

Southcentral (Dallas) Deanery Report
Diocese of the South
Orthodox Church in America
Dallas Diocesan Assembly 2016
Respectfully Submitted by Fr. Basil Zebrun

Since the establishment of the Mississippi River Deanery over a year ago our own South Central (Dallas) Deanery is now comprised of three states: New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas, with parts of East Texas annexed to the new M.R.D. Thus currently there are 15 active parishes, missions or mission stations in the Southcentral (Dallas) Deanery.

Two of the most prominent Diocesan activities this past year that uniquely relate to our Deanery simply in terms of geography were the re-interment of His Eminence Archbishop Dmitri in the Memorial Chapel at St. Seraphim Cathedral in early March, followed three weeks later by the election, then later enthronement of His Grace the Rt. Reverend Alexander (Golitzin) as Bishop of Dallas and the South. We look forward to Bishop Alexander's move to the South in the near future.

An additional activity drawing to an end this late fall within the confines of our Deanery, but having great meaning for both our Diocese and the Orthodox Church in America, is the closing of His Eminence's estate after a painstaking five-year effort, photographing, organizing, and cataloging the writings, correspondence and possessions of Archbishop Dmitri both within the Cathedral itself and at his residence. The people involved are to be commended for their professionalism, daily labors and great attention to detail.

And finally, we have to point to the semi-retirement this year of Mr. Milos Konjevich, our long time Diocesan Treasurer based in Dallas. His current role as – we might say – professional consultant will be invaluable, but we will miss his regular innovative and courageous approach to Church finances which helped our Diocese to grow tremendously during his tenure.

One potentially tragic event this past year within our Deanery was the near loss of the oldest Church in our Diocese: Sts. Cyril and Methodius, Hartshorne, Oklahoma (*See the enclosed parish report*).

As far as the Deanery itself is concerned, from the following reports one can see diversity in activities throughout our territory as the faithful engage in various endeavors in efforts to grow the Church spiritually and numerically. Most communities with a resident priest offer a minimum of three liturgical services a week (*Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday*). Some have added weekday Liturgies, Matins and Akathists as well. Education classes for all ages is the norm, including some Vacation Bible Schools, as well as a diverse selection of outreach activities. The latter range from unique sales, to lectures, concerts, and customized websites.

One may also see efforts in prison ministry, the writing of local editorials, as well as charitable endeavors, including outreach across the border into Mexico. Several active building or expansion programs are in progress, or have just been completed, and not a few churches are choosing to invest extra savings with the Diocese, at a good rate of interest. These funds are then used to help other missions expand or develop their own communities, when loans from local banks become difficult to acquire.

And finally, as always, we are blessed to have a group of enthusiastic, mission minded clergy, as well as dedicated laymen to help with the growth of their respective communities. I would like to thank especially Archmandrite Gerasim (Eliel), Diocesan Administrator; Archpriest Marcus Burch, Diocesan Chancellor; and other clergy (*priests and deacons*) who have assisted tremendously in an administrative capacity within our Deanery during the past year.

The following is a brief summary of activities in most of our Deanery communities, submitted by the local priests.

All Saints Mission

Victoria, Texas

Fr. Dimitri Cozby

Attendance and membership remain small but stable. Attendance at Sunday Liturgy can vary from a dozen to 35. The Mission has people of a wide variety of backgrounds, from cradle and convert, and from American to European to African. We get a number of visitors, but many are just curious and are from towns some distance away, unlikely to persist in attendance.

To encourage fellowship we have a pot-luck lunch following Liturgy one Sunday each month. We have one adult catechumen and her young daughter and another woman who frequently attends and has expressed interest in becoming Orthodox. We have had three infant Baptisms in the last year.

Fr Dimitri has participated in the formation of a local clergy group to promote greater harmony in the general community in the wake of the national disturbances of the past year.

