

Appalachian Deanery Report to the 2022 Diocese of the South Assembly

Baltimore, MD
July 18, 2022

While travel around the Deanery has been limited due to various efforts regarding the SARS-COV-2, the work of local parishes has continued, and the fruit of that work is evident in ways most of us report as being at least noticeable, if not somewhat overwhelming in the surprisingly best sense of the term.

Our Deanery plan was to meet in January, but the virus curtailed that effort. The opportunities to gather in Miami Lakes, Plano, and now here in Baltimore have been about it.

The Saint Andrew's Church, Ashland, VA, celebrated their 20th Anniversary, along with the 20th for St. Athanasius Church, Nicholasville, KY. Many Years to the faithful of these parishes and their faithful priests and deacons. While vibrant gatherings celebrated these good milestones, viral infection and other matters did limit the attendance.

Other important milestones around the Deanery include the accomplishment of debt retirement at the St. Tikhon of Moscow Church in Chattanooga, TN. This was able to be done from savings accumulated, and the result will be stronger cash flow for growth of the parish. While Fr. Seth Earl relocated to Atlanta, GA, he has continued to serve the parish and manage the significant interest of inquirers and catechumens.

In addition, there are two new priests assigned to Altars in the Deanery. First, Priest Jeremy McKemy becomes the first priest assigned to the St. Ambrose of Milan Church, Roanoke, VA. This mission was begun by the efforts of Archpriest George DeTrana and was inactive following his repose, that is, until Archpriest Sam Gantt moved back in retirement to his home town of Roanoke and assisted our effort to restore St. Ambrose to an active status again. The faithful there are growing in number, and they hope that growth will soon accomplish a more permanent temporary meeting place (among those of missionary spirit, that terminology does not need to be explained). Also, Priest Maximus Gibson has been assigned to the Altar at Dormition Orthodox Church, Norfolk, VA. His presence at this meeting may include moving box tape still stuck to his shoes, or without something still packed in storage. Many years to these new priests in our Diocese, and to the parishes that they serve, taking their place among the ranks of clergy of the Orthodox Church in America.

Also, after meeting him a few years ago in West Palm Beach, Priest David Ogan is faithfully assisting Archpriest Peter Dubinin at the Protection of the Virgin Mary, Clarksville, TN. While somewhat limited by current obligations, it is hoped that he will be available to fill vacancies for priest vacations and other necessities in that region of the Appalachian Deanery and the Diocese.

It is good to commend several priests, who in retirement have responded energetically and without reservation to the necessities of our Deanery missions and parishes. First, Priest Jonas Worsham, who retired from active priesthood about fifteen years ago after the first of continued manifestations of heart disease, has, nevertheless, been available over the years to attend to necessity at St. Tikhon of Moscow, Chattanooga, TN, and Protection of the Virgin Mary, Clarksville, TN. He has also been constructively involved in at least two other missions of our Diocese, in Memphis, TN and in Charlottesville, VA.

Second, Archpriest Sam Gantt, in addition to the restoration of regular services at St. Ambrose of Milan mentioned above, also provided priestly service to several GOA parishes in Virginia with the oversight of Proistamenos and Vicar of Southern Virginia, Nicholas Bacalis. And also, Archpriest Mark Hodal, in retirement from active priesthood due to limitations of mobility, made himself available to the needs of a thriving Dormition Church, Norfolk, VA, faithfully providing for their needs while sacrificing needs for his family. His commitment preserved the active life of the parish without their need to sacrifice much of the schedule with which they were accustomed. Many thanks, and many years to these models of selfless service in our midst, while not physically here in Baltimore due to their retired status.

Our parishes report budding candidates for service in Christ's vineyard. My intention is to visit these candidates with their priests as discernment leads to recommended steps. Please pray for all of those who are contemplating the vocation of priesthood, those priests or ministers in other denominations who are inquiring about Orthodoxy and wonder how that may change their vocation, and those contemplating a transfer of jurisdiction, or making the commitment to attend seminary.

The Holy Spirit is active among mission efforts in the Appalachian Deanery. The St Athanasius Church has been actively supporting the St. Nina Church near Berea, KY. The St. Andrew's Church has been actively supporting the Sts. Peter and Paul Church in Culpeper, VA. And, the St. Cyprian of Carthage Church has been supporting the St. Ambrose of Milan Church in Roanoke, VA. We continue to test opportunities in (or near) Tappahannock, VA; Middle Peninsula (Williamsburg), VA; Farmville, VA; Bedford, VA; Lynchburg/Charlottesville, VA; Staunton, VA; Wytheville, VA; Lewisburg, WV; Cookeville, TN; Louisville, KY; Nashville, TN; Pigeon Forge, TN, and anywhere we may find those who may say with the Ethiopian eunuch, "How can I [we understand], unless someone guides me?"

Carolina Deanery Annual Parish Report June 2021-June 2022

Statistical Snapshot

Mission/Parish	Baptism/ Chrismatio n	Weddin g	Funeral	Avg. Sunday Attendance	Avg. Services Per week	% Budget Personnel	% Budget Philanthroy	% Budget Ministries	Regular Adult Education Y/N	Regular Child Education Y/N
Archangel Gabriel				35	2	40%	1%	1%	Y	Y
Holy Apostles	10	0	0	70	4				Y	Y
Holy Ascension	15	2	1	100-110	3-5	50%	2.5%	1.5%	Y	Y
Holy Cross	17	1	1	60-75	2-3	60%	3%	2%	Y	Y
Holy Transfiguration	11	3	1	115-125	3	50%	5.5%	4.7%	Y	Y
Holy Resurrection	9	1	0	40-50	3-4	58%	1%	4%	Y	Y
Nativity	0	0	0	35-45	2	62	3	10	y	y
St. Anthony	4	0	0	32-40	3-6	60%	2%	2%	Y	Y
St. Basil	22	0	1	75-85	4	37	4	2	Y	Y
St. George	2/3	0	0	11	2-3	46.3	0	12.7	N	N/A
St. James	2/4	0	0	40-50	4	60%	1%	1%	N	Y
St. John	11/3	1	3	200-225	5-6	37%	10%	10%	Y	Y
St. Mary	0	0	0	24-30	2-3	28%	0	0	N	N
St. Nicholas	5	2	1	30-40	2	70%	2%	2%	Y	Y
St. Timothy	6	0	0	40	4	65%	3	2	Y	Y

News & Notes

Archangel Gabriel: we are actively seeking property via building committee. We have 3 catechumans. 3 men were tonsured by Archbishop Alexander in January with a first hierarchical visit.

Holy Apostles:

Holy Ascension: Thanks to the faithfulness and generosity of our parishioners, 2021 was a strong year financially, allowing us to make major roof and sidewalk repairs, and hire an administrator to assist Fr. John, who has many other administrative tasks as the Dean of the Carolinas, in the day to day operations of the parish. We also signed a contract to begin the next phase of our iconography in 2023. Plans are also being discussed for the future development of a parish hall.

Holy Cross: We continue to move out of our COVID-era slow down and, sadly, saw around 10 families leave the church in disagreement with some of the guidelines. However, we had the joy of receiving 17 souls into the church last year. We hosted the Archbishop and had many deanery and local clergy and parishioners join us for our ground-breaking on our property. We have completed all of our site work and once we get approved for our bank loan hope to begin the actual construction of our new church and hall this year. We have also seen new folks moving to the area making Holy Cross their home as well as having 9 catechumens. Even though our numbers are down from pre-COVID, financially we are on track to have the best year yet and are excited to get going on our building project.

Holy Transfiguration: We have thoroughly outgrown our current space and have spent quite a bit of time and energy searching, to no avail, for the right new location. We have just recently begun an 8 - 10 month petitioning process with the local government to get an exception to an airport overlay restriction which has prevented us from increasing the footprint of the facilities that we currently own. This would be our best option because our current location is ideal, it would be the least expensive option, and it would considerably move up the timeline (years, if not a decade or more) for us to have a consecrated altar. We eagerly anticipate Archbishop Alexander's visit for our feast day when one of our subdeacons will be ordained to the holy diaconate.

Holy Resurrection: Holy Resurrection continues to grow. Currently, the parish has received 9 souls into the Holy Church, and we currently have 17 catechumens and 8 inquirers. 4 parishioners are preparing to become readers, 1 is preparing to become a subdeacon, and 1 will be attending Seminary in the fall. We are also supporting a current seminarian who is entering his senior year at St Tikhon's. There are also very active Men's and Women's Groups, as well as a homeschool co-op. We also continue to work toward paying off our mortgage, and we are starting discussions about an actual Church building for the future.

Nativity: We continue to enter the post-Covid era slowly as we experienced 35 plus people breakaway to start an Antiochian mission which set us back both in membership as well as financially. Currently we are preparing 6 catechumens for baptism/chrisamation in August as well as having one of our members ordained to the Holy Diaconate and another young man begin the DVP program. These young men certainly provide inspiration and encouragement as we go forward. We are in our four year of our Community of Calling Grant (\$38,000) which helps us foster awareness and learn more about vocation and calling on a personal and communal level. This grant has been life-changing for me personally as well as for our parish. We put on a new roof in early Spring and will have a new carpet installed this week. Additionally we enrolled a catechumen on Pentecost Sunday. We host numerous outreach ministries throughout the year: Back to School Backpack Program for local impoverished children, sponsor a hot lunch once a month at the local Men's Rescue Mission, donate gifts for the Salvation Army Angel Tree Program, and make blankets for the local Charlotte Homeless shelter, and donate canned goods to the local Loaves and Fishes outreach ministry.

