

Diocese of the South (OCA) 2015 Annual Assembly Appalachian Deanery Report

The Appalachian Deanery of the Diocese of the South is formed by 10 churches, 4 of which are granted parish status and 6 that are mission/mission station status. Two of those mission stations are currently inactive. The Deanery covers the geographical region made up of the states of Kentucky, Tennessee (roughly east of the Tennessee River) and most of Virginia (the Northern Virginia suburbs of Washington, DC fall under the Archdiocese of Washington, DC). We have one mission (St. Tikhon, Chattanooga, TN) without an assigned priest and under the care of Diocesan clergy. The St. Seraphim Orthodox Church, Memphis, is now part of the **newly formed Mississippi River Deanery**. The Appalachian Deanery hopes to see both of the mission stations in Virginia (St. Ambrose of Milan, Roanoke, and St. Herman of Alaska, Charlottesville) return to active status with regular meetings for seekers and at least monthly Great Vespers/Divine Liturgy services for the faithful who may gather. These efforts will be overseen by Virginia clergy assisted by the hoped for presence of an intern. A group of interested faithful in the Farmville, VA area gathered for a few meetings, but at this time do not seem to possess the commitment for mission station status. There is also the intention to investigate potential for a mission station in Winchester/Front Royal/Strasburg, VA. The Wytheville, VA area presents the helpful convergence of highways for the mountainous geographical region of southwestern Virginia and may be a good place to consider another mission station. Tennessee possesses the greatest number of missions/parishes among the states of the Appalachian Deanery due to the location of St. Anne Church (Oak Ridge/W. Knoxville) and the ministry Fr. Stephen Freeman and other clergy at the founding of the deanery. There is hope to look at the region east of Knoxville (Smokies), even considering Bristol, TN for potential mission development, while not ignoring the need for a mission in the vicinity of Nashville. Kentucky has numerous college towns that should see our missionary effort in the near future. The Louisville vicinity, as well as the region of northern Kentucky approaching Cincinnati, OH are being discussed by St. Athanasius Church as potential areas for mission planting.

Dormition of the Theotokos Church, Norfolk, VA

<http://www.dormitionnorfolk.org>

Priest John Cox

Voting Members: 32

Average Sunday Attendance: 60

Average Great Vespers Attendance: 8

Percentage Increase/Decrease in Tithes/Offerings from 2013-14: -20%

Total Parish (Active/Inactive/Seekers): 100

Attendance for Pascha 2015: 75

2014 was a challenging year for us. We lost 3 families which accounts for the decline in attendance and offerings. A promising land acquisition materialized but upon further study, we discovered that the cost to develop the land would be prohibitively high. Currently, we have an offer in on an existing building that is very promising and we hope that a new home will lead to renewed vitality and open up new horizons for our community.

St. Andrew's Church, Ashland, VA

<http://www.firstcalled.org>

Priest Adam Sexton

Voting Members: 34

Average Sunday Attendance: 50

Average Great Vespers Attendance: 18

Percentage Increase/Decrease in Tithes/Offerings from 2013-14: NA

Total Parish (Active/Inactive/Seekers): 80

Attendance for Pascha 2015: 70

The parish is strong and motivated to grow. We have added about 5 families and individuals over the last year and giving is up, though not enough to keep us from running a deficit each month. Our biggest expense is the priest's salary. We have a community focused ministry and continue to be active and recognizable in the community. The parishioners have given extensively beyond their tithes and offerings for specific community need based endeavors and have elevated many citizens of Ashland out of some genuine hardships over the last year. These folks give! We look forward to being more present in a campus-based ministry to Randolph Macon College next door in the coming Church year.

St. Anne Orthodox Church, Oak Ridge, TN

<http://www.stanneorthodoxchurch.com>

Archpriest Stephen Freeman

Voting Members: 85

Average Sunday Attendance: 100

Average Great Vespers Attendance: 12

Percentage Increase/Decrease in Tithes/Offerings from 2013-14: +4%

Total Parish (Active/Inactive/Seekers): 192

Attendance for Pascha 2015: 150

We have had steady growth despite losing a substantial number of families since 2009 to a new ROCOR mission. We have filled our building space and are in a process of making decisions about how to move forward to support further growth.

