

Report for the 2017 Diocesan Assembly from the South-Central Deanery

Deanery Events

The Diocesan Clergy Retreat was held February 10th–12th at St George the Great-martyr Parish in Pharr, TX. His Eminence, Archbishop Alexander, delivered a series of talks on Old Testament themes: Adam as priest, the high Christology of the fathers, the Spirit overshadowing the Temple, the Theotokos as the dwelling place of glory, a discussion of the chariot in Ezekiel and the glory of God, finishing with the human person as the dwelling place of God.

On his pastoral visit to St Barbara Orthodox Church in Fort Worth, His Eminence, Archbishop Alexander, met with Dallas Orthodox Clergy in the evening and spoke to the Dallas Deanery Clergy the next morning.

Children from the South-Central Deanery participated in the All Saints Winter Camp on Feb 10–12th at Holy Nativity Church in Shreveport, LA. The theme was “Fuel for Lent.”

All Saints Summer Camp was held at Cooper Farms in Ledbetter, TX between June 25th to 30th, 2017. The theme was “Here am I. Send Me.” Priest Jason Foster organized the camp: 105 children attended and twenty adults were present in various capacities. The camp represents the common work of the Mississippi River and South-Central Deaneries.

During Great Lent Dallas-Fort Worth parishes participated in Sunday Evening Lenten Vespers at Greek Orthodox and Antiochian parishes as well as at St Seraphim Cathedral.

During Bright Week in 2017 Deanery clergy concelebrated the Paschal services in different parishes in the Dallas-Fort Worth area.

All Saints of North America Orthodox Church, Albuquerque, NM

Episcopal visit on October 28–29th, 2016.

Metrical 2016: Baptism 6, Chrismation 3, Marriage 0, Funeral 2.

St Sava Orthodox Church, Allen, TX has an average Sunday attendance of 100 people. Divine Liturgy is celebrated Tuesday, Thursday, and Sunday. The parish hosted a marriage seminar, entitled “Sacred Image, Sacred Marriage” on January 7th, 2017 led by Presbytera Kerry Pappas. This seminar launched a monthly class entitled: “You and Me Forever.”

On July 4th, 2017, the parish hosted its 4th Annual 4th of July celebration, as one more step in fundraising to build a new temple. A youth group meets on Friday evening with instruction on Scripture and Sunday School focuses on an explanation of the Gospel reading.

Our operating budget is \$14,000.00/month. The parish continues its building campaign, the Architect has designed plans, a contractor has presented his bid, and the parish is prepared to spend \$ 1.1 million on its new temple. We are continuing to develop our capital reserves.

The Parish operates St Sava Prison Ministry, and supports Samaritan Inn and Allen Food Pantry.

Metrical July 2016 to July 2017: Baptism 7, Chrismation 2, Marriage 1, Funeral 1.

St Jonah Orthodox Church, Alpine, TX. At the beginning of May, Priest Nicholas Roth transferred to the Sts George and Alexandra Orthodox Church in Fort Smith, AR and so the parish remains at present without a priest.

During the last year the parish focused on making some renovations to their building, on adult education, and on outreach in the community.

Metrical 2016: Baptism 1, Chrismation 0, Marriage 0, Funeral 0.

Archangel Gabriel Orthodox Mission, Azle, TX

In September of 2016 St. Barbara's inaugurated (*on a weekly basis*) a new mission effort 45 minutes West of Ft. Worth.

Archbishop Alexander has blessed the mission with the name of Archangel Gabriel. The effort has been made possible with the help of members of St. Barbara's (*7 families in all*) who reside in Azle, Springtown and Weatherford, TX as well as participation from other parishioners.

From September through January the group met in homes almost every Tuesday night at 6 pm for Vespers, a meal and fellowship. Attendance figures run between 15 and 25 people (*adults, teens and children*). In Feb 2017 the mission signed a lease on an 1800 square foot storefront facility in Azle. It enjoys good visibility from the highway and members of the mission have worked tirelessly to renovate the interior. Priest Thaddeus Werner, Chaplain at Lackland Air Force Base, donated a beautiful portable Iconostasis. St. Barbara's helps out with most of the mission's normal monthly expenses, allowing growth of the group's bank account from generous donations. Members of the mission have offered their time and effort, as well as monetary contributions. The nascent community is not self-sustaining financially, but we hope that the mission will develop over the next year, becoming a viable candidate for a Church Planting Grant.

Metrical Records recorded at St Barbara Orthodox Church.