All Saints of North America Orthodox Church

Albuquerque, New Mexico

Fr Nikolay Miletkov, Rector

All Saints of North America has currently 71 pledging members. The average Sunday attendance is around 80. Since last year's report we received 4 people into the Orthodox Church and had 1 funeral. Our weekly schedule consists of: silent recitation of the Jesus Prayer on Tuesday mornings followed by Continuing Education/Book Study; Wednesday Vespers followed by Catechumen class; Thursday morning Divine Liturgy; Saturday Great Vespers and Sunday Liturgy.

Our Sunday school is divided into 3 age group classes and takes place every Sunday after Holy Communion. We continue the Slavonic Liturgy as an outreach to the local Slavic community.

We continue the following ministries which were started last year, and have proven to strengthen our parish community: a monthly men's group gathering, monthly women's fellowship gathering, as well as a middle and high school youth group that meets once a month for food, fun, fellowship, and enriching spiritual discussion. Fr Nikolay is still involved with the OCF chapter at the University of New Mexico.

The Building Committee partnered with the Parish Council to develop a capital campaign brochure which was distributed to all parishioners, and mailed to anyone who has ever contributed financially to our parish. The brochure is available on our website. The Sisterhood of St. Anna continues to organize fundraising events and facilitate charitable giving for local, national, and international causes.

We improved the outlook of the Church property by committing to more regular landscaping efforts. We also replaced our old and fading church sign with a professional one of a masonry base. Additionally, our old fence on the east side of the property was replaced with a new one by a local Boy Scout Troop.

Our visibility to the Albuquerque community was further enhanced by remodeling our website and hosting a lecture on the Shroud of Turin by published author James Damon. This event was advertised via radio, newspapers, and flyers. Because of the success of this outreach effort, we decided to host a speaker at least once a year. Fr Nikolay also participates regularly in the monthly New Mexico Orthodox Clergy Fellowship Meetings.

St. Anthony the Great Orthodox Church

San Antonio, Texas

Fr. Leo Poore

St. Anthony continues with Phase III of its Icon project. It is projected that sometime during the month of August Iconographers will begin the Icons of Christ and the Apostles to be placed on the back wall of the Sanctuary. Our partnership with the San Antonio food bank continues and has resulted in our being able to reach each Friday approximately 35-55 families and about each quarter we are able to give away about 10,000 pounds of food to about 105-119 families. Very soon we will begin paving the lot across the street from the Temple, providing the parish with needed parking spaces. In addition, a youth choir will begin rehearsals in the near future practicing such selections as The Lord's Prayer and Communion Hymns to be sung during Sunday Liturgies. And finally we continue to receive new members and our various church organizations have remained active in their respective areas.

St. Barbara Orthodox Church

Ft. Worth, Texas

Fr. Basil Zebrun

During the past twelve months St. Barbara's hosted a number of special events. In September of 2015 a Ministries Fair was conducted in the parish hall during Coffee Hour with small booths set up highlighting parish ministries, providing detailed information on each. In October an anonymous benefactor donated three and a half months of professional vocal training (*once a week*) for choir members and readers. Thirteen people took part in these sessions. In November the community hosted Fr. John Behr from St. Vladimir's Seminary. Fr. John spoke at a Deanery Clergy Conference in Ft. Worth, as well as during an SVS Night Reception. December saw special collections taken for military pen pals, as well as for the homeless. In addition, we held our Holy Supper at the parish hall after the Nativity Eve service with close to 90 people taking part in this annual event. In January of 2016 we enjoyed our highly anticipated annual Chili and Cornbread Competition during Coffee Hour, and in March we hosted the Church's 33rd Annual Pysanky (*Ukrainian Easter Egg*) Festival. This latter event has proved to be a good fund raiser as well as a tremendous form of outreach, with tours of the Church and discussions on Orthodoxy taking place during the two-day sale. In March we began an adult book study focusing on Fr. Alexander Schmemmann's, "*Great Lent: Journey to Pascha*," followed by a summer study on "*Orthodox Psychotherapy*," by Metropolitan Hierotheos Vlachos and discussions as well on the classic work, "*The Way of a Pilgrim*." Also in March the parish was blessed with a visit by Mr. Kenneth Kidd of the O.C.M.C. who spoke with the parish council, then with the parish at large about mission work and mission opportunities for Church members. In April of this year parish youth took part in an outing to a local shelter in Dallas, accompanied by kids from a local Antiochian Orthodox Church. During the month of May, St. Barbara's held its Annual Pysanky Classes on two consecutive Thursdays. These also serve as fund raisers and have become good forms of outreach as most participants are non-Orthodox friends from the Ft. Worth area. On Thomas Sunday parish youth took part in St. Barbara's first Easter Egg Hunt. And then recently, members of the Church took tours of two local night shelters planning for parishioners to help out through monetary contributions as well as onsite donations of time and manpower.

