

South Florida Deanery Report DOS Assembly, June 2008

Christ the Saviour Cathedral * Miami Lakes, FL

Most of the activity at the cathedral parish has been around the acquisition of a new iconostas with icons, other wooden liturgical accessories which came from Greece, and the iconography work in the dome and altar apses. Fine work has been done to date by our iconographer, Dmitry Shkolnik and his team. The next phase of work will continue in the altar as well as the four corners in the Nave (the Evangelists).

Attendance on Sundays is usually in the 70's, and this is pretty steady all year long.

6 Baptisms, 5 Weddings, 3 Funerals

Our Sisterhood has raised money in order to send \$50 to each diocesan seminarian at Christmas.

The Konovets Quartet, a liturgical choral group from St. Petersburg, Russia, visited the parish in December, singing some of the responses at Saturday Vespers, followed by a liturgical music concert in Church Slavonic in the Stoyka Center.

The Archbishop visited in January for the parish annual Feast Day. A new subdeacon, Alexander Dimich, and a new reader, Stephen Butcher, were ordained for the parish.

The Cathedral sponsored the east coast deanery Lenten Mission with a healing service.

There is currently one catechumen who will soon be received into the Church, with two more potential catechumens in the wings.

The Cathedral is seeing more new Russian arrivals visit the church and the services. There were more at Pascha than ever. Some organizational meetings have taken place internally in order to respond best to this situation.

Ss. Peter & Paul Church * Miami, FL

Average Sunday Attendance: 17

There were two baptisms this past year.

The parish is small but active, continues to have regular Divine Services, and looks to better days ahead with God's help.

The parish continues to participate in outreach through "Cultural Friday" events. This is a neighborhood event which invites organizations and businesses to provide a favorable, family atmosphere for community gatherings.

The church building, being older, requires much work. This past year has seen quite of bit of expense and energy going toward renovations and maintenance.

The parish had an annual rummage sale fund raiser with regular tours of the church.

The parish sisterhood, together with the ladies societies of St. Sophia Greek Orthodox and St. George Antiochian Orthodox Cathedrals, sponsored a one day Saturday retreat delivered by His Eminence, Archbishop Lazar.

A University of Miami professor of architecture brought a group of students to the church to show and discuss the local neighborhood architecture.

St. Nicholas Church * Ft. Lauderdale, FL

After six years of literally 'fighting City Hall' we have received the permits for our renovation. When we began the process six years ago, we had enough money to cover the cost of the renovation plus some. In six years, construction costs have tripled! We now will bear that burden! Even though the construction industry is suffering because of the economic downturn several construction companies which have been invited to bid on our project have refused stating it is not worth their time to bid on projects costing less than a million dollars! We know our beloved patron, St Nicholas will continue to guide us and St Tikhon, who is the model for our faith in America, will continue to inspire us.

we celebrated masleenitsa with Vespers and a blini dinner which brought 125 faithful to enjoy tasty food, drink and entertainment.

Pascha Attendace: We did remove pews from the church to accommodate more people inside and they were about 6 deep outside. Guesstimate: 600. Pachal Vespers: 150

Also our church school put on a Nativity Program, and for Palm Sunday they chanted the prokeimenon, the verses and epistle! We plan on starting our Teen program in September.

BAPTISMS 41, WEDDINGS 7, FUNERALS 3

St. Herman's Church * Lake Worth, FL

Average Attendance: 40 – 65

One Baptism and three funerals last year.

Generous donations have brought about the installation a new green metal roof over the church, along with new door overhangs and hurricane shutters . These are major improvements to a building that suffered hurricane damage a just few years ago.

New doors and windows were also installed at the rectory, going more than \$50,000 over budget. With God's help, they will get this paid for.

New icons have also been installed at the church: the Holy Three Hierarchs and St. Sophia – Ss. Faith, Hope, and Love. Also received and which will go outside in front of the church is a mosaic icon of St. Herman of Alaska, made by Nina Zaslavsky.

St. Peter's Mission, Jupiter, FL

Average Sunday Attendance: 25

The mission, served mainly by Fr. James Mason, and at times by Fr. Stephen Plumlee, boasts of having had a Divine Liturgy every Sunday of the past year in their rented school auditorium space. They have also have had a council meeting every month.

Vespers have been served a number of times, and Presanctified Liturgy once, at a parishioner's home.

For four years, the mission has cleaned a section of Indian Town Road. A highway sign is posted acknowledging this responsibility.

Before Lent, the community had their third annual mission dinner. This year it was held at a country club with over 50 in attendance.

The mission is an enthusiastic group that is looking ahead toward obtaining their own property and seeking a regular priest.

St. James Church * Port Saint Lucie, FL

We are grateful for all of God's blessings which build up the Body of Christ. This past year Charles "Chuck" Shumski fell asleep in the Lord after a brief illness. All who knew him and love him will miss his good humor and ready smile.

