

Southcentral (Dallas) Deanery Report 2012

INTRODUCTION:

The Southcentral Deanery is the largest Deanery of the Diocese of the South. Encompassing six states, its 613,500 square miles totals almost two thirds of the territory covered by the entire Diocese. The Deanery includes: Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas. Within its border is the Diocesan Cathedral of St. Seraphim of Sarov in Dallas, and the oldest OCA community in the South, that of Sts. Cyril and Methodius in Hartshorne, Oklahoma, founded in 1897. Currently there are 23 active parishes, missions, or mission stations in the Deanery, including the newest community of St. Nectarios in Waxahachie, Texas, *officially* started July 1 of this year with the blessing of His Eminence Archbishop Nikon and the arrival of a resident priest, Fr. David Bozeman.

Because of its considerable territory, and because the number of active communities is at least twice that of any other Deanery, the suggestion has been made more than once, over the years, to add new Deaneries within its borders. Discussions continue as how best to make this happen. This will undoubtedly be a future topic of consideration after the election of a Diocesan hierarch.

Besides the continued growth of our communities, one of the most notable events taking place for the entire Diocese, within our Deanery borders, is the construction of His Eminence's final resting place at St. Seraphim Cathedral. The parish broke ground on May 11, 2012 for the Archbishop Dmitri Memorial Chapel. Recently the concrete was poured for the foundation and walls of the vault. The hope is that His Eminence will be brought home in the near future. People may help with construction costs by contacting Mr. Milos Konjevich the Diocesan Treasurer, or by simply mailing designated funds to the, Diocese of the South, c/o Archbishop Dmitri Chapel, P.O. Box 191109, Dallas, Texas 75219.

We are blessed to have enthusiastic, mission minded clergy within the Southcentral Deanery, as well as dedicated laymen who help with the growth of their respective parishes. The following is a synopsis of some of the activities taking place within our communities, as submitted by their respective priests.

All Saints Mission in Victoria, Texas

Fr. Dimitri Cozby

We have had a little growth in the last year. A very good family is moving, but we also have had a couple of new families move in. We also have discovered a number of young men and one couple from Eritrea living in nearby Port Lavaca. They attend when their work schedules permit. A new family of three is just beginning the pre-catechumenate. Average attendance on Sunday morning is about twenty people. We have celebrated two infant baptisms in the last year.

Our new iconostas was installed in early June. It was carved and the icons painted by Fr Jerome Sanderson and his sons, of Nashville, IN. We also purchased a new baptismal font from Russia.

All Saints of North America in Albuquerque, New Mexico

Fr. Nikolay Miletkov

All Saints of North America has currently 80 pledging members. The average Sunday attendance is around 100. The parish contains a good mix of people from all ages. More than half of our parishioners are converts. Since last year (summer of 2011) we have received 25 souls into the Orthodox Church. We also continue to add regularly new inquirers and catechumens.

On January 24th of this year, Deacon Stephen Henne was officially attached to All Saints and he continues to be a great asset to our parish. We are also greatly blessed to have in our midst as attached clergy: Pastor Emeritus (Retired) Archpriest George Sondergaard, Protodeacon Nicholas Jannakos, and Deacon Gerry Sondergaard.

A Liturgy in Slavonic is celebrated once a month on a Saturday. We are blessed to have very good relations with the only other Orthodox parish in the city, St. George Greek Orthodox Church. Their priest, Fr Conan Gill, and Fr Nikolay meet weekly as they work together with the UNM OCF. All Orthodox clergy in our state get together once a month for fellowship and discussion.

Our three-day parish retreat for Memorial Day at St. Michael's Monastery in Canones, NM has become an annual event. This year we had 50 parishioners participate (double from last year). By the grace of God this past December we paid off the US Bank mortgage for our property, and the only debt we currently have is our loan with the Diocese. The Building Committee meets monthly as we work towards building a proper and larger temple for our community.

Despite the fact that we continue to grow in numbers, we have also lost parishioners this year due to post retirement relocation, and job relocation. This has negatively affected our finances.

Our Wednesday evening Orthodoxy class, Sunday school, and local charity support are doing well. Starting this fall we'll add to our regular weekly schedule a Thursday morning Liturgy and a Tuesday morning continuing education class.

St. Anthony the Great in San Antonio, Texas

Fr. Leo Poore

St. Anthony the Great first organized in 1979, and purchased the present day Church in 1982. The parish has been growing at a steady pace so that today we have 135 adults and 49 children who are members of the parish. Our average attendance at the Divine Liturgy is 79-85: we have hit as high as 115. These numbers do not reflect attendance on Pascha or Christmas.

