



Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America  
Metropolis of Atlanta  
**Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church**  
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**January 2017 Bulletin**



## ***Christ is Born! Glorify Him!***

### **From Fr Dean:**

I pray that everyone had a Blessed Christmas and were recipients of God the Father's gift of His Son, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ whose birth brings to us the gift of salvation. As we pack away all the Christmas decorations, our attention now turns to the celebration of the beginning of a New Year.

At the beginning of a New Year, it is a tradition to make New Year Resolutions. Some make a resolution to lose weight, others to spend more time with family, others to give up some bad habit and the list goes on and on. For the most part, all our New Year Resolutions are broken and forgotten in just a couple of weeks. The following passage from St. Paul's letter to Titus guides us to make New Year Resolutions that are truly life changing. Resolutions that bring us closer to Christ and to each other. Read the passage carefully and make a commitment to make them part of your life in 2017.

"TITUS, my son, to the pure all things are pure, but to the corrupt and unbelieving nothing is pure; their very minds and consciences are corrupted. They profess to know God, but they deny him by their deeds; they are detestable, disobedient, unfit for any good deed. But as for you, teach what befits sound doctrine. Bid the older men be temperate, serious, sensible, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness. Bid the older women likewise to be reverent in behavior, not to be slanderous or slaves to drink; they are to teach what is good, and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, to be sensible, chaste, domestic and kind that the word of God may not be discredited. Likewise urge the younger men to control themselves. Show yourself in all respects a model of good deeds, and in your teaching show integrity, gravity, and sound speech that cannot be censured, so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say to us." *Titus 1:15-16; 2:1-8*

May 2017 be a Blessed, Healthy and a Happy Year as we continue our spiritual journey to salvation by committing our WHOLE life to Christ our God.

### **Schedule of Services**

Sunday Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am on Jan 1 with Fr Ezekiel  
Sunday Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am on Jan 8 with Fr Ezekiel  
Sunday Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am on Jan 15 with Fr Ezekiel  
Sunday Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am on Jan 22 with Fr Ezekiel  
Sunday Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am on Jan 29 with Fr Ezekiel

### **Visitors**

*A warm welcome to Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church  
We are glad to have you worship with us today  
Please join us for Fellowship Hour in our Social Hall after Liturgy*

**2016 – A Year of Faith . . .** As we look back over the past year at Holy Trinity, we have much to be thankful for. Holy Trinity still stands in faith as a beacon of Orthodoxy for the Mississippi Gulf Coast. It was a year of challenge and joy. Fr Ezekiel who along with Fr Dean continued serving Divine Liturgy throughout 2016.

Your Parish Council worked hard, but you worked harder to make it happen. Our Sunday Religious Education Program was very successful and well attended. We had several baptisms and chrismations: Julia Foskey and Donna Ricconi. We had one marriages blessed: David AbouDaud and Rondina Marceau. And there were two Orthodox weddings: John Collins and Donna Ricconi; and Dan Cerembei and Elizabeth Murray. We saw the passing of one of our beloved parishioners, Mary Makris. We built upon the Stewardship Program, increasing membership.

We had a very successful International Christmas Festival and Pastry Sale. It showcased all of the ethnic groups that make Holy Trinity their church (Greek, Russian, Ukrainian, Romanian, Belarusian, Kazakhstani, Georgian, Moldovan, those with Hungarian and German background. The Festival included dancing by Russian Kalinka Dancers (Adult & youth), and Greek Gulf Coast Hellenic Dancers, Ukrainian Dancers, plus the traditional foods of those ethnic groups.

We participated in the Gulf Coast Historical Society Event displaying our Greek, Russian, Romanian and Ukrainian cultures. The highlight of the event was the Greek and Russian dance performance. We continued with the Slavic Tradition of Blessing an Easter Basket and had wonderful Easter Week with the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ and a very well attended Agape Feast. We saluted Holy Trinity's veterans who give and gave so much through service to our country.

Our missionary work "Christmas on a Ship" was very well received where Holy Trinity hosts a ship that comes into Gulfport. We hosted a ship of Russian and Ukrainian seamen for their Orthodox Christmas giving Christmas gift packages to each seaman,

singing Christmas carols and saying the Lord's Prayer in Russian. We also had a very successful yard sale. A lay prayer service/Orthodox study group continued.

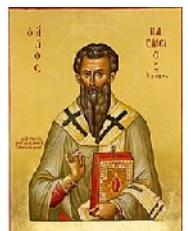
Our members also participated in an Orthodox Retreat at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral in New Orleans. The retreat focused on practicing Orthodoxy today and for future generations. Our church had the most participants at this retreat. We celebrated International Women's Day and Men's Day at our Church with a special luncheon and gifts. We conducted a special service on World Marriage Day honoring the vocation of marriage and family.