St. Anthony: We ended 2021 on a good note both financially and with new people, both inquirers and Orthodox people who have moved into the area. We were able to use the time in 2021 to remodel the house next door to be used as the hall and classrooms. We connected the church and house with handicap accessible sidewalks and ramps. We were also able to add a parking lot for 18 cars. 2022 has seen a good influx of new people looking to join the church.

St. Basil:

St. George: We have just resumed adult education with a sort of Bible study on Ezekiel 1, we can't yet call it "regular," but we expect that will be an appropriate appellation in the next few months. || Child Education: Nothing formal yet, since at this time we have only one child of school age. || We anticipate working on the exterior of the church and hall (replacing damaged clapboards, painting) before the end of the year, although that is likely to be a multi-year project, with the duration dictated by the availability of funds and volunteer time.|| In August 2014 there were two members; the number has fluctuated over the years, but we now take care of fifteen to nineteen people, including children, and a varying number of visitors (particularly in the summer months). There are two adults who have been in catechumen status for years, and although they do not come regularly, they consider the

mission their church. There are also several Orthodox believers in the general area (including the Outer Banks, a drive of at least an hour and twenty minutes) who are not formally members of the mission, but consider St George's their parish. || Noteworthy is the fact that the mission receives financial support from a number of friends in the area who are not Orthodox but who like the idea of having an Orthodox presence in the community; in addition, there are several Orthodox and non-Orthodox people who live in various parts of the country, who contribute to the mission.

St James: We have largely outgrown our rented space. This year we celebrated the tenth anniversary of our mission's founding with a beautiful liturgy and a feast, both held on our purchased property. We have fully-developed building design and plan (courtesy of Andrew Gould) and are working to fund this. Our growth has been slow and consistent, split between some new converts and other Orthodox folks moving into our area (apparently driven by COVID to consider relocating). We have been disappointed to not see the influx of inquirers that so many other parishes seem to have seen during covid, possibly due to the older demographic in our area. We are lacking in terms of ministries and outreach to our community at this time, which we hope to change. We are trying to reboot our adult classes, which largely were dropped due to covid concerns. Financially, we remain strong, which has been encouraging. We now have a newly-ordained Deacon, which has been a blessing.

St. John: We continue with strong growth on all fronts. August 2021 saw the hiring a youth director and the beginning of 2022 of a parttime choir director. Work toward completion of the temple is underway: wall paintings (the dome project is complete), choros, interior shellacking of pine trim and finish. The plastering of the remaining interior will be completed in July 2022. The parish hall is underway with the decision to add the "wrap around" porch on the temple during this phase of construction.

St. Mary Magdalene: Fr James Bozeman (priest of St James Orthodox Church) is the current priest-in-charge handling the administrative duties, and Fr Michael Matsko (retired and attached to St MM) has been tapped to temporarily handle the local pastoral duties. **From Fr Michael:** STMM is attempting to recover and rebuild following the division that has plagued the parish over the past several years. Our Dean asked for an assessment to determine the long-term viability of STMM. Our finances have been limited and we could not meet the Diocesan requirements for a permanent Pastor. Our emphasis, however, is not on money. Our issues were Spiritual, which always has its negative effects on Stewardship. We have been working on increasing participation in the Liturgical life of our parish. Attendance at our services is improving. The Sacrament of Confession is a problem which we are working to correct. Parishioners are absent from the Liturgy for extended periods of time, and still want to receive Holy Communion. We have worked hard to improve in the area of Evangelism. At present we have been blessed with two inquirers and four Catechumens. If God so wills we will once again have children in our parish. We will have Christian education both for children and adults in September. Two of our young people are currently at Antiochian Village, one is a Counselor and one a Camper. In July one of our Teens will be attending a music workshop in Pennsylvania and hopefully one day learn to direct choir. The Church building has been painted on the inside, the cupola cleaned, new Icons are being hung, new carpets put in place, old soiled chairs replaced and general maintenance issues that need attending to are in the process of being completed. All that is being done here has been donated by our parishioners. Thanks be to God! We are working hard to till the soil of renewal here at STMM. If we move forward in Love, "the gates of hell" will find no home here! Please pray for us, as we pray for all of you. In Christ, Fr. Michael

St. Nicholas: We have lost some families due to military relocation, By the end of 2022 we will have lost 14 adults and children. We are going to begin a weekly study session probably the first of August. Financially, right now, we are sound. God-Willing that continues. We have a new HVAC unit; took on a termite contract to protect the Church building and the Parish Hall; and replaced the hot water unit. Nothing else needs to be done at this time.

**Mississippi River Deanery
Diocese of the South
2022 Report**

The Mississippi River Deanery of the Diocese of the South is doing well. The priests that serve the deanery are committed to the Gospel and the mission fields they serve. Over the last year, by the grace of God, we have all experienced various forms of growth in our local parishes. Baptisms and chrismations are taken place, inquirers and catechumens are being instructed, church buildings have been purchased, parish halls renovated, and new seminary graduates have been ordained and are preparing to intern for a year before transitioning into their mission assignments within the deanery. Overall, the deanery is very blessed. In the following, you will find an overview from each priest that describes what is taking place in his respective mission or parish.

**Holy Nativity Mission
Shreveport, LA
Priest Jason Foster**

Holy Nativity has been blessed with baptisms, chrismations, and weddings over the last year. We have focused on beautifying our grounds, developing our outreach ministries, and moving the majority of our educational opportunities to Sunday. Consequently, we are enjoying full meal coffee hours and extended fellowship with those that travel up to two hours to be with us on Sunday. Also, we had one of our largest catechumen classes this last year. We have discovered the best way to reach our area is to invite friends and family to some of our major events. Therefore, we are exploring quarterly gatherings that will allow us to show hospitality to our neighbors. Lastly, we held our 10 year anniversary in December, postponed one year due to Covid, and we were blessed to have Archbishop Alexander, Archpriest Marcus Burch and Archpriest Peter Robichau with us. In honor of the occasion, we commissioned iconographer John to write a large icon of the Nativity of our Lord in our parish hall. As an added bonus, John made our ministry bus a mobile work of art. As we look to the future, we have Presv Mireal Tudora working on the initial design of our future temple. Our hope is we can break ground on it within the next five years.

**St Matthew the Apostle Mission
Baton Rouge, LA
Priest Joshua Trant**

St. Matthew the Apostle Mission Baton Rouge, LA Parish Report 2022 The past year has been marked with blessings and challenges. Of the many blessings at the mission, we have

celebrated baptisms and a wedding, and currently are enjoying a larger than usual group of catechumens making their preparations to be received into the Church at Theophany. We have outgrown our current facilities; however, the astronomic rise of construction costs has caused us to delay our building project though we are still trying to find an “affordable” way to build on the land we purchased last year.

Sts. George and Alexandra Mission
Ft Smith, AR
Archpriest John Maxwell

We have received many blessings from the Lord this year, along with many struggles. Below are the highlight:

1. We receive 5 adults and 7 children by Baptism and one Adult by Chrismation
2. We added 6 adult Orthodox and three Orthodox children who moved into the area. We also have two adult Coptic Orthodox who are now attending the parish.
3. We lost 2 adult members who moved away and 2 adults Catechumens with four children leave our mission
4. The Renovations of our Church Hall is still not complete. Because of this we had to cancel our June VBS with 22 children registered to come. We anticipate Phase One of the hall to be completed with an occupation permit for our August VBS. We have 25 children who are now registered. Some of these children we have not seen since Covid. Hopefully we will start seeing them and their parents.
5. Currently we have 16 inquirers. All have showed up over the past two months.
6. We had over 50 for Pascha
7. We had his Eminence Alexander visit us with an attendance at vespers of 74 and 65 at the Divine Liturgy. We should note that Fr. John Wheling and some of his faithful came to vespers.
8. We have beautiful new icons for our Iconostasis.
9. We began having a booth at the local Famers Market to introduce ourselves to the community and are planning a Festival for Fall of 2023.
10. We plan on resuming our Sunday School Program in September after not being able to use our hall for over 2 years.
11. Our mission has a large geographic footprint. The cost of gasoline is causing some of our members to come less often.
12. My cancer has spread to most of my upper torso. I am hoping to have a recent seminary graduate and priest to come to our parish, once a family medical situation resolves. This priest, if blessed by the Archbishop. Wil be mentored by me and then replace me as I retire.

**Saint John of Chicago Mission
Rogers, Arkansas
Archpriest John Wehling**

We are thankful to God for continued growth in at St John Mission in Northwest Arkansas. Like many of our missions and parishes we have seen growth through inquirers, catechumens, and new people moving to the area who are already Orthodox Christians. We have a number of new babies and a growing young adult group. Our Church School program continues to teach our elementary age kids and Fr John teaches the Youth Group throughout the school year. We have active men's and women's groups engaged in service and fellowship.

Mat. Anne Marie stepped back from directing the choir last year after seven years and Jonny Braun has taken over. The choir has already done some recording for an album to be released as a fundraiser for a new church/temple.

