

# **2008 Appalachian Deanery Report**

## **St. Andrew, Ashland, VA**

Thanks to the Grace of God, the Church is well in Ashland. We have a devout, dedicated and supportive church family. Our people are immersed in the struggle to remain a people of Faith and Love in spite of the difficulties of life in modern times.

We have well attended Liturgies and varied attendance at other church services. We have ongoing adult classes, mens group, and womens group, and various socials. We interface with our local community as we can, socially and in charitable activities. Our church building and grounds are in good shape and no mortgage. We've had a couple of births and infant Baptisms; one adult Chrismation; had one adult return from service in the Mideast, added two more single people and one small family to our membership. Fr. David Arnold, of St. Cyprians in Richmond, and myself have regular gatherings with local Orthodox and non-Orthodox clergy and find this fellowship wonderful.

## **St. Cyprian, Richmond, VA**

Please accept my greeting on behalf of the faithful of St. Cyprian of Carthage Orthodox Mission. This has been a momentous year for our parish, and our joy is joined with the parishes of our Diocese making such great effort for the continued establishment of Orthodox Christianity in the United States of America. The stories of outposts and missions being planted, growth among other missions and parishes, construction and consecration of new temples, and the renovation and expansion of others is truly humbling. It is awesome to be a part of this work.

As my wife Catherine and I pulled into the parking lot of Christ the Savior Cathedral in Miami for last year's Annual Assembly, my cell phone rang and I noticed the call was coming from the architect in charge of our church building plans. Taking the call, I learned that the bids were opened and that the low bid was \$200,000 above the estimated cost for the total project. Sharing the news with our parish officers, I perceived and even shared their concern that maybe we would not be able to proceed with the plan as it had been developed, that maybe we would have to scale back the project or take a different course.

During the course of that assembly, we were encouraged to learn that our situation was not unique, that many other parishes in our Diocese have suffered the same discouraging news. Leaving Miami, I felt that our parish would be able to accept the challenge and proceed with our plan, counting on the commitment of a strong diocese that would not leave us alone in this task. After some value engineering, additional contributions from within and without of our parish family, and the pledge of support from the Diocese of the South, we were able to begin construction during September 2007, and we anticipate

## 2008 Appalachian Deanery Report

an “unofficial” celebration of the Vespers of Pentecost in the new temple, hopefully taking full occupancy by the end of June or in July of this year.

While the building project has received a great deal of attention among our parish family, we have also enjoyed signs of steady growth. Since the last Annual Assembly we have celebrated 5 Baptisms/Chrismations and brought 3 souls into the Church through the prescribed Reception of Converts. Since September 1, 2007, our cumulative average attendance at Great Vespers is 20, and the Divine Liturgy has averaged 54 souls. During the month of April our average Divine Liturgy attendance was 70 souls. There were over 80 souls packed in the nave, narthex (porch) and library nook of the house for the services of Holy Pascha. We look forward to more space in the new temple and look to fill it with faithful Orthodox Christians and seekers as we continue our mission work in the Richmond area.

Here are a few highlights of the past year in our parish (a complete history can be viewed on our parish website):

- We celebrated our patronal feast at the end of August with a picnic at the site of the new temple before any construction began.
- A sizeable group of volunteers from St. Cyprian helped decorate the Richmond Convention Center for the Thanksgiving feast that is made available to the Richmond community.
- We continued the tradition of a fall campout and some new faces joined the overnight excursion.
- For Holy Theophany, taking advantage of the feast falling on a Sunday, the Blessing of Water following the Divine Liturgy was held at an upper landing on the James River, just a few miles from the new church location. Nine families had signed up for house blessings that day, so a caravan left the river and went house to house, singing the festal troparion as houses were blessed with the sanctified waters, ending the day at the Arnold house with a pot-luck.
- The women’s group works around busy schedules to share in fellowship and service. They organize outreach ministry events and enjoy dinner out and an occasional retreat together.
- A growing number of single adults held an organizational meeting for a singles fellowship. They hope to mix service, instruction and fellowship within a loosely organized calendar of events.
- We make the effort to pray for our brothers and sisters at Church of the Praise of the Blessed Theotokos in Nizhnii Novgorod, Russia. They recently renovated their church after years of neglect during the communist era. Two families in our parish are from this church in Russia.
- During the academic year, I assisted the College of William and Mary chapter of the Orthodox Christian Fellowship, and also worked with Fr. John Manuel and

## **2008 Appalachian Deanery Report**

the chapter at Virginia Commonwealth University in addition to statewide planning efforts.

