

**Report of the South-central Deanery  
Dallas, TX**  
Submitted by Archimandrite Gerasim

Within the South-central Deanery the Cathedral, Parishes, and Missions continue to experience positive growth and development.

Since the last Diocesan Assembly in St Louis, Missouri two veteran priests have departed this life: Archpriest Michael Storozuk (September 4<sup>th</sup>, 2018) and Archpriest Dimitri Cozby (May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2019).

In addition to their loss to the Deanery, last summer Priest David Bozeman was transferred from St Nektarios Mission in Waxahachie to St John of Damascus Orthodox Church in Tyler, TX in the Mississippi River Deanery.

In our far-flung deanery two other priests have stepped up to address parish vacancies: Archpriest Fred Janecek and Priest Basil Biberdorf, respectively, have been serving at St Jonah the Wonderworker in Alpine, TX and at St Nektarios in Waxahachie, TX.

His Eminence, Archbishop Alexander, visited the Dallas-Fort Worth area to consecrate the St Sava Orthodox Church in Allen, TX on Feb 16<sup>th</sup>, 2019. On that day Archbishop Alexander also ordained Michael Rehmet to the Diaconate to serve at St Maximus the Confessor Orthodox Church in Denton, TX. During his visit the Archbishop met with candidates to the Diaconal Vocations Program and Seminary as well as those preparing for ordination. Archbishop Alexander later returned to St Maximus the Confessor Orthodox Mission in Denton, TX on June 6<sup>th</sup>, 2019, the feast of the Ascension of our Lord, and ordained Sub-deacon Anthony Dax Stokes to the diaconate.

Church Construction:

Following the lead of St Sava Orthodox Church, All Saints of North America Orthodox Mission in Albuquerque, NM will begin building their temple toward the end of the year. Again I have attached the report of Archpriest Nikolay Miletkov because it illustrates the community activity that lies at the heart of their effort to build an Orthodox temple.

Holy Apostles Orthodox Church in Bixby, OK is focusing on the construction of a viable parish hall, desperately needed to serve the needs of the growing congregation.

Parish Milestones

On January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2019 St Anthony the Great Orthodox Church celebrated its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary. His Eminence, Archbishop Alexander visited the parish, celebrated the Divine Liturgy, tonsured readers, and deliberated the assignment of a new parish priest in September. Archpriest Leo Poore will retire at the end of August and Priest David Wooten will be assigned as Priest-in-charge of St Anthony the Great Orthodox Church.

On Thomas Sunday, 2019 the St George the Great-martyr Orthodox Church celebrated the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their parish. They continue their missionary and philanthropic work. Priest Silouan Burns, presently a seminarian who comes from St George the Great-martyr Church, will serve this summer for six weeks at St George even though he is now part of the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania.

#### Parish Events:

The Orthodox Christian faithful of the South-Central Deanery always have Pan-Orthodox events at which to participate, especially in the Dallas-Fort Worth area.

On March 23, 2019 Dr Jeannie Constantinou led a retreat called “The Judge on Trial: The Scandalous Narrative of Holy Week,” sponsored by North Texas Orthodox Missions and the St Barbara Philoptochos.

On March 30<sup>th</sup> Archimandrite Sergius of St Tikhon’s Monastery led a retreat on prayer at the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ Women’s Monastery.

The following weekend Archpriest Michael Oleksa made the rounds at Deanery parishes with presentations on the Saints of Alaska, Orthodox Missions, and the Sundays of Great Lent.

On July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2019 Dr Jeffrey McDonald, a long-term OCMC Missionary to Albania, will offer a lecture on St Gregory the Theologian [sponsored by North Texas Orthodox Missions] to give the faithful an example of what he is teaching in Albania.

This year two fundraisers were held in the DFW area for St Vladimir’s Seminary:

“The Lone Star Banquet” on Feb 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2019 and “Big Hats and Cocktails” on June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2019.

From June 18-24<sup>th</sup>, 2019 a group of eight people went from the South-central Deanery to participate in the Home Building Group at Project Mexico.

#### Missions

The St Cyril of Jerusalem Mission in The Woodlands, TX managed to lease a parcel of land last winter, and acquired two modular buildings that have been placed on that land. This is the first time that St Cyril of Jerusalem Mission has its own location and place to meet in the Woodlands.

The St Maximus the Confessor Mission has enjoyed excellent growth in the last few years. I am attaching the report of Archpriest Justin to the Deanery Report so that our fellow priests can read it in full and see the effort their parish is making to develop a parish community that draws people to the Orthodox Church.

Archpriest John Anderson has been serving monthly at both Sts Cyril and Methodius Orthodox Church in Hartshorne, OK and also at St Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church in Denison, TX.

