

### **The Dean's Reflections:**

The Appalachian Deanery consists of 9 parishes or missions served by 11 clergy (priest and deacons). It is among the youngest deaneries in the diocese. Only 2 missions within the Deanery predate the late 90's (as OCA missions). We stretch from the Mississippi River to the Atlantic Ocean. Much of the area has yet to be adequately surveyed for mission plant opportunities. However, the Church has grown in all of its areas, enduring and overcoming both the normal trials of parishes, as well as the unique problems presented by our region and particular situations. Our priests are largely underpaid (due to the size of missions) and work to find solutions despite the hardships they face. Many of our missions are in the stage of looking for property for construction or remodeling that which they have. Our work goes forward, encouraged by the prayers of our fathers in the faith and the many missionaries who have sacrificed so much in the creation and founding of our beloved diocese.

Archpriest Stephen Freeman  
Dean of Appalachia

### **KENTUCKY**

St. Athanasius, Nicholasville, KY  
Fr. Justin Patterson, Priest in Charge

#### Metrical Information July 2010-June 2011

Over the past year, 8 adults and 6 children were baptized, 1 member was received by chrismation, 13 people were received as transfer members (a record for us), 6 transferred out to other cities, 1 adult and 2 children have, sadly, become inactive (left regular life in the Orthodox Church). We married a couple in October of 2010. Despite challenges, we now have 20 more people in our community than this time last year!

Our parish finances continue to grow. We hit our financial goal of a 10% growth budget, achieving our budget goal for the 4<sup>th</sup> year in a row.

#### Parish Life Overview 2010-2011

Two areas of growth:

- 1). We began a serious ministry to our youth in fall of 2010. Spearheaded by a team of adults working together, we now have an integrated Sunday School and Youth Group approach, complete with opportunities to go to summer camp together, do community service, do serious catechesis, and do social activities together.
- 2). We have trained three additional choir directors, bringing up our number of regular directors to five. We serve at least 5 services per week in the church, so we now have a fully sustainable rotation of chanters/directors.

Two areas of challenges:

- 1). A year ago, we were preparing to build on the property our parish purchased in 2006. Last fall, however, we realized that our people had reservations about the the location and viability of this property as a permanent home for our parish. Shifting our vision away from a property we have been so focused on has been difficult; but we launched out in June 2011 with a new capital campaign to raise money for a new property. Response to the capital campaign has been encouraging; but we have a much work to do and we have agreed acquiring appropriate property and building a temple is a top priority for us in the coming year.
- 2). Our attempts to do mission work in Eastern Kentucky have not been successful. We have realized, though two attempts to work with people in Eastern Kentucky, that what they need in order to become authentically Orthodox, is a functional parish with some kind of critical mass of people. In both cases when we attempted to establish mission stations, there were only a handful of people and/or one key family. In all likelihood, future mission work that takes place from St. Athanasius will either be within an hour of our parish (so that people can partake of the regular liturgical and spiritual life of an established parish) or will involve several committed and stable (preferably Orthodox) families as a core. We have learned a great deal about Orthodox mission work through our abortive mission attempts!

Fr. Justin Patterson

## **TENNESSEE**

### **Chattanooga - St. Tikhon of Moscow Orthodox Mission**

Rev. Daniel Talley, Priest-in-charge

Rev. Hierodeacon David (Colburn), attached

#### **Overview**

For the mission in Chattanooga, 2010-2011 included many blessings and changes. Priest Daniel began work in June of 2010, his first assignment after graduating from seminary. In the summer of 2010, the parish participated in home gatherings and a “vision retreat” to better understand its present state and to plan for the future. We welcomed several new members and also had several others move to different parts of the country. One major development was our attempt to purchase an existing church in downtown Chattanooga in the spring of 2011. Though we were unable to acquire this property, it enabled us to see in an ever clearer light our abilities and zeal. In October 2011, we had the blessing of a visit from His Grace, Bishop Mark, our first episcopal visit. Reader Michael Leutwiler was ordained to the subdiaconate this day.

