

Central Florida Deanery Report Diocesan Assembly 2009

St. Mark, Bradenton FL Fr John Chudick reports that the community has moved into their new church “unofficially.” Unofficially because some of the work is incomplete and they do not have a Certificate of Occupancy (CO), but the building official is allowing them to occupy since the incomplete work is minor and is unrelated to safety. Fr John is looking forward to getting the CO and going public and inviting people to their new facility.

St. John the Theologian Mission, Gainesville, FL This mission has functioned for the past 12 years at the University of Florida chiefly as an OCF, being served for the past two years on Sunday evenings by Dn James Nicholas. Beginning this fall we will be plant St. John the Theologian Mission with Dn Theodore Brinegar and a few families from St. Justin Martyr in Jacksonville. We will start with the Typica service every Sunday evening. We have funds in the bank and are trying to find permanent space to rent. We will start with about 20 people and anticipate attendance to meet the 50 mark in one year’s time. Presently the OCF will continue with Dn James and Dn Theodore will focus on the planting of the mission.

St. John the Theologian OCF, University of FL, Gainesville, FL The 2007/08 and 2008/09 college sessions have been a time of redevelopment and much progress for the OCF ministry at the University of Florida. We have grown from a handful of students doing occasional Vespers during fall and spring semesters to a vibrant year-round program of just over twenty members with hopes to reach 25 – 30 by the end of the 2010 session. It now includes a combination of Vespers and Bible studies, reading programs, and social programs. Our focus is on three levels: (1) ministry to Orthodox students, (2) campus-wide programs that reach out to all students, and (3) inter-campus networking. We have organized two successful statewide retreats in which OCFers from all Florida colleges were invited to attend. We have also applied for and are now receiving modest SGA grants to assist with some basic expenses. The frequency and nature of our programs and outreach are such that we have added an Event Planning Officer to our slate of operating officers.

St. Raphael of Brooklyn Mission, Inverness, FL Saint Raphael Orthodox Mission serves parishioners within a 35 mile radius centered in Inverness, Florida. Currently we have just under 70 members with new faces at the Liturgies monthly. This year Mother Raphaela, the Abbess of Holy Myrrhbearers Monastery in Otego, NY provided a pre-Lenten retreat for parish members plus the community-at-large. The Gospel of St. Matthew was the topic of our fall classes. Currently, the parish is finishing a large mosaic icon of the Holy Myrrhbearers which will become a shrine outside of our hall.

The “Vespers in the Villages” program continues to grow with attendance as high as thirty. The twice-monthly Vespers is provided for Orthodox Christians and the public in this large and growing suburban retirement “city”. There are new faces at each service. Also, there are now “regulars” who attend each Vespers and provide increasing support to the program. Recently, a Vespers service was covered by the local newspaper and television station.

St. Justin Martyr, Jacksonville, FL This year we expanded our parish cemetery to about 1 full acre with 1,000 +/- plots. Plots are available for all Orthodox Christians at a cost of \$1750. For all Orthodox clergy and spouse, and monastics the plots are free so please inquire with Fr Ted.

Our growth has leveled off some (hovering at 200) Income is "tight" and like others we are feeling the economic downturn, parishioners losing jobs, etc. By God's grace we are so far on budget. We believe our "leveling off" is a part of the natural life cycle of a church, where everyone is comfortable and happy and having their needs met and the leadership is busy doing maintenance (which is a good thing!) We have begun to reestablish our Evangelism Team and are producing a DVD outreach disk. We will run ads inviting people to discover the ancient faith. We have two full time priests, a 32hr/week Youth Director and 32 hr/week secretary. In addition Fr Sergius Clark takes care of shut-ins.

It is getting harder and harder to keep up with everything!

Russian Mission, St. Justin Orthodox Church Jacksonville, FL Was launched in November 07. Now we have about 60 families. Average attendance is about 50-55 people per Sunday Liturgy. Liturgies in Slavonic are served every 2,4 and 5 Sunday of every month right after English Liturgy, Russian Mission coffee-hour following. In other Sundays we have Moleben in Slavonic with a Russian coffee-hour. Every Saturday there is a Slavonic panikhida at 10 am. We follow New Calendar, except Nativity of Christ, Theophany and winter St Nicholas day. This year our mission is going to be self sufficient. We have Russian Sunday School for adults before Slavonic Liturgy. Russian people are encouraged to bring their kids for St. Justin children Sunday school lessons. We have social events like Christmas tree (Elka) holiday, New Year celebration in a Old Calendar, picnics and other for Russian mission and other St Justin church parishioners on permanent basis. Hieromonk Arkady (Migunov) is in charge of St Justin Russian mission. He also serves Liturgy every third Saturday for Russian community at St Stephens in Orlando, FL.

