

Report of Mission's Coordinator Diocesan Assembly 2008

This report begins with the customary disclaimer for any repetition that may be in the local deanery reports. I have purposely left out some missions since I know they will be well covered in their deanery reports. There are also some mission stations that are better reported on in their deanery reports.

Austin, TX

A mission station has been formed in Austin, TX. It meets weekly on Sunday evenings for Vespers, study and fellowship time under the leadership of Fr Brooks Ledford. Fr Brooks drives up from San Antonio. It has a strong core of about 8-10 regulars and great potential. It is a great opportunity for a committed hard working mission minded priest. Due to summer vacations, the mission will meet just a few times in preparation for the fall.

Montgomery, Alabama

The potential in Montgomery, AL is excellent. It has an MSA of 330,000+ and no English speaking Orthodox Church. The core group is excellent. It is being led right now by Fr Timothy Ullmann who is a military chaplain. He and his wife Matushka Susan are natural church planters. Fr. Timothy did not intentionally plant this mission but picked it up from Fr Benedict Crawford who for a time served it. Fr. Timothy will be transferred next year and we will need a priest. They have a great church facility and a great future.

St Phillip the Apostle, Tampa, Florida

What defines this community is high commitment. More than half the membership truly tithes and almost no one "skips" church, i.e. Sunday attendance is usually 100% of membership. Fr Joseph started with a modest group and a vision and community has a healthy rate of growth. Average weekly giving per capita in this three-year young mission is well above parish average in the upper half of the diocese for giving. Because of the level of commitment and the excellent demographics of the area St. Phillip's has a great future.

St Matthew the Apostle, Baton Rouge, LA

The community continues to do well, grow and stay healthy under the lay leadership of Mark Christian. St Matthew's just upgraded and moved into a better located and larger facility. Fr Justin Patterson with workers from his community drove all they way down to Baton Rouge to help the mission move. Different clergy have been rotating through serving the Liturgy on the second Sunday of the

month and we are in gratitude to Fr Matthew Jackson for serving Obednitsa on the third Sunday of the month also. The work of the mission has been hindered by the dysfunctional administration of the OCA. Mark continues to be poorly served by the late vocations program that now has been through four changes in leadership. This past year the Greek Archdiocese attached a priest to their Baton Rouge Chapel after 25 years of vacancy in obvious response to our presence.

Edenton, Edenton Mission Station, NC:

They have made wonderful strides in the last year and are to be commended with a new building and financial stability. I continue to receive thorough monthly reports.

St Peter the Apostle, Jupiter FL

Thanks be to God it seems we have a new priest to take over this mission with wonderful potential. The core leadership is very committed, efficient and has a good spirit. They are people of prayer and love with a good vision. They have had some difficulties that were not fault of their own and kept their hands to the plow looking forward. It is a tough town for churches. The greatest challenge they have is the cost of real estate and the availability of suitable facilities to use as a church. It is a remarkable group and will do well, despite the challenges.

Holy Cross Orthodox Church in the Greensboro / Winston-Salem / High Point , NC

This year Holy Cross became the only diocesan recipient of the very limited OCA Mission Planting Grants. Since beginning the Church planting program and submitting reports their average attendance has been 60. Reading Fr Christopher's monthly reports is a pleasure because you see his passion for excellence and a healthy vision for a growing mission minded Church.

Russian Orthodox Mission at St Justin Martyr, Jacksonville, FL

This ministry launched in November with about 30 people and today numbers about 100. Fr Arkady is an effective evangelist. Following other successful models we have purposely kept this ministry fully part of St. Justin Martyr. Slavonic Liturgy is served twice per month on Sunday and on the other Sundays there is a Slavonic Moliben. Every Saturday morning there is a Panahida. This ministry is fully funded in house and is highly successful. Our goal is to grow this ministry to a point where it can be successfully hived off.

Valdosta Mission

We have about 20 people who come to this mission once a month for services. Without a full time priest in the area or at least regular Sunday services we are unable to grow the mission further. We will have to make a decision about continuing this work soon.

St. Petersburg, FL

We are exploring an opportunity there. More to come.

Holy Ascension Mission, Charleston, Mt. Pleasant, SC

Since the last assembly Holy Ascension successfully completed the church planting grant program. Holy Ascension was the first mission to employ earlier “front ending” the grant on the diocesan level (15k, 10k, 5k) that helped more when help was needed. Fr John Parker is to be congratulated for his excellent work.