#### **Worship, Education, and Outreach**

Our cycle of worship has increased. We have a typical schedule of Wednesday and Saturday Vespers and Sunday Liturgy. We have celebrated all of the major feasts as well

as several minor ones with Vespers and Liturgy. Matins has been added for Tuesday and Thursday mornings. Christmas, Theophany, Great Lent, and Holy Week services were all celebrated. Occasional services were also offered, such as the Pannikhida and Molebens according to the needs of the faithful.

Catechism class is now offered on Wednesday evenings. Our syllabus includes the study of Orthodox doctrine and Scripture. Separate classes were offered for all during the Nativity fast and Great Lent. Other changes include the printing of weekly bulletins for Sunday morning and website updates which offer a schedule of services.

We have increased choir participation and formalized practices and materials.

Outreach included several food drives for a local food bank and contributing to the missionary and relief efforts of national Orthodox organizations. One project in the near future is the development of a community garden to provide fresh produce for those in need locally. We have a "back acre" in which clearing and preparation has already begun.

### **Special Projects**

We had several major changes to the temple this year. One was the purchase of a new iconostasis constructed by a local craftsman. We also have a new sanctuary floor and shelving. We did suffer damage from the tornadoes of April 2011 and from the insurance coverage, we received a new roof and ceiling, including lighting for the both the nave and sanctuary. We have hosted numerous work days and continue to beautify the grounds and make changes and repairs to the building as needed.

### **Membership and Statistics**

Membership has generally remained the same though we do have a number of catechumens and inquirers. Over the past year, we have received over 40 Sunday visitors, several of whom have become catechumens or continue to worship with us. Easter and Christmas services also attracted many others.

Our budget is on track and includes the major addition of a full time salary for the priest.

Sunday attendance (average): 25

Vespers attendance: 5-10

Current catechumens: 6

Baptisms/Chrismations: 2

### **The Year Ahead**

Our main objectives and vision for the year include an increased commitment to 1) education coupled with a well rounded liturgical cycle and 2) an outreach to the poor. Examples include:

1. Furthering education for the faithful, catechumens, inquirers, and children.
2. Development of a community garden which is still in its planning phase.

3. Host special guests and speakers.
4. Development of pan-orthodox outreach opportunities and cooperation.
5. Continued development of best-practices for non-profit institutions.
6. Continued beautification of temple and grounds.

### **Clarksville, TN - Protection of the Holy Virgin Orthodox Mission**

Fr. Stephen Freeman, Priest in Charge

Mission served by Fr. Jonas Worsham and Readers

Holy Protection began as a plant that from the military chapel on Fort Campbell. When its founder, Fr. Peter Dubinin (Orthodox military chaplain), was transferred, Holy Protection was served by readers from St. Anne in Oak Ridge, as well as by St. Anne's Rector and assistants.

For a time, Fr. John Beale served the mission, until being transferred to the West Coast.

Fr. Jonas Worsham took up the work of supply priest for Holy Protection following his retirement. Together with his wife, Mat. Joan Marie, he has helped the parish to grow and move towards greater stability.

Fr. Peter Dubinin served the mission for a short time in 2011.

Presently, Holy Protection is being served by Fr. Jonas and looks forward to continued growth and stability. It is the plan of the Deanery to move towards a position when a full-time priest can be assigned.

### **Cleveland, TN - St. Maria of Paris Orthodox Mission**

Fr. Stephen Freeman, Priest in Charge

Fr. Deacon Kevin Rigdon, attached

St. Maria's has continued to grow and thrive during 2011. Though Fr. Stephen serves as Priest-in-Charge, weekly services are maintained by Fr. Deacon Kevin Rigdon, who lives in Cleveland and directs all aspects of the Mission. Weekly attendance has continued to grow 20-30 on average. The choir is maturing and a number of catechumens are preparing to be received into the Church.

St. Maria's has a rental space in downtown Cleveland, a space that is tidy and useful for the present time. Events occasionally spread to the home of Fr. Dn. Kevin which is just a few blocks away.

Fr. Stephen makes periodic visits to hear confessions, admit catechumens and generally hear about the needs of the mission. Fr. Dn. Kevin assists one Sunday per month at St. Anne in Oak Ridge, together with Fr. Stephen. From that Sunday service he carries consecrated elements back to Cleveland in order to serve Typicon with Communion for the mission.