As we look toward the months ahead, of course the occupancy and regular use of the new church building is foremost on our minds. We look forward to the beautification of the temple, and to planning for its consecration. We also look forward to making use of this space by increasing our parish ministry and outreach. This will not be the time for complacency, but for greater work and effort at making the truth of Orthodox Christianity available to our community and region. We also hope to concentrate on the work of planting missions around the Old Dominion with our Dean's guidance, and the blessing of His Eminence, Archbishop DMITRI.

### **Dormition of the Holy Virgin Mary Orthodox Church, Norfolk, VA**

No report received. In September of 2008, Fr. Theodore Panchak, who has served Dormition for decades, will be officially retiring. Archbishop DMITRI has approved Fr. Andrew Nelko, Naval Chaplain, to take care of the Church's pastoral responsibilities as the search for a new Rector begins. The Dean and Diocesan Staff, under the guidance of His Eminence will be working together with the parish in this important task.

# 2008 Appalachian Deanery Report

## ST. ATHANASIUS, NICHOLASVILLE, KY 2008 PARISH REPORT

### Overview:

The past 12 months have continued to be a time of both growth and increased stability for our Nicholasville mission.

Two main challenges, by God's grace, have been addressed over this past year. 1). We have been able to pay our tithe to the diocese in full for the entire fiscal year for the first time in our parish history. By God's grace, our financial house is in order. 2). Because of generosity in our deanery and hard work in the parish, too, we are on the cusp of paying off our 17 acres of land (hopefully August 2008). So by the fall we will have the new challenge of moving forward with making plans to build a proper church.

### Metrical data:

In the last 12 months, we baptized seven children and received five souls into the Church by Holy Chrismation and Confession. In addition, we have five catechumens who are being prepared to be received into the Church within the coming year.

Our average Sunday attendance is between 70 to 90 people. Our Saturday evening and Wednesday evening attendance averages about 40. Attendance at our festal Vigils and Liturgies varies depending on the day of the week. Nonetheless, Vigil generally draws no fewer than 30 people and as many as 50. And Liturgy—because we celebrate it early enough so that people are still able to go to school and work (7AM)—draws no fewer than 30 on a Feast Day.

### Liturgical Life:

For every Lord's Day cycle, we serve Great Vespers with the Matins Gospel Reading sequence. Liturgy follows on Sunday morning at either 9:30am or 10am (depending on the season). We serve the All-Night Vigil on the eves of all great feasts and the Liturgy follows the next morning. It is my hope to begin serving the Resurrectional All-Night Vigil in the near future, as our choir becomes more familiar with the Resurrectional canons. During the school year, a vibrant parish education program precedes the Sunday Liturgy. We have between 20 and 30 children involved in our Sunday school program (depending on the week).

Every Wednesday evening—following the custom of many other parishes in our diocese—St. Athanasius generally celebrates either Vespers or a Moleben with Akathist. A formational class for newcomers follows the Wednesday evening service. This service and class function as a vital point of contact for newcomers.

We also keep a number of lesser-rank feasts with Vespers and Liturgy cycles (e.g., Mid-feast of Pentecost, Holy Spirit Monday, American saints).

# 2008 Appalachian Deanery Report

## Ministries:

We currently divide out ministry responsibilities into “stewardships.” Among our stewardships are our church bookstore, children’s ministry, choir ministry, hospitality ministry (greeters), parish library, web development and IT, altar-servers, physical plant, grounds and landscaping stewardship. We also have missions and outreach stewardships that are tasked with bringing to our attention information that helps us to be more faithful participants in the great tasks of Orthodox mission and charity. One project for the coming year: prison ministry.

In the last twelve months, our young adults formed a young adult group. A group of between 10 and 15 twenty-somethings meets almost every week for some group discussion or activity. In the year to come, we have concrete plans to form a youth group for our middle and high-schoolers.

Over the past two semesters, St. Athanasius participated in an OCF college ministry at the University of Kentucky. We will be exploring how to do college outreach more effectively (especially at some of Kentucky’s smaller colleges) in the coming year.

Last fall, we hosted a Lecture Series (one lecture each month in the fall) at which various local Orthodox priests and professors shared about Orthodox-related topics. This coming year, we are expanding this Fall Lecture Series into something more formal and publicized—addressing the dual need for both ongoing parish education and also outreach to the surrounding community.

# **2008 Appalachian Deanery Report**

## **St. Anne, Oak Ridge, TN – Report for the Diocesan Assembly – 2008**

In this past year, St. Anne has continued to move forward, particularly in our ministries among our growing number of youth. We have had a continuing number of families join the Church with young children, as well as numerous births in the parish as well.