We are outgrowing our fellowship hall, far past having outgrown our parking lot, and filling the temple many Sundays for the past months. As we are staying on track in our budget we are beginning to plan for building a church/temple.

Since our last Diocesan Assembly we have had 6 baptisms, 4 Chrismations, and 1 wedding. We currently have 7 adult catechumens

**St George Mission
Bartlett, TN
Archpriest Mark Sutton**

Since our last report of September 2021, we have maintained four weekly classes: a liturgical readers' class, a book study, a catechism class, and an open class on topics in Orthodoxy. In addition we had zoom catechism for those who could not attend the regular catechism. In September of 2022 we will start a new round of education opportunities.

We currently have three catechumens and baptized or chrismated four in late 2021 and early 2022.

Each week we have three vespers services, one matins and Sunday liturgy. We celebrate all the major feasts with liturgy and have other liturgies as well. Our plan last year to begin a regular midweek liturgy was foiled because we could not get singers during the day, but do have them now. After Sunday liturgy we have a potluck meal and often at other liturgies too. During Lent we kept our weekly schedule, substituting the Pre-Sanctified on Wednesdays. The three congregations of Orthodox in Memphis celebrated the Sunday of Orthodoxy after taking off

two years because of Covid. We concelebrated liturgy at the Annunciation Greek Church with a full house and it was a good experience as usual. We served eleven services during Holy Week and had midnight service for Pascha. Pascha Sunday we got together for Vespers, an egg hunt and pizza. In Bright week we served the weekly schedule plus one Bright Liturgy.

We did a simple food event for the public last year to meet new people and to make some money for the church. We made about \$1200 selling homemade blini. They were very good and our church was enthusiastic about putting it on. It was designed to not take a lot of prep and last only three hours. We're going to do it again this year, adding one hour of serving, but with the same format.

Our tithes and contributions are at all-time highs and our finances continue to do well. Thanks to various principle-only donations to our building fund, we have about \$93,000 left on our mortgage. However, at the moment we are getting prices to replace our air conditioning system. We don't have prices yet but it's probably going to be about \$50,000. OCCIF has said that we can finance this through them and that may be the way we go. We will also talk to Noel about it.

We are building a bell tower that should be done soon. It will be able to withstand 120mph winds. Keeping a 70 year old building maintained is ongoing. Not much maintenance had been done previously. We are doing electrical improvements now and have concrete work to do on the front. Last year we had work parties and painted all the wrought iron railings.

By God's grace and the prayers of the saints, we go forward, joyful that we are in His fold, are able to serve, and praying for His continual forgiveness, mercy, and love.

St. John of Damascus Mission
Tyler, TX
Priest David Bozeman

The work at St. John of Damascus in Tyler, TX continues to move ahead robustly. There has been substantial activity and growth over the last two years. A major element of our work has been our iconography program under the direction of iconographer Ivan Roumantsiev. We completed the iconostasis, the apse, the four pendentives with the evangelists, and a full set of festal icons. The work continues as we raise funds for the next phase of work.

In 2021, we had 23 baptisms / chrismations, 0 weddings, and 3 funerals.
In 2022, as of July we have had 22 baptisms / chrismations, 0 weddings, and 2 funerals.
As of July, our average Sunday attendance is between 125 - 140 persons.

With such an increase in new faithful, the bulk of our Christian education has been in catechism and children's education. We hope to begin to focus on continuing Orthodox education for the many faithful who desire a deeper experience of orthopraxis.

We are working toward increasing the activity of two mission stations in our area, St. Ephraim Mission in Longview, TX and St. Paisios Mission in Nacogdoches, TX. With the addition of two recent clergymen to the area, we look forward to increasing our mission work over the next year.

Holy Resurrection Orthodox Church
Clinton, MS
Archpriest Paul Yerger

Statistics:

Baptisms with Chrismation: 1 adult, 2 infants

Chrismation Only: 1 Adult

Marriage: 1

Deaths: 4

Members who attend at least monthly: 68 adults, 43 children, 6 in utero

Finances July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022

Net Operating Income \$ 121,938.37 (average \$10,161.53 per month)

Operating Expenses \$ 133,374.66 (average monthly \$11,114.55)

Net Loss \$11,436.29

Youth Fund Donations \$5,105.00

Unrestricted Gifts from non-members \$9,180

Church News

This spring Covid claimed our long time Treasurer, Business Manager, and pillar, Robert Ainsworth. We also lost two founding members, Charles Haddad and Joe Khalaf. *May their memory be eternal.*

Lately our Sunday attendance has increased to the 50 – 70 range, still less than before Covid. But we see more visitors and seekers than usual.

Bishop Gerasim visited here in June and tonsured three readers for us as well as two for Columbus and two for Hattiesburg, and three subdeacons for us and one for Hattiesburg. Our people enjoyed staying late hearing him at coffee hour. He also presented a gramota from the Holy Synod to our Subdeacon John Wood for his 42 years of faithful service as Choir Director here.

In October Father John Parker brought the wonder-working icon of St. Anna from St. Tikhon's. Both the icon and Fr. John were blessings here.

Fr. Alexis Baldwin is a blessing to Orthodoxy in Mississippi, serving missions in Columbus, Hattiesburg, and McComb, as well as helping me as needed. This spring the Hattiesburg community were able to buy a building. The community should grow in this visible and attractive home. I don't know whether there is significant that now all three of our Mississippi OCA missions have bought buildings that were former Christian Science churches.

For more than 20 years our local Orthodox clergy (two Antiochian, one Greek and us) have had lunch together monthly. It is a joy to know each other well and be aware of what each other are doing. We also have joint services on Sunday of Orthodoxy Vespers, Paschal Agape Vespers, and Blessing of a local reservoir the Sunday after Theophany.

We have a very good Parish Council this year; they take responsibility to follow up on projects and I am able to delegate many things I used to do myself.

Christ the Saviour Mission

McComb, MS

Priest Alexis Baldwin

Mission Baptisms/Chrismations: 0 Catechumens: 3 Normal attendance: 10 adults (this includes a few adults irregularly attending) Buildings: Parsonage, Church Hall, Priest office building, and Church all owned Ministries: (Currently) Divine Liturgy and Vespers once a month The buildings at Christ the Saviour are in need of significant maintenance, but remain in working order. There's a lot of potential and opportunity for growth and renewed life in the community and the area surrounding. An estimated 12,000+ people live in McComb as of 2019. Pike County, in which McComb is situated, is home to 39,000+. The McComb micropolitan area is home to 52,000+ people. The city of Brookhaven is a mere 30 minute (25 miles) drive from McComb and is home to 34,000+ people. Over the last year, about five new folks who live both near McComb and over 45 minute's drive from Christ the Saviour have begun to attend. Again, the Mission remains an island in the South West corner of Mississippi. The four closest Orthodox communities to it are all in Louisiana, 60+ miles away, one way drive. Holy Cross Mission Station in Hattiesburg the next closest, is 70 miles, one way. In an age when many Orthodox commute to Church, the generally accessible ministry area population of nearly 100,000 people has often proven to be sustainable. I have been blessed to serve here. I believe however, this Mission's trajectory is toward decline but, not due in any way to the Pandemic. A different vision is imperative to provide the foundation for reversing this trajectory. This implemented vision needs to be methodical and well thought out. If this doesn't happen, situation of the this community will unlikely support any kind of continuation.

Holy Cross Mission Station
Hattiesburg, MS
Priest Alexis Baldwin

Holy Cross Mission Station Baptisms/Chrismations: 2/0 Catechumens: 2 Normal attendance: 20 adults, 5 children Buildings: Around the beginning of this year, purchased church building on .3 acre lot Ministries: (Currently) Divine Liturgy and Vespers once a month, additionally Divine Liturgy once a month on Saturday/or special event. Occasionally, in months with 5 Sundays, Vespers and Divine Liturgy twice that month. When I'm not serving, lay led Typica on Sundays and lay led Vespers most Wednesdays and Saturdays. Faithful participate in regular online community discussions/fellowship, online book club held throughout the year, online workshops, Monday through Friday Online Mission Daily Scripture and Prayer, and Friday night Online Catechumen classes as scheduled Holy Cross has seen growth this year, with new members/catechumens/inquirers. At the beginning of 2022, we purchased and moved into a church which sits on 1/3 of an acre. This reduced the financial burden versus renting by at least \$200 a month. We have renovated the interior, constructed and finished an Iconostasis, purchased and planted a sign, and received a generous donation of liturgical Icons, Banners, and Items from Elijah's mantle. We were blessed to host His Grace Gerasim for a Saturday morning brunch. The level of commitment in all areas of community life has continued to increase. This will continue, by all indications, going forward. In terms of budget, we have a ways to go before the community reaches mission status or supports a full-time priest.