We do not divide the St Justin community into Americans and Russians. Rather we help Russian speaking people keep their cultural traditions while remaining a part of the St. Justin community.

St. Stephen the Protomartyr Church, Longwood/Orlando, FL Presently Fr. Mark is on sabbatical and the parish is being served by deanery clergy. Fr. John Ealy, the "founding father" of St. Stephens is covering midweek feasts and the Saturday evening Vigil. Protodeacon Michael Malanowski is taking care of the day to day administrative and pastoral needs. For the past year Fr. Arkady has served a Liturgy on the third Saturday morning of the month and is laying the groundwork for a future Russian Mission.

St. Andrew the First Called Church, New Port Richey, FL The growth of our church was my major concern this year. We need to ignite our efforts with prayer movement among all our members. All of our efforts are really meaningless if we are not connected to the Lord. Psalm 127:1 reminds us that "unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain." We had a few issues with the hall and kitchen areas repair. All of them have now been remedied (such as replacing air condition and repairing the floor) with the monetary help of many parishioners and supporters.

Great Vespers is served every Saturday and Divine Liturgy every Sunday and Holy Days. There is an average of around 50-70 people attending Divine Liturgy on Sundays. Pierogi making is an ongoing weekly event in our church that helps us to unite ourselves as a family and a community and raise funds to support our parish. I am trying to utilize my Russian language as a tool to attract new parishioners moving to Florida mostly from other states. All Divine Services and Sermons are being held in English and it does not prevent Russian-speaking congregation to attend our services. As a priest I am trying my best to serve spiritual needs of my congregation by prayers and spiritual support of our Hierarchs, my fellow brothers in Christ and my congregation.

St. Alexis Mission, Palm Coast, FL For the past 10 years I have served as supply Pastor for St Alexis Mission with the exception of a six month period (2000) in which Father Svyatoslav Vasilyev (departed) served as acting Pastor. We have approximately 13 – 25 believers in Church every Sunday with 80% being communicants. We are using St. Stephen's Roman Catholic Church. Confessions are held the 1st Sunday of the month before Divine Liturgy at 9 a.m. There are some 6 to 8 Choir members and some Sundays we have several people who at times sing portions of the Liturgy in the Byzantine Chant. The major portion of Liturgy is served in English with about 15% in Slavonic to accommodate our Russian faithful. Major social events every year are our Patron Feast Day Dinner of St. Alexis in May and our Annual Picnic in October. During Lent we have tried to have a Presanctified Liturgy and Adult Bible Study. A luncheon is sponsored every Sunday after Liturgy. Our church warden Henry Poleschuk, my son Michael & nephew Peter faithfully set-up the church for worship every Sunday. Our Mission has raised funds for I.O.C.C., O.C.M.C. and St. Tikhon's Seminary. We have been able these past 10 years to send 2 representatives to The All American Council in Orlando - 2002, Montreal 2005 and Pittsburgh - 2008. This year we raised the funds (air tickets & tuition) to send our 16 year old altar server Daniel Ivanovsky to the St. Tikhon's Orthodox Youth Camp in July.

Sad to say I am not able to serve our people on Feast Days as I live 200 miles round trip from Bunnell. Our group is mostly senior citizens but our attendance is basically 80% on Sundays. We faithfully send in our diocesan tithe. St Alexis Mission is a loving and faithful group! Respectfully submitted, Archpriest Nicholas Molodyko-Harris – Retired, Supply Pastor

Holy Trinity Church, Safety Harbor, FL Fr Kyrill Williams arrived during Holy Week and has hit the ground running hard. Attendance has rebounded from 10 or less on Sunday to almost 50. He has his first catechumen and the church has begun tithing to the diocese again. They are presently searching for a way to refinance their mortgage. Fr Kyrill and his Matushka are expecting their first child the week of the Assembly. Welcome to the diocese Fr Kyrill!

St Phillip the Apostle Mission, Tampa FL The parish continues to grow and we have added several new parishioners. We likewise continue to serve visitors to the Tampa Bay area. Presently there are three Russian students who are here on a work/visiting program at Busch Gardens and who worship with us. We have another catechumen in formation, our fourth since the parish was founded.

In February we had a successful run at the State Fair witnessing to Christ and to Orthodoxy 13 hours a day for 12 days. Over 450,000 visited the fair this year. We have just made our application to be at the Fair in February 2010.

We are now in the process of discerning what further outreach ministries our time, talents and resources will permit us to establish. We already have a continuing "Food for the Poor" drive and have decided that we want to and can add two more ministries. We have held two parish meetings since May toward this goal. We have been in contact with FOCUS to seek their help in this discernment process.

St. Simeon Church, Titusville, FL No report submitted.