St. Anthony's is a Pan Orthodox parish inasmuch as we have various ethnic groups (Orthodox). It is one of three Orthodox communities in San Antonio. The others are St. Sophia Greek Orthodox Church and St. Ephraim Antiochian Orthodox Church. An Orthodox Clergy Brotherhood exists which meets every other month: I was elected as its President. San Antonio has a population of about 1,114,000.

Being a mobile community we have seen the attendance and financial resources fluctuate at times. However, I am pleased to report that the last couple of months we seem to have had an increase in general contributions to the parish.

The parish as a whole has continued to reach out to the surrounding neighborhood. The Sisterhood and Brotherhood have held Yard Sales and collected food items to be given to the local CAM organization. The Church School has continued in educating our children, engaging them in the life of the parish. Our teen group has helped its members feel better connected to their faith and parish life. We have been conducting Adult Education classes as well as classes for the catechumens. We are moving forward with our icon project beautifying the temple and have this year begun to place icons on the sidewalls of the temple. We have purchased a vacant lot across the street of the Church and are in the process of improving the lot. We hope to continue with God's help to be a visible presence to our Orthodox Faith, allowing others to find the True Faith.

St. Barbara Orthodox Church in Ft. Worth, Texas

Fr. Basil Zebrun

The St. Barbara's community has occupied its current 6400 square foot all purpose building since December of 2006. The parish has its eye on constructing a traditional temple on the east side of its 3 acre lot, in the future. Minor improvements, both inside and out, have been made recently to the existing structure. Fr. Basil has been full time at the parish since September of 2009.

During the first 6 months of 2012 the parish averaged 95 people per Sunday Divine Liturgy. Currently we have 8 adult and 2 teen age catechumens, and 2 serious inquirers. In addition Orthodox who have moved to DFW have added to parish growth.

Adult and teen classes are held each Wednesday after Vespers. Church School for children is conducted on the 2nd Saturday of each month, with an emphasis on integrating children more fully into the liturgical life of the Church, and on providing parents with information and encouragement for restoring the home as a primary center for religious instruction. Additionally, this past year brief Church School periods were held during Coffee Hour to provide a synopsis of the day's theme. Members participated in a Vacation Bible School conducted at St. Demetrius Greek Orthodox Church. Plans are being considered for a VBS at St. Barbara's next year.

Saturday Vespers and Sunday Liturgies also form part of the regular weekly worship cycle. Once a month General Confessions are done as an extra time for personal repentance and as a means of instruction.

Each August our community participates in the TCU Church Fair. A member of the parish, and seminary graduate, is actively involved with local OCF efforts. St. Barbara's currently has funds budgeted for helping with the OCF each semester. Two major festivals are conducted each year at our parish (*Spring and Fall*) in addition to Post Pascha Pysanky Classes open to the public, with the dual goal of raising funds and introducing the neighborhood to Orthodox Christianity. St. Barbara's hosted a Friday evening portion of a Regional 2012 Mission and Evangelism Conference in January. In addition a lecture/discussion series is being planned for early this Fall as a further effort to reach our neighbors.

The Annual Parish Picnic each Summer at the Lake House of a parishioner, continues to be a highlight of the year, and has become a valuable social event, affording all parishioners, catechumens and their family members the opportunity to know one another outside of a typical parish setting.

St. Basil the Great Mission in Weatherford, Oklahoma

Fr. Nicholas Aiello

St. Basil the Great Mission was begun as an internship by Dn. Joel Wilson and myself last summer. I had been laying the foundation for the mission since the previous two summers - before I began seminary. (My wife and I purchased a home in the area and she had been attending Nursing school at the university in Weatherford while I attended Seminary at St. Tikhon's).

I had budgeted and rented a small office space over the summer and offered daily readers services and weekly seminars - as well as spent time interacting with the community in any way available to me.

We had the great blessing of having, by the end of the summer, actually more people than we currently do. By the end of the summer we had 4 families and an inquirer...And we had a financial commitment and a commitment to continue readers services (Hours) - allowing the mission to remain functioning (in the same space) while I returned for my last year of seminary.

At that time we had about a dozen people involved - since that time however we have had two women (and potential families) move out of the area. One of them out of state - the other about 2 hrs away. We average about 6 on Sunday - and have the same amount attend my weekly catechism class.