St. Catherine Mission Station
Columbus, MS
Priest Alexis Baldwin

Baptisms/Chrismations: 7/3 Catechumens: 0 Normal attendance: 22 adults, 10 children Buildings: St. Catherine purchased (ongoing mortgage) their current 1,400+ sq ft church building which houses the chapel, two bathrooms, as well as two other rooms: one for a bookstore and the other for fellowship. Ministries: (Currently) Sunday Divine Liturgy and Saturday Vespers once a month. Some months, also an extra Vespers and Divine Liturgy (often major feasts) when it is able to be scheduled. When I'm not serving, lay led Typica on Sundays, as well as readers Vespers frequently on Wednesdays throughout each month. Some faithful participate in regular online community discussions/fellowship, the online book club held throughout the year, online workshops, Monday through Friday Online Mission Daily Scripture and Prayer, and the Friday night Online Catechumen classes. Laity have organized their own monthly brotherhood and sisterhood monthly meetings, in addition to various events and fellowship days. St. Catherine continued to see growth this year. The community continues various beautification projects, liturgical item purchases, maintenance, and interior additions. New members coming from the towns outside of the city of Columbus continued to inject substantial vitality into its already growing community. This growth by numbers will possibly continue in the future. Regarding St. Catherine's budget, they still have still ways to go before the community can feasibly reach mission status or support a full-time priest.

North Florida Deanery Report--2022 Diocesan Assembly

The North Florida Deanery consists of six parishes, and six missions and one mission station. As been the case elsewhere in the Diocese the North Florida Deanery has experienced significant growth coming out of Covid.

Annunciation Russian Mission, Jacksonville, FL (2012)

Igumen Arkady (Migunov), Priest-in-Charge

Annunciation Russian Mission continues to grow with new people moving into the area. While this is a blessing it has created challenges with the rapid run up of construction costs for their new facility located in nearby St. John's County---which is one of the fastest growing counties in the United States. Construction costs are escalating faster than in most other parts of the country. The community has a Russian school to teach both children and adults to learn, keep or improve their Russian language skills. Because of cultural tensions caused by the war in the Ukraine, Fr Arkady has had to do some peacekeeping and he has been successful.

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

Archpriest David Rucker, Priest-in-Charge

Last year we noted that St Alexis has been in existence as a mission for 26 years and functioned as a mission station and chaplaincy. In this the 27th year we have been proactive in moving the community from chaplaincy to a mission mindset. The mission council is now proactive in leading the community, attendance and income is significantly up, and Fr David Rucker is now the Priest-in-Charge. They are looking for a building of their own.

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

Priest Patrick Smith, Rector

After all the difficulties of the past few years with their building program, the parish is thriving (as it did, despite the previous problems caused by the building contractor.) There are a lot of babies being born and steady and healthy growth of new people joining the community.

Sts Joachim & Anna Mission, The Villages, FL (2021!)

Priest John Chudik, Priest-in-Charge

Just planted one year ago as a hive off of St. Raphael Church, Inverness, Sts. Joachim and Anna purchased their own 2000sf facility in December 2021. As is usually the case, the facility needs some renovations to meet church (assembly) occupancy requirements. The engineer who was hired to prepare drawings, etc. has been inattentive to the project and has caused delays. They have a contractor hired to do the work.

St. Justin Martyr, Jacksonville, FL (1994)

Archpriest Theodore Pisarchuk, Rector; Fr Jacob Hatch, Associate Priest

Like other parishes in the deanery St. Justin Martyr has a had a number of baptisms and/or chrismations over the past year and presently has a number of catechumens and inquirers. In June a recent graduate of SVS joined us as Youth Director. We are engaging a consultant to do

a Construction/Capital Campaign feasibility study, asking (1) Should we build a new temple? (2) Or expand what we have, and (3) How much funds can we raise.

St Mark, Bradenton, FL (1979)

V. Rev, Jonathan Cholcher, Rector

The parish continues to grow with new members moving into the area and by baptism and/or chrismation. They have a number of catechumens and inquirers. By God's grace the parish received a few considerable designated bequests for building a fellowship hall and installing iconography for their beautiful temple. They have begun the first steps in forming committees and reaching out to an architect. In the SW corner of the church, a memorial garden was installed called, St Mark Memorial Gardens. A new Altar, Table of Preparation, and 6 wooden Choir music stands were given to the Church from Nativity of the Virgin Mary Church in Waterbury, CT, which was demolished in 2019. A Summer Mini Camp for children was conducted during Pentecost and a "Learning Liturgy" was served.

St Philip the Apostle Mission, Tampa FL (2005)

Archpriest Joseph Ciarciaglino Priest-in-Charge

St Philip's continues to grow receiving a number of people by baptism and/or chrismation in the past year and have a number of catechumens and inquirers. They continue their "Food for the Poor" collections of canned goods and baby goods for women who have chosen not to abort. A touchstone of this community is the ongoing work of Akonyibedo (St Nektarios) Health Center in Northern Uganda (<http://www.ugandaclinic.org/>). You are encouraged to visit their display at the AAC.

St. Raphael Orthodox Church, Inverness, FL (2002)

Igumen Sergious (Gerken), Rector

Despite having hived off many of people and planted Sts. Joachim and Anna Mission last year in the nearby town called "The Villages", this parish flourishes! Attendance is strong and God has blessed their missionary spirit. They have many catechumens and have received a number of people by baptism and/or chrismation. They upgraded the roof on the fellowship hall with a standing seam roof, purchased a ¼ lot for a children play area, and added iconography to the iconostasis. The mean age of this "retirement community" is getting younger with new members between the ages of 20 and 40 something.

St. Simeon Church, Titusville, FL (1966)

Fr Kyrill Williams, Priest-in Charge

This parish is continuing its growth curve, having received a number of people by baptism and/or chrismation and they have a number of inquirers. The parish council has grown young and has a strong vision for the future and a fresh outlook and approach to areas like maintenance, on-line presence, Sunday school and coffee hour. They are preparing to approach the City of Titusville for guidance on what they will be allowed to do in expanding their facilities.

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

Priest Daniel Hickman, Rector

The three most significant events of the past year were first the falling asleep of the parish's beloved deacon of 35 years, Protodeacon Michael Malanowski (*Memory Eternal!*), the hiving off the St. Nina Russian Mission and the design of their new temple and funding it with a capital campaign. They have made improvements to both their coffee hour and catechism ministry. They have also received many this year through baptism and/or catechism and have inquirers.

St. Nina the Enlightener Russian Mission (2018)

Archpriest Andrey Syrkin (Attached to St. Stephen's)

This year St Nina Russian Mission was formerly hived off of St Stephen's. They have their own rented facility in East Orlando. Unfortunately, just as they were committed to moving the war broke out in the Ukraine and caused angst amongst some of the laity and they lost some families. They had to cancel their annual festival Maslenitsa. They presently have 35 families which is a good foundation to build off.

St John the Merciful Mission (2019)

Priest Daniel Hickman--- served by Priest Phillip Beiner

St John the Merciful has nearly double in size over the past year. They have grown internally (babies), and externally- baptism and/or chrismation of new converts. This new mission is financially strong and is also a recipient of a Church Planting Grant. They rent and are actively looking for their own facility, either buying an existing facility or find land to develop.

St John the Theologian Mission Station, Gainesville, FL

Archpriest Theodore Pisarchuk/Fr Jacob Hatch/Dn James Marth

This past year the community began having Liturgy on the second and fourth Sunday of the month serviced by a rotation of clergy from St. Justin Martyr. The mission continues to grow in numbers and has \$68k in annual pledges and \$70k+ in the bank. We anticipate having a fulltime priest in the area during the fall. Presently the community rents a Coptic Church on Sundays that does not have a priest.

Valdosta Orthodox Mission Station, Valdosta FL

Archpriest Theodore Pisarchuk/Priest Jacob Hatch

We have a number of inquirers and Orthodox Christians in the Valdosta area, but we do not have any local lay leadership. After serving a half dozen times after Covid with poor attendance, we made the decision to focus our resources for now on St John the Theologian in Gainesville. Today people from the Valdosta area on regular basis drive to St. Justin Martyr for Liturgy.

Tallahassee, FL

There are a few people who regularly drive from Tallahassee to Jacksonville for services and we have baptized/chrismated two folks from Tallahassee. Unfortunately, ROCOR aggressively pursues our people in the area. We plan focus our mission work either in Valdosta or Tallahassee once Gainesville has a fulltime priest.

South-Central Deanery Reports: Summer 2022

St Seraphim Orthodox Cathedral (Dallas, TX)

St Seraphim Cathedral continues to experience steady growth in attendance, stewardship, and participation in the sacramental life of the Church. In January of this year, Archpriest Joseph Chaffee began to serve regularly at St Seraphim Cathedral. On February 20th, His Eminence, Archbishop Alexander, ordained Protodeacon Theophan to the Holy Priesthood. Archpriest Oleg Kostenko, a priest of the Russian Orthodox Church, serving with us at St Seraphim Cathedral has exerted a great impact on the life of St Seraphim Cathedral, celebrating the Slavonic Liturgy and teaching a class on the Orthodox faith one Saturday a month. Archpriest Theophan keeps the catechetical class lively week after week. He works well with Fr Joseph in preparing people to be received into the Church by baptism or chrismation. We have currently begun remodeling the second floor of our Cathedral Hall. Our deacons often accompany Bishop Gerasim throughout the DFW area and in nearby states. The acolytes have become quite proficient at coordinating the hierarchical services. Parking as well as fellowship and classroom space remain regular challenges. Services continue to be viewable online for our elderly and immuno-compromised parishioners. During the first six months of 2022, we have baptized 19 people, chrismated six, married four couples, and served the funeral for one person.

St. Basil the Great Mission (Weatherford, OK)

St. Basil the Great Mission is coming out of our Covid low last year at this time of 6 regular members (including my wife and I), to, as of this writing, 28 regular members.

