

**Deanery Report – Appalachian Deanery  
Diocesan Assembly – July 21 – July 24, 2009  
Atlanta, Georgia**

**KENTUCKY**

*St. Athanasius - Nicholasville*

Over the past year, our mission has baptized 4 children and 3 adults. St. Athanasius also received 3 adults by chrismation. We have also welcomed 4 adults into our parish as transfer members. At the same time, we lost 5 adults and 4 children as a result of job transfer or move of some kind. We married a young couple and buried a young child. We are blessed to have a dozen catechumens or serious seekers.

St. Athanasius is in the middle of modest renovations of our current rental space—including the building of a more complete iconostasis, the acquisition of church furniture, and a thorough cleaning and painting of our entire space. After we have completed these projects, we hope to devote more of our attention to the building program. Since last year, we have paid our 17 ½ acres of land off and are readying ourselves to select an architect and to launch formally a building campaign. We are doubly excited because the recent economic stimulus plan has had the effect of guaranteeing new roads that will make our land even more accessible to future members—shaving off many minutes from commutes to and from church.

Over the past year, St. Athanasius' finances have become even more stable. An ever-larger number of our faithful and catechumens are faithful tithers. By the grace of God, our mission has been able to achieve all of its budgetary goals for this fiscal year, which is also testimony both to the faithfulness of our people, and to the good planning of our parish council and treasurer. We are indebted to our council and treasurer for their outstanding work over this past year in terms of communication, planning, and follow-through. One of the events that gave our finances a serious boost in January was our treasurer's "Six-Month Financial Check-up." We set aside a Wednesday evening programming spot (when I usually teach my Orthodoxy 101 class for newcomers) and he gave a masterful presentation on our parish budget, how and why we spend money, what our procedures are, etc. The transparency of his presentation resulted in a surge in giving, which reflected the confidence people placed in our council's stewardship of parish finances.

Our liturgical worship remains the heart of our parish life. We have added not only Saturday evening Vigil over this past year, but also a Wednesday and Friday Matins service at 7am. Flowing from this liturgical life, St. Athanasius continues to develop, expand, and tweak parish ministries:

Sunday School (prior to Liturgy) draws in on average 30-35 people.

Orthodoxy 101 (catechesis after Wednesday Vespers) continues to be an important point of entry and education in Orthodoxy for converts.

Basic Outreach goes on not only with existing programs like our annual educational Fall Lecture Series, but also with events like our fall Clothing Giveaway, which offers lightly-used clothing for free to those in need.

Project Lazarus Bread Ministry was inaugurated this past year. Each Sunday afternoon, we distribute bread given to us by Panera to the needy right at the doorstep of our church! We have the joy of touching many lives.

Jail Ministry got underway this year. Right now, the priest and one parishioner go each week into the local jail. Three additional parishioners have filed paperwork to get involved in this ministry.

Bookstore Ministry is becoming more high-profile. Not only do we offer quality Orthodox literature at our church, but have increasingly begun to take our stock out to other venues (e.g., the Ichthus Christian Music Festival).

Meals Ministry is something our parish has long done for families within the parish during times of crisis or after giving birth. This past year, we also began to take care of a non-Orthodox elderly couple (housebound).

Campus Ministry was also a task we undertook during Lent this year at Asbury College. We have not found our campus ministry “niche” yet, but are always exploring ways to serve students in the Lexington-area colleges and universities.

Nurturing Vocations remains a huge part of my ministry as a priest in this particular place. We have at least two men who would make excellent “permanent deacons” who are long-term members of the parish. Because of our proximity to Asbury Seminary, we also have a number of young converts who are seminary-trained who will be heading to Orthodox seminary with my blessing in the coming years. We also are nurturing a budding iconographer and (hopefully) preparing to weave the counseling skills of certain parishioners into our outreach ministries.

## **TENNESSEE**

### *St. Tikhon - Chattanooga*

We are a small church with 99% of the adults being converts to the faith. We continually navigate the many waters necessary to gain an Orthodox world view. We are fortunate to have Fr. Deacon David with his wealth of orthodox experience to assist our group in staying true to the canons of the Church. One thought we have come to as a group is building a church is for the glory of God. We do not need it for more room or any other reason. There are some among us

who question why not “redo” what we have but then we became united in the words of Blessed John (of Shanghai and San Francisco):

The construction of a church is a sacrifice to God; to allocate a parcel of land for church services is to sacrifice to God part of your personal possessions, but most of all it is a gift of your love, your zeal.