Holy Trinity became involved in Focus North America in the school backpack program where we provided twenty-four filled backpacks to the Biloxi School System for disadvantaged school children. We supported the OCMC Missionary Work in Alaska to work with the native youth. We continued to participate in several charities, Feeding the Hungry, Christmas Program, and Kids Make a Wish Program. Holy Trinity contributed to the Diakonia Retreat Center as part of the Guardian Angel Program. We contributed to Give Kids the World charity which provides vacations to terminally ill children and their families.

Holy Trinity supported her sister parishes by attending the Mobile GreekFest, New Orleans Greek Festival, and Gulf Shores Greek Night. Our Gulf Coast Hellenic Dancers performed at the Annual Gala Fundraiser of the Walter Anderson Museum of Art. We participated in the Armed Forces Retirement Home Social by performing the Greek and Ukrainian dances. Holy Trinity members traveled to the Russian Embassy in Washington DC to attend Maslenitsa 2016, which is the Russian Mardi Gras. Holy Trinity gave a presentation to the Gulf Coast Genealogical Society on the different cultures representing our Church and their history on the Gulf Coast. We created a library of books, CDs, DVDs, and other media for parishioners to use. We also created a Review of the Arts, which focuses on Orthodoxy, in our monthly newsletter.

Now as we look forward to 2017 and building upon our accomplishments with a sense of anticipation, contemplation of what may come, setting of goals, and prayer for health and happiness in the community. May we share in the joy of this season of light and life, expecting the great and abundant blessings of God in the coming year. Let us offer our worship and prayers, as we serve one another and all of the people, in the grace and power of Jesus Christ our Lord. To start the year we are blessed to celebrate two beautiful and holy feasts of the Church – the Feasts of St Basil and Theophany. *A major area we will focus on is the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of our Church.*

**Feast of St Basil - January 1st . . .** Saint Basil was born into a wealthy Christian family in Caesarea Cappadocia, Asia Minor, in 330 AD. He was one of six children, all of whom became saints. He visited monastic centers and he himself founded a monastic community where he lived with other monks for about five years. He wrote many rules and guidelines for



monastics so that all Eastern monasticism owes something to his spirit. He greatly cared for the poor and suffering and built an estate which included houses for travelers, a church, a hospital and a hospice all with a complete staff. A famine struck the area and sent many poor and starving into his care; their pain grieved him and he labored to feed them with his own hands. He wrote, "If you are reduced to your last loaf of bread and a beggar appears at your door then take the loaf and lift your hands to heaven and say, O Lord, I have but this one loaf. Hunger lies in wait for me but I revere Your commandments more than all other things". If you should say this, then the bread you gave in your poverty will be changed for an abundant harvest. Basil was aware of his own shortcomings and dispirited by disappointments in his life of struggles, wrote: "For my sins, I seem to fall in everything". Nevertheless, he was far from a failure. His labors, including his writings On the Holy Spirit greatly contributed to the final triumph of Nicene orthodoxy at the second Ecumenical Council of Constantinople in 381. He had a great effect on the formulation of monasticism, the Liturgy of Saint Basil is largely his own work, celebrated ten times during the liturgical year and author of the Anaphora (the central portion of the Divine Liturgy). We also celebrate St Basil with St Gregory the Great and St John Chrysostom on the Feast of the Three Great Hierarchs on January 30th.



**Feast of Theophany - January 6th . . .** Make ready, O Zebulon and prepare thyself, Nephthali. River Jordan, stop flowing and leap for joy at the Lord's coming for Baptism. Rejoice, O Adam, with our first mother; hide not yourself as in Paradise of old. For seeing us naked He has appeared, to clothe us with our first garment. Christ has appeared, to renew the whole of creation. Theophany means the "Manifestation of God." Jesus' Baptism by St. John the

Forerunner in the Jordan was the beginning of His public ministry. All three Persons of the Trinity were shown forth at one time and place: the Father testified from on high to the divine Sonship of Jesus; the Son received His Father's testimony; the Holy Spirit was seen in the form of a dove descending from the Father and resting upon the Son. Personification of the Sea and the Jordan are seen in the water, recalling the words of Psalm 113: "The sea saw it and fled; Jordan was driven back." On the left, we see the olive tree with the branch cut off and the ax laying across it. This signifies that this is the divide between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant and we are grafted into spiritual Israel, the Church, by Baptism. See the poster at the end of this bulletin for more on the Feast of Theophany.

