

Central Florida Deanery Report 2013 Diocesan Assembly

Annunciation Russian Mission, Jacksonville, FL

Annunciation Russian Mission was established in 2012, hived off of St Justin Martyr where this Mission incubated for nearly 4 years. The first Liturgy was celebrated on September 2, 2012. Presently the community has a leased 2450sf facility with regular services, coffee-hour, parish council meetings, classes for children, baptisms, social events, etc.

Income is better than budgeted and we look forward to increase our budget for the next year. Our attendance is about 60 people for the regular Sunday service. Services in Church Slavonic are performed according to the Julian calendar. Parishioners are taking ownership in ministry and are doing a wonderful job. We are in a process to discuss possibility to look for a permanent location. Glory be to God for all His mercies towards Annunciation Mission.

Holy Trinity, Safety Harbor, FL

Fr Kyrill Williams will be released from his duties at Holy Trinity effective August 26th to serve in another diocese. For the past four years Fr Kyrill and Matushka Tamara have sacrificed greatly to serve this community. When they arrived the community was very broken. Fr. Kyrill and Matushka Tamara brought a lot of healing to the community. It is now a healthy church family. Despite a very significant amount of financial help from the Diocese, the community has not been able to get its head financially above water.

It is said it takes at least 7 years to fully turn around a community and there was just not enough time to get it done. Presently Holy Trinity is at a fork in the road. The Diocese has done all it possible can. Presently if we can find a priest who is willing to serve the community for no remuneration in exchange for living in the apartment so that the parish can work its debt we may have a solution. There is also the possibility to the parish taking care of the debt so that income can be used to support another priest family.

St. Alexis Mission, Palm Coast, FL

The mission is served on Sunday mornings only by Fr. Nicholas Molodyko-Harris.

St Andrew the First Called, New Port Richey, FL

St. Andrew's continues to grow, both in terms of new converts and others who are returning to and/or discovering our parish. We are double in size from where we were 2 years ago (nearly triple in the winter months). We have a good many children now and are doing our best to meet everyone's needs. We have remodeled a section of our hall to include a Church school room, and we have built a fenced in play/picnic area outside for the children as well. This coming year we will have 4 separate classes. We continue to have bible study/adult education class on Saturdays before Vespers. We have cleaned up and relocated our parish sign to a part of the property that allows it to be more visible from the road. Overall the parish is becoming a much more lively and busy place. We are, however, not without our concerns. If the parish continues to grow at this rate we will soon outgrow our current building, and despite the fact

that we are doing much better financially, we are in no way a wealthy parish, and do not have the financial means to relocate. This issue is compounded by the fact that the community around us is no longer what it was 25 years ago. We have had issues with vandalism and there is some concern for the parishioners' safety. We have installed security cameras and are just hoping and praying that things don't get worse in that regard, and that God continues to guide our small outpost to where He wants us to be.

St. Justin Martyr, Jacksonville, FL

A lot of changes have taken place at St. Justin Martyr in the past year. After four years of incubating at St Justin Martyr, in September 2012 Annunciation Russian Mission was hived off under the able leadership of Fr Arkady. It was bitter sweet for all, but yet a much needed one for both communities. As expected the impact emotionally and financially was significant.

We were sad to see the Russian community go. They were an integral part of the parish family, and in the end it was a win-win for all. For St. Justin Martyr the next 6+ months was a rediscovery of who we are as a community—our identity as American Orthodox. In retrospect it is striking how much the local parish culture shifted while hosting the Russian Mission. Notably in the Jacksonville area we became known as the Russian Church and this was inhibiting our outreach with the non-Orthodox.

The emotional impact happened with the initial 20-30% overall drop in attendance. This is now being offset by new young families in the parish and inquirers and catechumens. The financial impact has been offset by direct savings in overhead, supplies and salary. What brings most joy is the combined income and attendance of both communities is up significantly.

This summer St. Justin parishioners participated in two mission trips: Project Mexico and the San Esteban Teaching Team. Also the parish has fully funded a medical assistant at the Health Clinic in Uganda through St Philip, Tampa FL.