St Basil the Great Orthodox Mission in Weatherford, OK experienced significant growth this spring with the arrival of two Orthodox families and by receiving seven people into the Orthodox Church at Pascha.

At the beginning of August Priest Chrysostom Arthur will be assigned to serve at St Gabriel Mission in Azle, TX, about half an hour northwest of St Barbara Orthodox Church.

All Saints Summer Camp took place this year between July 1st and 5th with participation distributed evenly among the adjoining Mississippi River and South-Central Deaneries. Approximately 160 children participated and we enjoyed good staffing from our parishes as well. Deacon Herman Garrison and Sub-deacon Anthony Davis contributed greatly to the Camp program as did Priest Valentin Ilies from a Romanian Orthodox mission in San Antonio, TX.

### Clergy Notes

We are happy to welcome Archpriest John Reeves, formerly a priest of the DOS, back from Pennsylvania to McKinney, TX as a retired priest, now living closer to his children and grandchildren.

In addition to the ordination of two deacons mentioned above, Deacon Herman Jonathan Garrison was ordained at St Tikhon's Seminary on May 26th, 2019. As a current DOS seminarian, he interned this summer at Holy Nativity Orthodox Church in Shreveport, LA.

Sub-deacon Anthony Davis graduated from St Vladimir's Seminary in May 2019. Sub-deacon Anthony was a big help at All Saints Summer Camp. He will be working in the Dallas-Fort Worth area and attending St Barbara Orthodox Church.

Several new students from the area will begin seminary studies in September.

## **All Saints of North America Orthodox Church**

### **Albuquerque, New Mexico**

*2019 Parish Report*

*submitted by Fr Nikolay Miletkov, Rector*

- By God's grace and because of a most generous, large donation and additional pledge from an anonymous donor, we hope to start the construction of our Church later this year! Glory to God for All Things!
- All Saints of North America currently has 91 pledging members. The average Sunday attendance is around 90.
- On July 4th, 2018 John Teifel and Silouan Chris Parchert were made Sub-deacons by His Eminence Archbishop Alexander at the Monastery of the Holy Archangel Michael in Canones, NM.
- Sub-deacon Silouan Chris Parchert has successfully completed the OCA Diaconal Vocations Program. He will participate this summer in his second Diaconal Liturgical Practicum, which will be held in July at St Seraphim

- Cathedral in Santa Rosa, CA. It is our hope that at His next visit to our parish, Archbishop Alexander will ordain Sub-deacon Silouan to the Holy Diaconate.
- 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.
  - Central to our parish life are our Sunday School, Youth Group, OCF, Men's & Women's Groups and Monthly Slavonic Liturgy.
  - Fr Nikolay participates regularly in the monthly New Mexico Orthodox Clergy Fellowship Meetings.
  - With the invitation of the Russian Department at the University of New Mexico, Fr Nikolay, continues to lead one yearly session of the course *Saints and Sinners*. The class looks at the important role The Orthodox Church plays in Russian history, culture, and literature.
  - Our parish still partners with Hope Works, a local day shelter. We support this organization by serving monthly a meal at their center as well as providing financial donations, food, clothes, and hygiene items.
  - The Sisterhood of St. Anna continues to organize fundraising events and facilitate charitable giving for local, national, and international causes.
  - We also maintain our relationship with the Albuquerque Astronomical Society (TAAS) by hosting their quarterly public star gazing events. This has proven to be a wonderful outreach opportunity for our parish.
  - The annual Theophany Blessing of the Rio Grande affords our parish increased visibility in the Albuquerque community as the *Albuquerque Journal* covered this event once again.

### **St. Maximus the Confessor Orthodox Mission**

**Denton, Texas**

*Submitted by Archpriest Justin Frederick*

*On June 20, 2019*

This July marks the eighteenth complete year since the founding of the mission in 2001. By God's grace, the parish is into its fourth year of vigorous growth. Average attendance at Divine Liturgy on Sundays has risen from 91 in 2016, to 109 in 2017, to 137 in 2018, and, so far in 2019, 151. Average Vigil attendance on Saturday evening has risen from 34 in 2016, to 40 in 2017, to 54 in 2018, and, so far, to 74 in 2019. Over the past twelve months, Sunday attendance has averaged 147, with an all-time record of 195 at Pascha. In the past twelve months, we have baptized five babies of parishioners and received another seventeen children and adults into the Orthodox Church. Six adults wait to be received in August, and another ten catechumens and some ten serious inquirers await. We had one funeral, no weddings.