Liturgically and educationally our community maintained its normal weekly schedule of Wednesday and Saturday Vespers, as well as Sunday morning Hours and Divine Liturgy, adding Thursday morning Liturgies to the routine. Adult Bible studies were held after a number of these Thursday services. Catechumen classes are conducted on Wednesday's after Vespers, with Saturday afternoons being the preferred time slot for specific book studies. In addition, once a month on Saturday afternoons the parish conducts its Church School Classes just prior to Great Vespers. General Confession has become a well-attended service with as many as 25 people taking part just prior to Vespers the third Wednesday of each month. In addition to the above we can mention the celebration of special Feast Day services, as well as those for Great Lent, Holy Week and Pascha. The Pascha Midnight Service saw 151 people in attendance with 139 joining in the Palm Sunday celebration. For 2015 we averaged 93 people for each Sunday Liturgy. Thus far for 2016 we have averaged 102 people for each Sunday Liturgy. During the past twelve months we Baptized and/or Chrismated 7 adults and 2 older children, and Baptized 5

infants. One Wedding was celebrated as well. Currently we have another 10 catechumens and 7 serious inquirers including both adults and children.

In July of 2015 parishioners of St. Barbara's welcomed into their midst Fr. Joshua Trant, as well as Matushka Heather and daughter Tabitha. Fr. Joshua assisted on a regular basis with the celebration of weekly services, as well as with Baptisms, Chrismations, a Wedding, Church School classes, a book study, and delivered weekly homilies. He added his services as the only supply priest within two Deaneries. This distinction kept him busy traveling on a number of weekends during the year. In addition, Fr. Joshua was able to participate in the first organizational meetings of a new mission effort initiated by the St. Barbara community 45 minutes west of Ft. Worth in the Springtown, Azle, Weatherford areas. In August of this year St. Barbara's will be saying goodbye to the Trant's as they take up a new assignment in Baton Rouge, Louisiana and we wish them Many Blessed Years!

St. Barbara's will also be saying goodbye (*temporarily*) to a member of our community as he heads for St. Vladimir's Seminary at the end of August. This will be the 6th person received at our parish into Orthodoxy to study at an Orthodox Seminary: three have been ordained, and one (*a layman*) is currently a professor at an Orthodox Seminary. We anticipate as well the departure (*for seminary*) of another young couple either in 2017 or 2018.

In addition, our Church is looking forward greatly to a visit from our new Father in Christ, His Grace Bishop Alexander for our Patronal Feast at the beginning of December. And then finally, the St. Barbara Building Program continues to progress. During the past twelve months we interviewed 5 architects (*4 with a license to practice in Texas*). Our short term goal is to choose one of the 4, then render a vote on a Church design by the beginning of 2017.

**St. Basil the Great Orthodox Mission,
Weatherford, Oklahoma
Fr. Nick Aiello**

We have met our expectation for growth in the last year - thank God. This year we averaged sixteen regular members (*all contributing and involved adults with one child*). As I write this we now have eighteen regular members.