It began last July with a 38 yr old married father of 3, a lifelong avowed atheist (raised by avowed atheists), coming into our mission wanting to talk about God. He left 3 hours later with a few books and a desire to return with his wife. ..which he did. A month later they (and their 3 children) were received as catechumens and are to be baptized on the feast of Transfiguration.

Within a few weeks of that we had a Roman Catholic family of 5 express interest in the Church - and soon after became catechumens and were received into the Church on Holy Saturday. Along with another Roman Catholic woman who came to us about the same time (from a different parish). They were followed a couple of months later by an Evangelical family of 4 who would become catechumens and will also be received into the Church at Transfiguration.

And in the last couple of months we've had 2 college students join us, another Roman Catholic man who has become a catechumen, a Western rite couple, former OCA parishioners of yours at St. Sava who relocated to our area 1.5 yrs ago and desire to return to the OCA and their formation.

And these additions have changed us as well. We now have a midweek service with a family potluck that is increasingly well attended. We're developing a weekday children's service and catechism for our homeschool kids, and nursing home visitation ministry on Sunday after our fellowship brunch, and training new readers on chanting, compiling and serving vespers and matins. ...and hope later this year to have our first ever choir.

St. Barbara Orthodox Church (Ft. Worth, TX)

This past year saw an approximate thirty percent increase in Church attendance. Visitors are welcomed at each Sunday Liturgy, many of whom are either inquirers or Orthodox Christians new to the area. Catechumen classes have also grown. With children, St. Barbara's has close to a dozen people overall at various levels of study.

Also realized was a rise in general donations and building fund contributions by almost fourteen percent over 2021. On-line donations accounted for eleven percent of our income and continue to make an impact each year.

As reported earlier – in 2020, then moving into 2021 – the parish experienced a thirty to forty percent decline in regular attendees in response to COVID protocols, as well as to the founding from our ranks of the Azle, Texas Mission. The thriving of Archangel Gabriel's is a true blessing. We are also mindful each week, that St. Barbara's continues to be in "rebuild or reconstruction mode."

It has been one full year since the cessation of COVID protocols in parishes. Several Church members contracted the disease at various times, including Fr. Basil. It was necessary therefore, to close St. Barbara's recently for only one week. Thankfully there were no widespread outbreaks within the parish.

Since his consecration and enthronement as Bishop of Ft. Worth, His Grace Gerasim has visited several times, providing new altar servers and choir members opportunities to "get their feet wet," learning hierarchical protocols. He is accompanied by Cathedral deacons and subdeacons, who help greatly through their service and liturgical directives. We look forward to additional pastoral visits in 2022 and 2023. During each visit we see a large increase in attendance. Over two hundred and fifty people took part in the June 30th enthronement service and reception.

Reader Stephen Bodnarchuk and Christina Ruth Harrell are currently working with several new choir members, blending their sound with that of long-time members. Two small rehearsals and a larger Saturday rehearsal are conducted each week. Singers have shown improvement and display increased confidence as the weeks go by. Christina was a participant this June in the week-long St. Vladimir Seminary Summer Music Institute. Reader Stephen took part in similar institutes in years past. Both benefited greatly from their experiences.

St. Barbara's continues its regular cycles of worship and education: a minimum of three services per week as well as adult education classes. Services for major feastsdays, Lent, Holy Week, the Paschal season, baptisms and weddings were met this past year with great joy. After June 1, 2021, classes for readers and altar servers were conducted, especially in light of future visits by Bishop Gerasim.

On October 18, the parish hosted a class of twenty students from the local Southwest Baptist Theological Seminary. This was a third visit for this particular professor and his students during the past four years. They came prepared with insightful questions. Icons and the topic of salvation seemed to be of particular interest.

Christian Education for the youth of St. Barbara's is conducted once a month on the second Saturday just prior to Vespers. Parents are also given a great deal of take-home material to work with their children during the additional three weeks. This affords our youth an opportunity to take part in at least one Great Vesper service a month, while placing an emphasis on "the home" as a primary venue for

education in the Faith. Matushka Christine continues as our coordinator. She also continues as a member of the Orthodox Church in America's Department of Christian Education and was the project coordinator and editor for the Department's latest on-line publication for 2022: *Luminaries: Those Who Walked in Christ's Light*.

St. Barbara's looks forward to the months ahead: to various community activities, visits from Archbishop Alexander and/or Bishop Gerasim, and to the reception of our catechumens into the fullness of the Faith.

All Saints of North America Orthodox Church (Albuquerque, NM)

- By God's grace, construction of our New Church is progressing well, and we hope to begin services there around the end of 2022. Glory to God for All Things!
- We purchased our neighbor's property to the South. A parishioner is currently renting the existing house and covering the mortgage payment and all associated expenses. We are working with the county to change the zoning by combining the two properties. This is a great asset and blessing for our parish.
- All Saints of North America currently has 114 pledging members. The current average Sunday attendance exceeds 100.
- With the blessing of His Eminence Archbishop Alexander, Dn Silouan Parchert, from our parish has enrolled in the M.Div. program at St. Vladimir's Seminary starting Fall 2022.
- Please pray for Dn Silouan, Matushka Emilia, and their three young children Colin (St. Nicholas of Japan), Brendan, and Sebastian.
- Isaack Eric Debelak has begun the process of applying to the OCA DVP program.
- Our weekly schedule consists of Continuing Education/Book Study on Tuesday Morning; Wednesday Daily Vespers; Thursday morning Divine Liturgy; Friday evening Catechumen class, Saturday evening Teen Book Study followed by Great Vespers and Sunday Liturgy.
- Our ministries include Sunday School, Youth Group, Orthodox Young Adult Fellowship, Women's Group, Men's Group, and Married Couples Group.
- Our Church still partners with local charitable organizations by providing financial donations, food, clothes, and hygiene items.
- The Sisterhood of St. Anna continues to organize fundraising events and facilitate charitable giving for local, national, and international causes.
- Our parish Clergy participate in the New Mexico Orthodox Clergy Fellowship Meetings, with our own Dn. Stephen Henne being the group's coordinator.

Archangel Gabriel Orthodox Church (Azle, TX)

In 2021-June 2022 we had 9 Baptisms and 5 Chrismations. Our average attendance has risen from 50 to 55 on Sundays from the beginning of 2021 until now. We held our regular Church School program for the fall/spring session of 2021-2022. We also had regular Wednesday evening book club meetings for our adults and our Orthodox 101 class on Sundays throughout the year. Our most popular event of the year by far was our Christmas Music Celebration on Sunday December 26th during our coffee hour. We had many parishioners sing and perform traditional Christmas songs and carols and we had 96 people in attendance, our largest crowd yet for any event. Our leadership on both parish council and the building committee has been moving forward with hard work and enthusiasm. In February of this year we put in an offer on a church building that was for sale in Weatherford (about 25 minutes from our current location). Our offer was accepted on the condition that we have 45 days to find the \$75,000 gap in financing that we still needed. We were able to secure all the finances AND enough to cover the needed renovations in less than two months! Renovations began on our building at the end of May and are set to be complete enough for us to begin moving in this week (June 13). We have had SO many generous donors and volunteers throughout the whole process and we could not have completed this monumental task without their support and dedication. Please pray for us as we make this transition to our new location!

St. Sava Orthodox Church (Allen, TX)

St. Sava Orthodox Church in Allen, TX has had a phenomenal year. Our weekly schedule, in addition to Sunday Divine Liturgy and fellowship, includes Divine Liturgy on Tuesday and Thursday mornings, an Old Testament survey class on Friday evenings, a Catechumen Class on Wednesday evenings after Daily Vespers, and Great Vespers on Saturday evenings. Protodeacon Gregory Conley's Catechumen Class has completely replenished after we have received six new members at Pascha and eighteen new members at Pentecost. We have had one wedding and one funeral. Our Sunday School program ministers to our children ages two to eleven, and our Youth Group ministers to kids age twelve to seventeen. Those ministering to our youth and I have completed the Effective Christian Ministry course and cohort, giving us a revolutionary vision and praxis for ministry within the Church. Workshops for altar servers and readers have sharpened the skills of many of our men and boys. The St. Sava Pantry continues to collect food to be distributed to those in the larger community needing help putting food on the table. The Pantry also collects food on behalf of the Allen Food Pantry.

Stunning iconography was painted in the dome in January by Dmitri Andreyev, who shall eventually paint all the walls of the temple in three month installments twice annually. We have grown so much as community (averaging 140 in attendance on Sunday, with most of them staying for fellowship afterward), that we can no longer fit comfortably into our old parish hall. While we got a design for a new parish hall from Mirela Tudora who designed our temple, the cost of the project is prohibitively expensive at present. As such, we are employing strategies to both prolong the life of our current parish hall and to increase the seating capacity therein (removing existing walls, building a larger deck, etc.).

Our annual budget is \$295,000, for which we are ahead of schedule in collections. Our parish has a cash surplus of \$293,000.

While there was once a religious common denominator (Protestant or Catholic) to the majority of the inquirers seeking Christ in our parish, this is no longer the case. They are coming from all manner of

backgrounds: Mormon, Jewish, and atheist. The society at large is driving people mad, but the Holy Spirit is pricking the hearts of men, women, and children to find Christ in His Orthodox Church. For this, we give thanks!