Churches are not needed by God Whose throne is heaven and Whose footstool is the earth; it is we who need them. It is we who benefit from donating towards the building of churches, although the Lord accepts not so much the substance of our alms, as much as He does our zeal; the quality of our effort. Christ approved the widow's mite, saying that she had given more than anybody else, for the rich cast in a great deal from their abundance, but she gave all she had, all her livelihood.

As a group we have begun the process of gathering information, studying architecture, reviewing materials on and on to build a church to glorify God. We have 3 new baptisms/chrisinations joining us from Pascha, and one new catchecumen.

Time to Build

by St. John of San Francisco, Wonderworker

Some people are saying: "The time is not come to build the Lord's house." Among them are many who are buying houses for themselves, who live in their own houses in full satisfaction of their material needs, or who are selling their homes to move into better and better dwellings, increasing their assets. It is understandable when such words are heard from unbelievers. But how can they be repeated by believers who themselves go to church?

A church is a place that is consecrated, holy, in which there always dwells the grace of God. At the consecration of Solomon's temple, the glory of the Lord in the appearance of a cloud filled the house of God. So it was in the Old Testament temple. How much more powerfully does the grace of God act in the temples of the New Testament, where there is offered a true cleansing from sin, where we partake of the true Body and Blood of Christ, where, during the Divine Liturgy, the Holy Spirit continually descends upon the Gifts being consecrated and upon the people present? One can pray anywhere, and God hears prayers from anywhere. But it's much easier to pray in a church where everything is conducive to prayer. From there our prayers ascend to God, and the mercies of God are sent down upon us.

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although the Lord accepts not so much the substance of our alms, as much as He does our zeal; the quality of our effort. Christ approved the widow's mite, saying that she had given more than anybody else, for the rich cast in a great deal from their abundance, but she gave all she had, all her livelihood. Those alms we give in the name of God are received by God Himself. Spiritually, our alms are laid up in the treasuries of heaven, God's treasuries, from which nobody can steal them away. If someone steals any church possession, he steals from God Himself and the Lord God Himself punishes him.

At each Liturgy, those who contributed to the building of the church are commemorated. In building churches here on earth, we create for ourselves eternal habitations in heaven. Decades will pass, our bodies will decay, perhaps our very bones will turn to dust, but our souls will live eternally. Happy will they be who prepare for their souls a dwelling in the heavenly mansions. Even if the churches, which are built, fall into ruins the names of those who contributed to their construction will be written in God's eternal books, and the prayers that arose from within these churches will be sealed.

#### *Protection of the Holy Virgin Mary - Clarksville*

Protection of the Holy Virgin Mary Orthodox Church in Clarksville is a fledgling mission parish having an extended first chapter as a military chaplaincy open to the public. Previously stationed for more than a decade on the premises of the military chapel at Ft. Campbell, KY, the community of some two dozen souls now known as Protection persisted from week to week in celebrating Divine Liturgy within a general-use chapel where led by a military chaplain who was assigned to the base. The whole life of the community was limited to weekly meetings which were not infrequently subject to sudden cancellation due of the chaplain's primary duty to the post or unit to which he was assigned. This situation obtained for more than a decade, yet civilians who were able to pass security clearance to enter the base continued to attend Divine Liturgy there as celebrated by Chaplains Rev. Peter Dubinin and Rev. Isaiah Gillette.

Just this year, the second chapter of Protection's life in Christ began when the Orthodox community which gathered at the chapel at Ft. Campbell instigated the move to the present location, a rented A-frame chapel owned by Clarksville's Missouri Synod Lutheran church, Grace Lutheran. This present chapel allows semi-permanent control of the temple as it is not currently being used for worship by the host Lutheran community. It is, however used for choir practice on Sunday morning and this prevents us from beginning the celebration of the Divine Liturgy at the canonical hour of 9:30 or 10:00 as we must wait until 10:25 for their practice around the piano to end before we may begin the Divine Office of the 3rd and 6th Hours preparatory to Divine Liturgy at 10:45.

As the newly-assigned priest, I have instituted the regular celebration of Saturday evening Vespers, during these warm months beginning at 6:30. The influence of the local majority Baptist religion presents a challenge to the Orthodox sense of worship as a continual work of the people which only culminates on Sunday morning.