We gained occupancy of our building in late October - so we've only had a dedicated space for about nine months. (*Before that we were in a 300 sq.ft. business office.*)

Financially, two years ago our monthly offerings averaged \$1,600.00. The last few months of last year we averaged \$2,500.00...We have maintained that amount for the last year and our goal is to see it raised to \$3,000.00 monthly within the next six months

Because I am unpaid, the majority of this amount goes to our building project and paying off our debt to the diocese. This being the case, with our current rate of growth and giving we hope

to maintain our goal of paying off our debt within seven years. ...and begin work on our permanent temple, (converting the present building to a fellowship hall and offices).

**St. Cyril of Jerusalem Orthodox Church,
The Woodlands, Texas
Hieromonk John (Anderson)**

The community of St. Cyril's continues faithfully as a witness in the Woodlands as it experiences a second pastoral change in approximately three and a half years. Hieromonk John (Anderson) having served the community zealously required a recent transfer for health reasons to New Mexico. Fr. Benedict Crawford however, from McComb, Mississippi, is currently in the process of moving to Houston in order to serve the brethren of St. Cyril's full time. Members of the parish are very grateful to Fr. John who has not only been a good pastor, but has helped greatly and specifically with healing after the loss of Fr. David Moretti.

The Church's rented facility continues to be a strength possessing an ideal location, with a nave that will hold two to three hundred people, a professional kitchen, and good hall space. Visibility, however, is extremely limited making their community's steady growth even more impressive. Prior to Fr. John's sick leave the parish was averaging approximately 60 people per Sunday. Attendance is now at about 45 people per Liturgy, and will undoubtedly increase again in the months ahead. A challenge within the next year may be the need to relocate should the landlords deem such a move necessary.

**St. Cyril and Methodius Orthodox Church
Hartshorne, Oklahoma**

As mentioned in the Deanery Report's introduction, due to the lack of resident oversight in Hartshorne, an aging parish membership, as well as the death of a parish guardian, a local non-Orthodox preacher was able to make an attempt to gain legal ownership of the Church this past year. With the help, however, of local non-Orthodox friends and civil servants who recognize the value of the parish within the community at large (*and who apparently stand guard informally over the property on a weekly basis*) as well as through the efforts of Archimandrite Gerasim, Fr. Ambrose Arrington and members of Holy Apostles Church in Bixby, Oklahoma, the above described attempt was prevented. A service of celebration was held on the parish's Patronal Feast with 71 people taking part, including seven clergymen, current parish members, many non-Orthodox friends, as well as a number of baptized Orthodox who lost contact over the years with their original Faith. Archimandrite Gerasim and Fr. Ambrose delivered homilies. The latter's words were particularly moving as Fr. Ambrose spoke of the history of the community, as well as the sacrifices made by its founders, and he challenged those present to be faithful to the vision of their forefathers in Christ.

**St. George Orthodox Church
Pharr, Texas
Fr. Antonio Perdomo**

Church Statistics

Since last Assembly five new members were Baptized and Chrismated. We currently have several catechumens and inquirers. Planned for this year also, a Marriage Blessing in September and a Wedding in October.

Church Growth

This year we have been averaging about 60 for Church on Sunday. Sometimes we have as many as 75 attending services. This highlights the need for more construction, this time for a new Church Temple. Our Church will fit 100 in a time of need. However, fifty is what is comfortable in the space that we have. We are currently starting to look at the possibility of enlarging our current Church. At the same time, we are considering the option and expense of building a new and larger Church in the back of our property. The limitation for us is the funding. In the last few years, we acquired a loan which is currently being paid down and will be for several years to come. We are thankful for the help from the Diocese with this and are hopeful for continued help with future construction as well.

