

## **Diocese of the South (OCA) 2018 Annual Assembly**

### **Appalachian Deanery Report**

The Appalachian Deanery is composed of 10 parishes, 5 of which the OCA designates as Church and 5 as Mission. The St. Herman of Alaska Mission, Charlottesville, VA, is the only inactive parish at this time. The Deanery covers the geographical region made up of the states of Kentucky, Tennessee roughly east of the Tennessee River, and most of Virginia (the Northern Virginia suburbs of Washington, DC fall under the Archdiocese of Washington, DC). St. Tikhon of Moscow Mission, Chattanooga, TN, is now served by the assigned Priest, Seth Earl. Many thanks to the faithful who kept coming to services and inviting people to come experience the Orthodox Faith. Many thanks to the Archpriests and Priests who helped keep weekly services at the Mission over the past several years: Archpriest Peter Smith, Archpriest Mark Hodal, Archpriest David Arnold, Priest Jonas Worsham, Priest Daniel Talley, Priest Athanasius Shaw. Interest for an Orthodox Christian presence in Farmville, VA has waned, while there is still an effort to maintain OCF chapters at Longwood University and Hampden-Sydney College. St. Anne Church, Oak Ridge, TN, celebrates their 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in August. A recent graduate from SVOTS, Deacon Daniel Greeson, is now assigned to St. Anne as a Pastoral Assistant to Fr. Stephen Freeman who has announced his intention to retire December 31, 2019. St. Athanasius Church, Nicholasville, KY, continues to work with those who are actively a part of the Orthodox Church or who are interested in Orthodox Christianity in Berea, KY. The St. Ambrose of Milan Mission, Roanoke, VA, has been meeting weekly since Great Lent of 2017 and is led by Archpriest Sam Gantt. They have faithfully begun to support the work of the Diocese with their tithes, are meeting in rented space, and hope to find space that will not keep them setting up and taking down liturgical items each week.

### **Dormition of the Theotokos Church, Norfolk, VA**

<http://www.dormitionnorfolk.org>

Priest John Cox

Average Sunday Attendance: 65

Average Great Vespers Attendance: 20

Average Weekday Service Attendance: 12

Total Parish (Active/Inactive/Seekers): 100

Attendance for Pascha 2017: 80

Percentage Increase/Decrease in Tithes/Offerings YE 31DEC2017: +33%

#### **Noteworthy details**

- This year we were excited to receive a 100k gift which we used to pay down debt to the Diocese and increase our philanthropic activity in the community.
- Having completed 1 year in our new building, we have moved into the beautification stage of our development. We now have iconography on the

- walls and plans for a new altar and a proper iconostasis are under way.
- This year, on account of our increased space, we hosted Sunday of Orthodoxy for the entire Orthodox community for the first time. It was a great success for which we are grateful.

## **St. Andrew's Church, Ashland, VA**

<http://www.firstcalled.org>  
Priest Adam Sexton

Average Sunday Attendance: 40-50  
Average Great Vespers Attendance: 10  
Average Weekday Service Attendance: 0-10  
Total Parish (Active/Inactive/Seekers): +/-60  
Attendance for Pascha 2017: 65-70  
Percentage Increase/Decrease in Tithes/Offerings YE 31DEC2017: NA

Truth is, we are finally experiencing all at once the growing pains we have managed to hide for the last 5 years or so. This is actually a far better gauge of the health of this God-blessed Body of Christ.

Since last summer we have been blessed with a deacon in Fr. Michael Chisholm. This has been a most timely godsend spiritually to me personally and to the parish in general. Father Michael has undertaken diaconal service with zeal and aplomb and I am grateful for his service both in and out of the liturgical setting. He is a great asset to the ongoing health of St. Andrews. His ordination was a particular grace to our parish. God is so good to us.

We have begun an iconography beautification project at St. Andrews. We are working with Damascene gallery in Wayne WV to have museum quality "fakes" installed, starting with a Pantocrator in the ceiling and then a platytera behind the altar. The project is intended to include the entirety of the worship space and we hope to have it largely completed by this time next year.