The parish, in its present, early stage of development as a mission independent of the military base, has a long road ahead in the establishment of full parish life. I am working with parishioners to establish the hospitable habit of an organized, nutritious meal at coffee hour after Liturgy, which will provide a sense of welcome for newcomers and a way for extant members to get to know each other better. We stand in need of establishing now a legal entity as a parish, with a bank account, committed membership and pledged, regular stewardship contributing to the upkeep and growth of the church. I thank the existing laborers of Protection parish for performing the normal business of the church as they have occurred to them; we also need to recruit more hands for these tasks. We need to find singers responsible for the celebration of all services, and to train more readers capable of proclaiming the Old Testament and Epistles. I look forward to beginning midweek Vespers and classes on the Gospel and the Church.

In the near future we will need to have more control of our temple, which may necessitate a move. Our present temple is large and handsome but refurbishment is planned for it this summer which will impact our tenancy there. Our host, Pastor Larry Peters, is a friendly and supportive presence and wishes to accommodate us but I see the limits of our stay at Grace Lutheran already being set if grace intends to make further use of the chapel, and if we grow in membership.

The development, edification and mobilization of the people of Protection parish as a thoroughly Orthodox Christian body able to welcome all their neighbors into the Orthodox Church here in Clarksville will be a long process fed first and foremost by the Word of God proclaimed in the Holy Gospel and the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist. Word and Sacrament are our two great gifts to the world; our task to share them is enormous.

### *St. Seraphim of Sarov - Memphis*

As I was unable to attend the last assembly I would like to submit a synopsis of our Parish meeting held in February of 09 which reviewed 08.

In 2008, tithes were up significantly, membership is up by seven , attendance is up on Sunday and generally more consistent, and on the other hand expenses were up, attendance is down at weekday services and major feasts. In late August I injured my shoulder and was out of work for ten weeks. Thanks to your generous giving we were financially stable for the duration. Our choir director of 8 years, Matthew, departed for grad school. Seraphim has emerged as a choir leader with Anastasia. We are dangerously low on singers who know the music at this time. Melanie continues as our Treasurer doing the weekly contributions, deposits, bills, bookkeeping, reporting, and communicating with the diocesan Treasurer. We pay all our bills on time, have a humble sum in our savings and have a good reputation with the Diocese. M. Joanne continues our Sunday school program for kids under 10 years. We currently have no programs for our other youth. The Parish Board consists of Melanie and myself and we conduct the church's business as things come up. The Board does not meet regularly. We have liturgy every Sunday and for the twelve major feasts. Attendance at major feasts is 5-10 people and weekday services

attendance is 2-5. We had several infant baptisms during the year and many Pannikhidas for relatives of our membership. Eric continues to be the mainstay acolyte. He will be leaving for school in August and will need a replacement. We had a major celebration for the Dormition Feast and St. Nicholas. We continue to have a church website, [Orthodoxmemphis.org](http://Orthodoxmemphis.org). It was not updated at all in 2008. We do not have a person responsible for the site. We changed our Sunday meal frequency from every Sunday to once a month and instituted coffee hour. Every week prosphora is brought to the church by either Tatiana, Pelagia, Joanne, Svetlana, or Melanie. Joanne continues to be our purchaser and meal coordinator in general. Melanie continues to put together a high quality weekly bulletin including lives of the saints, essays, birthdays and names days.

The church yard continues to be cut by a service and we hired a woman to clean the church every other week. We had our air conditioner stolen and Larry installed a new one which was donated by one of his vendors. Because of the theft we extended the alarm system to both of the systems outside. Our copier is consistently used for Sunday School and choir. It quit working and was sent in for repair. We had the bamboo cut down in the back and the yard graded. We did no repair or painting or major maintenance on our building in 2008. We now have a list of things that will need to be done this year. We have no one in charge of the building or its maintenance at this time.

Our address list needs updating. Information on births, baptisms, marriages and deaths need to be compiled for our Church records.

We currently have no catechumens and no inquirer's classes.

We have very adequate music resources and liturgical texts for everyday of the year. Our liturgical library is quite sufficient thanks in part to many donations from our members.