Tonsured Reader- Seminary

At the Reinternment of Archbishop Dmitri of Blessed Memory, one more Reader was tonsured for our Church. He will be visiting St. Tikhon Seminary after the Diocese Assembly with the hopes of attending 2017-18 academic year.

Construction

The last projects of the hall construction have been completed. The roof has been installed on the back porch, professional grade faucet installed in the kitchen, and the floor has been sealed and waxed. This concludes all of the projects having to do with the construction of our new hall.

Community Outreach

We continue to serve over 100 families in the Food Pantry twice a month, mostly with grant money until this time. Our primary grant source is no longer an option, so we would greatly appreciate receiving one time or ongoing donations from parishes and individuals, no matter how large or small, to facilitate the continuation of this vital ministry in our region. The Food Pantry participants have been very grateful for the new porch roof to protect them while they are outside waiting to pick up their food boxes. The hall is also becoming a popular place for several meetings from the community. The International Festival is a big hit drawing thousands to our Church. An event which was started two years ago, with some success and which has been well received by the local community, is a once a year Dinner Theatre held in our Church Hall.

Metropolitan Council/Diocesan Council

Fr Antonio was elected to serve on the Metropolitan Council as an at-large member for a term of six years at the last All American Council. While Matushka Elizabeth continues to serve on the Diocesan Council.

Summer Camp

This year, seven members from St. George participated in All Saints Camp. Many more wanted to go but had conflicts with their schedule which did not permit them to attend.

Mexico & Spanish Language Outreach

Fr. Antonio continues to serve as Liaison for the Diocese of Mexico and their Missions. This year the OCMC Mission trip went to some Mexican Villages at the end of March to teach and assist by teaching the children and adults in the area. A Toyota pick-up truck donated by St. Justin Martyr in Jacksonville, Florida was delivered to Pisa Flores in June. Outreach through online forums, translations and other support offered.

Holy Apostles Orthodox Church

Bixby, Oklahoma

Fr. Ambrose Arrington

With God's help we completed the expansion of our chapel last October, which effectively doubled the space in our nave. Sunday attendance has increased as a result, averaging about 85, many of whom are children. We have also had several families moving into the area from elsewhere. Ethnically we are a healthy mix of Anglo-Americans, Russians, Greeks, Romanians, Ethiopians, and Eritreans. We have served 8 baptisms (3 adults, 5 infants), 1 wedding, and no funerals. Having been through a building program last year, we set as a goal to focus on spiritual development this year. To that end we have increased our service schedule to include several Vespers and Matins services in the week, with time for confession following. We also hosted a retreat on Marriage and Family Life during Great Lent, given by Fr. Constantine Nasr from Oklahoma City. The retreat was well attended and helpful. In May we had a "surprise" guest speaker, Dr. Ralph Wood from Baylor University, who was in town and offered us a lecture on "C.S. Lewis, the Great Divorce, and Becoming Icons of Christ." This was a wonderful lecture and was attended by parishioners of the various local Orthodox Churches, and a few visitors. We are in the process of finalizing plans for our parish cemetery. We will also likely need to begin planning for a new parish hall next year, as the current one (a double wide trailer) is rapidly becoming inadequate.

St Jonah the Wonderworker Orthodox Christian Mission

Alpine, Texas

Fr. Nicholas Roth

St Jonah's has continued to make slow progress over the past year. We had one baptism in January, we anticipate another this fall, and currently have three serious inquirers.

Unfortunately, it looks as though one member will be moving to central Texas in order to care for his aging parents, so – as seems to be the norm – our overall numbers will remain the same.

Our current membership stands at 20, with 15 voting members. Our demographics are encouraging based on the percentages, and would be fantastic if we were a larger mission: 20% of our parishioners are children; 20% are 21-30; 30% are 31-40; 15% are between 40-60; and only 15% are of retirement age. The average Sunday attendance is 12, while the average Great Vespers attendance is 10.

