

Centennial Celebration at Aliquippa's St. Elijah

by Milos Rastovic

ALIQUIPPA, PA - On August 2-3, St. Elijah Serbian Orthodox Church held a centennial Slava celebration. August 2nd is St. Elijah Day, named "Elijah thunderer" or "Ilija gromovnik." The annual picnic on the church lawn featured Jedinstvo Orchestra from Phoenix, AZ. During the picnic, thunderstorms forced people to gather together under a tent. In the Serbian Orthodox tradition, thunderstorms on the celebratory day mean that St. Elijah's chariot with four horses are rumbling through Heaven and the clouds. St. Elijah condemned evil spirits with fiery words that represent thunder and lightning.

A vesper service was served by V. Rev. Fr. Stevan Stepanov, followed by a dinner reception at St. Elijah Center. Jedinstvo again entertained, and guests had an opportunity to eat Serbian food, kolo dance, and visit with each other in a cheerful atmosphere. On Sunday morning, His Grace, Serbian Orthodox Bishop of Eastern America, Dr. Mitrophan assisted by V. Rev. Fr. Stevan Stepanov, V. Rev. Dr. Rodney Torbic, and Rev. Milorad Orlic celebrated Holy Divine Liturgy, a procession around the church, the

cutting of the Slavski Kolach and the blessing of the Koljivo.

At the Gala Banquet, His Grace Bishop, Dr. Mitrophan blessed the faithful and stressed the importance in marking this anniversary, saying, "Behold, a century has passed since your forebears established the parish of the Holy Prophet Elijah and began to build their first place of worship. They dedicated themselves and their families

to building for themselves a common home where the Name of our God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and of His great servant, the Holy Prophet and Visionary of God, Elijah the Tishbite could be glorified... It is with great joy that I congratulate you, dear brothers and sisters, headed by your parish priest the Very Reverend Protos-priester-Stavrophor Stevan Stepanov, on the 100th anniversary of your church and parish, with the wish that your future generations may celebrate many more centennials." His Grace recognized and congratulated all contributors to St. Elijah Church.

V. Rev. Fr. Stevan Stepanov extended congratulations to the Kumovi Nick Kosanovich and Andy Muha. "The love and devotion to their Church and community has earned them respect and the special honor of being our Kumovi for this year." He also congratulated the High School Graduating Class of 2014, including Brandon Wilson, Alyssa Knapp, Garrett Cheran, and Robert Suder, pointing out that "the present generation will remain steadfast and honor our forefathers continuing to contribute their time, talents and resources for the spiritual and material welfare of our St. Elijah Church."

Milan Mrkal, President of the St. Elijah Church School Executive Board, said that we pray together and celebrate 100 years of accomplishment. "Looking toward the future is the focus that keeps us united and committed to one another." Kum Nick Kosanovich Jr. and Kum Andy Muha both gave inspiring speeches recognizing the past and offering hope for the future.

St. Elijah Church was founded and consecrated in 1914. Dr. Michael I. Pupin, Serbian scientist and inventor, was a sponsor of the church that became a beacon of light for all Serbian people to preserve their heritage, religious identity and hope for the future. Despite many difficulties and hardships, Serbian people have preserved their Orthodox faith and tradition.

Literature:
Saint Elijah Serbian Orthodox Church. Celebrating 100 Years of Milestones and Memories. 2014.