Holy Apostles Orthodox Church, Bixby, OK

We have had two baptisms (babies) within the past 12 months. We have had no weddings or funerals. We currently have 6 adults and 2 teenagers in Inquirer's class, all of whom are fairly serious. One family has moved away, and one student has graduated high school and gone off to college. We celebrated the feast of Ss. Peter and

Paul with the local Greek Orthodox Community, and they joined us the next day for our parish feast—the Synaxis of the 12 Apostles. We also concelebrated the Synaxis of the Theotokos, the Feast of St. Stephen, the Blessing of Waters (at the Arkansas River), and the Sunday of Orthodoxy with the local Greek and Antiochian parishes.

During the academic year, we have church school on Sundays for approximately 50 children, as well as a Continuing Education class for adults, taught by various parishioners (and by myself). During the school year, we also have a growing homeschool co-op that meets on Fridays. Inquirer's classes take place on Friday evenings. We strive to maintain a healthy liturgical cycle, with Monday being the only day in which there is not a service in the church.

Metrical July 2016 to June 2017: Baptism 2, Chrismation 0, Marriage , Funeral 0.

St Seraphim Orthodox Cathedral, Dallas, TX

Last October the Cathedral purchased property adjacent to the church hall on the corner of Wycliff Ave and Throckmorton. In the autumn we formed the *Eikon Teen* Fellowship that meets monthly at the Cathedral.

During July and August, 2016 Reader Daniel Greeson helped at the Cathedral as part of a summer internship.

On September 10th, 2016 the Cathedral hosted the workshop: “Equipping the Saints,” a Pan-Orthodox Sunday School Teacher Workshop led by Elissa Bjeletich from Austin, TX.

On September 16th–18th Fr Gregory Jensen led a three-part Retreat, entitled, "Christian Discipleship and Our Call to Holiness."

On November 12th, Josh Lourie and Nathan A Jacobs visited the Cathedral and screened their new film, “Becoming Truly Human.”

On December 4th, 2016 Sub-deacon Chrysostom was ordained to the diaconate by His Eminence, Archbishop Alexander, at St Barbara Orthodox Church in Fort Worth.

On May 21st our parishioner Elena Tsvetkova offered a Concert of Piano Music by J. S. Bach, J. Brahms, P. Tchaikovsky, and N. Medtner.

In June 2017 Deacon Theophan Warren transferred to the Diocese of the South from the Diocese of the Midwest and has been attached to St Seraphim Cathedral.

The Slavonic Liturgy on the 4th Saturday of every month continues to be well attended but the Spanish Liturgy is poorly attended.

We have contracted Hidell and Associates to help us develop a master plan for the construction of a substantial Cathedral Hall.

Metrical [July 15th, 2016–July 15th, 2017] Baptism 14, Chrismation 4, Marriage 1, Funerals 5.

St Paul Orthodox Church, Denison, TX has had a difficult year due to the decline in health of Priest Michael Storozuk. He has had several cardiac procedures performed during the last year. We continue to pray for his recovery.

The parish is sending one parishioner and his family to St Tikhon's Seminary in August.

Metrical 2016: Baptism 0, Chrismation 0, Marriage 0, Funeral 0.

St Maximus Orthodox Church, Denton, TX

This year (2017) at St. Maximus shows record attendance (average attendance at Sunday Liturgy is 102, up 11 from last year; Sat Vigil 40). Currently we have one active catechumen and another six people attending the initial class for inquirers. We have been forced to use our narthex as part of the nave on Sunday to accommodate everyone. We serve Liturgy regularly on Thursdays. As most of our children are homeschooled, many attend with their mothers on Thursdays, attendance ranging between 30 and 50.

They have various activities after Liturgy including PE, field trips, singing at a nursing home, etc. Our great need, beyond more of Christ in our life, is for money to build a church and confirmation about where to build. We also serve a Liturgy in Slavonic for Russian speakers the first Saturday of the month 7-8 times a year. We have 100 active Orthodox adults and 56 children.

The parish will be sending one seminarian to St Vladimir's Seminary in August.

His Eminence, Archbishop Alexander, visited St Maximus on the weekend of July 30th–31st.

Metrical 2016: Baptism 12, Chrismation 3, Marriage 0, Funeral 0.

St Barbara Orthodox Church, Fort Worth, TX

In addition to its normal cycle of services, St. Barbara's conducts an adult/teen class on Wednesday night after Vespers, and a Book Study on Saturday afternoon. Church School meets once a month on Saturday, prior to Vespers; material is provided for parents to use at home during the school year. General Confession is conducted once a month prior to a Wednesday Vespers, as a supplement to personal confession throughout the year.

Parish Council Members continue to work hard at their respective ministries: Catechumen and Adult Education, Charities, Cleaning and Beautification, Coffee Hour and Kitchen, Greeters, Media and Outreach.