St Jonah's finances continue to improve, although we are still dependent on receiving the DOS Mission Planting Grant (of which two years remain). The loan we had secured through a local bank is now paid off, and we now are able to concentrate on reducing our debt to the Diocese for the church building. In fact, compared to this time last year, we have reduced our total debt from \$77,985.36 to \$67,461.10 – a reduction of 13.5%. God willing, we'll be able to continue on this path and with some modest growth, we'll retire our debt within the next five years.

In conjunction with our debt reduction, we are also pursuing approximately \$35,000 in renovations to our building, as it is 60 years old and has decades of deferred maintenance that needs to be addressed. We have redone the electric throughout the building to replace old cloth wiring, and are currently having new energy efficient windows installed, along with heating and air conditioning. We are also pursuing the possibility of using spray foam insulation in the ceiling to help us keep the cool in, as West Texas summers get hot! The lack of climate control has been difficult, especially on our iconostasis and some of the older icons, so we are seeking to remedy the situation as soon as possible. We finally have icons for the iconostasis, which will be installed and blessed once the renovations are complete – hopefully by the end of the summer.

In addition to the regular Saturday and Sunday services, Daily Vespers is served every Wednesday evening, and the All-Night Vigil for Great Feasts. A Panikhida is served each month on the first Saturday, and a Molieben on the third Sunday after Divine Liturgy. We remain involved with the local food pantry, as well as the library and senior center.

We currently face three major challenges: finances, geography, and evangelism. In regards to the first, we are still not financially self-sufficient, and are dependent on the Mission Planting Grant to meet our obligations. Given that we have 22 months remaining (as of July 2016), we need to develop a plan on how we will transition to self-sufficiency within that time period. Unfortunately, the second challenge has a severe impact on the first: only a few parishioners are native to Alpine, and it seems that the reason we lose people is they move away to be closer to family members or to find better employment opportunities. Because of this, we need to have a greater focus on evangelism in the community, but we have not yet had much success in that regard, and evangelism is probably the area in which we need the most help. Indeed, if we are to be successful in Alpine, we must be more focused on evangelizing the local community and bringing people to the fullness of the faith.

St. Maximus the Confessor Orthodox Church

Denton Texas

Fr. Justin Frederick

The parish celebrated its patronal feast (January 21) this year in two special ways, both firsts for the parish. Bishop Maxim of the Western Diocese of the Serbian Orthodox Church was present to celebrate his name day, to chant a little for us, and to deliver our annual St. Maximus lecture. Second, we used a new Vigil service composed for us by Reader Isaac Lambertson, which used both existing hymns for St. Maximus and newly composed hymns. The parish rejoiced to pay off its loan from the diocese last August. A new temple is needed. Though Sunday attendance is up a bit from last year (averaging nearly 89), it remains mired in the 80s since 2012. Saturday evening Vigil attendance averages 32. We had the property surveyed to prepare for presenting our plans to the city for feedback, but work towards getting the presentation made proceeds slowly. We baptized three infants and received three adults since last summer. Our catechism class continues with good attendance. We have our first summer intern of what we hope will be many. The parish will celebrate its fifteenth anniversary the last weekend in July.

St. Nektarios Orthodox Mission

Waxahachie, Texas

Fr. David Bozeman

St. Nektarios Orthodox Mission just celebrated its four-year anniversary. Those initial feelings of excitement are still with us as each new person that joins us in our efforts renews our sense of purpose. The last year was exciting as we purchased our first building and began to develop our lives around a fuller liturgical schedule. We witnessed the first babies being born in the mission, held our first baptisms, and also said goodbye to some friends and held several funerals. We had the joy of celebrating a wedding for two of our young people. We experienced a lot of firsts this year and look forward to our continued life together.