The parish is raising money to build a proper temple (besides designated gifts, all money that come in over the monthly budget goes into the building fund) and working its way through the maze of municipal regulations towards getting a final

design and location to build on the property approved. We have recruited and are presently training new people for our ministry of Christian burial, the Myrrhbearers' Ministry. Special offerings and our alms budget help support four local charities: one that helps the indigent, one that ministers to unwed mothers, the prison ministry of a fellow priest, and a soup kitchen. Special offerings are also taken up to support seminarians, missions, the IOCC, and the like. Our choir just sang a special concert with a Russian quartet to raise money for our building fund. Our number of ordained clergy grew 200% with the ordination of Michael Rehmet to the Diaconate in February and Anthony Stokes to the diaconate on Ascension by Archbishop Alexander. We are sending a candidate, who was just elevated as a subdeacon, to seminary in the fall. The priest has his eye on other potential candidates for seminary and ordination and is working with them to season them in Church life, develop them in spiritual life, and train them extensively in serving, singing, reading, with service to Christ's Church in mind.

This past year we were enriched by Archbishop Alexander's visit on Ascension, by Fr. Michael Oleksa being with us during Lent to talk to our men's group about God's work in Alaska (before Vigil) and to the whole parish (after Vigil). Dr. Mark Tarpley also addressed the men's group and came another time to deliver the St. Maximus Memorial Lecture to the parish at the feast of St. Maximus on the topic of the reconciliation of men and women in St. Maximus. Many parishioners travelled to the Nativity of Our Lord Monastery in Kemp, TX, to hear Abbot Sergius of St. Tikhon's speak. Many attend the pan-Orthodox Vespers held at various parishioners in DFW each Lent.

St. Maximus continues to offer a full schedule of services including nearly daily Matins, which provides a good training ground for readers, singers, and future clergy. Every other month or so, we serve a first-Saturday-of-the-month Divine Liturgy in Church Slavonic. We offer a regular Thursday Divine Liturgy which is well-attended by mothers and their homeschooled children at which we have been preaching through the Old Testament in homilies directed at the children.

Catechism classes taught by Deacon Michael are held on Sundays after Liturgy and by the priest on Friday nights. Other classes are offered. We recently read and discussed the *400 Chapters on Love* by St. Maximus as well as our Lord's *Sermon on the Mount*, which also provided the theme and primarily material for our church school this year. We scaled church school back to just two classes this year, due to lack of space, teaching just Jr. and Sr. High ages. The St. David the Builder of Georgia men's group meets the second Saturday of each month for breakfast and either edifying instruction and discussion or a work project. Outside of Sunday liturgy and Coffee Hour (which is always a potluck meal), following the example of Archbishop Dmitri, the parish gathers often for picnics (Pascha, Memorial Day, our first annual Oktoberfest in October), for a parish Thanksgiving meal the Sunday before the Nativity Fast, a couple yearly open houses at the rectory, and an All Saints Party October 31, and a parish cookout and game night on the fast-free Friday after Pentecost. This has done much over the years to build the sort of community that attracts people to the Church.

**Holy Apostles Orthodox Church**

### **Bixby, Oklahoma**

*Submitted by Priest Ambrose Arrington*

*On July 16<sup>th</sup>, 2019*

Since last year's Diocesan Assembly, we have received 20 people into the church via baptism and/or chrismation (13 children/infants, 7 adults), but have celebrated no weddings or funerals. Ours is a very young parish with lots of children. On that note, our current major project is fundraising for a new parish hall with adequate fellowship and classroom space. We have received a matching pledge for the calendar year – all donations to the building fund will be matched up to \$500,000. We also look forward to Archbishop Alexander's visit in November—we have not had a bishop visit in 10 years.

### **Archangel Gabriel Mission**

**Azle, Texas**

*Submitted by Archpriest Basil Zebrun*

*On May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2019*

#### **Location:**

Azle is approximately 40 to 45 minutes west of St. Barbara's. As reported last year, the Mission has grass roots origins. Five families at St. Barbara's are within 10 minutes of the Mission's location, with two additional St. Barbara families about 30 minutes away in Springtown and Weatherford, respectively. Both towns are also located west of Ft. Worth. These seven family units initiated the effort almost three years ago. We have been meeting regularly once a week since the beginning of September 2016. Attendance for Tuesday night Vespers averages between 20 and 25, with more for twice a month Liturgies and special occasions. Fr. Chrysostom and Matushka Katherine Arthur from St. Seraphim Cathedral have been a great help in facilitating weekend services on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Saturdays and Sundays, as well as once a month on Tuesdays. The clergy couple look forward to continuing their service to Archangel Gabriel and to the Diocese in months to come.

#### **Facilities:**

The group currently meets in a renovated 1800 square foot storefront that has been beautifully transformed into chapel, hall, bathroom, office and kitchen space. In some cases, members absorbed the cost of renovation, while St. Barbara's helped with other expenses. Fr. Thaddeus Werner in San Antonio donated a lovely portable Iconostasis. Church members then expanded this work through donations and their own skills. Additionally, members and friends of the Mission have donated icons and chairs, custom-made icon stands and an altar. A search is ongoing for a permanent location offering several acres in a highly visible location.