Weatherford is a college town (Southwestern Oklahoma State University) of about 16K with the students and 12K without them during the summer. With SWOSU in the city there is some financial and employment stability...Whereas the rest of OK is bracing for the bust that is sure to come (sooner rather than later) from the Natural Gas industry. However Weatherford is within driving distance of many other communities - so the total number of people the mission can serve is closer to 45K.

The religious demographic of Weatherford and the surrounding areas is about 60% Baptist, 10% Methodist and 10% Mennonite (although their influence is significant being the first ones to settle this area). The majority of the rest are Evangelical and Pentecostal - and a few % Roman Catholic.

The nearest Orthodox presence is Oklahoma City 85 miles away. Within the OKC metro area are large Antiochan and Greek parishes and as well as smaller ROCOR and Ukrainian parishes. I have good relations with all of them except ROCOR - I have not visited that parish yet. However I've served and preached (as a layman) at the Antiochan parish and been strongly endorsed by their rector - Fr. Constantine Nysr. The Greek priest is my wife and my confessor and the Ukrainian priest baptized my Grandson.

I was aware of no Orthodox in the area when we began the mission. Consequently the people we have, while very committed, are not a core group...Although in time that may be the case. As such we have no personal income from the mission - and in fact are the main contributors. Furthermore, my wife, just finishing nursing school and recently employed is our sole income with my full-time commitment to the mission.

Demographically we are adults in our mid 40's to early 60's (men and women equally) with two in their early 20's. All SW Oklahoma Caucasians except one member who is half Lebanese. There are both Native American and Mexican communities within these local communities that I

very much want to reach. I'm going to begin a study of Spanish soon (I'm semi-fluent in Italian) and am always looking for ways to make inroads into the Indian community.

My emphasis is the therapy of the church as it is expressed in the local parish. That being the case I offer Matins and Vespers every day during the week but one and the Divine Liturgy as often during the week (in addition to Sunday of course) as I have readers. In terms of community outreach I volunteer (doing visitation) at an elderly care facility 2 days a week (3 hrs. at a time) and am working on doing prison visitation another day, and in the Fall hope to open an OSF chapter at SWOSU. I am also planning on offering a series of seminars in the Fall at a local coffee shop which will be advertised, as well as having Fr. Constantine give a lecture on the Middle East - he is Palestinian.

My plan for physical expansion is similar to what has been done by Holy Apostles in Tulsa: to purchase a double-wide mobile home for a chapel (newer, used ones sell in this area for as little as \$18K - with a plot of land). To purchase land and build a temple as we have the resources...Converting the chapel to a fellowship hall when the temple is completed.

Christ the Saviour Orthodox Church, McComb, Mississippi

Fr. Benedict Crawford

Christ the Saviour Orthodox Church was established in 2004, a "daughter" parish of Holy Resurrection Orthodox Church in Clinton, Mississippi. At this time our total membership is 39 adults, 27 children, 1 catechumen, and 1 inquirer. Our average Sunday attendance is around 23 adults and around 15 children. For Saturday

Vespers we typically have 7-10 adults and 8 children. Our usual schedule of services is: Saturday, Vespers 6:00 pm. Sunday, Divine Liturgy 10:00 am. Wednesday, Small Compline or Molieben, 6:00 pm. Thursday, Adult Class on Orthodox Faith, 6:00 pm.

Once a month the Divine Liturgy is served in Hattiesburg for the benefit of our members there. We also try to have a class on the faith there once a month. Reader Vespers is served every Friday evening. The Hattiesburg Mission Station has around 18 adults and 7 children, including two inquirers.

An on-going challenge for our mission has to do with the fact that we are at this point largely a "long-distance" parish for most of our parishioners. We have an inquirer who will soon be made a catechumen who drives to us from nearly two hours away. Another family drives nearly two hours to be with us. About one third of our parishioners live within a half hour drive. The small percentage of members from the local town is partly a reflection of being located in a small town (pop. 13,000) in southern Mississippi, where Orthodoxy is not well known.

One enjoyable event from the past year was our first annual "Greek Festival" – bearing in mind that we have only one person of Greek descent in the parish! Nevertheless, the event was well attended, and did a wonderful job getting local residents to come to our parish, visit with us, tour the church, and generally be aware that we are here and friendly.