Noteworthy this year is Dn Steven Bruns coming on staff fulltime for one-year internship as the Pastoral Assistant. Dn Steven is picking up the secretarial/office work and assisting Fr Ted in administrating the parish and in pastoral work. After completing his internship the plan is for Dn Steven to plant a mission church in Gainesville, FL.

St Mark, Bradenton, FL

This year we experienced quite a few firsts. We completed our first formal church school year, participated in a program with Community Haven, which is a residential center for those with special needs, sponsored an art show, and planted a fruit tree grove on our property. St. Mark continues to maintain its ties to our local community through participating in the Annual Taste of Manatee Festival, which supports local children's programs.

We also had our Annual Orthodox Education and Cultural Festival, which featured a variety of music and dancing. We held several seminars of which two noteworthy seminars were Iconography and Spirituality by master iconographer Vladimir Blagonadezhdin and a Russian Art

and Spirituality seminar by Vera Bourenina. We also had a visit from Matushka Susanna from the St. Elizabeth Convent in Minsk, Belarus. Several parishioners accompanied Fr. John to visit Russia for the first time.

We are very fortunate to work with Milos Konjevic and the Diocesan Debt Reduction Program. This year saw the elimination of one debt and the consolidation of another related to our new church building program. We continue to stress the importance of tithing as well as charitable giving. We see slow, but steady growth in our stewardship and look forward to a busy and challenging new year.

St Philip the Apostle, Tampa FL

Though we lost several members due to job and school transfers we experienced a net increase in membership due to new arrivals to the area and the reception of three converts during the year. Attendance at Sunday Divine Liturgy averages about 90%. We maintain a full schedule of services throughout the year. Our monthly Panikhida, where the names of all of the departed of parish members are read, is well attended.

Our charitable outreach continues with our year-round food drive and the distribution of our Christmas collection to charitable good works. We exceeded our goal of using at least 10% of our income for charitable good works, not including the food drive.

Our mission activities continued with the sending out of our seventh short term missionary in three years, this time to Project Mexico. The parish continues its efforts to raise funds for the building of a medical clinic in northern Uganda. The building is up and the roof is on. While construction continues, we are now in the process of obtaining the necessary operational permits from the Ugandan government. Our parish has committed to paying the nurse's salary at the clinic for at least two years and most of those funds are now on hand. A dedicated website for the clinic, provided free by Orthodox Web Solutions, is now up and running at www.ugandaclinic.org.

Fr. Joseph has recently been elected to the board of directors of OCMC. In December and again in June he traveled to Uganda for meetings regarding the clinic. He continues as treasurer of the Orthodox Clergy Brotherhood of Tampa Bay.

Saint Raphael Orthodox Church, Inverness, FL

Saint Raphael serves parishioners within a 35 mile radius centered in Inverness, Florida. This area is home to many retired couples living in extensive planned communities in a suburban setting. The parish also has a mission-outreach with a twice monthly Vespers at a large, fast-growing suburban retirement community known as, "The Villages". This outreach is bringing lapsed Orthodox Christians back to the Church as well as servicing our more distant and less mobile members. Currently the parish is preparing for a fall ethnic festival and outreach as well as preparing for our pre-Nativity retreat

St. Simeon Church, Titusville, FL

Demographics have become a significant challenge with the end of the Shuttle program at Cape Canaveral. Fr Krist Nicklaus works a secular job in order to serve the people of St Simeon and is to be congratulated for his faithfulness.

St Stephen Orthodox Church, Orlando, FL.

In the past year we have started a Christian education class that meets after Divine Liturgy on Sundays. We usually have 10-20 in attendance. We have also offered classes on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings, and we started hosting a series of parish retreats. Kyriakos Markides visited in the Fall and Fr. John Behr was our speaker this spring.

We support OCMC missionary James Hargrave, the OCA's mission planting grant, our seminarians Joshua & Mariana Schooping, and local Orthodox charities - The Ephraim Project and Ss. Cosmas & Damian House.

We average 120-130 on Sunday morning. Although attendance has been trending slightly up over the past 18 months, tithes & offerings have been down significantly this year and we are having to readjust our budget.

We have received 14 people into the church through baptism or chrismation. We currently have 1 catechumen and several inquirers.