

North Florida Deanery Report--2019 Diocesan Assembly

The North Florida Deanery covers the northern geographical half of the great state of Florida and consists of six parishes, and five missions and two mission stations. Our greatest need is a priest for St. Marks, Bradenton. Our next greatest need is a priest for the South Orlando Mission (St John the Merciful) and after that Valdosta and Gainesville. These fields are ripe for harvest!

Annunciation Russian Mission, Jacksonville, FL (2012)

Hieromonk Arkady (Migunov) *Priest-in-Charge*

Presently the parish is heavily invested in developing their 5-acre church property. Today they await their final site plan approval and are working with a South Florida GC to build the Church. Fr Arkady lives in a home on the property. Income and attendance remain stable and healthy. They have a Russian school where children are learning to read and write in Russian.

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

Served by area Clergy

Fr Phillip Drennan who is on loan from the Antiochian Archdiocese serves the mission. The community meets on Sunday mornings in a rented R.C. Church. They have begun the process of looking for and purchasing an existing church facility or a property they can develop. They will have their first ever hierarchal visit this coming October with Archbishop Alexander.

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

Priest Patrick Smith, *Rector*

The defining event of the past year is the parish's building renovation. As often is the case, building programs have there are difficulties. The challenge is the utter incompetency of the GC. Because of Fr Patrick's temperament, the parish has been incredibly patient and understanding getting through this. There have been cost overruns and the parish has been able to raise all the extra necessary funds. Because of construction, they have limited use of their facilities and yet the parish continues to grow.

St. Justin Martyr, Jacksonville, FL (1994)

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

This year SJM has been working hard at improving outreach. The parish launched live streaming in the fall and it has been well received, with 5-15 people per week watching services while sick, traveling, etc. This summer the parish sent out 15 missionaries to four different countries and raised \$9k above the tithe between Lent and Pentecost for missions. The iconography project is 92% funded and about 75% complete. For the first SJM has a fulltime youth director/pastoral assistant. They are beginning a comprehensive strategic plan that will help them prayerfully discern where they believe God would want them to be in ten years as far as ministries and facilities.

St Mark, Bradenton, FL (1979)

Archpriest Stephen Plumlee *Attached*

St Mark's is in a period of transition. Presently Fr Stephen Plumlee taking care of the liturgical duties while Subdeacon Jim Abraham is taking care of parish administration alongside the parish council while the Diocese looks for a new parish priest. Presently the PC is working on refinancing the debt to take advantage of lower interest rates and to reduce debt is looking into selling off a back parcel of the property that does not fit into the long-term site plan.

St Philip the Apostle Mission, Tampa FL (2005)

Archpriest Joseph Ciarciaglino *Priest-in-Charge*

St Philips continues grow and the average age is getting younger. In the past year nine people were chrismated, one baptized and they have four catechumens and two inquirers. Fr Joseph is establishing an OCF at University of S. Florida. A continuing touchstone of this community is the ongoing work of Akonyibedo Health Center in Northern Uganda of which many DOS parishes were generous to support during their Lenten almsgiving.

(<http://www.ugandaclinic.org/>).

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

Igumen Sergious (Gerken), *Rector*

In the past year Fr Sergious moved into a rectory right across the street from the church. They continue to improve their facilities and grounds. They just finished tiling the whole church, added a security system and painted the inside walls. It looks wonderful. St. Raphael has an outreach to The Villages celebrating vespers twice per month. About one-half the parish commutes 30 or so minutes Sunday mornings from The Villages. The parish consists of mostly retired people.

St. Simeon Church, Titusville, FL (1966)

Fr Kyrill Williams, *Priest-in Charge*

In December Fr Kyrill came to St Simeon's and since the parish has experienced a rebirth. Attendance has returned to previous levels and finances are stable. Fr Kyrill is keeping full liturgical schedule despite full time employment as a Hospice Chaplain. Since his arrival they have received one family into the faith.

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

Priest Daniel Hickman, *Rector*

St. Stephen's is in full church planting mode. (*Please see below for the Orlando Russian Mission and the South Orlando-St John the Merciful reports.*) Because of this work St. Stephen's is flourishing parish. In October St. Stephen's will celebrate its 50th Anniversary. Along with the Russian Mission they have baptized or chrismated this year 31 people and have 5 catechumens. Parishioner Mark Buchman was ordained to the Holy Diaconate and he has been dispatched to lead the South Orlando Mission. Everything is going well with Camp St. Christopher, VBS's and parish retreats.

Orlando Russian Mission (2018)

Priest Andrey Syrkin (*Attached to St. Stephen's*)

The Orlando Russian Mission continues to grow and amaze. Original plans were for the Diocese, St. Stephen's and another parish to help underwrite Fr Andrey's salary for the first year, but this was not necessary. From the beginning they have been self-supporting. For the present time they serve the liturgy in Slavonic at 12n on the second, fourth and fifth Sundays of the month at St. Stephens. They are still in the "community gathering mode," In the not too long away future their numbers may be big enough to consider getting their own facility. They have a Saturday Russian school for children. The community follows the Old Calendar.

South Orlando Mission—St John the Merciful

Priest Daniel Hickman

St John the Merciful was planted in September of 2018 in South Orlando as a hive off of St Stephen the Protomartyr. The community has a rented storefront with a four-year lease and meets for Saturday Vespers and Sunday morning Liturgy weekly. Dn Mark Buchman is the local leader. Attendance is about 20.

St John the Theologian Mission Station, Gainesville, FL

Hieromonk Arkady (Migunov)/Archpriest Theodore Pisarchuk

For the most part of the last 25 years we have had some sort of OCA mission work taking place in Gainesville. For the past 10 years or so Fr Arkady served the Russian community on Saturday mornings using the Greek Church. Fr Ted has had a monthly Vespers (& some Lenten Presanctifieds) with a bible study. Because the local Greek Church no longer welcomed the Russian community on Saturday mornings, Fr Arkady and Fr Ted melded the two groups and together they celebrate one monthly liturgy on Saturday mornings with Fr Arkady and monthly Vespers with Fr Ted. If we had a mission minded priest in the area, we could plant a healthy church. Fr Ted will also be serving the OCF this fall.

Valdosta Orthodox Mission Station, Valdosta FL

Archpriest Theodore Pisarchuk/Priest Jacob Hatch

Presently Fr Ted and Fr Jacob alternate going to Valdosta to celebrate an Obednitsa service monthly on a Sunday evening. We have about 20 people who regularly attend. We have one family of inquirers. The next closest Orthodox church is 75 miles away and the population should be enough to support an Orthodox Church.

Tallahassee, FL

We have a mission exploration meeting scheduled in September with former St. Justin Martyr parishioners.