Our average Sunday attendance still remains around thirty people but we have maintained a healthy budget and met all of our giving goals each year. We applied for and were awarded the OCA Planting Grant in January and began to benefit from the financial support. And we look forward to seeing the fruits of that support over the coming years. We made some efforts on developing our parish life by holding several events including an IOCC yard sale fundraiser. It allowed us to open our doors to the community and allowed them to be charitable for Orthodox Christians around the world. We also had a parish campout during Bright Week and our annual Fourth of July get-together.

Overall, things have been generally good. Though our numbers are modest we believe we are building the proper foundation on which we will grow. And we have great hope that God will reward our faithfulness and allow us to bring the light of Christ to a larger community.

St. Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

Denison/Sherman, Texas

Fr. Michael Storozuk

This past year St Paul parish experienced many serious illnesses amongst our members, everything from heart valve surgery, 2 brain aneurisms, 2 women with female issues needing surgery, bypass heart surgery, another heart attack with follow up bypass surgery, prostate surgery, shoulder surgery, and a few more that I cannot remember. Thanks be to God, all are now on the mend. It seemed to me that I was spending all my time in the hospital.

During the last year, two of our members were made readers and sub-deacons, one of which will attend seminary next year, hopefully coming back in three years as my replacement. We also received one adult by Baptism and Chrismation, and two infants by Baptism and Chrismation. We have one serious inquirer whom I am giving instruction. In 2016 we had our largest Pascha celebration ever.

Of course when you have your own building and property there are always repairs and improvements necessary. During a severe rain/wind event one Sunday morning the cross on top of the cupola on our temple was blown down. This was the second cross since 2003, the first one being wood and the second a plastic/composite material. This time our new cross is made of aluminum tubing, welded in a NASCAR frame shop at no charge as a favor to one of our members. Being metal this new cross required a lightning rod on top with cables going down the sides of the building to 8' ground rods. We expect this cross, covered in bright gold, with non-conductive guy wires will last quite a long time. Replacement of the east porch and ramp on our Activity Center was completed in concrete (no further rotting), AND I Have a donor to put rock about 3+ feet up off the ground all around the church building which will certainly beautify out temple. This work will begin when the weather gets cooler. We still have much caulking and paint touch up to do which we will do ourselves.

St. Sava Orthodox Church

Allen, Texas

Fr. Photius Avant

Our community gives glory to God for the blessings we have been given this last year. As a parish, we are 74% American, both converts and children of Russian and Eastern European immigrants. We are 16% Russian-born, and the remaining 10% are comprised of Ukrainians, Bulgarians, Georgians, Mexicans, Serbs, Kazakhs, and Eritreans. Approximately 12% are aged 60 and above, 22% are in their 40's or 50's, 25% are in their 20's or 30's, 8% are teenagers, and 33% are children. Our average Sunday attendance is between 70 and 80 people, and we continue to have well attended services during the week, which includes the Divine Liturgy on Monday, Vespers on Wednesday, Divine Liturgy on Thursday, and Great Vespers on Saturday. We have had four baptisms and one reception by penitence and statement of faith. There are currently two catechumens and three inquirers. We had one wedding and one funeral.

Catechumen classes meet on Wednesday and Saturday, and there are limited four to five week Bible studies throughout the year. Youth group meets on Sunday after Liturgy, and book lovers gather on the last Thursday of every month for Book Club. Outreach to the community includes volunteering and financial assistance to the Samaritan Inn, a homeless shelter for families, and weekly visits to Orthodox and inquiring inmates at Seagoville Federal Prison.

Our architect is finishing the last details for our new building, and he should be done in a few weeks. The loan officer with whom we are in contact said that his bank would grant us a loan if we were able to secure \$300,000 in pledges. We have launched a capital campaign to raise \$300,000 toward our new building, and we are happy to say that, after only two months, we have secured over \$200,000 in pledges from faithful members of our community and beyond our community. With our 4th of July fundraiser, we received support from St. Seraphim Orthodox Cathedral in Dallas, St. Sarkis Armenian Apostolic Church in Carrollton, and St. Paul Malankara Syriac Orthodox Church in Plano. This last year has been truly blessed, and we trust in the mercy of God for the coming year, whatever it may bring.

