

Diocese of the South (OCA) 2012 Annual Assembly
Appalachian Deanery Report

The Appalachian Deanery is composed of 9 churches, 4 of which are parishes, 4 are missions, and one mission station. The Deanery covers the geographical region made up of the states of Kentucky, Tennessee, and most of Virginia (the Northern Virginia suburbs of Washington, DC fall under the Archdiocese of Washington, DC).

As a deanery, we have seen a lot of change over the past year. A new dean was elected at the February 2012 Pastoral Conference meeting in Charleston, SC. Two new priests have been assigned to serve within the deanery (a third was just assigned in June 2011). We held our first teleconference and intend to stay in touch by meeting bimonthly in this manner.

The following reports have been received from the priests in the Appalachian Deanery. Where there is currently no priest assigned, the Dean will report on recent events.

Dormition of the Theotokos Church, Norfolk, VA

<http://www.dormitionnorfolk.org>

Fr. John Cox, Priest-in-Charge

This report encompasses my first full year as the priest at Dormition. The past year has been a good one for my family and the parish family as well. I am thankful to God that I can reiterate my statement from the last report that our parish is one with increasing momentum and a developing sense of purpose and vision. We have a number of young families as well as a vital group of middle age and older folks of both convert and cradle Orthodox provenance that worship every Sunday. The parish is kind and welcoming in an unassuming way and not inclined to be difficult either with each other or with me. Below is a brief list of some of the highlights from the past year as well as some challenges. One matter that does bear further comment is our parish's ongoing effort to find a new home. Currently we rent a small chapel which we fill to near capacity almost every Sunday. Last fall it became apparent that we needed more room and we began to consider our options for finding a new home. Our first instinct was to search for a building we could purchase and repurpose but nothing that fit our criteria for growth and affordability surfaced. Next we attempted to find space to rent but again we were unsuccessful in finding an amenable solution. Now we are considering remaining at our current location for the time being and purchasing land on which we can build a permanent home for our community. Thus far we have a couple of promising possibilities that, while not addressing our current space issues, will give us continued momentum and a future home to look forward to.

Highlights:

- New parish website
- 16 newly illumined (14 on Holy Saturday)
- 1 current catechumen
- A well attended book study program
- Greater and more regular Sunday attendance
- Fuller cycle of services
- Increased philanthropic activity (school supplies to Afghanistan, toy drive, one time monetary donations, food bank support)
- Vibrant young children's group

Challenges

- Our building is too small
- We don't have a full time choir director
- Parish finances are very tight
- Lay leadership/participation in education, music, and stewardship needs to improve

St. Andrew's Church, Ashland, VA

<http://www.firstcalled.org>

Greetings from St. Andrew's in Ashland!

Around Pentecost last year I gave notice to Fr. Stephen Freeman, our Dean at the time, that I wanted to retire from St. Andrews as the Rector for medical reasons and conveyed to him the desire that I be replaced with a full time pastor. During the year Fr. David Arnold replaced Fr. Stephen as Dean. Fr. Marcus, the Chancellor of the Diocese, found a likely candidate in Deacon Ian Shipley who was in his last year at St. Tikhon's. Fr. Ian was ordained in the spring and visited St. Andrews with his family. Fr. David worked out an agreement compatible with the Shipley family, St. Andrew's and the Diocese. Due process of a transfer for Fr. Ian upon his graduation was forthcoming. In the meantime Fr. Mark Hodal, exiting rector was to be assigned to St. Cyprian of Carthage, Richmond, as Assistant Rector, the changeover to be in effect June 1, 2012. I have been at St. Andrew's 23 years and Fr. David and I have been endeavoring to make this a graceful transition, especially for the members of the church. St. Andrew's currently has around 30 adults and about 25 children ages infant to late teens/young adult (including the new Pastor's family). Everyone has been there more than a couple of years with the exception of one adult newcomer. It is my prayer, hope and expectation that this will work out and allow St. Andrew's to

move forward in our eternal journey. In the last calendar year we've had one child's Baptism and one adult death.

Your brother in Christ,
Fr. Mark Hodal, Rector(last day), St. Andrew's, Ashland, Virginia

St. Seraphim Church, Memphis, TN

<http://www.orthodoxmemphis.org>

Since last summer we have had four infant baptisms and currently have three adult catechumens. Catechism classes are held two to four times a month at the church depending on variables such as church services and individual schedules. The current class began in early March and will be ending June 26.