A project that we are looking at for the coming year will be replacing some or all of the church's windows. Our church building is an old fashioned wood-frame building built around 1910, and has beautiful wooden windows with unique glass panes. Unfortunately, due to time and weather the wood around the panes has rotted out, and needs to be replaced. We are hoping to find a way to do this both economically and in a way that is sensitive to the historical character of the building.

Saint Cyril of Jerusalem Orthodox Mission, Houston (Woodlands), TX **Fr. David Moretti**

Saint Cyril of Jerusalem Orthodox Mission was established in 2007 with the blessing of His Eminence Archbishop DMITRI. At this time our total membership is 34 adults, 33 children, 2 catechumens, and 1 inquirer.

For Saturday Vespers we typically have 7-10 adults and 8 children. For Sunday Orthros we typically have 5-8 adults and 1 child. Our average Sunday Divine Liturgy attendance is around 25-30 adults and around 20 children and usually we receive and greet 2-3 visitors. Our usual schedule of services is: Saturday, Vespers 6:00 pm. Adult Education Sunday 7:00 pm. Festal Orthros 8:00 am. Divine Liturgy 9:00 am. Sunday School 10:30 am. Fellowship Hour 11:15 am.

Once a month a non-sacramental service (i.e., Daily Vespers, Paraklesis) is served in Humble, TX as one of our very pious and faithful parishioners built a large "chapel" on his personal property.

We anticipate a great deal of growth over these next few years as Exxon Mobil is building their World Headquarters within the boundaries of our city and they will be moving 10,000 + people here to The Woodlands. We have already had inquiries from out of state employees who are Orthodox and are looking for a Church home.

A project that we are looking at for the coming year will be to find land or a building to renovate that can truly become our own as we are still renting an old sanctuary of the Anglican community has on their property. This arrangement is wonderful in that it allows us to keep our fully finished iconostasis in place yet we cannot use the building during the week only the weekends which presents a horrible challenge in developing a further expanded Liturgical life for the community.

Ss. Cyril and Methodius Russian Orthodox Church, Hartshorne, OK **Fr. Ambrose Arrington**

Ss. Cyril and Methodius continues to meet regularly for services, despite not having a resident priest since the retirement of Fr. Joseph Nelson in 2009. There are seven active members and one catechumen. There have been no baptisms, weddings, or funerals in the last year. Fr. Ambrose Arrington currently serves Liturgy for the community once a month on a Saturday, with the parish meeting on Sundays for Typica and fellowship. Due to the historic interest of the parish, especially the century old church building (one of the oldest in Oklahoma), there are quite a few visitors. Most come for a "tour" of the church, and are always hospitably received. The community is in need of attention (beyond a monthly visit) in order to provide for the remaining parishioners, as well as the preservation of the historic facilities.

St. Dimitri of Rostov Mission in Los Alamos, NM (Pending)

St. George the Great Martyr in Pharr, Texas **Fr. Antonio Perdomo**

St. George has been in existence for thirty three years in the city of Pharr, Texas and is the only Orthodox Church in the area. This being the case, our Church has a healthy blend of most ethnicities of the Orthodox Churches in this country. Spanish also plays a big role in many of the Church's activities. The city of Pharr currently has a population of approximately 70,000 with

McAllen the neighbor city having approximately 120,000. The Rio Grande Valley, an area covering from Rio Grande City to Brownsville has about one and a half million people. The closest OCA Church is St. Anthony the Great in San Antonio, and Corpus Christi has St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church.

Fr. Antonio Perdomo is the only Priest in the parish. Sometimes he travels for work in Mexico and other Missionary activities around the country in his capacity overseeing Spanish Ministry work in the Church.

The Parish of St. George is a growing Church, and one of the challenges that we face is that part of our population moves away regularly due to economic concerns. We keep growing and people continue to move. Currently the Church has 59 adult members. This year we have scheduled weekly catechumen classes and been blessed with receiving two adults members through baptism. This brings our Current membership up to 61. On an average Sunday there are approximately 50 to 60 in attendance, even though there have been several Sundays where there were more than 70 present.

Our most notable achievement this past year is the completion of our new hall which officially will fit 120 people; the hall has been a real boon for activities in the Church. The new hall has made it possible for our membership to assemble more comfortably for meals, coffee hour, meetings and special activities. Even though our basic hall is complete, the kitchen still needs to be finished. This is one challenge that we are working on this year. Because of the new space St. George has volunteered to host the next Annual Clergy meeting in the beginning of February 2013. At the beginning of June the local Chamber of Commerce sponsored a Grand opening and Ribbon Cutting Ceremony in our hall to further introduce us to the community and to share our ministry work with them.

