

Atlanta Deanery Reports - 2019

St. Mary of Egypt Orthodox Church, Norcross, GA

Fr. Cyprian DuRant

St. Mary's hosted a successful clergy conference this past February, featuring Hieromonk Chrysostomos of Koutloumousiou Monastery as the speaker. The responses to his talks were very positive.

We have made numerous physical improvements to our parish facilities including newly renovated restrooms, installation of a drainage system to the property, and new lampadas for the temple. Those who were here in February will know how desperately the drainage issue needed to be addressed.

Classes continue to be held on Thursday nights, and Sunday after coffee hour. Also, the children's Sunday school has seen a revival with an extra teacher to lessen the burden.

Recently, we began a program with volunteers gathering during the week to make sandwiches for the Loaves and Fishes program of our sister parish, St. John the Wonderworker.

We have had served 4 baptisms, and 1 funeral since the last assembly.

In the fall, we were blessed to have visitations of the Hawaiian Iveron Icon and the Icon of St. Anna from St. Tikhon's.

Fr. John Parker, the dean of St. Tikhon's Seminary, brought the latter icon as he visited the speak about the seminary.

St. John the Wonderworker Church, Atlanta, GA

Fr. Thomas Alessandroni

This year at St John the Wonderworker we have been working to strengthen our ministries and make them an integral part of the life of the parish. Members of our young adult's ministry were instrumental in organizing the second annual Connect conference which drew Orthodox young adults from across the country for a weekend of inspiring talks, worship and fellowship. The Conference was a great success, it sold out weeks before the conference and there is talk of having these conferences in other parts of the country. St John's was one of 14 parishes in the country to receive a grant from the Lily Foundation, to explore ways to retain young adults in the life of the church. The portion given to the

Orthodox is being administered by Holy Cross Seminary through the Telos program. The money has allowed us to put on events which are multigenerational and foster the development of leadership in the young adults to prepare them to take on responsibility for the ongoing life of the church.

Our adult education ministry has initiated a speaker program with the goal of having 4 speakers a year. We were blessed with a visit from Fr Seraphim Aldea who is building a monastery on the Isle of Mull, dedicated to All Celtic Saints. He gave a fascinating account of the lives of these very early but not well known Orthodox saints, and of his own adventures in taking on this daunting task. Matushka Rebecca Meyers and our parishioners Bruce and Joan McPherson went there on pilgrimage last summer and highly recommend it.

Our Parish will be hosting the National Brotherhood of St Moses the Black annual African American Ancient Christianity Conference in November. In anticipation of this we had a booth at the Atlanta Juneteenth celebration, commemorating the Emancipation Proclamation. Members of our local brotherhood displayed books and icons and engaged in conversation with many people. We are extending an invitation to all our Orthodox brothers and sisters to come and experience an Orthodox vision of racial reconciliation.

Since our last report we have received 4 adults, one teen and 5 new babies through Baptisms and 1 adult through Chrismation. We currently have 4 Catechumens. We have had 2 weddings and no funerals this year

We continue to serve the homeless and indigent; in our area through the Loaves and Fishes Program. Some of our members have been visiting other churches with a couple of our clients along to testify to the blessing the program has been in their lives. This has proved to be very effective and revived some of our financial and volunteer support.

We painted our church ceiling a deep blue and had a local iconographer surrounded the Pantocrator with Cherubim and Seraphim and the 4 Evangelists. He did a beautiful job and we hope to do a little more each year.

We are very grateful to our Lord for the many blessings and opportunities we have received and for the prayers and support of our Hierarch Archbishop Alexander and all the Diocesan leadership.

St. Innocent Orthodox Church, Macon GA

Fr. Theophan Buck

We have had another blessed year at St. Innocent. Our Sunday attendance has held steady and increased a bit to around 55-65 on an average Sunday. We continue to have visitors and people moving to our area that join our community. This Pentecost we Chrismated four

new adult members into the Church. Our choir continues to be one of our best assets. Prison ministry continues. We continue to post sermons and classes on YouTube and Fr. Theophan continues to give church tours and be regularly invited to the local colleges to give presentations on Orthodox Christianity.

As you may remember, last year we finished our new parish hall and over this past year we have been settling into it. It is amazing what having proper fellowship space does for a community! Our new facilities make having classes and having guest speakers much easier. As a result, we started a new Church School program which meets once a month on Saturday and is followed by Vespers and then food and fellowship. Being a parish with a sixty-mile radius, having Church School once a month and adding fellowship makes sense and has improved our participation. We also had an outreach event last fall which offered two classes to the general public entitled "From Christ to Constantine." This past Lent we brought in three monastic speakers, a sister from St. Elizabeth's Convent, the nuns from Mary and Martha Monastery, and Fr. Seraphim from the Mull Monastery. Finally, this year we celebrated our annual Pascha party at the new parish hall, and had record attendance. The parish hall is helping our parish grow, develop, and establish itself. In the past we have always felt a bit hamstrung by our lack of fellowship space.

Since we have been a parish which always seems to have a project going on, we wanted to make sure we weren't becoming overly self-focused. As we discussed this concern with the parish a volunteer came forward and we formed a charity group this past year. Each fasting season we raise funds for various needs. Our people are very generous and in the past year we have supported a pregnancy center, the various monastic visitors, a homeless ministry, and a group that helps kids with cancer. This past year we set a record with charity giving.