We welcomed 8 new souls into the Church in the spring of the year and we have 4 current catechumens. There are also several who are making the "bobber wiggle" but who have not been "hooked" yet.

St. Andrews has a combined youth group with that of St. Tikhon's parish, a two year old mission of ROCOR's Western Rite Communities in Richmond. The parishes enjoy a blessed fraternity of mutual support. This unity is life giving and has been an indispensable boon to St. Andrews in particular.

## **St. Anne Orthodox Church, Oak Ridge, TN**

<http://www.stanneorthodoxchurch.com>  
Archpriest Stephen Freeman

Average Sunday Attendance: 110  
Average Great Vespers Attendance: 20  
Average Weekday Service Attendance: 30  
Total Parish (Active/Inactive/Seekers): 204  
Attendance for Pascha 2017: 210  
Percentage Increase/Decrease in Tithes/Offerings YE 31DEC2017: +11.86%

St. Anne continued its growth in attendance and income along with a wider range of programs. We completed preliminary work towards the building of a new Temple and will be hiring an architect in the coming year. Deacon Daniel Greeson just began as Pastoral Assistant on July 1, 2018. Many years, Fr. Deacon Daniel and Chelsea!

## **St. Athanasius Church, Nicholasville, KY**

<http://www.athanasiusoca.org>  
Priest Justin Patterson

Average Sunday Attendance: 140  
Average (Vigil) Great Vespers Attendance: 35  
Average Weekday Service Attendance: 35  
Total Parish (Active/Inactive/Seekers): 220  
Attendance for Pascha 2017: 207  
Percentage Increase/Decrease in Tithes/Offerings YE 31DEC2017: +54%

Over the past 18 months, St. Athanasius has enjoyed perhaps the strongest and most sustained growth in its history. We have seen an increase in all three categories of newcomers: converts to the Faith, active Orthodox moving to the area, and inactive Orthodox--sometimes in the area for a long time--reconnecting to the Faith. Beyond the obvious fact that we are Orthodox (our biggest draw!,) St. Athanasius in particular is reaping the benefits (I think) of our spacious church facility, increased visibility (and reputation for stability and engagement) in the community, responsible leadership from the parish council, good help from a now-seasoned deacon, and a calm period in the OCA and diocese (thank you Met. Tikhon and Vladyka Alexander!) Last summer, we reported that we were just setting up an online giving portal-system; but by now we've had a full year to assess its value. Our online giving program ([tithe.ly](http://tithe.ly)) has exceeded our expectations and brought more than a dozen new, substantial givers "online." Moreover, a number of our teens and twenty-somethings began giving regularly almost immediately--and we will see their contributions grow in the years ahead. One of the real points of celebration for us as a parish in 2017 was being chosen

as one of fifteen "pilot parishes" for the Telos Project, a Lily Endowment-funded initiative run out of Holy Cross Greek Seminary. Our parish will receive \$25,000 over four years exclusively for use with work among 23-29 year-olds! One of the remarkable side benefits of the Telos Project is that we are developing a great team of lay-leaders--and many of their ideas and efforts will translate into ministry opportunities to strengthen the whole parish. (I would officially like to alert the diocese to a pastoral need here. We are not quite ready for a full-time second priest; but if there is any priest looking for a place to retire--and yet still do part-time ministry and make some money--Kentucky is a great place. We have no supply priests within 3 hours of Nicholasville, so there is a great need.)

### **St. Cyprian of Carthage Church, Richmond (Midlothian), VA**

<http://www.stcyprianoca.org>  
Archpriest David Arnold

Average Sunday Attendance: 80  
Average Great Vespers Attendance: 23  
Average Weekday Service Attendance: 15  
Total Parish (Active/Inactive/Seekers): 151  
Attendance for Pascha 2017: 144  
Percentage Increase/Decrease in Tithes/Offerings from 2014-15: +14%

This past year has been full of blessings for our parish. We were able to participate in the ordination of two Deacons and one Priest. We began to save money and plan for our next phase of the Master Plan. We dedicated an acre of our property for use as an Orthodox Burial Ground. We walked with a beloved sister as far as we could in this life as she kept up her struggle with cancer.