This past year we have been able to use the hall for several of the Church's annual events. The hall hosted our Church's Annual International Festival at the end of 2011. We hosted as well, an Old Christmas Fundraiser and a Blini Breakfast before the beginning of Lent. We also intend on having a BBQ Fundraiser this summer. These fundraisers have been a great help with meeting responsibilities with our new building. It might seem that we have overextended ourselves with fundraisers, however the extra events were due to the pouring rain on the date of the main festival, and because we had enough products for these various activities afterwards.

The new hall was completed in time for our Church to host its Annual Seventh Winter Service Youth Retreat. This year the Retreat Master was Abbot Meletios Weber. He was received very well by all in attendance. The new hall has also provided us with two very useful school rooms. The extra space make it possible to offer Church School to the youth of our Church every Sunday during the School year. The rooms are also used for special activities in the summer. The hall has allowed the Food Pantry at St. George to work more smoothly and to serve the community better. The Food Pantry serves approximately 100 families two Wednesdays a month. The biggest challenge we face this year with the Pantry is the funding of the program. Another challenge has presented itself this year because the Food bank has moved to a new location.

This year seven members, two adults and five children of our Church will be attending St. Peter the Aleut Camp at Possum Kingdom Lake in North Texas.

Even though we continue to assist with mission work in Mexico, this has been challenging because of the violence across the border. Travel is possible but only to certain places and at certain times.

St. George is missionary minded and always seeking ways to grow. We have discussed the possibility of starting a mission in Harlingen. However, we realize that to do so now would be premature as it would divide our congregation and make it very difficult to meet financial needs. We would love to grow to the point where that is possible. Another area filled with missionary possibility is the work across the border. However, as mentioned previously this is on hold for the moment.

Some of the goals for us to accomplish this coming year include the completion of the kitchen and connecting it to the new hall, encourage tithing, more participation in Church activities and parish growth in a Christ centered environment.

Sts. George and Alexandra Mission in Ft. Smith, Arkansas

Fr. John Maxwell

Sts. George and Alexandra Mission in Fort Smith, AR has had its ups and down this year. Attendance for Sunday Liturgy has been as low as the high teens and as high as the mid 40's. We had over 50 for Pascha. Father Paul Fetsko services the mission twice a month, while I service the NWA Mission Effort. He is greatly appreciated. Thankfully we have finally paid off our mortgage. Now we have no debt. This hopefully will help us to eventually support a full time priest, which should help the mission to grow. We have had one death, and have lost a family due to relocation. We have had one baptism. Matushka and I have struggled this year with health issues which thank God are improving and have been a bit pre-occupied with the role of caregivers. Matushka Debra's mother Dorothy reposed on June 16th after a 13 month long state of needing total care. Her Uncle Harold was moved into Hospice care on July 5th. Please keep him in your prayers.

Report on NWA Mission Effort

Fr. John Maxwell

The NWA Mission effort has been a real source of joy. The people are talented, enthusiastic and committed to their faith. They are doing a fine Job learning the music. They put up a web page and a facebook page. They post the classes I teach. They are eager to learn and grow and regularly come to confession and they tithe. One of the faithful Bill reposed at the beginning on June. We have had a family of four move away to Springfield and another family of four will soon move away to Michigan. This is a real blow to the faithful, but they persevere. We average about 17 for Sunday Liturgy, including children, with 12 people at Vespers. They hold reader services when no priest is available. They are also doing mid week vespers and akathist services, as well as book studies. We meet in a store front. We have two rooms. One is set up with a kitchen, with tables and chairs for potlucks and classes. The other room is where we have our services and the children have their classes. Soon we will be attaching the royal doors to our iconostasis. We have a talented man helping with the wood work.

Holy Apostles Orthodox Church, Bixby, Oklahoma

Fr. Ambrose Arrington

Holy Apostles is located in the city fence line of Bixby, in south Tulsa County. The Tulsa metropolitan area has a population of approximately one million. Since the time of the last

Diocesan Assembly, Holy Apostles has had an approximate average attendance of 60 at Sunday Liturgies including children. Having lost some members in 2011, we have had new people move into the area, as well as baptisms, and continue to have visitors every Sunday. We have had 4 baptisms (2 adults, 2 children), 1 wedding, and no funerals, by God's grace.