Fr. Dn. Kevin has petitioned to be ordained priest, with the enthusiastic support of the mission, the Dean, and all who are aware of his work. A special event in 2011 was the visit of Bishop Mark (Mamon) in October.

**Memphis, TN**

St. Seraphim Orthodox Mission

Fr. Mark Sutton, Priest in Charge

October 24, 2011

Dear Brothers,

We needed more readers at St. Seraphim and developed a ten week course that parishioners with no experience could learn the vespers service. The course teaches how to use the Order of Divine Services rubrics, the weekday Octoechos and the Monthly Menaion to put together the changeable portions of the lower four ranks. After learning how to put the service together the class chanted the service for several weeks in a classroom situation and finally did the service with a mentor at the public Wednesday vespers service. Some have gone on to learn the chanting portion of Great Vespers and can put that service together also. The course is now in its third round ( two or three persons per course) and we consider it a great success for our parish.

We baptized one adult, one early teen, three infants and married two couples since last report.

Except for a brief period when we tried ‘coffee only’ we continue to have a meal after the Liturgy that is provided by the members of the parish on a rotating ‘team’ basis. Everyone usually stays and the fellowship is very good.

**Oak Ridge/Knoxville, TN**

St. Anne Orthodox Church

Archpriest Stephen Freeman, Rector

St. Anne has continued its growth this year, both through the baptism and chrismation of converts as well as new members moving to the Knoxville area, and through a continued “baby boom” within the parish. On Sundays, it is generally the case that children well outnumber adults. Along with this has been a thriving Sunday School program.

A major focus of 2011 has been the beautification of the parish. The iconostasis was enlarged and completed through the work of parishioners and the noted iconographer,

Dmitry Shkolnik. In addition, painting, a new tile floor, the addition of antique furnishings and other efforts have made our temple of wonderful place to pray and worship.

A bell stand, crafted in a full-timber style, was added outside the entrance of the parish, and bells from the Urals are shortly to be installed.

The parish looks forward to the soon addition to our clergy family - Fr. Athanasius Shaw and Mat. Molly, will be joining us from Washington state.

St. Anne continues to be involved in the local community, particularly in its support of the Women's Crisis pregnancy center, the Rescue Mission in Knoxville, and Fr. Stephen's leadership of the OCF at the University of Tennessee.

There is a continued development of lay leadership within the parish and support of mission work across the world.

## **VIRGINIA**

### **Ashland, VA**

St. Andrew Orthodox Church

Fr. Mark Hodal, Priest in Charge

Fr. Mark Hodal was diagnosed last year with a crippling disease and has bravely fought his way back towards health. Area clergy and the lay leadership of the parish maintained a faithful life, ministering to Fr. Mark as well as sustaining the life of the parish.

This year, Fr. Mark has requested retirement for medical reasons. The Locum Tenens, the Diocesan Staff and the Dean have been working with Fr. Mark and the parish to establish a proper time for his retirement and a proper successor to the first priest and founder of this parish. We request prayers for a smooth transition and the sustenance of the parish.

### **Richmond, VA**

St. Cyprian of Carthage Mission

Fr. David Arnold, Priest in Charge

Since the previous Annual Meeting our parish has seen a slight reduction in active members. This seems due to fewer catechumens and reception of converts as well as more persons relocating or choosing not to remain active in the life of the Church.

While the reported number of active members has not grown, the participation of our membership has become more vital and there is a very positive energy among us. The Church School has seen growth in interest among students and commitment from their parents, as well as growth in the number of volunteers to be teachers and helpers. We remain on pace to match our contributions for 2010.

Our small group of teenagers organized monthly meetings, as well as service projects for the parish and community. Those of their age group serving in the altar and chanting/singing at services are an encouraging presence. Lay leaders are planning more ways to challenge and channel the energy of this important age group.

The number of visitors during our services has increased noticeably. Both travelers and Orthodox Christians in our region are finding us and coming to worship with us. Some of these are coming to be regular “visitors” and promise to be active members in the future. The church website has been the consistent means for people finding us and wanting to visit.