In July 2016 Fr. Joshua Trant and family moved to St Matthew Orthodox Church in *Baton Rouge*. The parish supports one seminarian, Antwian Davis, in his second year at St. Vladimir's Seminary. In September of 2016 we enjoyed an Annual Parish Picnic at a parishioner's lake house, while a Ministries Fair was conducted in the Church Hall on September 18.

In October 2016 we chose Mr. Michael Hoffer to be the architect for our new Temple. In December 2016 the parish hosted His Eminence, Archbishop Alexander, for our patronal Feast of St.

Barbara. At the Divine Liturgy the Archbishop ordained the servant of God, Chrysostom Arthur to the Diaconate, the first ordination ever to take place at St. Barbara's. With his visit the parish hosted a Sunday evening Pan-Orthodox Clergy Meeting, as well as a Deanery Clergy Meeting on Monday, December 5th. On Jan 27th, 2017 St. Barbara's hosted a portion of the yearly lecture series, *Perspectives*, sponsored by NTOM (North Texas Orthodox Missions), "*The Church as Family*." Speakers for the evening were Archimandrite Gerasim from St. Seraphim Cathedral and Archpriest Anthony Karbo from Holy Theophany Orthodox Church in Colorado Springs, CO. On the third Sunday of January the parish enjoyed its Annual Chili and Cornbread Competition. In March and April the parish held its 34th Annual Pysanky Festival. This event has become a kind of local tradition to which many non-Orthodox Christians look forward. Along with annual Pysanky Classes the two affairs are enjoyable outreach, social and fund-raising activities. St. Barbara's also conducted its 2nd Annual Easter Egg Hunt. In late May/early June a young lady from the parish took part in a two-week retreat at the Nativity Monastery in Kemp, TX. Two teens participated in the All Saints Youth Camp in Ledbetter, TX, with one mother offering her services as Camp Counselor.

After a number of interviews and much deliberation, we selected an accomplished Ft. Worth Architect, Mr. Michael Hoffer, to help with the design of the new St. Barbara Church. He has designed two large Orthodox Churches in North Texas and worked on projects of considerable size throughout DFW. The Council and Building Committee will finalize an exterior design for the new Church by September, submitting the initial plans for His Eminence's blessing.

During 2016 St. Barbara's averaged 99 people per Sunday Liturgy. During 2017 the parish is averaging 104 people each Sunday.

Another 12 people are in various stages of the catechumen/inquirer process.

Metrical [July, 2016 to July 2017]: Baptism 12, Chrismation 0, Marriage 0, Funeral 1.

Sts Cyril and Methodius Orthodox Church

Metrical 2016: Baptism 0, Chrismation 0, Marriage 0, Funerals 0

St George the Great-martyr Orthodox Church, Pharr, TX

This year the Fr Antonio and Matushka Elizabeth celebrated their 15th Anniversary at the parish.

The parish has sent one parishioner, Reader Silouan and the Burns family, to St Tikhon's Seminary in July 2017. The Burns family will be there for approximately three years with the hopes of being assigned here afterwards.

On an average Sunday 50 people attend, but at times there are up to 70–75. A larger worship space is needed. St. George has had way over 100 attend special services even though it does get a little crowded. We are challenged at the present by the need to pay off the mortgage on our “new” hall space.

The St George Food Pantry continues to serve those in need of food in the community. Most months 80 to 100 families are served twice a month. This provides our Church a wonderful opportunity to serve others and to connect with the community. A video was created for this activity and can be watched at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LM996tTxHEc>.

The 2016 International Festival was a success and has been very well received by the community. A video was created and can be watched at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r5g38FG_e5E.

His Eminence, Archbishop Alexander, visited the parish on February 10th–12th. The Parish then hosted the DOS Clergy Retreat on February 13th–15th, 2017.

Mission work in Mexico is an ongoing project of the St George Church and Archpriest Antonio continues to visit Mexico several times a year.

Fr. Antonio also represents the DOS as an “at large” member of the Metropolitan Council. Matushka Elizabeth represents our Deanery at the DOS Council.

Metrical 2016: Baptism 5, Chrismation 3, Marriage 2, Funeral 1. [During the first half of 2017 there 1 baptism and 2 Chrismations].

St Anthony the Great Orthodox Church, San Antonio, TX

Metrical 2016: Baptism 5, Chrismation 1, Marriage 0, Funeral 0.