We participated by invitation in a community outreach event last fall entitled "Day of Worship", which allowed us to set up a booth and talk to people about the Orthodox Faith for an afternoon. We will likely continue to participate in this annual event, which is a cooperative event put together by several area churches.

In terms of parish development, we are currently trying to establish a cemetery on our land, a move which has been approved by the Board of Adjustment, but disputed by one of our neighbors, and is currently under appeal to the Oklahoma Supreme Court, the lower court having upheld our right to have a cemetery on our property. This issue is a source of frustration for us, since it is obviously our right, and the wheels of justice grind exceedingly slowly. Nevertheless, we trust that God in His mercy will resolve the situation. In addition to the establishment of the cemetery, we are currently exploring options for future community development and how to manage the growth of the parish. The church school continues with approximately 30 students. In addition, a home-school co-op meets at the church once a week, which is comprised of five families from Holy Apostles and Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church. Charitable activity takes place mostly through anonymous giving into an alms box, which is disbursed at the discretion of Fr. Ambrose. Nationalities represented in the parish include American, Russian, Greek, Palestinian, and Romanian. The liturgical language is English. We are preparing to celebrate our 10-year anniversary next year.

Holy Nativity of our Lord in Bossier City, LA (Pending)

Holy Resurrection of our Lord in Clinton, MS (Pending)

St. John of Damascus Orthodox Mission in Tyler, TX

Fr. John Mikita

St. John's continues to move forward with a building program. This past year we began working with Presbytera Mirella Tudora, an architect from Romania living in the Dallas area. We continue to seek that elusive synergy between design and cost.

A highlight from last Fall was a visit from Protopresbyter Demetrios Carellas, an Archimandrite in the Greek Archdiocese, chaplain to Birth of the Theotokos Monastery in Saxonburg, PA. Fr. Demetrios delivered three talks on Faith, Hope, and Love. The talks were well attended. We hope to bring him back next Fall.

Our attendance remains strong, though we have lost some families who have moved for jobs. Financially we are still feeling our way forward after ending our grant period with the Diocese. We had two baptisms this past year.

St. Jonah Mission in Alpine, Texas

Fr. John Filipovich

St. Jonah Mission has been in its new facility (the former Mexican Methodist Church built in the 1950s) for a year and a half and continues to beautify the building and grounds as means are

available. Plans are in the works to construct a permanent iconostasis to replace our portable one. Our challenge is the opposite from that experienced by other Missions in the diocese, in that we have more than enough space to fill.

As of September 2011, Fr. John Filipovich ceased his Circuit Riding Ministry and is able to devote more time to St. Jonah Mission. The service schedule has increased to every Saturday evening (Great Vespers) and Sunday Morning (Divine Liturgy) as well as the Great Canon (first week of Lent), Wednesday Presanctified Liturgies during Lent, Holy Week & Pascha services, Vespers during the pre-feast of Christmas, the 12 Great Feast Days (Great Vespers with Litya & Divine Liturgy) and a few Saints Days such as St. Jonah (June 15), SS. Peter & Paul, Nicholas and Herman. We also celebrate a mid-week Vespers on Wednesday evenings followed by a class. Members of the Mission are very committed but attendance varies widely according to the work schedules of the members. At Christmas & Pascha we had attendances of over 20 but, some Sundays are as low as the priest and choir; most Sundays we see between 5 and 10 in attendance. We have one potential catechumen and others are making initial inquiries about the Church. We are also starting to see a few out of town Orthodox visitors who vacation in Big Bend Nat'l Park and other attractions in the area.

We are in the process of trying to purchase a mobile home to use as a rectory. Father John is pursuing secular work (*at least part time*). In terms of further outreach, we have preliminary plans to host an iconography lecture in Marfa, Texas (about 25 miles away) to draw interest from the art colony there and with the hope of persuading the Menile Collection in Houston to help sponsor the event which would lend an air of allurements to the area artists and art enthusiasts.

Brewster County, of which Alpine is the county seat, is the largest county in the state of Texas (over three times the size of the state of Delaware) but with a population density of one person per square mile. The neighboring counties of Pecos, Jeff Davis and Presidio are not quite as big but share similar population densities. Alpine is truly a missionary outpost in that it is a small community with a population of about 5,000, 3 hours from the nearest airport and one hour from the nearest Walmart (which has its merits.) There is a small university in town: Sul Ross State University with a student population of about 2,000. Last fall, we were able to identify three Orthodox students, two of which attended services. Individuals and families with Orthodox ties/backgrounds have been found in the area but they currently attend heterodox churches.