St. Maximus Orthodox Church (Denton, TX)

St. Maximus Orthodox Church in Denton, TX continues to grow—having both inquirers and catechumens each numbering in the teens. The parish has unanimously voted to accept a proposal by Andrew Gould for expanding the temple on the current property. Naturally, the plan must be accepted by city planning and development. Enthusiasm runs high for the project.

St. Paul Orthodox Church (Denison, TX)

Since the last report in September of 2021, St. Paul has experienced a growth in new families – both already Orthodox and new Inquirers to the faith. In late September, we lost one of the long-standing pillars of the parish, Sophia (Marcia) Crise, who bore her illness with great humility. The Nativity season brought old friends back to the parish. Long time Orthodox members, Dionysius and Barbara Davenport, had moved back to the area and have been very willing to volunteer and help organize the needs of the parish. (Then) Deacon Maximos Gibson served his final full liturgy as a deacon before being ordained to the priesthood at the Cathedral. The parish continued to experience growth with the addition of Orthodox families living and working in the area. We also added many new inquirers and baptized/Chrismated several people. Much-needed repairs have been done to both the temple and the activity center; however, more remains to be done. These items include: a new roof, new gravel for the parking lot, a new sign, and ramp repairs. The young men in the parish are willing and able to help with these tasks. We also served nearly a full Holy Week schedule for the second year in a row. We picked up on Holy Wednesday and faithfully served all the way through Agape Vespers. We have baptized/chrismated 6 people in 2022 and we have added nearly 14 new inquirers this year! In addition to more volunteers in caretaking of the grounds, we also have more young men helping in the altar and at the reader's stand.

In March, a local reporter came and toured the temple and spoke with Fr. Herman. He said he wished to feature the parish in the local newspaper. There's a growing local interest in the parish, especially as the rural-setting of the parish now turns suburban. The "Sher-Den" Metroplex is slowly becoming a part of the north Dallas area and over 10,000 people are expected to move to the area in the next 5 years due to a major deal with the local Texas Instruments factory. St. Paul has experienced steady growth in 2022 and continues to be a shining example of the love of Christ.

St. Cyril of Jerusalem Orthodox Church (The Woodlands, TX)

St. Cyril Orthodox Mission was founded in November 2004, and celebrated its first Divine Liturgy in August 2005. The current priest was assigned in August 2016.

At present our total membership includes 70 adults and 22 children, plus 7 catechumens and inquirers. Our average Sunday attendance is about 80. Sunday Divine Liturgy is followed by coffee hour and an

inquirer class. Nearly every Sunday we have a number of new visitors, either Orthodox or interested in Orthodoxy.

After spending a year in borrowed space in Humble, Texas, about four years ago the mission decided to rent a piece of property on Highway 242, at the northeast corner of The Woodlands. We purchased two modular buildings, one for use as a temple, the other for use as a church hall. This year the modular buildings have been paid off, and we are working toward purchasing of a piece of property where we might move our current buildings until a larger space can be built.

We are currently in our final year of receiving a Planting Grant from the OCA. This has been a great help to us, and has gained us time to grow into a larger, more financially stable community. The Woodlands, Conroe, and the Montgomery County area are all growing extremely rapidly, and prices for land are constantly rising. But we continue to search actively for an appropriate property to purchase in this area, with God's help.

St. Anthony Orthodox Church (San Antonio, TX)

Report for St. Anthony the Great Parish, San Antonio, TX, July 2021-2022

St. Anthony's parish has continued to be blessed with an increase in giving over the course of the past year. Last September, we were able to pay off the remainder of the original mortgage that was still outstanding on the Church building -- a real shock to our long-time members who didn't think that day would ever come! Our mortgage payment is now being forwarded monthly to the diocese in anticipation of building a new, larger parish hall (though this will be a longer-term project than originally planned due to a dramatic and swift rise in construction costs.

Our choir continues to grow, slowly but surely, after a post-pandemic "dry spell." Our hard-working choir directors have regular rehearsals, and new members are stepping forward to help lead the faithful in beautifully-sung prayer. Fellowship is also on the increase, as both the brotherhood and sisterhood are under energetic leadership that seeks to help with parish endeavors and meet together to promote parish social life (The brotherhood meets regularly to continue the traditional beer brewing, and the sisterhood has met at members' houses for food, games, and fellowship).

We currently have five catechumens and are finishing up a round of Fr. David's catechism course (to be restarted in October). Over the past year, since the previous assembly, St. Anthony's reports the following sacraments:

- 10 chrismations
- 9 baptisms + chrismations
- 3 weddings (and 2 being planned!)
- 3 funerals

Our youth also fundraised to help attend All Saints Summer Camp 2022, and were blessed by their time there.

May God grant us another year of growth and service!

Nativity of Our Lord Monastery (Kemp, TX)

The Nativity of Our Lord Monastery had major iconography done in the St Nicholas chapel. This included the walls and iconostasis, in addition to iconographic and decorative frescoes. The iconographer John Jurewicz, son of the well-known iconographer Fr Theodore Jurewicz, came to Texas in order to complete this intensive work. The convent chapel, though small, serves as the place of worship for the monastics and visitors until the monastery church is built. As such, it is fitting to worship in a space of beautiful iconography offered to the glory of God.

Three women are currently living at the monastery; two monastics and an aspirant. The monastery receives a consistent flow of emails from people asking about monastic life. Four monastic inquirers have scheduled visits to the monastery for later this year.

In the summer of 2021, we completely renovated the retreat center kitchen so that it is commercial. This allows us to efficiently serve mercy meals and extend hospitality for pilgrims and retreats; In 2021-2022, the retreat center provided facilities for numerous mercy meals and, after the pandemic, several women's retreats, with attendees as follows: 25 from St. Peter Antiochian Orthodox Church of Fort Worth; 30 from St. Andrew Antiochian Orthodox Church of Woodway; 25 from Holy Nativity; 12 from St. Anthony the Great OCA Orthodox Church of San Antonio. We are also looking forward to hosting retreats for burial societies, including the burial society of St. John the Forerunner Antiochian Orthodox Church of Cedar Park.

Throughout the pandemic, we continued to keep the cemetery open for those in need. Our ministry here expanded, out of necessity, into much more than providing a resting place for the dead. Grieving families require not only practical advice on how to prepare the bodies of the Orthodox dead for burial. They also require guidance on how to navigate the funeral industry during an emotionally difficult time. Seeing an intense spiritual need, we also provided immediate, and even long term, pastoral care for grieving families after the burial of their loved ones.

By the Grace of God, because of the increase of converts and attendants at Orthodox churches during the pandemic, the monastery's candle business remained strong and has continued to grow.

St. Jonah Orthodox Mission (Alpine, TX)

With the departure of Fr. Frederick Janecek, the community is without a priest. As such, there will be monthly visits starting in August and ending in October by Fr. Chrysostom Arthur. Further service may have to be done by the dean. There is currently one inquirer in the mission. The people continue to meet faithfully every Sunday for reader services, and they remain connected to one another throughout the course of the week. They are tightly knit and love one another dearly.

St. Nektarios Orthodox Mission (Waxahachie, TX)

Prior to the responses to COVID in 2020, life at St Nektarios Orthodox Mission in Waxahachie was looking quite positive, with energetic and committed faithful as a core and a regular stream of visitors who would progress to inquirers and catechumens. Within months of ending various COVID restrictions, this pattern has returned. We routinely have new visitors—individuals and families alike—at our services, with many becoming catechumens and eventually Orthodox Christians. We are also blessed with an in-house “baby boom”.

We are currently working with an architect to develop plans for a permanent church to be constructed on our existing half-acre property. There is significant fund-raising left to do. However, our current facilities (in a 100+ year old plantation house) are routinely at capacity for worship, fellowship, and education. Thus, NOT moving forward in this direction is not an option. We trust in God's provision even as we plan carefully to continue our mission activity in Ellis County, Texas.

In more basic terms, our weekly schedule most of the year includes Saturday evening vespers, Sunday morning hours and Divine Liturgy followed by coffee hour, and Wednesday evening vespers. I (Fr Basil) serve most of the great feasts and our patronal feast (Nov. 7) on the given days, starting at 8 a.m. on weekdays. (Attendance is sometimes light, but consistent.) The Lenten schedule includes a Presanctified or Annunciation vesperal liturgy each week plus a rigorous Holy Week. During the school year, a brief church school is offered to children under the age of 11. Catechesis with me is offered most Sundays, overlapping a bit with coffee hour, along with classes that alternate between Scriptural and other topics after Wednesday vespers about half the year.

Typical Sunday attendance: 40-45 (Pascha: 57)

Receptions since July 2021: 13 (12 by baptism, 1 by Chrismation)

Funerals since July 2021: 1

All Saints Orthodox Mission (Victoria, TX)

All Saints Mission has received the service of Fr. Frederick Janecek, who transferred from St. Jonah Mission in Alpine, TX following the repose of his beloved wife. Prior to this, South-central Deanery Clergy had made occasional parish visits, specifically Priest Benedict Crawford and Priest David Wooten. One parishioner died in an unfortunate accident.

Ss. Cyril and Methodius Orthodox Church (Hartshorne, OK)

Fr. John Anderson continues to serve Sunday Liturgy on a monthly basis.