Last summer we welcomed to our parish staff, Fr. Justin Mathews and his family, Mat. Jodi (Catherine), and their three sons, Elias, Asher and Hayden. With them has come a growth and maturation of our ministry to young people as well as Fr. Justin's outstanding leadership in the OCF ministry on the campus of the University of Tennessee.

Since our last Assembly we have received into our parish by Baptism or Chrismation, 19 persons.

Last fall we began a Sunday School program that has been very successful, well-staffed by enthusiastic teachers and well attended by enthusiastic students. It is yet another event in our life that makes us aware of our growing need for more space.

We are beginning the process of looking at architects and developing plans for a new Temple on the vacant lot next to the parish purchased last year.

This year marks the 11<sup>th</sup> year of St. Anne's existence as an organized Church. We have passed many milestones but are keenly aware of the mission that has only begun in our area.

This year we assisted a group of Orthodox in Clarksville, TN (north of Nashville) to begin work towards the establishment of a mission off-base (they current meet at Fort Campbell).

We ask the prayers of our brothers and sisters as we continue our work for Christ.

In Christ,  
Priest Stephen Freeman

## **Clarksville, TN Mission Station – Report for the Assembly - 2008**

Aided by St. Anne and the Deanery, Clarksville has opened a missions account and is tithing to the Diocese. Current discussions are underway to explore moving off base and into a more aggressive position of mission.

# 2008 Appalachian Deanery Report

## St. Tikhon's Chattanooga, TN

Our parish has ebbed and flowed with our yearly tithe of families to seminary, and the forces of the economy. The faithful have been fed with Sunday School teaching from 2 yr olds to the silver heads that have led the way into the Church. We have 5 men working with our reader to read the Hours and the Epistles. With the support of the parish, Fr. Jonas and family have opened a breakfast and lunch restaurant that continually offers an interface between the public and the Orthodox Church of America. From the fasting foods on the menu to the icons on the wall to the books available, the customers have continual opportunity to ask and have answered questions on orthodoxy and the OCA. We also use the restaurant for fund-raising for planned youth mission trips to Mexico or Guatemala. We also have an iconography guild meeting regularly that has drawn non-orthodox artists. (no pun intended). We still have plans to expand our current building to be an orthodox structure to glorify God and to provide more room for classes and fellowship. We have outgrown our present fellowship hall and classrooms. We have over 2 acres available for growth. We have had 1 wedding, 1 funeral, & 3 chrismations. More Russian immigrants are finding out about our mission. The small bookstore continues to provide a wide array of orthodox subjects at slightly above the wholesale price to enable the faithful to be spiritually fed. This year during Great Lent our small parish collected over \$300 in the OCMC coin box program.

## St. Seraphim, Memphis, TN

St. Seraphim Church - Memphis, Tennessee

St. Seraphim continues to have a strong core membership that supports the church year after year. We had one infant baptism and three chrismations since last summer. One new member transferred from an OCA parish in New Jersey and another from St. Athanasius in Nicholasville, KY. Two new families have relocated in Memphis and one family transferred to the Greek Church. We continue to have 20-30 adults per Sunday plus a varying number of children.

Donations and tithes were up over last year.

We continue to have a regular Sunday School program. This summer our choir director is using some of the Sundays to develop a children's choir. The children attend the Divine Liturgy and then go up to their class after receiving Holy Communion.

We will be losing our long time choir director( nine years), Matthew Sutton, who will be leaving Memphis to do graduate work. He has composed several liturgical pieces over the

## 2008 Appalachian Deanery Report

last several years one which is a Cherubic Hymn that we began using at Pascha. We have really appreciated his work and he will be greatly missed.

We had to get a new property insurance company this year. Our old company offered us a very unfavorable deal but, thankfully, we found an Orthodox insurance agent in Ohio, (Nick Kormos with Insurance Systems) who got us excellent coverage at a very reasonable price. His company has set up an OCA group plan that is good for our parishes looking for insurance or possibly a better deal.

Our church building continues to serve us well but is ready for some small scale maintenance on the exterior.

We're doing two evening services a week and three morning services. The morning is an abbreviated matins that is attended by one to four people. Of course there's the Sunday liturgy and feast days. We had about 50 people at Pascha and a very good group throughout Holy Week. We have had better attendance at Pascha in the past but many would leave sometime during Paschal Matins. The last two years everyone stayed through liturgy and the 3:00 am Paschal Feast and increased our sense of unity.

There is a lot more that could be done at St. Seraphim. Everyone including myself spends a massive portion of the week working and taking care of family and home. On the one hand the scale of St. Seraphim's endeavors is in balance with what people seem to be able to handle and on the other hand there is a desire here in many of the parishioners to do more. This is what we will work on this coming year.