Fr. John is becoming better known in the community. He writes a religious column for the local newspaper on a rotating basis (about every 6 weeks) with other clergy in town. At the end of May, 2012, he spoke to an adult class of Methodists studying Church History (with a very good response) and is scheduled (at this writing) to deliver the invocation at the July 3, 2012 meeting of the City Council. He is also a member of the local Ministerial Alliance and community chorus.

St Matthew the Apostle Mission in Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Fr. Mark Christian

The parish is celebrating our sixth year as a congregation. With our Sunday attendance now averaging over 40 children and adults each week, we are beginning to stretch the limits of our one-room storefront location. Through regular contributions to a building fund, we hope to find a more suitable setting in the future.

This past year we welcomed a number of people who have moved into the Baton Rouge area, along with five children and adults by Baptism and Chrismation. An additional six adults and two children are preparing for reception. Classes are held regularly for all ages.

Two years ago, we upgraded our website and have seen a significant increase in searches and inquiries. We have also established a presence on Facebook to promote our services and foster a greater awareness of the Orthodox life.

We support the IOCC and OCMC with occasional offerings and provide relief to those who ask our help through offerings to the alms box.

In cooperation with Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, several of our students are organizing an OCF chapter at Louisiana State University. Regular meetings should begin in the fall 2012 semester.

It is our great joy to share in the life St Luke describes in the early church in the days after Pentecost in the Acts of the Apostles: *"...with gladness and simplicity of heart," we are "praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved."* (2:46-7)

St. Maximus the Confessor in Denton, Texas

Fr. Justin Frederick

St. Maximus Orthodox Church, the only parish in the Western Hemisphere dedicated to the memory of this great ascetic and theologian, is located in Denton, Texas, a growing city of 100,000. The city contains two large universities and serves as county seat of a county of more than half a million people. So far, St. Maximus is the only Orthodox parish in Denton County; but we hope to change that soon. Founded in July 2001, the parish celebrates its eleventh year this year by painting and beautifying the outside of their hundred-year old building and adding to it a thousand square-foot room to provide much needed hall space. When that is completed, the parish plans to move forward on building its temple designed by Orthodox architect Andrew Gould.

We are a growing parish comprised mostly of converts, young families with many young children, a good group of teens, and a healthy sprinkling of older people both married and single. Sunday Liturgy attendance averages 80, ranging from 70 to 100. Saturday evening Vigil attendance averages 30. With the hall to be finished in the next two months, we are considering establishing an annual *St. Maximus Lecture* to honor our patron, to promote awareness and appreciation for him, and to serve as a means of outreach. We have an initial speaker in mind who proposes to speak on *"How coming to grips with St. Maximus's 400 Centuries on Love changed the way I think about eating, reading, and thinking."* The parish has been served by Fr. Justin Frederick since its founding. Services are in English with Slavonic used when appropriate. Besides a Sunday church school program for preschool through high school after Sunday Liturgy during the school year, a regular, ongoing, year-long catechesis class is taught on Wednesday nights, and an adult education class is taught weekly on another day, alternating between Scripture and classic texts of Orthodox Spirituality. We look to rebuild our OCF chapter this fall as outreach to the universities. We have charity as a line item in our budget (our goal is eventually to reach 10%) as well as an alms box. Both sources are used to help those in need both within and without the parish, as well as to support worthy charities and appeals.

St. Nektarios Orthodox Mission in Waxahachie, TX

Fr. David Bozeman

St. Nektarios Orthodox Mission held its first Divine Liturgy on Sunday, July 1, 2012. We are renting a storefront space in the historic downtown square of Waxahachie, TX at 208 W. Franklin Street. We had 19 attendees at our first liturgy with a few interested persons unable to attend. Waxahachie itself has had no Orthodox presence until now. The town itself consists of approximately 30,000 people and over 100 churches of various stripes.

The challenges that we face as a new mission are varied. We must establish ourselves as a presence within the community and be recognized as being a legitimate church. Orthodoxy is virtually unknown and so the first question that we are being asked is, "what is Orthodoxy?" Our rental space provides reasonable exposure to the community and will be helpful in beginning to generate interest. Growth in numbers through community outreach and education is a primary goal at this point. Inquirers classes and regular services are in the works to help us begin to grow.