Holy Apostles Orthodox Church (Bixby, OK)

By God's mercy and grace, we continue to experience steady growth in attendance and new members. Over the past year (since last July), we have been blessed to receive into the Holy Church 24 new members by baptism and/or chrismation (15 babies/children, 9 adults). In addition to this growth, we have had many new families move into the area. We are grateful that many have found a spiritual home here.

This year, 2022, we have undertaken the construction of a new parish hall, for which we have been raising funds for the past 3 1/2 years. We have been blessed with a matching grant, which doubles every dollar given to the project. It has been our hope to complete the project without taking on additional debt. The new parish hall will give us room to grow, as well as expand our extra-liturgical activities -

church school, homeschool co-op, adult education, catechesis, etc. God helping us, we will have the new building finished by the end of the year.

While our chapel is more than adequate for our worship, our current parish hall is a modified double wide trailer, and has over the past 15 years been stretched to its limit. Nevertheless, we strive to maintain a vibrant parish life. Services are offered at least six days a week, church school is offered for both children and adults throughout the school year, we have a homeschool co-op which meets once a week, and we continually are catechizing new inquirers. Truly, God is good to us.

Monastery of the Archangel Michael (Canones, NM)

His Eminence visited the Monastery this year. All appears to be well.

Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ Monastery (Kemp, TX)

The monastery has reopened to visitors from a lengthy quarantine period. The sisters continue to manufacture candles and welcome pilgrims.

All Saints Summer Camp (Point, TX)

There were 250 campers this year. The priests, campers, and other volunteers were from the OCA, ROMA, ROCOR, and the AOC. Spiritual Warfare was the theme of this year's camp.

Southeastern Deanery Parish Reports 2022

St. Innocent Orthodox Church - Macon GA

Fr. Theophan Buck

Since our last report in September of 2021, we have received around 30 people, adults, and children, into the Church. Needless to say, we have had a blessed year. Our Sunday attendance has increased to 100-110 on average. Currently, we have 17 catechumens and we continue to have regular visitors, inquirers, and people moving to our area making St. Innocent their home. Our choir continues to be one of our best assets. Prison ministry continues. People continue to be generous in their giving. This year we have given around 12k to international and local charities. We were blessed this year to have Fr. Thaddeus Werner and his family make our parish their home while they are stationed at the Robins Air Force Base. Fr. Thaddeus helps distribute Communion on most Sundays, and Mat. Valery is our new social media manager.

This year we hope to add more parking as people have to park on the grass on Sundays. In addition to parking, we hope to add a road to our new cemetery. Our iconography committee is active again and it looks like we will be working on our first phase of iconography with Vladimir Grygorenko sometime in 2023. We are a thankful community and as we head into our 26th year it is our prayer that God would continue to grace us, guide us, send us spiritually hungry people and help us to do His work in the Middle Georgia region.

St. Luke Mission - Anniston, AL

Fr. Basil Henry

God is blessing His work here in the Anniston area. We have been seeing steady growth over the past year with new members moving to the area and others converting to the Holy Orthodox Church. We baptized and chrismated 2 and chrismated 1. Currently we have 10 Catechumens and plan to Baptize 2 of them at the end of the month. We are seeing attendance up into the 60's frequently at Sunday Divine Liturgy. Our Lent, Holy Week and Pascha attendance set records for us.

The single biggest change in our church life resulted from a visit to the beloved Sts. Mary and Martha Monastery this time last year. Matushka and I visited there for an overnight stay. I was struck quite deeply by observing the daily life and services of the Mothers there. I decided that there was no reason whatsoever that our community shouldn't enter into the liturgical richness of daily services that they experience. Upon returning home I devoted myself to serving Matins and Vespers at the church on all of the weekdays except Monday. On that day and on Saturday morning matins I would pray them at home. The results have been transformative. The past year has been one of learning about the daily liturgical richness of our Holy Church. We acquired all of the books needed to put together each service. We learned of the transformations of the services throughout Lent, Holy Week, Pascha and the Pentecost season. A number of people were drawn to these services and overtime learned how to do them with me. On occasion I am the only one physically present so I learned to move between the altar

and choir and serve them simply with the angels and the saints present. We also created a binder for people to write names for prayer and all of them are prayed for each day. This has all had an invigorating effect upon our church.

I have taught a class this year on the Book of Revelation from a Patristic perspective with much success. Our Sunday coffee hour brunch is a lively affair with people staying deep into the afternoon to spend time with each other. Next month we will have our annual picnic gathering with swimming and boating at a parishioner's house and deck on the river.

May God continue to bless this little corner of His Vineyard over the coming year.

St. Mary Of Egypt Orthodox Church - Norcross, GA

Rev. Christopher R. Maciolek

Glory to God for all things! We've concluded the second half of Fr. Christopher's first year at Saint Mary's and the building is still standing. In fact, we thank God for new roofs on Saint Mary's temple, hall, bell tower, and sheds this past Bright Tuesday. With a little help from his friends, our parish warden, Taylor Hostetter, rebuilt the front steps of the temple and made preliminary plans to repair/rebuild portions of our wheelchair ramp later this year. We did have an unfortunate experience with a budding graffiti artist(s) who was bent on expressing themselves on the walls of our sheds, but they have since departed and the sheds were promptly repainted thanks to the hard work of Saint Mary's faithful.

We continue to enjoy a full liturgical life at St. Mary's. We have welcomed a few new families into our midst - transplants from around the metro area. We were blessed to celebrate three baptisms and a wedding so far in 2022 and are thankful for seven catechumens/inquirers on deck for our new round of classes starting this August. We are beginning the process of selecting and training more candidates to help with reading and responses during the services in order to increase our liturgical life. Our Bible study is steadily making its way through St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans.

Our beloved Father Peter and Mother Terri have made the move from their home next door to Saint Mary's to an assisted living facility in nearby Lawrenceville. Mother Terri continues to faithfully serve as a choir director and we are blessed to see Father Peter's smiling face on a regular basis.

St. Symeon Church, Birmingham, AL 2022

Fr. Alexander Fecanin

St. Symeon Orthodox Church has been blessed in the past year. We continue to have strong stewardship support in the community resulting in a significant continued reduction of mortgage debt. We completed a drainage correction problem behind the

church hall which was needed since the time of new construction. This solved a flooding problem in the church office.

We returned to having our festival in October which we call the "Food and Culture Fair." It is a one-day event which features ethnic food and crafts booths, church tours, choir concerts and a lecture on holy Icons. It raised around \$15,000, part of which goes to the parish sisterhood for charitable projects.

There were 12 adult converts and 7 children joined to the Church this past year. We also had 5 marriages and 2 deaths. There are 6 catechumens and several other inquirers. We see new faces at virtually every Sunday Liturgy. We anticipate two ordinations to the holy diaconate from the community in the coming year. The St. Herman Mission Station in Tuscaloosa continues to be a very positive outreach. Glory to God for all things!

South Florida Deanery (Diocese of the South – OCA)

July 2021 – June 2022 Parish Reports

Christ the Saviour Cathedral (Rector: Fr. Joseph Lucas)

The Cathedral had a very fruitful year, with the reception of 11 adults by either baptism or chrismation, and 11 children. There were 3 marriages, and only 2 deaths (neither of which was COVID related). There were 2 families who transferred from other parishes. Average Sunday attendance was 90-100, with 150 for Pascha. Average Vespers attendance is 10-20. The parish has a total pledged membership of 67 adults. A full cycle of services is being offered, including Saturday evening Vespers, All-Night Vigil and Liturgy for the major feasts, Liturgy for some of the minor feasts, and a full Lenten and Paschal schedule. Adult Catechism for new members was offered both last autumn, and again after Pascha. Bible Study is offered every Wednesday, with about 10 attending in person, and 10 virtually. Church School for the youth is broken into 3 age groups, and has a total enrollment of 20. For outreach, the Cathedral offers the annual Autumn Lecture, this past year held in conjunction with the Diocesan Assembly and Jonathan Pageau. In addition, Fr. Joseph makes numerous public appearances, offering prayers at Miami Lakes events such as city council meetings, festivals, etc. For charity, the parish has had to focus on a few internal cases that were dire. Financially, the Cathedral has been operating in the black for the past year, and does not foresee any financial problems in the near future. The parish council is presently in the final stages of planning to expand the parking lot and further beautify the grounds.

Holy Cross Church (Rector: Fr. Geroge Volkovinsky)

We did not have any adult or older children/teen conversions last year. However, we have a family of two adults and four children who regularly attend our church services. They previously attended a Lutheran church but left if because of their LGBTQ+ policy. Currently, they are not interested in our catechism classes but it may change in the future. We had 1 infant baptism. We had 1 death. Our average Sunday attendance varies from month to month. An average Sunday attendance in the winter time is about 50; in the summer time it is about 30. Average Vespers attendance is 12. Our total pledged membership is 30. Currently, we do Vespers every Saturday and one the eve of major Feast Days, and Divine Liturgy on every Sunday and major Feast Days. Furthermore, during the Holy Week we have services every day and services on Bright Monday. We offer two Bible studies every week: one is held in the morning and one is held in the evening. The evening Bible study is on-line. Our parish is striving to be actively engaged in the life of our local community. We did two prayers services for peace in Ukraine in

co-operation with the Holy Annunciation Greek Orthodox church that were widely attended by the local community. Currently, our parish is collecting medication and humanitarian aid for the people of Ukraine. We work in co-operation with the volunteers from Florida For Ukraine. We are planning on building a playground for children near the church. Our finances are stable at present. We understand that we need to have a church hall in order to foster growth. We are working on persuading our parishioners to understand the necessity of a normal church as a part of our church growth. The parish maintains an interactive Facebook page, a webpage. Despite the negative impact of global events, Holy Cross Church maintains a strong, solid and committed group of parishioners in which most maintenance/repairs and general operations of the church function off the sweat-equity of the variety of these talents as well as the generous contributions of the faithful.