One catechumen lives an hour and a half away from Memphis in Jackson , TN and is unable to attend the weekday classes. In the fourth week of Lent on Saturday one of members there hosted us for a morning and afternoon catechism on the Divine Liturgy which five people attended. We will be having another all day catechism on July 7 and plan to continue this venue for those in Jackson .

We had the pleasure of an unofficial visit of a Russian priest and his family for two weeks last summer whose sister-in-law is a member of our parish. It was quite good that many of the Russians and Ukrainians were able to talk with him and we all enjoyed his narratives about what his life was like pastoring four different parishes in four different towns.

We recently held a wedding at the Annunciation Greek church in Memphis because of its large capacity. The bride's great grandfather, the Very Reverend Benedict Tallant, who is rector of St. Nicholas Church in Brookside, AL is celebrating his fiftieth anniversary of the priesthood this year as a Russian Patriarchal priest and at the age of 86 crowned his great granddaughter as four generations looked on.

Even though it has been a good year, we have not had a "banner" year. As such, there are certainly good signs of a community maintaining and growing in unity and commitment. The need for a strong, cohesive core of the assembly has never been clearer. We seem now to be a marketplace of individual effort and need common vision in more areas of our church life and greater realization of our unity in Christ. A success in this regard has been that when the need arose, we were able to raise up several chanters from the congregation who were skeptical of their capability. After weeks of classes and practice they now 'take on' this responsibility for our church (to the level they have been taught) having a shared vision of its importance and a spirit of service for the good of the church.

We are able to make 'ends meet' but our tithe is down this year compared to the last two years. We do not make a head count of Sunday attendance but it is generally good and consistent. We have lost a few members and have gained a few this year. Our acre of land and church are in good repair and are very pretty this time of year. We continue to have a common meal after liturgy on Sundays. We have vespers on Wednesday and Great Vespers on Saturday and serve the Feasts. We believe we live in God's blessing.

In brotherly love,
Fr. Mark Sutton

St. Anne Mission, Oak Ridge, TN

<http://www.stanneorthodoxchurch.com>

Brethren,

St. Anne has enjoyed a very blessed year as a parish. We completed a two-year project of beautification of our temple, including: completion of our iconostasis with work by Dmitri Shkolnik; kiots for icons on the side walls of the nave; new tile flooring; painting of the Church and parish hall; stenciling of the Church; new entrance doors; a bell-stand built as an Eagle Scout project by a young parishioner and a set of bells from Russia. The participation in the project evidenced a whole-parish commitment to the beauty of our temple.

During the year, we had 18 Baptisms and 2 received by Chrismation. We have been enjoying something of a "baby boom" in the parish, with many births within our young families, and other families with young children becoming part of our community. It is not unusual to have more than 40 young children in Church on a Sunday.

Our Sunday School program has become a very strong part of our parish life. The classes are team-taught and very well led. The participation is extremely good and the place that Christian education holds in the life of our children is manifest in countless ways. The Sunday School program has been a strong attraction for Orthodox families in our area and a strength in the Church's outreach to inquiring families. This has clearly becoming a desirable place to raise an Orthodox family.

Along with this year's growth has come increased crowding. Our present building is being strained beyond its capacity. This fall, the priest's office will become an additional Sunday School room, while our priest is keeping office hours in the bookstore.

In October of this year, Fr. Athanasius Shaw and his family, Mat. Anna (Molly), daughter, Nina and grandchild, Jackson, moved to the Knoxville area from the Diocese of the West (Washington State). Fr. Athanasius has been assisting in services and has also covered needs for Tennessee missions.

From mid-December to the end of January, Fr. Stephen was on a medical-leave-of-absence. Fr. Athanasius served the parish during that time. Fr. Stephen returned to full-time duties in February and has been doing very well, grateful for the support of the parish and the prayers of so many.

Our needs as a parish tend to be fairly obvious. As we grow, the pressure on our space increases. We have an indebtedness of \$210,000 (for our present building and adjacent land). At the same time, we are confident that additional space would be filled quickly with growth from the nearby area. We pray that the way forward will become more clear.

There are growing needs in the surrounding area. Sevierville (which is near the entertainment destinations of Pigeon Forge and Gatlinburg) has a young Russian population that numbers as many as 50 families. St. Anne serves this young population, though the parish is more than an hour away. We feel the need for a mission in the area, with a priest who can speak Russian. There are great pastoral needs going largely unmet.