A ministry that has blossomed over the past year is prison visitation. Priestly visits are made when contacts request a visit on behalf of a prisoner. A federal prison in Petersburg, about 45 minutes south of us, has a group of orthodox meeting weekly as part of the chaplain department programs. Another priest attends bi-weekly meetings, and one of our members completed volunteer training and also attends these meetings. The group sees a few visitors as well, since the Orthodox faith offers something entirely different than the high volume group that meets in the large assembly room down the hall. At another state facility, a resident is due to be released next month and will be received into a local church as a catechumen.

Work continues on the doors and icon panels to complete our iconostasis. This lengthy project is going to be a welcome addition to our Temple. It is our hope to complete these preparations and secure a calendar date to have the space consecrated sometime in the coming year.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Priest David Arnold

**Norfolk, VA**  
Dormition of the Theotokos Orthodox Mission  
Fr. John Cox, Priest in Charge

I (Fr. John Cox) was assigned as the full time priest of Dormition of the Theotokos Orthodox church as of June 1st of this year. This report is a forward looking reflection comprised of data and observations based primarily on the 5 months of my tenure. First some general observations.

I think it safe to say that thus far my family’s presence here can be characterized as a positive experience for us and the parish. As a family unit we (the Coxes) have adjusted well to our new locale and enjoy our new home. Relations between me and my family and the parishioners, other parish leaders, and the parish council have been warm and mutually supportive. At all levels the parish has shown a willingness to participate in the ongoing life of the community both physically and financially, support changes in their parish experience, and embrace new ideas about the future. Amongst parishioners there is a strong positive feeling about their parish experience and optimism

about the future of the community. The parish also has a developing sense of mission and purpose in relation to the community around them and a desire to grow and participate more fully in that community. On the whole I would characterize our parish as one with increasing momentum and a developing sense of purpose and vision.

We do face some ongoing challenges. Our facilities leave a lot to be desired. Our rented space, though inexpensive, is small and awkwardly laid out. It is not large enough to comfortably accommodate all the parishioners (children included) for coffee hour. It does not have its own restrooms or running water, and neither heats nor cools efficiently.

While the members of the parish, at their own initiative, have gone to considerable expense and personal effort to beautify our space its inherent potential as an attractive force is limited. Acquiring new space would require a parish wide commitment to significantly increased giving. On some level this may be a blessing in disguise since many of our parishioners travel a significant distance to attend services and events at Dormition. Any relocation outside of the immediate area will almost certainly have an adverse effect on the attendance of some parishioners so the fact that financial constraints force us to think slowly and creatively about relocation may help us to hone in on and build consensus around a solution that best serves the entire community.

The bullet points below support many of the impressions above and highlight some of our parish's efforts over the past 5 months.

- New parish [website](#) created and installed.
- Major parish cleaning day with good participation.
- 9 catechumen enrolled and 1 child chrismated.
- Added Saturday Great Vespers back to the schedule and introduced Wednesday daily vespers for the first time.
- Restarted weekly parish book group and advertised it to the surrounding community.
- Church school and children's sermons each Sunday with lesson outlines posted each week on the website. (Matushka Sunny)
- Catechumen class each Saturday with childcare offered.
- Remodeling the parish library/conversation room.
- Sunday attendance has been described by parish leaders as either:
  - A. More consistent than before and consistently at the high end of the average. (45-55)
  - B. 15-20% higher than before.
- Parish giving has also improved. Comparing the past 5 months to the 5 months previous shows an increase of 30% in monthly giving.
- Reconstituted the parish building committee to plan for future growth and relocation.
- The majority of the parish just completed a parish growth survey from which the following preliminary information may be highlighted:
  - Most parishioners feel positive about their parish experience and/or optimistic about its future.
  - Most parishioners desire to see the parish grow.
  - Most parishioners would like to be involved in some form of parish ministry/service.
  - Most parishioners believe that in addition to offering the services our purpose is to reach out to the poor and need and invite non-Orthodox into the Church.
  - The parish council has also supported my involvement with St. George mission station in Edenton, NC as a gesture of sisterly support.
  - Dormition has a wonderful group of young children that enliven our communal experience and pretty good demographic balance, with the notable exception of teenagers and young singles.

In conclusion, Dormition is a small community with limited resources and a challenging building situation but the people of the community have demonstrated through their attendance, flexibility, and financial support that they are motivated to move forward and willing to get behind initiatives that will help us do so.