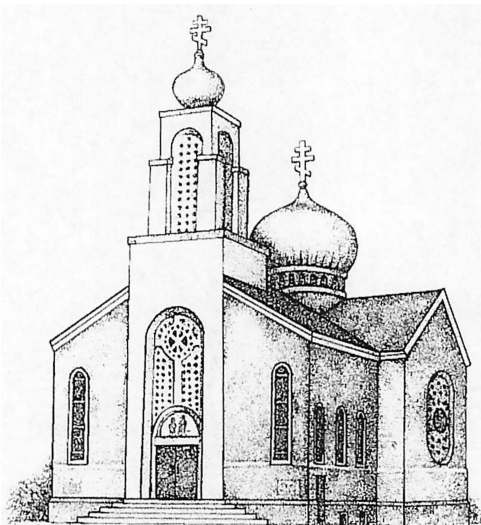
Website: <https://holytransfigurationnh.org>

Phone: 203.387.3882 e-mail: [holytransfigurationnh@gmail.com](mailto:holytransfigurationnh@gmail.com)

O give thanks  
unto the Lord,  
for he is good.  
Alleluia!  
For his mercy  
endures forever.  
Alleluia!



Your Grace, our Bishop Benedict:  
Many blessed years!



With loving prayers for  
your continued ministry  
in our diocese from the  
parish community of  
SS. Peter & Paul,  
Meriden, Connecticut

**Your Grace!**

**With heartfelt joy, we congratulate you on the first anniversary of your consecration to the Holy Episcopacy. May the Lord God protect you and strengthen you to be our spiritual leader for years to come!**



**From the Pastor Vladimir, Parish Council,  
and Parishioners of St. Mary's  
Holy Assumption Orthodox Church in Stamford, CT**



St Alexis of Wilkes-Barre  
Orthodox Church  
Clinton, CT

God grant you Many Years Bishop Benedict!



**O.N.E.**

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## Upcoming

**March 10**

**Deadline for the next issue of the ONE**

**April 6**

**Holy Unction Service at Three Saints, Ansonia**