Finances and a permanent space are also challenges that we are facing. With such modest initial numbers, we must focus on growth in participating numbers and the accompanying financial contributions that will come with that. The diocese is playing a large role in supporting the mission, and me in particular, at this point with a very aggressive plan for building a phase 1 Church. We hope to secure land begin a chapel construction within a relatively short period of time.

Our immediate needs are for a variety of liturgical items. Having started from essentially nothing, we have acquired the basic items to hold liturgy but have a number of things which still need to be acquired to be able to fully function.

St Paul the Apostle in Denison, Texas

Fr. Michael Storozuk

St Paul the Apostle Mission was established January 2003 in the Denison / Sherman area of North Texas which has a population of about 54,000 people and is 70 miles north of St Seraphim's. St. Paul's is an offshoot, sister community of the Dallas Cathedral.

The search for a "place of our own" began immediately and in November 2003 we had the closing on our two acres of land. After 16 weeks of construction - accomplished predominantly by members of the Mission - Archbishop Dmitri served the first Liturgy in the new temple. The Church was consecrated August 2008 and soon after, construction on a 2500 square foot activity center began. The second completed structure was also a labor of love by members of the community.

When we established the mission we had 7 members and and have grown to 26 with others who attend sporadically. We are currently working with a group of inquirers and catechumens. We have a strong, committed group of faithful members. Our regular weekly schedule includes Wednesday Vespers, Thursday morning Divine Liturgy, a Saturday Akathist followed by Great Vespers, and Sunday morning Divine Liturgy. Festal, Lenten and Holy Week Services are also celebrated.

The main challenge to St Paul's at present is the need for more members. This will give a larger Orthodox presence and help our poor financial situation.

The Dallas area Deanery meeting has been held at St Paul's the two last two years and we look forward to more such opportunities.

St. Sava Orthodox Church in Allen/Plano, Texas

Fr. Seraphim Hipsh

Building Program

Last September, we paid off our last "non-Church" related loan so that we now own our property in full. Due to the poor economy and resulting decrease in annual income since 2008 (\$150K) we have put on hold our full scale building project (projected cost \$1.5 million) and initiated an interim building program project that will take advantage of our existing parking lot and fellowship hall. Plans are underway to build a larger worship space/chapel on the northeast end of our property. In what we consider a great gift from God, during Bright Week this year, we were offered a donation of a very large, two piece commercial playground set up. All we had to do was pay to have it moved, installed, and mulched. Since our parish spends a tremendous amount of its time outdoors, it seemed logical to take advantage of such an opportunity, which we funded through our own personal loan.

Prison Ministry

We have initiated and maintained a weekly/bi-weekly prison ministry at the local federal prison in Seagoville.

Right to Life

We participated in the local 40 Days for Life by filling the vigil slots for a day at the abortion center in Dallas and raised funds for our local crisis pregnancy center.

Restland Liturgies

We celebrated three Liturgies at Restland Cemetery this year including one for Vladika DMITRI on his 40 day anniversary of repose, one on Vladika's birthday, and our usual annual liturgy on the Day of Rejoicing. All were well attended by the faithful from all over the metroplex.

Second Priest Added to our Staff

Fr. Photius Avant was assigned as a second priest at St. Sava. We have been paying a modest part-time salary to him, and in addition to serving at the parish, he (and Matushka Carrisa) built and coordinated our weekly Wednesday evening church education program called Cross Training.

Weddings, Baptisms, Funerals

While we did not perform any weddings at St. Savas this past year, we did have seventeen baptisms and one funeral.

St. Seraphim of Sarov Orthodox Cathedral in Dallas, TX

Fr. John Anderson

Since our last assembly at the All-American, St. Seraphim has continued to heal, especially since Pascha. December was our best month ever regarding income which was remarkable considering the sixty per cent drop at Pascha 2011.

More and more parish members are returning to the cathedral, coming more regularly to church and to confession. We are again building up our catechumens and have received several new Orthodox converts as well as Orthodox individuals and families.

The newest daughter mission of the Cathedral, St. Nectarios, has just received its first priest – Father David Bozeman – and had its first Sunday Divine Liturgy in its new rented space. They are looking to buy four acres near Waxahachie in south Dallas and build a chapel there as soon as possible.

We just finished our deanery camp, St. Peter the Aleut, which was very successful. The campers are very much looking forward to next year!

The construction of the Archbishop Dmitri Memorial Chapel is moving along. The foundation is being completed this week and we are preparing for the next phase. We ask for your continued prayers in Christ,