Holy Spirit Church (Rector: Fr. Stephen Lourie)

Over the past year, our parish received in 6 adults by baptism/chrisimation, and had 1 infant baptism. In addition, we received 12 persons who transferred from other parishes. Our average Sunday attendance is 65, with 15 at Vespers. Our pledged membership is 90. In addition to weekend services (Saturday Vespers, Sunday Orthros and Liturgy), we offer Divine Liturgy every Thursday (unless there is a great feast); Liturgy on the Twelve Great Feasts; and Paraklesis during Dormition Fast. During Great Lent we have the Akathist every Friday; Pre-Sanctified each Wednesday; Bridegroom Matins on Great Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday; Holy Unction on Wednesday; Mystical Supper at 9 and 12 Gospels on Thursday with Procession at 7; Great Friday Taking Down From The Cross at 3 and then Lamentations at 7, and procession with the epitaphios; and Holy Saturday St. Basil at 7 pm. On Great and Holy Pascha: the Midnight Service, Paschal Orthros and Divine Liturgy beginning at 8 am; with Agape Vespers at Noon. In terms of educational offerings, we have Catechism, Orthodox education classes for 8 weeks in Fall and pre-Lent, usually in the 14-16 range for attendance. These usually cover a variety of topics designed for inquirers and for the uncatechized. Men's group meets each Tuesday with usually 10-12 in attendance. This is usually a book study. Right now we are using Fr. Photius Avant's YouTube channel. Women's reading group meets monthly with around 20 in attendance, reading and discussing Orthodox perspective and discussion from short stories. Sunday School classes are available but we currently do not have more than 5 kids. Our primary form of outreach is our webpage and social media. For charity, we take up collections of food at Thanksgiving and Christmas gifts for the needy at Advent. We also hold a monthly food drive for local food pantry. We take a missions and charities collections every month and use that to support local places or needy people. We resurfaced the parking lot, and finished our landscaping projects this past Spring. Next, we plan to expand our physical plant soon. We need more space and especially a narthex. Our budget is stable, and we have \$100,000 in savings. All in all, we've seen a steady growth in numbers, but also in other perhaps more important ways: spiritual development is very encouraging; confessions are up; holy water consumption is up; attendance at vespers is up; visitors are up and steady; attendance is up (even in summer); and donations are up. These are all good signs.

St. Demetrius Mission (Rector: Fr. Gleb McFatter)

This past year, our Mission received in 1 adult convert, and baptized 3 children. There was only 1 death. Our average Sunday attendance was 35, with Vespers attendance at 4 (Seasonal). Weekly Vespers is offered, plus Liturgy for feastdays, Clean Week services, Pre-Sanctified once weekly in Lent, a full Holy Week cycle, and occasional Akathists. Pascha attendance was back to pre-pandemic levels this year. A few Orthodox are moving to Naples and starting to attend St. Demetrius. One-on-one catechism is available when inquirers are interested. Our Sisterhood is presently involved with charitable work at St. Matthew Poor House, a local shelter. We are currently collecting donations to replace our cupola. Our finances are currently stable.

St. Herman Church (Rector: Fr. Philip Kontos)

Our parish received in 6 adults, and baptized 3 infants. There was 1 wedding, and 2 funerals (for non-members). There were 2 adults who transferred from other parishes. Average Sunday attendance was 30, and 15 for Vespers. The parish has a total pledged membership of 65 adults. In addition to serving Liturgy every Sunday, we offer Weekly Vespers on Saturday, Weekly Liturgy on Sunday, Most Major Feasts: Great Vespers Divine Liturgy; Panikhidas on request; Lenten services include Compline and Great Canon, week one of Lent (and during the 5th week), Pre-Sanctified Liturgies on Wednesdays; Holy Week: Bridegroom Matins, Unction on Wednesday, Matins of 12 Gospels, Holy Friday Vespers, Holy Saturday Matins, Holy Saturday Vespers Liturgy, Paschal Services through the night, Vespers of Pascha; Panikhidas for whole parish's departed on Memorial Saturdays. We offering various educational classes such as Catechism (two groups currently with 5 catechumens); Book Studies on Thursdays via Zoom (we just finished 30 Steps to Heaven and will soon begin the Spiritual Homilies of St. Philaret of Moscow – we get between 6-8 attendees). We're hoping to start (or at least have in place as more people come) a Sunday School program....currently we have one child who is a toddler. We are planning on beginning a "Continuing Catechism" for the newly received converts: a monthly get together for younger people (i.e. under 60) who want to continue to learn about the faith through get-togethers, socializing, and discussion is being planned as well. For outreach we recently started a Games Night. We also have some new members that are actively involved in Urban Apologetics, and we're looking forward to working along some of those lines. In regards to charity, we've completed two campaigns for Ukrainian Relief (first was \$1,000.00, most recently collected \$560 from a luncheon fundraiser, a successful dinner / fundraiser to help the homeless raised over \$1000 with matching funds, we've also collected over \$200 to be given to a women's pregnancy shelter in Jupiter). Our finances are solid, so we're in the planning stages of putting in central air, offices, and bathrooms in the Church Hall. An architect has been engaged to begin preliminary work. Overall, we're growing and getting younger with a good group of people who want to create a viable community for the future of the Church in Lake Worth, FL.

St. James Church (Rector: Fr. Maximus Urbanowicz)

St. James Church received 2 adults by baptism/chrisamation, and baptized 2 children. There were 2 marriages, and 4 deaths. There were 20 new members who transferred from other parishes. Average Sunday attendance was 82. Average Vespers attendance is 15. The parish has a total pledged membership of 90 adults. In addition to Liturgy every Sunday, Vespers is being offered more frequently, as well as weekday services for feastdays. A full cycle of services was offered during Lent and Pascha. A weekly adult catechism is offered on Sundays, as well as Sunday School for the youth. Bible Study is offered weekly, and the 16-week Alpha Course program is offered annually. For outreach, we organized the “Holy In One” Golf Tournament in May. For charity, we sponsored a bicycle giveaway for underprivileged neighborhood youth called “Operation Wings” in September, the Pancake Break for Veterans & First Responders in June, and have ministered to the homeless people who populate our premises because of the bus station behind our church—providing food, prayer, and electricity. We are planning to refinish the gold on our dome, and to finish our iconography project as soon as possible. Maintenance wise, we put in a new hot water system in our hall and replaced an air-conditioning unit in the parish hall. Our finances over the past year have been stable.

St. Nicholas Church (Rector: Fr. Igor Kseniuk)

This past year at St. Nicholas Church we saw 10 infant baptisms, 4 funerals, and 2 weddings. One adult transferred to us from another parish. Our average Sunday attendance is 30-35, with 5-7 for Vespers. Our pledged membership is 45. In addition to our normal weekend services, we offer Vespers with Litya for major Feasts; Akathists to St. Nicholas or to other saints on Wednesdays throughout the year (except in July and August, and during Great Lent, when the Pre-Sanctified Liturgy is served; during Great Lent: four days of Great Canon of St. Andrew (first week), Pre-Sanctified Liturgies on Wednesdays, Memorial Saturdays, Holy Unction (towards the end of Lent); and the rest of the typical Lenten and Paschal cycle. We started doing adult education classes after the Akathists on Wednesdays, but due to a lack of commitment from our parishioners and diminishing attendance classes are currently not offered. We are planning to reopen our church school for children this Fall, however are in desperate need of a good Orthodox teacher. We stay in touch with our homebound parishioners, with many of the faithful calling them frequently, and offering them a ride to church (for those who are able to attend services but either live far from church, or have no transportation). We keep our church website updated and share the information about our church and services through social media. Every week we collect non-perishable food items and distribute them to those in need locally. Our current project that we are working on is getting rid of termites and fixing the damage done by them. After that, God willing, we will be working on updating the floor in church and placing a cupola on the front part of the church. Financially we have pretty much recovered from a little setback due to the pandemic and are currently stable, with very much

appreciated financial support from our Diocese and the Karlo J. Forsberg's Foundation. We are proud that with God's help we were able to bring back order, beauty, and peace to the services, and cleanliness to our temple and the church facilities, which is regularly noticed by both our parishioners and visitors to our church. We hope and pray that this will help us to bring back those who wandered away for some reason after Father Kirrill's passing, as well as bring in new souls that are searching for an Orthodox spiritual home.

Ss. Peter and Paul Church (Priest-in-Charge: Fr. Philip Reese)

Our average Sunday attendance is between 25-38, with 5-10 at Vespers. We had 2 adult baptisms, 6 adult chrismations, and 2 child baptisms. There was 1 wedding. We renovated the rectory apartments, and the parish kitchen. Work on the grounds is ongoing. We received notice that the religious worker visa for Alexey Rukavitsa (our future rector) was finally approved by the State Department. We now await the final steps to this process, and his relocation to Miami from Ukraine.