#### **Outreach and Finances:**

The Mission has a website and a media team that helps greatly with advertising. Members took part in a local Community Outdoor Fair, which was rained out on the first day. Similar efforts will be attempted in the near future to introduce neighbors to Orthodoxy. Coffee Hours are offered after each evening and morning service to

foster fellowship, and a Parish Picnic was conducted on May 26, with invites sent to parishioners and friends of St. Barbara's. In addition, the Mission has a checking account, and is building up its reserves, using funds for additional material needs, looking forward to the day when a priest will be sent to the Azle, Weatherford, Springtown area. Free literature is always available in abundance for first time visitors. St. Barbara's helps out with the Mission's monthly expenses.

**Statistics and Membership:**

We have 25 people (*adults, teens and children*) who belong to the Mission, with additional members from St. Barbara's who help out on occasion with singing. Reader Stephen Bodnarchuk from St. Barbara's helps with the choir, directing, coordinating both music and choir rehearsals. At times we have as many as 7 or 8 people in the choir. Several principle members are part of the founding group of St. Barbara's. They bring their love for the Church and years of experience to the new Mission effort. In addition, we have other very dedicated and talented people as part of Archangel Gabriel who help to keep everything going on a monthly basis.

**St. Barbara Orthodox Church**  
**Ft. Worth, Texas**

*Submitted by Archpriest Basil Zebrun*  
*On May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2019*

The parish has an ongoing schedule of weekly, festal, Lenten and Paschal services.

**Building Program Update:**

The first phase of the St. Barbara Building Program was concluded over a year ago with a design and site plan approved by the parish and blessed by His Eminence Archbishop Alexander. Our next phase – voted on at the 2019 Parish Meeting – will include both an outdoor play area for children and an extension to the parking lot, allowing for a 60% increase in available spaces. We hope to have necessary documents and funding in place by the end of the year.

**Charity Efforts:**

Two families gave of their love, time and resources to host orphans this past year from Ukraine. A member of one family serves as a North Texas Regional Contact and Instructor for those wishing to serve as future host families. She and her husband provided this year two presentations on the topic for interested parishioners. A Medicine Drive for the local Presbyterian Night Shelter was initiated during Advent. Collections were taken for the St. Nektarios Medical Center in Uganda.

**Education:**

Once a month Church School classes utilized resources published by the OCA's Department of Religious Education: *Saints who were Physicians and Healers*. Inquirer and catechumen classes are conducted once a week. They focused most recently on *Beginning to Pray* by Archbishop Anthony Bloom, and on Fr. Alexander

Schmemmann's, *For the Life of the World*. Bible Studies were conducted on *The Sermon on the Mount* and *The Miracles of Christ* using Biblical texts and Archbishop Dmitri's commentaries as primary sources. Altar Server classes were also held at select times throughout the year. A special presentation in December was offered: *God is With Us: How the Incarnation transforms our Daily Living*. Special music rehearsals for both the youth and men of the parish have been initiated. And then finally, the Annual Pysanky (*Ukrainian Easter Egg*) Festival and Pysanky Classes remain popular fundraisers and social, outreach events, as well as opportunities to introduce people to this ancient religious folk art.

#### **Mission Efforts:**

In addition, we continue with Tuesday night Vespers, as well as twice a month Liturgies in Azle, Texas, about 40 minutes west of Ft. Worth. Archbishop Alexander blessed this Mission effort with the name of the Holy Archangel Gabriel. While Fr. Basil Zebrun celebrates most Tuesday services in Azle, we have been fortunate to have Fr. Chrysostom Arthur from St. Seraphim Cathedral to help out for twice a month Saturday Vespers and Sunday Liturgies. Attendance for the Mission's Vespers averages around 20 to 25 people, with 30 to 35 as the average on Sunday mornings. (*See more in separate report*).

#### **Seminary Graduate:**

St. Barbara's has been pleased to help sponsor Mr. Antwian (*Anthony*) Davis as a student at St. Vladimir Orthodox Seminary in New York during the past 3 years. Antwian graduated this past May and has accepted a Lay Chaplaincy Internship in Dallas. We look forward to Antwian's presence in the DFW area and to what lies ahead in terms of future Church responsibilities.

#### **Statistics:**

During 2018 we had 10 receptions into the Church, infants, children and adults. During the first half of 2019 St. Barbara's has experienced, in somewhat rapid succession, a number of births. We look forward to the baptisms of these and other infants soon to be born. St. Barbara's currently has 14 catechumens and/or inquirers. With regard to Church attendance, we averaged 101 people per Sunday Liturgy. Over the years, income has steadily increased with 2018 showing the highest overall income in parish history.