St. Athanasius Mission, Nicholasville, KY

<http://www.athanasiusoca.org>

Priest Justin Patterson

Voting Members: 78

Average Sunday Attendance: 109

Average (Vigil) Great Vespers Attendance: 33

Percentage Increase/Decrease in Tithes/Offerings from 2012-13: +0.05%

Total Parish (Active/Inactive/Seekers): 183

Attendance for Pascha 2014: 175

At the end of July 2015, St. Athanasius marks the completion of our first year in the new church facility. Our primary work, this past year, has been getting settled in to our new location even as we continue doing the church work we have always prioritized: Divine Services, Christian Education, various ministries, and hospitality. One highlight of the fall was our Open House. While rain kept the crowd smaller than we had hoped, our efforts to get out the word resulted in our being able to host nearly 200 people as they toured our church and acquainted themselves with our Faith. In February 2015, we welcomed Archbishop Nikon and Bishop Mark (as well as about a dozen other clergy and scores of laity from nearby Orthodox parishes and Holy Cross Monastery) to our parish for the formal Dedication of the new church. While at St. Athanasius, Archbishop Nikon ordained a deacon, Fr. Simeon Siskar, to assist in the work of the parish. We enjoyed our second largest crowd ever for Pascha this year--and were grateful to have, at last, a fully adequate parish hall for fellowship. The challenge of continued missionary work and outreach lies before us in the coming year.

St. Cyprian of Carthage Mission, Richmond (Midlothian), VA

<http://www.stcyprianoca.org>

Archpriest David Arnold

Voting Members: 68

Average Sunday Attendance: 73

Average Great Vespers Attendance: 25

Percentage Increase/Decrease in Tithes/Offerings from 2013-14: +18%

Total Parish (Active/Inactive/Seekers): 121

Attendance for Pascha 2014: 145

The final detail layers of pigment for the remaining images on the Sanctuary walls and ceiling will be completed during the week of the All-American Council. This project has been a blessing for our members to support and to watch as it progresses from one layer to the next. Our Iconographer, Conner "Seraphim" O'Keefe, his wife Ilaria, and their children, Herman and Ida, will be moving to St. Vladimir's Seminary to begin studies there this fall. We will miss them, and hope they can come back when we are at the next stage of Iconography in the Temple. While we hoped to have the Altar consecrated this year, it has been decided to postpone those prayers and actions until a later date. We hope to see debt for construction of the Temple eliminated by the end of 2016 so that we can begin to plan for construction of the Kitchen/Hall/Education/Administration building.

Protection of the Holy Virgin Mary Mission, Clarksville, TN

<http://www.orthodoxclarksville.org>

Priest Thomas Langdon

Voting Members: 40

Average Sunday Attendance: 40

Average Great Vespers Attendance: 12

Percentage Increase/Decrease in Tithes/Offerings from 2013-14: +14.8%

Total Parish (Active/Inactive/Seekers): 70

Attendance for Pascha 2014: 54

Besides raising about \$20,000 in restricted funds to help renovate the new church property, our tithes/offerings from 2013/2014 to 2014/2015 increased 14.8 %. We moved to the new church property and have been renovating it over the past year. We moved into our new chapel on Oct 1, 2014, our Feast day. We have also been making improvements on the exterior of the building and established a play area with a new wooden play structure for the youth. We now have adequate facilities and grounds as a church home to call our own, and the primary challenge and goal over the next year is to expand our ministry and presence in the greater Clarksville community.

St. Tikhon of Moscow Mission, Chattanooga, TN

<http://www.sainttikhons.org>

Mission served by Diocesan Clergy: Archpriest Peter Smith, Priest Daniel Talley

Voting Members: 29

Average Sunday Attendance: 30

Average Great Vespers Attendance: 7

Percentage Increase/Decrease in Tithes/Offerings from 2013-14: (-11%)

Total Parish (Active/Inactive/Seekers): 60

Attendance for Pascha 2015:45

The St. Tikhon Mission continues to progress from previous decline to barely Mission Station size to again approaching the size of a small but viable Mission. While not able to support a salary for a priest at this time, the available clergy are serving weekly services, as well as Great Feasts and the Lenten/Paschal cycle. The faithful are keeping the building in good shape, just completing renovation of the Nave floor. Priest Jonas Worsham (attached/retired) faithfully served first Sundays during the previous year. It should be noted that Fr. Jonas has had a role in the formation and support of many of the missions in the Appalachian Deanery (St. Herman of Alaska, St. Seraphim of Sarov, St. Tikhon, Holy Protection). We appreciate his devotion to the priesthood and diligent work in the Appalachian Deanery, even after retirement. Axios!

St. Maria of Paris Mission Station, Cleveland, TN

<http://www.stmariaorthodoxchurch.org/>

Priest Kevin Rigdon

Voting Members: 35

Average Sunday Attendance: 38

Average Great Vespers Attendance: 15

Percentage Increase/Decrease in Tithes/Offerings from 2013-2014: +10%

Total Parish (Active/Inactive/Seekers): 73

Attendance for Pascha 2015: 62

Our growth this year was tempered by the loss of parishioners through job relocation or graduation.. This last Nativity Fast we had a small building fund drive which raise about \$33,000, and that has been deposited with the Diocese. This Fall, we begin our second year with the local OCF chapter that continues to grow.