In the past 2 years, a neighboring mission under the jurisdiction of ROCOR has been established. We have had a very cooperative relationship with them and with our neighboring GOA parish as well. The sense of a clergy brotherhood in the Knoxville area has never been as healthy.

Other nearby towns are under consideration for possible mission plants. As the work in the greater Knoxville area of Tennessee continues to mature, the need for new missions grows.

We are deeply grateful to the good God who has blessed us in our work. We pray for all of you and ask your prayers.

In Christ,
Archpriest Stephen Freeman +

St. Athanasius Mission, Nicholasville, KY

<http://www.athanasiusoca.org>

Metrical Information July 2011-June 2012

Over the past year, 2 adults were received into the Orthodox Faith by way of Confession and Chrismation. 3 children were baptized. 7 Orthodox Christians transferred into our parish. Sadly, 3 parishioners have become inactive over this past year, leaving the regular life of the Orthodox Church. 1 moved out of town and transferred to another parish. There were no deaths or marriages recorded this year. We are sending one of our readers and his wife to St. Vladimir's Seminary in the fall; but they are in process of moving to New York now.

We averaged between 100 and 120 persons per Sunday Liturgy over this past year. Average Sunday School attendance was 43 (including adults and teachers).

Our parish finances continue to grow. We hit our financial goal of a 10% growth budget, achieving our budget goal for the 5th year in a row.

Parish Life Overview 2010-2011

St. Athanasius celebrated its 10th Anniversary as an OCA parish this past February. We hosted Bishops Nikon and Mark, as well as 7 other clergy members and their families. About 160 people—including about 30 former parishioners who have since moved away as well as many local friends of our parish—attended the festivities (which included Hierarchical Liturgy and a Banquet). Bishop Nikon tonsured two new readers and one new subdeacon for our parish.

Probably our greatest area of challenge right now is the problem of not having enough space for worship, education, and fellowship coupled with the fact that several properties (that we got very far along with in the purchasing process) fell through just before closing. We are again on the cusp of purchasing property, but it has felt like we have been on that cusp for a long time. Over the past year, thankfully, we have been able to add just under \$100,000 to our building fund: so we have been working, even though—in terms of property—we do not have anything to show for it (yet!). We are a fully functional and active parish in every way except in terms of having a temple. Acquiring land (and building an appropriate church on it in as timely manner as possible) remains our primary goal in this coming year.

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

<http://www.stcyprianoca.org>

Our parish family continues to evolve as some members move due to employment changes, and the same phenomenon brings new Orthodox Christian families and persons to our mission.

During the past year there have been four baptisms (2 children, 2 adults), one marriage, one burial, and there is currently one catechumen enrolled, along with a very serious seeker.

The “new building” is now nearing the end of the third year of use. We are enjoying the beauty of the space as the Iconostasis is taking shape and Icons for the Holy Doors are being completed. There are a growing number of very helpful music directors among us who share the duties once faithfully provided by only one person. Our parish is a singing parish and the space certainly makes that offering very beautiful. We will continue to organize ourselves and encourage leadership among the laity to enhance our worship and ministry.

Making an effort to refinance our remaining construction debt while mortgage rates were favorable, we were compelled to incorporate as a church in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Our treasurer completed a great deal of work to make this process go smoothly. We anticipate having this debt retired within five years.

We welcomed Priest Mark Hodal, his wife Rebecca and daughter Tatiana to our parish family. Fr. Mark previously served St. Andrew’s Church, Ashland, VA, and is now our Assistant Rector. Many years!

It is my hope to encourage and prepare more lay ministry opportunities within our parish and broader community during the coming year. We also intend to look for and encourage the planting of mission stations in Virginia, relying on both the clergy and very gifted laity in our mission. I also hope to accomplish the necessary steps for our mission to be recognized as a church, and to plan for the consecration of the altar and building during the course of the next year.

In Christ,
Priest David Arnold

Protection of the Holy Virgin Mary Mission, Clarksville, TN

<http://www.orthodoxclarksville.org>

Reporting in the absence of a Rector, it is encouraging as the Dean to be able to observe that the Mission in Clarksville is showing signs of renewed commitment and that a very positive spirit energizes the people. A recent tragedy among them has brought tremendous grief, and they would ask us all to remember the newly departed servant Yafet, and his mother Meley. Yafet, only 18 years old, was swept into the ocean by strong currents and perished. His mother is currently in Ethiopia where his remains will be laid to rest in a family burial plot at a monastery. Memory eternal!