### **Protection of the Holy Virgin Mary Mission, Clarksville, TN**

<http://www.orthodoxclarksville.org>  
Priest Thomas Langdon

Average Sunday Attendance: 50  
Average Great Vespers Attendance: 15  
Average Weekday Service Attendance: 12  
Total Parish (Active/Inactive/Seekers): 80  
Attendance for Pascha 2017: 70  
Percentage Increase/Decrease in Tithes/Offerings from 2014-15: +15%

2017 notable accomplishments - new iconostasis and other improvements; Archbishop Alexander's visit (first ever by a bishop); 11 baptisms and chrismations in 2017 with several more this year.

## **St. Tikhon of Moscow Mission, Chattanooga, TN**

<http://www.sainttikhons.org>  
Priest Seth Earl (As of 1 June 2018)

Average Sunday Attendance: 40  
Average Great Vespers Attendance: 10  
Average Weekday Service Attendance: 5  
Total Parish (Active/Inactive/Seekers): 60  
Attendance for Pascha 2017: 58  
Percentage Increase/Decrease in Tithes/Offerings YE 31DEC2017: +35%

The Appalachian Deanery welcomes Fr. Seth Earl after his assistantship in the Atlanta Deanery. His assignment began June 1, 2018. Many years, Fr. Seth and Stephanie!

St Tikhon Mission has had a growing year since last summer. Starting with hosting the DOS Assembly here in Chattanooga, the mission's momentum has steadily increased. Over the last year, Fr Peter Smith, Fr Jonas Worsham, and Fr Seth Earl have been rotating serving the Divine Liturgy on weekends. After Fr Peter officially retired, the St Tikhon community honored him and Matushka Terri for all their support the last number of years. With Fr Peter's retirement, Fr Jonas volunteered to take on on the extra weekend, thus allowing the mission to continue with celebrating the Divine services every weekend.

## **St. Maria of Paris Mission, Cleveland, TN**

<http://www.stmariaorthodoxchurch.org/>  
Priest Kevin Rigdon

Average Sunday Attendance: 45  
Average Great Vespers Attendance: 13  
Average Weekday Service Attendance: 11  
Total Parish (Active/Inactive/Seekers): 70  
Attendance for Pascha 2017: 72  
Percentage Increase/Decrease in Tithes/Offerings YE DEC312017: -15%

Our growth this year was tempered by the loss of parishioners through job relocation or graduation.. This last Nativity Fast we had a small building fund drive which raised about \$33,000, and that has been deposited with the Diocese. This Fall, we begin our second year with the local OCF chapter that continues to grow. A new location for the mission promises space for growth to reach the next point of transition.

## **St. Ambrose of Milan Mission, Roanoke, VA**

<https://orthodoxroanoke.org/>  
Archpriest Samuel Gantt (retired)

Average Sunday Attendance: 25

Average Great Vespers Attendance: 10-15

Average Weekday Service Attendance: NA

Total Parish (Active/Inactive/Seekers): 30

Attendance for Pascha 2017: 29

Percentage Increase/Decrease in Tithes/Offerings YE DEC312017: +100% =)

33% increase since July 2017 (**Official records began to be kept in July 2017.**)

Starting from April 2017 to present, we have had nine official Catechumens, one baptism, and seven Chrismations. We started out with nine parishioners and are now up to 25 average attendance. We began meeting in a Lutheran Church sanctuary, with Friday evening Vespers and Saturday morning Divine Liturgy. We are now renting space in the Roanoke Council of Garden Clubs building, which allows for us to celebrate Saturday evening Vespers and Sunday morning Divine Liturgy. Each weekend, we take out of storage and set up the Church (Icons, Altar Table, Table of Oblation, Choir & Reader stands, Analogion, etc.), which then needs to be stored away after each Divine Liturgy. We are currently looking for other space to rent where we can leave everything set up (an Iconostasis, Altar Table, Table of Oblation, Choir & Reader stands, Analogion, etc.).

## **St Herman of Alaska Mission, Charlottesville, VA - Inactive**