While being charitable, by God's grace, we were also able to add beautiful bells and a "bell tower" to our parish which has added beauty to our services. The purchasing of the bells felt as though every movement we made was ordained by God's grace and providence. The wood for the bell tower was donated and a dedicated parishioner and master carpenter built our new structure at low cost. We had a few members of St. Symeon in Birmingham come and teach us some basics of bell ringing. While this was going on, we also received funds to order a large, Amish style wooden boat playground which we recently built behind our parish hall. Again, God has been good to us!

This year has also had a lot of administrative developments. For our Cemetery, we finalized all the bylaws, rules and regulations and easement documents and after a long wait the pins were placed. In short, our Cemetery is in business. We also came up with an iron clad Parish Hall Usage document to protect us in the future. It's nice to have an honorable Judge as a member of our community!

Now that we have the facilities and everything is settling into order, in the coming year we are praying that God will reveal to us what direction or project we need to begin to work on. It would be nice to organize more outreach events to bring our community to our

parish. We may also, if it pleases the Lord, begin to focus on the first phase of iconography for our beautiful temple.

We are a thankful community and as we head into our 23rd year it is our prayer that God would continue to grace us, guide us, and send us spiritually hungry people and help us to do His work in the Middle Georgia region.

St. Basil the Great Mission, Marietta, GA

Archpriest Paul Burholt

The Mission of Saint Basil the Great in Marietta Georgia began informally as an Oratory and bookstore in a small rented house with the blessing of Metropolitan Jonah in 2010. In 2014 a store front was rented and renovated. Regular services began in August of that year with the blessing of Archbishop Nikon establishing St Basil's as a Mission of the Diocese. The present property was acquired in 2017 as a permanent home for the Mission.

Membership consists of approximately 80 souls, of whom 25 are children. This is an almost completely convert community. An average Sunday congregation might be around 50 people. Most make regular confession. There are adult education classes and children catechism classes. In the past year there have been 4 Baptisms, one marriage, and the reception of one adult convert.

Glory to God for All Things!

St. Luke Mission, Anniston, Alabama

Fr. Basil Henry

God continued to bless us this year with steady growth. We received eight new members through Holy Baptism and Chrismation. At the moment we have two catechumens. There was record attendance at our Holy Week services this year and about 70 attending the Pascha service. We have a particularly vibrant coffee hour brunch after the Divine Liturgy each Sunday. I am currently preparing the next series of Biblical Studies for our mid-week class. In the Fall, we will resume our monthly game nights at church and dinners at local restaurants.

In July, we have a major parish picnic and swimming day at a parishioner's house on Weiss Lake It is eagerly anticipated and includes ski jets, boating and loads of fun. Over the years each Christmas Season I have dressed up as Saint Nicholas/Santa Claus and travelled about

the area sometimes visiting nursing homes, hospitals, and showing up unexpectedly at various grocery stores right before Christmas. It is a blessing to naturally look the part and I love seeing the explosive joy on peoples faces, especially the children. In June our mission travelled to St. Symeon's wonderful new temple in Birmingham where I concelebrated with Fr. Alexander Fecanin the wedding of our Reader Nicholas and Rachel Bailey. We were blessed to have the Antiochian Deacon James Hargrave and his family join us at Pentecost as they travel the country gathering support for undertaking mission work in Kenya. This week we mounted a magnificent new handwritten icon of the Warrior Saints in our temple. It is quite large and was written for us by the wonderful iconographer, Fr. Jerome Sanderson. It will join other large icons of the All Saints of Africa and of the Unmercenary Saints.

Many of you knew my father-in-law, the Antiochian Archpriest, Fr. Stephen Rhudy. He had been living here in Anniston for a number of years since his retirement. He reposed in November after a prolonged battle with cancer. May his memory be eternal!

Please continue to pray for our work in this little corner of the Lord's Vineyard.

Sts. Constantine and Helen Mission, Helena, GA

Fr. Alexis Baldwin

Members: 19 adults (4 children)

Ave Attend: 8

Baptisms: 9 (2018) None (2019)

Chrismations: None

Catechumens: 1

Annual General Fund Income: \$9,000

Annual General Fund Expense: \$8,400

Charity Fund Income: As allocated

Capital Campaign and Building Fund: \$0

Rent/Own: Own Double wide trailer (chapel/kitchen/classrooms) with 2 acres

Services Offered: Twice a month Saturday Divine Liturgy; Divine Liturgy on the Old Calendar for Nativity and Theophany

St. Symeon the New Theologian Church, Birmingham, AL

Fr. Alexander Fecanin

St. Symeon's in Birmingham has had a positive year of continued growth. There were 12 adult converts, plus a 5-year old boy (son of a member), 3 infant baptisms and 3 weddings. There was record attendance for both Pascha and Palm Sunday. Fr. Seraphim Joa is attached and serves faithfully both here and as a supply priest for the Diocese.

Seminarian Phillip Ritchey will enter his third year at St. Vladimir's Seminary this fall.

The St. Symeon Choir's new CD recording of the Akathist to St. John of San Francisco, in English, has just been published in time for the celebration of the 25th anniversary of St. John's canonization on June 29. The recording features the Joy of All Who Sorrow Cathedral clergy with the St. Symeon singers. It is available for sale at stsymeon.com.

We have a regular ministry to a local women's shelter, including Saturday breakfasts and a collection for basic toiletry and hygiene items. There is also a small ministry to the homeless with some regular attendees at our fellowship meals following the Liturgy. Some of them do work around the church for compensation.

We have a festival in October which we call a "Food and Culture Fair," featuring ethnic foods, lectures and concerts.

Glory to God for all things!