I know we are not up to our full potential but we do continue to accomplish quite a bit. The spirit of this group of Christian is a real beneficial presence in the lives of our families and our Orthodox community. We are encouraged by St. James to be not only hearers of the word but doers so that our Lord may say to us --"Well done thou good and faithful servant". The vision of the Church and of our parish--to have all things in order in brotherly love, to spread the Good News and to rightly worship The Holy Trinity--are daily, weekly, yearly and lifetime goals. They provide needed direction in our lives. They give us hope, community and the bond of love.

As of this writing, we have four adult catechumens and one teen. Our tithes are ahead of last year and this represents growth in the realm of tithing. Our attendance on Sundays is about the same even though we are growing in membership. Two additional men serve in the altar. The parish, in conjunction with Diocese (in a graduated scale over three years), is providing health insurance for me. We have caught up on the building maintenance and had the exterior of the church painted before Pascha. On a regular basis we offer three services a week, during Holy Week we offered nine.

I know there are developmental resources in the OCA, in our diocese and in our deanery that we are not bringing into play yet at St. Seraphim that could improve our evangelism, community life and worship. It is our prayer and intention to tap into this reservoir of talent and experience and benefit the Lord's work here in Memphis.

Priest Mark Sutton

*St. Anne - Oak Ridge*

By God's grace, St. Anne continues to grow in its life as a parish. In this past year we have seen the continued growth in the number of families with small children which has at the same time placed greater emphasis on our ministry to young children. Vacation Church School, inaugurated last year with great success is scheduled for its second year later this month. The entire Sunday School program was a crowded event with wonderful leadership by its teachers and staff.

St. Anne enjoyed a visit from Archbishop DMITRI last August and hosted a Deanery Workshop in the same weekend. We marked 2008 as the 10th anniversary of the parish. Exploratory work for planting a mission was begun in 1997, including the first celebrations of the Divine Liturgy. Regular Sunday services began in February of 1998. An exact "founding date" for the parish has thus always been a "moving target." It was our parish's fourth hierarchical visit in our 10-11 years and a rich experience for the parish and the deanery.

In January of 2008, the parish's program for a second priest ended. Fr. Justin Matthews accepted a position as CEO and President of FOCUS North America which provides leadership and development for social ministries in partnership with Orthodox parishes throughout North America.

St. Anne assisted over the past year or more in the establishment of Protection of the Holy Virgin Mary Orthodox Mission in Clarksville, TN, the newest mission in our Deanery. Reader Jim Tilson was especially helpful in leading Reader's services. Fr. Justin Matthews and Fr. Stephen Freeman traveled regularly to provide Divine Liturgy. In June of this year, Fr. John Beal was assigned as priest-in-charge. We look forward to growth in this, the fourth OCA parish in Tennessee.

Our Deacon, Fr. Deacon Kevin Rigdon, has continued to provide needed help with our services and has assisted particularly on occasions when Fr. Stephen has had to travel outside the parish. Father Deacon will be graduating from his college program this summer. His responsibilities are likely to change with new employment. The parish prays for his ministry and waits for these new developments to give direction for us.

A strong focus in this past year has been increasing the level of volunteer involvement and leadership in the parish. A survey was completed that has helped spur much greater participation

in various ministries and activities by the whole parish. We refinanced our building and property loans this year which will help eliminate our debt sooner. Our progress with plans for a new building has been tabled until our debt is reduced.

The general economic conditions had an effect on our 2009 budget. The parish adjusted well and prays for rapid improvement.

We have added several families by transfer this year and added 15 new parishioners by baptism or chrismation. We continue to add catechumens and to have a steady group of inquirers.

The parish's strong role in the local OCF chapter has continued. Fr. Stephen spends one day a week on the UT campus.

We ask your prayers as we enter this next year's work. May God bless the Diocese and grant her retired Archbishop and Metropolitan locum tenens many years!

## **VIRGINIA**

*St. Andrew - Ashland*

Submitted by Priest David F. Arnold

On behalf of Priest Mark Hodal and the faithful of St. Andrew's

This past year has seen the baptism of two children, the enrollment and preparation of two catechumens, and the encouraging presence of six or more regular seekers and potential members. As with all our parishes, families relocate or attend other churches in the area, but the parish family is vital and the mission effort is still active in the region between Richmond and Fredericksburg, VA.

A significant project was recently completed in the back church yard where privacy fencing and a playground for the children was installed. This and other projects around the church building have created a "finished" and "friendly" appearance to the church property.

The women of the parish began a regular women's group meeting that usually includes a meal together and some sort of topical study or discussion.