Two beautiful babies were baptized this past year, Sophia Martinez and Nicholas Arisi. After many years our Royal Doors were finally completed with the icons of the Holy Evangelists and the Annunciation. Inga's mother, Galina, from the Ukraine, wrote the icons for us and also gifted us with a beautiful icon of the Christ Not Made By Hands.

Our official membership is up to 47 adults but our average attendance throughout the year has been in the 70 to 80 range for Divine Liturgy. Holy Vespers really needs to be worked on.

The Feast of the Nativity was a very joyous occasion and very well attended, both the Vigil and Divine Liturgy on Christmas Day. It is our local tradition for our children to have a birthday cake that says Happy Birthday Jesus. We celebrate the real meaning of Christmas, the Birth of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Vespers of Forgiveness Sunday was very moving. After our blinny breakfast we had our spiritual retreat to prepare for confession. A very large group went to Confession before Vespers. When we asked forgiveness of each other at the end of Holy Vespers there were 52 people in attendance. After the midnight service of Pascha there were more than 55 baskets to be blessed before we began our Agape Meal. Paschal Vespers at noon was also well attended.

We have a wonderful mix of cultures: from the Slavic Countries, from Egypt and Africa, from the Greek experience and from our American roots. It is a joy and I give thanks to God every day for the spiritual family He has blessed me with. I have good altar servers and during this assembly our parish family has been blessed with a new deacon, Fr. Deacon Paul Hilko, and with a new sub-deacon, Robert Andrew McCrocklin. May God Grant Them Many Years!

Our St. Mary's Sisterhood is very active at St. James. Every first Sunday of the month they host a Breakfast Brunch. Our fellowship hour after Divine Liturgy is always very well attended and supplied.

On October 20, 2007 our parish outing to the Holy Land Experience in Orlando was a stunning success. Our planning committee is working on another family outing for this year. We pray and worship together in God's house but we also want to carry the joy and love we experience as Children of God into this weary world which really needs to see, learn and be taught the true and living Way of our Orthodox faith.

There is still much that we, as a parish family must do. It is a daunting experience and there is still much to learn. I have asked my children in Christ to read as part of their daily devotions St. Paul's letter, 1st Corinthians Chapter 13 verses 1-13. We ask the Holy Spirit to enlighten our understanding of these verses, so when we hear the words of Christ "Love ye one another as I have loved you" and "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, by the love ye bear for one another", we will be ready to do just that; love, forgive and bear each up, because we are "our brothers keeper"!

The most unworthy archpriest,
Fr. Ernesto Rios

St. Demetrius Church * Naples, FL

Average Sunday Attendance: 90 – 100 Winter, 30 – 40 in the Summer

A new choir leader has brought improvement to the music situation at the parish.

Renovations to the building and property have continued to take place.

A Naples area Orthodoxy 101 course takes place with St. Demetrius and the Antiochian and Greek Orthodox parishes. Attendance is 30- 40, and have brought a number of people to Orthodoxy.

The Archbishop was in attendance at the parish's 25th Anniversary celebration in December.

The parish sponsored the deanery west coast Lenten mission service.

Holy Cross Church * Olga (Ft. Myers), FL

Average Sunday Attendance: 40 Winter, 24 Summer

The parish is preparing one catechumen for reception into the Faith.

Two parishioners relocated out of the area. Income is generally down from last year.

Two baptisms, 1 chrismation, 2 weddings

Holy Spirit Church * Venice, FL

Holy Spirit Orthodox Church in Venice, Florida continues to experience the Wonder of God

through the Holy Spirit! We have awakened from a sleepy little church to a hub of believers and seekers extending outreach throughout the community. During our winter season and through Great Lent and Pascha with great joy we welcomed an average of 75 attendees (35 to 55 in summer) for Divine Liturgy. In addition we have been blessed to be able to provide weekly Vesper services and services for all Holy and Feast days – equally very well attended. Our joy continues having had three baptisms and currently providing class for catechumens. Two funerals were also held.

With our growth comes much work to provide for this community. Discussions are being held within our parish for expansion of the present church/fellowship hall. Improvements are also visible (landscaping, new storage shed, painting) and some not so visible (entire new air-conditioning system). To provide for this growth we have three major annual projects; Christmas Boutique held in December, in February we have our rummage sale, and in the spring our pre-Easter bake sale. On a monthly basis we have lesser projects such as monthly ethnic food sales sponsored by our Women's Guild and expanded luncheons (which include appetizers through desert).

Outreach is an important part of our mission. Through our Good Samaritan Fund we have been able to assist several families both inside and outside our parish during difficult times. Our website has been established and is updated regularly. We have a beautifully expanded weekly bulletin which includes not only church news, but the Epistle reading, the Gospel lesson and a section about the Saint(s) of the day. Our regularly scheduled adult education known as "Senior Moments" is always well attended. Through our prayers and determination, we at Holy Spirit Orthodox Church know and believe that through Him Everything is Possible!