All Saints Orthodox Mission, Victoria, TX

Our Mission continues to struggle. Stagnation in the petroleum industry has had effects on the Victoria area. As a result several of our families have moved away, seeking employment elsewhere. Average Sunday attendance is 15-20. However, on the bright side, we have celebrated two infant baptisms in the last year. Also, we recently had a family move back to town after a few years elsewhere. We also have a couple of serious inquirers. We have been able to do some long-needed maintenance on our temple. We now have a Facebook page, in addition to our website. We also maintain contact with our parishioners through a monthly email newsletter. In addition to services, we have a monthly potluck luncheon following Sunday Liturgy. Father Dimitri has become active in a local clergy alliance. Through these contacts, we have able to inform more people in the area about the existence of our Mission and in general about the truth of the Orthodox Faith.

Metrical 2016: Baptism 3, Chrismation 0, Marriage 0, Funeral 0.

St. Nektarios Orthodox Mission in Waxahachie, TX has just celebrated its fifth year anniversary. We are in the midst of the second year of the OCA Planting Grant and are enjoying the

opportunities it has afforded us to keep a full-time priest. I continue my work at Nativity Monastery, celebrating Divine Liturgy weekly as well as offering classes. This is possible because of the Planting Grant and we are grateful for it.

Our average Sunday attendance is approximately twenty-five people. We have suffered some loss this year through families moving away as well as several of the faithful falling asleep in the Lord. But we have maintained a healthy budget and met all of our giving goals this year as well as each of the preceding years. We made some efforts on developing our parish life by holding several events including our annual IOCC yard sale fund-raiser, which allowed us to open our doors to the community and allowed them to be charitable to Orthodox Christians around the world. We also have given classes now for several years to the broader Waxahachie community on Orthodox iconography, which have been well received.

We currently have four catechumens and a new family of seven that are inquiring. This has been encouraging after a long period of quietness and modest growth. There were three baptisms celebrated over the last year along with three funerals. Overall, our mission life seems to be moving along in a healthy way, though we remain eagerly patient for Christ to enlarge his Church here in Waxahachie.

Metrical 2016: Baptism 3, Chrismation 1, Marriage 1, Funerals 3.

St Basil the Great Orthodox Church, Weatherford, OK

By way of overview it has been a blessed year. We have had one chrismation, one Orthodox couple move into the area, and a single woman transfer membership from OKC. With the stability we've enjoyed and these additions to our parish, we have increased average Sunday attendance from about 12 to usually 18 ... and several times over 20.

With our temple remodel almost complete, by early autumn we hope to begin dedicating funds to advertising and events in order to expose more people to the mission.

Metrical 2016: Baptism 2, Chrismation 1, Marriage 0, Funeral 0.

St Cyril of Jerusalem Orthodox Church, The Woodlands, TX.

Priest Benedict Crawford began serving in The Woodlands last August just after the Diocesan Assembly in Wilmington, NC.

St. Cyril Orthodox Mission, founded in November 2004, presently has a membership of 32 adults and 21 children. Average Sunday attendance this year has been 54. We host a Tuesday evening class on the faith, plus weekday Vespers for feasts.

Fr. Benedict Crawford arrived with his family in August 2016. In March 2017, John Lickwar was appointed as choir director, and since then our choir has flourished under his direction. We have seen slow but steady growth in the past year; each weekend new visitors come.

We currently face loss of access to the property that we have rented for the past several years. We are looking for alternative venues for our mission, possibly even north of the Woodlands in the Conroe area.

Metrical July 2016 to July 2017: Baptism 3, Chrismation 0, Marriage 0, Funeral 1.

Monastery of the Archangel Michael, Canones, NM

On July 8th, 2016 Monk Silouan was ordained to the Diaconate by Archbishop Alexander at the Monastery of the Archangel Michael in Canones, NM.

On October 28th, Hierodeacon Silouan was ordained to the Holy Priesthood by Archbishop Alexander at the Monastery of the Archangel Michael in Canones, NM.

On July 4th, 2017 Hieromonk Silouan was elevated as Abbot of the Archangel Michael Monastery in Canones, NM.

The Monastic Brotherhood now consists of the Abbot, three monks and two novices.

Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ Monastery in Kemp, TX hosted several conferences this last year:

“Silence and presence: Hearing the Gospel in a Noisy World,” by Priest John Mikita of Tyler, TX on September 24th, 2016.

Novice Svetlana was tonsured as Riassaphore-nun of Nun Susanna on December 19th, 2016.

Patronal feast at which His Eminence, Archbishop Alexander, presided. He gave an address as well entitled, *The Role of the "Spiritual Father" in Orthodoxy*, on December 30th.

Priest Rodney Torbic offered a Lenten Retreat entitled *Prayer: Essential and Beneficial in Our Lives!* on March 11, 2017.

Priest Vasile Tudora of St John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church led a Youth Retreat in May.

Archpriest Chad and Matushka Thecla Hatfield offered a presentation entitled: “Marriage: Pilgrimage to the Eternal,” on May 27, 2017.