Holy Protection Mission has been faithfully served by the retired Priest Jonas Worsham during the absence of an assigned Rector, and since February 2012 there have been weekly services with a rotation of priests from the deanery including Fr. Jonas, as well as the Archpriest Peter Dubinin and Priest Athanasius Shaw. Observing a renewed commitment among the people, recommendation was made to assign a new priest to the mission, Priest Thomas Langdon. He will begin his ministry July 1, 2012, and may even be present among the delegates at this Annual Assembly. The Langdon's will seek to support themselves while the mission stabilizes, but a healthy list of seekers and potential catechumens will bring immediate growth, and the promise of continued regular services will attract more of the Orthodox Christians in the area to attend the services. Please remember the Langdon's as they begin a new chapter of their lives in Clarksville.

In Christ,
Priest David Arnold
Dean, Appalachian Deanery

St. Tikhon of Moscow Mission, Chattanooga, TN

<http://www.sainttikhons.org>

Overview

Fall 2011 – Early Summer 2012 provided a period of commitment and growth for our people. We continue to be strengthened by God's love which has been so graciously given to us. Overall, we have witnessed a great growth in principles, continually defining and reshaping our common discipleship to our Lord.

Worship, Education, and Outreach

We have a typical schedule of Wednesday and Saturday Vespers and Sunday Liturgy, along with the celebration of major feasts. Occasional services were also offered, such as the Pannikhida and Molebens according to the needs of the

faithful. In early 2012, we were blessed to pray at the National Memorial for the Unborn in Chattanooga on Sanctity of Life Sunday. Radonitsa was also celebrated for the first time at the gravesite of one of our founding members.

Catechism class is offered as needed when catechumens are enrolled. A class on Genesis was held during Great Lent, taught by Fr. Daniel. Church School was taught by Fr Daniel and Mrs. Dottie Arnold during Great Lent on Sundays. The children planted flowers to beautify the grounds on Lazarus Saturday as their special offering.

Last October, we welcomed Mr. and Mrs. Floyd Frantz who presented on their work with the St. Dimitrie Program and other ministries in Romania.

On the Sunday of Orthodoxy we welcomed the communities of Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church and The Protection of the Mother of God Chapel (ROCOR) to our Church for Vespers. The clergy present included the V. Rev. Stavros Rousos, Rev. Stavros Ballas, Rev. Matthew Smith, and Rev. Dn. Christophe Lepoutre. Fr. Stavros Ballas presented the homily.

Our common meal following Sunday's Divine Liturgy continues to be an important social gathering for our people. It is also a great way to offer hospitality to our guests and visitors.

Many local inquirers and Orthodox visitors "passing through" have come to worship with us.

We are still considering 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. Several work days have been very successful, though much labor is still needed.

Special Projects

A *solea* and *ambo* were added to the temple in late 2011. The sanctuary space was also extended to allow for more room for the servers. The bookstore was reorganized in early 2012 and a small library is also being considered for the edification of the faithful.

Membership and Statistics

Sunday attendance (average): 25

Vespers attendance (average): 5

Current catechumens: 6

Baptisms/Chrismations: 5

Weddings: 1

Membership, as defined by the Diocesan By-laws, continues to be our goal and commitment. Our small group continues to offer the blessings bestowed upon them to their Church with great zeal. Financially, 2011 was a great success and an increase in income was duly noted.

The Year Ahead

On July 21-22 we will welcome the V. Rev. Chad Hatfield as a speaker. He will offer reflection on Missions and Evangelism. We plan to make this a “community event” as much as possible and a meal and other events will be offered.

Other Church properties are also still being considered for our mission as our location is limited in its visibility. Fr. Daniel and the parish council see this as an important goal for the future.

St. Maria of Paris Mission Station, Cleveland, TN

Deacon Kevin Rigdon, with the assistance and supervision of Archpriest Stephen Freeman, continues to work with the faithful and seekers who comprise the St. Maria of Paris Mission Station in Cleveland, TN. See their progress at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/St-Maria-of-Paris-Orthodox-Church/127851193914255>