

## Central Florida Deanery Report 2016 Diocesan Assembly

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The Central Florida Deanery covers the northern geographical half of the great state of Florida and consists of seven parishes, two missions and a mission station. Overall things continue to do well in the deanery—overall income and attendance is up, existing facilities are being improved/expanded and two parishes and one mission have outgrown their facilities and are looking for new properties/suitable facilities. We have two strong mission opportunities--- The Villages (see St. Raphael of Brooklyn report) and a Russian Mission in Orlando (See St. Stephen's report). Also Fr Dan has begun tilling the soil in southern Orlando. (See St. Stephen's report again.) Most definitely our greatest need is to find another priest to compliment the work of Fr Arkady amongst the Russian people. We will be having a deanery Parish Stewardship Workshop on August 22<sup>nd</sup> in an effort to better equip ourselves in nurturing strong and generous stewardship in our parishes.

### **Annunciation Russian Mission, Jacksonville, FL (2012)**

Rev. Hieromonk Arkady (Migunov) *Priest-in-Charge*

This year will be Annunciation Russian Mission's fourth anniversary. Presently they worship in a well-located converted office warehouse. They have long outgrown their 2500sf facility. They have been searching for a new property and have put few contracts in on properties that have not panned out for one reason or another. They have begun a Russian school for the children of Russian immigrants to learn to read and write Russian.

Attendance is good and finances are remarkably well for this young community. In addition to Annunciation, Fr Arkady serves a Saturday liturgy once per month in Gainesville and Orlando.

### **St. Alexis Mission, Palm Coast, FL (1995)**

*Served by area Clergy*

Services are celebrated both in English and Slavonic. Fr Nicholas Harris, who is retired, serves the community regularly and drives two hours one-way every week to celebrate the Sunday Liturgy.

### **St Andrew the First Called, New Port Richey, FL (1976)**

Priest Patrick Smith, *Rector*

St. Andrews continues to flourish. Attendance has hit the century mark and they have outgrown their present facilities. They have established a building fund and are looking for land to build a Church. In the meantime they continue to fix, beautify, and upgrade their present facility. The majority of growth has been with young families with children. This fall one of their parishioners will be attending Holy Cross/Hellenic College undergraduate school. Any struggles they have are all related to continued growth. Fr Patrick and Matushka Kristen are a perfect fit for this community.

**St. Justin Martyr, Jacksonville, FL (1994)**

Archpriest Theodore Pisarchuk, *Rector*

At the beginning of 2015 St. Justin Martyr launched a Mortgage Principal Pay Down Program and to date the principal has been additionally reduced by \$34,000.

In 2015 St. Justin Martyr also launched an iconography program to complete the Nave. Presently 64% of the icons have been pledged and 15% of the iconography has been installed. It is expected to have all the work substantially complete during Lent 2017. In September 2015 in thanksgiving to God, St. Justin Martyr launched a Paying it Forward program, for the three year Church Planting Grant the community received from the DOS & OCA. About \$25,000 was raised to purchase a 4-wheel drive truck for the Diocese of Mexico to enable a priest to regularly visit and serve the 5000 Orthodox Christians of the 12 Orthodox villages in the states of Hidalgo and Veracruz, Mexico. The vehicle was personally delivered by Fr Antonio Perdomo in June. The parish also now has a smart phone app which has been well received. The greatest need at St. Justin Martyr is a second priest.

**St Mark, Bradenton, FL (1979)**

Priest John Chudick, *Rector*

The parish has grown over the past year with people moving to the area and chrismations. The Sunday school program has expanded. They have increased their contributions to the Managed Debt Program. Attendance continues to grow and they have excellent attendance for midweek Feast Days. The parish has a special small group ministry consisting of medical professionals and lay people to provide spiritual and emotional support the sick and suffering. Fr John is unable to be with us for the Assembly because he is serving as the camp nurse at Camp Nazareth in Mercer, PA (American Carpatho-Russian Diocese) where his son attends.

**St Philip the Apostle Mission, Tampa FL (2005)**

Priest Joseph Ciarciaglino *Priest-in-Charge*

The parish continues to grow and do well. A touchstone of this community is the work of Akonyibedo Health Center in Northern Uganda (<http://www.ugandaclinic.org/>). This past year the community raised \$9,000 in-house and from other nearby Orthodox communities through the Tampa area Pan-Orthodox Lenten Vespers to build a maternity/delivery facility at the medical center, which today is under construction. Year round the parish collects food for the poor and baby items for mother's who have chosen not to have an abortion. In addition to tithing the community directs 10% of its income to charity and to those who come to us for assistance. The parish is fantastically mission minded and "other-focused." This year they have completed some building improvement, renovating a restroom and retiling the narthex and fellowship hall. The parish acquired two large veneration icons and 1 kiot containing 75 icons. A parishioner custom made 3 analogions for them.

### **Saint Raphael Orthodox Church, Inverness, FL (2002)**

Igumen Sergious (Gerken), *Acting Rector*

Over the past year attendance has increased 12%. Since the arrival of Fr Sergious attendance is up 55%. The parish has a full round of services—50 during Lent and Holy Week, and all are well attended. The parish consists of mostly retired folks—but now children are beginning to attend and for the first time there is a Sunday school for the youth!

On the second and fourth Tuesday of every month Fr Sergious celebrates Vespers in The Villages where many parishioners live. It is a great source of encouragement because of so many attending, both Orthodox Christians and visitors.

Parishioner Alla Greif in making a mini-omophorion for His Excellence Bishop Alexander. She was commissioned by our parish to create this gift on our behalf and many precious, semi-precious stones, and pearls were donated for this endeavor. May God Grant our New Bishop Many Years!

They continue to host our Coptic Brotherhood for church services once a month on Saturday. The parish has outgrown its facilities but they are making good with what they have. The fellowship hall is full and overflowing. The facilities and church grounds continue to be improved, including landscaping, paving and interior painting, installing LED lights and bathroom facility upgrades.

### **St. Simeon Church, Titusville, FL (1966)**

Priest Krist Nickolas, *Priest-in-Charge*

Aging demographics continue to be the biggest challenge for St. Simeon. Ever year the parish takes a small amount of money from their savings to meet their expenses. With exception of just a few, most members are retired. In the fall, a well-attended church growth workshop was held. Fr. Krist is very active in local ministries in addition counseling. He no longer works secularly and is full time at the parish.

### **St Stephen Orthodox Church, Orlando, FL. (1969)**

Priest Daniel Hickman, *Acting Rector*

Revival continues at St. Stephen's. Attendance has rebounded to the better days at St. Stephens and so has income. Fr. Daniel has taken leadership in reestablishing a summer youth camp along with the South Florida deanery. This year one parishioner has begun studies at SVS, another has engaged the monastic life at St. Tikhon's and a third has gone to Sts. Mary and Martha Monastery.

Notably Fr. Dan has begun a regular mission outreach in South Orlando with the hope of eventually daughtering a second OCA church in Orlando.

Served by Fr. Arkady (Migonov) the Russian Mission continues to do very well. The choir is excellent and the numbers are good. This mission is primed to take off with the right priest. We are desperately seeking to identify a mission minded evangelical Russian speaking priest for this community. One priest did visit from Russia this past Lent, but it was not a fit.