The men are organizing a similar effort and plan to bring a discussion on J. Mack's study of St. John's (Climacus) Ladder of Divine Ascent.

A significant portion of this year has been spent under concern for the Priest Mark Hodal, who around the beginning of Great Lent became progressively disabled by a mysterious illness. He was hospitalized just before Pentecost and spent about 10 days undergoing various tests and treatments and is now home under visiting care of a nurse and therapist. The diagnosis is still vague, but seems to be an autoimmune type of disease. He is gaining strength and hopes to gain mobility to return to some of his work as priest and bread chef (and husband and father). Please

continue to pray for Fr. Mark's recovery. The clergy of the Appalachian Deanery, especially Fr. Ted Panchak (retired), are covering the priestly ministries of the parish. Attached Navy chaplains in Norfolk are also available, and the deanery of St. Nicholas Cathedral (Washington, DC) has also voiced ability to help until Fr. Mark is able to return to his duties.

### *Dormition of the Holy Theotokos - Norfolk*

The past year has seen significant changes in the life of the Dormition Community. In August 2008, the Very Reverend Theodore Panchak, who was Priest at Dormition for the past 23 years, retired. In September 2008 the Very Reverend Andrew D. Nelko, with the blessing of His Beatitude Metropolitan Herman and His Eminence Archbishop Dmitri, assumed the position of Priest-In-Charge of the parish. As a U.S. Navy Chaplain Fr. Andrew and his family; wife Tanya and children Anastasia, Andrew, Nathanael, Nadia & Tatyana, have resided in the Norfolk area and have actively participated in the life of the parish for the past 8 years. In November Fr. Andrew & Matushka Tanya attended in the 15th All American Council in Pittsburgh, PA.

Along with Fr. Andrew the parish is blessed to have the Very Reverend Paul Pynch, a retired U.S. Navy Chaplain, attached. The Reverend Eugene Wozniak, an active duty Navy Chaplain stationed in the Norfolk Area, and his family also participate in the liturgical life of the community. As the faithful of Dormition plan for a future house of worship of their own the past 8 months has seen significant improvements to the current building. This includes a complete paint job, icon shelves on the walls, improved and enhanced lighting, a new carpet and new hand made choir stands & pews. In addition to the external beautification of the church building significant effort has been undertaken in the area of growth/outreach. An expanded website has been the cornerstone of this endeavor. Also plans are underway for a "Slavic Festival" and the Annual "Chicken BBQ" this Fall. A lecture by a well known Orthodox speaker is also being considered for the future as an avenue of general outreach and education to the local community.

In the coming year a concerted effort is planned in the area of parish religious education. An Adult Education/Catechumen Class has been initiated and an expanded and focused children's religious education program is being organized. With a commitment to liturgical and spiritual growth, and a dedicated community of believers, the future of the Dormition Parish indeed looks bright.

### *St. Cyprian of Carthage - Richmond*

The significant event for our parish during the past year was occupying the new building in time to celebrate the day of remembrance for the Hieromartyr Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage with the first Divine Liturgy at the new temple. We enjoyed a festive day and continue to celebrate the joy of gathering together in this temple, and we look forward to completing the new Iconostasis and Holy Altar in order to schedule the consecration of this space.

Two infants were baptized and we look forward to the first wedding at the new temple later this summer. We have seen an increase in families who attend services, and our adult contributors grew to 52 for the 2009 census. The parish “flock” is now 108 children and adults, and we are encouraged by seven active seekers who we hope will become catechumens. Three of those seekers will be candidates for baptism, so we will be in the market for an adult sized baptistery.

Our parish council has grown to an active and very supportive group of leaders. They are encouraged to see that our contributions are keeping very close to last year, and that we are ahead of our projections for retirement of construction debt. Of course, the recession has touched families in our parish, and there is still an air of concern, but everyone seems optimistic about meeting our responsibilities as stewards of what God has provided.

Since moving to the new building, we were blessed to sell the house that was our meeting place for almost 30 years. The purchasers are renovating the house for use as a child day care. This may offer us the opportunity to support the neighborhood that we left by volunteering time and material for the day care or other social ministry that may develop.

Each Feast and “first” in the new temple is a blessing, and we look forward to hosting sisters of mercy Olga and Elena from the St. Elisabeth Convent of Minsk in late July. We were blessed to host a stop on the OCF National Tour, as well as OCMC representative Kenny Kidd in recent months.