St Seraphim of Sarov Orthodox Cathedral
Dallas, Texas
Archimandrite Gerasim (Eliel), Fr. John Anderson

Your Grace, Reverend Fathers, brothers and sisters of the Diocese of the South,

2015 proved to be another year of healing for the Cathedral community. Church attendance, participation in the sacramental life of the Church, educational programs, inquirers classes, and tithing proved stronger than 2014. These trends continue into 2016 as well.

We continue our transition from private to corporate instruction, from personal to communal gathering. While this transformation, long overdue, is just beginning, it is already bearing fruit. Inquirers and catechumens have become, first of all, part of the worshipping community of the Cathedral. We have had not only many receptions into the Church, but the baptism of many children as well. By the end of June 2016 we have already surpassed the total number of baptisms and receptions from 2015. We are now insisting that couples preparing for marriage attend the Marriage Preparation Seminar at the local Greek Orthodox Church in Dallas. This is another step to make the instruction of our faithful corporate rather than private, belonging to the life of the Church instead of an exchange behind closed doors.

2015 saw the completion of the Archbishop Dmitri Memorial Chapel. His re-interment, at which His Beatitude, Metropolitan TIKHON, presided, took place on March 4th–5th, 2016. It was the fruit of clergy and lay leadership, spearheaded by Sub-deacon Vladimir Grygorenko, active nearly every day, in the Memorial Chapel project, years before he began to adorn the chapel with iconography. The Iconography at St Seraphim Cathedral is the foundation of our catechesis. The return of Archbishop Dmitri to the Cathedral marks a gradual shift from a house of worship to a place of pilgrimage. In 2015 we refinished the dome on our Cathedral, arranged

attractive lighting to illumine the cupola, thereby drawing the attention of the local community to our Cathedral. A new dome crowns the Memorial Chapel as well.

As a Cathedral community we also hosted a number of events this last year including Diocesan meetings, guest speakers, meetings with Metroplex clergy and laity, and youth conferences. In January we hosted the 2016 Pan-Orthodox Youth and Camp Workers Conference. This served as a constructive response to criticism of our own youth camp program, providing essential training to those overseeing our children. Following last years' successful All Saints Summer Camp, enrollment in 2016 jumped to 83 children under the leadership of Priest Jason Foster. St Seraphim Cathedral continues to actively support to IOCC and the missionary work of OCMC.

On the 5th Sunday of Lent, 2015, Priest Philip LeMasters from St Luke Antiochian Church in Abilene, TX addressed the Orthodox people of Dallas at the Pan-Orthodox Vespers, while in 2016, His Grace ALEXANDER made his first episcopal visit coinciding with the DFW Pan-Orthodox Vespers at which His Grace addressed the faithful. During Bright Week, 2016 we organized the celebration of the Divine Liturgy at our sister parishes around the DFW Metroplex. On June 11th, St Seraphim Cathedral hosted the Enthronement of His Grace, Bishop ALEXANDER, again well attended by our sister parishes throughout the Diocese of the South.

As a Parish we have committed to our support of North Dallas Shared Ministries. This will provide more focused attention on food drives, volunteering in social outreach and charity, and provide better service to those coming to us in need. The impoverished and the ailing in our community have not been neglected. We have raised and dispersed more funds through our Charity Fund during 2015–2016 than ever before.

Sustained increased attendance throughout the year resulted in tithes exceeding our budgetary expectations. This allows us to continue to pay down the debt on the Memorial Chapel, the resurfacing of the dome, and the remodel of the Bishop's residence. The direction of the Cathedral community continues to offer a strong liturgical life, sustained catechetical instruction, Pan-Orthodox leadership, and meaningful outreach to our community. This has been possible due primarily to a united Parish Council replete with great skills and commitment.