**Other January Feasts . . .** Other major feasts during January include: Synaxis of St John the Forerunner, January 7<sup>th</sup>; St Anthony the Great, January 17<sup>th</sup>; Euthymios the Great, January 20<sup>th</sup>, St Gregory the Theologian, January 25<sup>th</sup> and the Three Hierarchs, January 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Blessing of Water and Homes . . .** January 6 is Holy Theophany where we celebrate the Baptism of our Lord. The difference between His Baptism and our baptism is that when we are baptized, we are changed. When Jesus was baptized, He changed the

water. We will do the service of the Blessing of the Water at Liturgy on *Sunday January 8* bring a small container. If you don't have one we will make them available in the church. With the Feast of Theophany begins a season for the Blessing of Homes. There are two goals in this: 1) To recognize the Baptism of our Lord and our own as well and 2) To pray for God's blessing on our homes and our families. God made our bodies as well as our souls and is concerned with the whole; where we eat, where we sleep, what we drive, our pets – May God bring his blessing to it all. How does it happen? Invite the priest! Homes will be blessed on *Sunday, January 15* (homes west of our church) and *Sunday, January 22* (homes east of our church). If you would like your home blessed, contact George Yurchak at 228-831-5820 or [georgeyurchak@yahoo.com](mailto:georgeyurchak@yahoo.com) who will make the arrangements with Fr Ezekiel, and accompany him to your home.

**Christmas on a Ship, Wednesday January 11 . . .** Holy Trinity will continue with its missionary work with ships that come into Gulfport harbor and have Orthodox seaman who are far from home. We will celebrate Orthodox Christmas with the Russian and Ukrainian seamen on the Tucana J. Ship in the harbor of Gulfport. Captain Vladimer said he will be delighted to have us attend. Russian Orthodox Christmas is normally celebrated on January 7, but the ship comes in on January 11. We will set up a schedule with the International Seaman Center. We will meet at the Gulfport harbor at 11:30 at the west harbor entrance and be bused to the ship for a Christmas program. We will bring Christmas gift bags for each member of the crew, sing Christmas carols, and get a tour of the ship. We can put Christ back into Christmas for them. We need people to support this. This was well attended last year. Attendees will be invited to attend the International Seaman Center Christmas Luncheon at the Great Southern Club in December. Please contact George Yurchak at [georgeyurchak@yahoo.com](mailto:georgeyurchak@yahoo.com) or 228-831-5820 if you can attend.

**January 8, Vasilopita . . .** We will have the Greek tradition of cutting the Vasilopita Bread on January 8 after Liturgy. We will have a Pot Luck Luncheon to follow. Please bring one of your favorite ethnic dishes for the occasion to share with all. On this day we will also continue the tradition of taking a collection for St Basil's Academy, the orphanage maintained by the Archdiocese in upstate New York.

**General Assembly Meeting, Sunday January 29. . .** At the General Assembly we will bring everyone up to date on business from 2016 and a look ahead into activities in 2017. Treasurers report will also be provided along with a Stewardship update.

**2017 Church Calendars . . .** The 2017 Church Calendars are available in the Church Narthex. They were donated by Eleni Vganges in memory of her husband, Eleftheri Vganges..

**January Birthdays . . .** Happy Birthday to Leonardo Aron, January 3, Cathy Hoch, January 9, Demetri Vlahos, January 10, Vona Wawryszcuk, January 12, Linda Peters,

January 22, Natalia Petrovska, January 24, Dorothy Porter, January 25, Elaine Stevens, January 26, and Sheila Yurchak, January 30, Cyril Hugh Donohue, January 31. If we don't have your birthday please contact Sheila Yurchak at 228-831-5820 or [sheilayurchak@yahoo.com](mailto:sheilayurchak@yahoo.com).

**Anniversaries for January.** . . Brandi and Hugh Donohue on January 10.

**Church Thanks** . . . Thanks to all those who have given their time and talents in helping out at Holy Trinity throughout the year. Your time and help contributes significantly in welcoming new parishioners, keeping up the church/grounds and keeping the church available for all Orthodox to attend. Thanks again to those generous parishioners who have brought their special food items for our after Liturgy social hour. It is important everyone take their turn, even if you have to donate \$20 for the food, which a council member will buy. Many thanks to Elizabeth and Katerina Vamvakas for making the Prosforo throughout the year. HUUUGE thanks to all those who gave their time and talent to the 2016 International Christmas Festival and Pastry Sale in helping make this event a very successful fund raiser. Thanks to George & Sheila Yurchak for putting together our Bulletin and Newsletter each month. Our sincere appreciation goes out to Fr Dean for driving from Mobile and Fr Ezekiel for driving from Louisiana on Sundays and all the other days for special events.

### **Religious Education**

Fr Dean and Fr Ezekiel will continue their weekly religious education classes after Fellowship Hour. **ALL ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND.**

### **Religious Needs**

Clergy are available for talk, confession, pastoral counseling, spiritual care, individual prayer. Tours of our church can be arranged. If you want to set up an appointment, please contact George Yurchak – 228-831-5820 or [georgeyurchak@yahoo.com](mailto:georgeyurchak@yahoo.com).

**Get Well** . . . Prayers and blessings to Fr Jim Karagas, Karen Bridges, Ioan (John) Curticapian, Elizabeth Vamvakas, Irene Stevens, Alan Koskan, Photine and Angelo Hagicostas, George Vaporis, Lela Roberts, Nancy Malek, Virginia Freeman, CoCo Collins, Freddie Nossier, Tom Portaritis, Cristian Ionescu, George Mavromihalis, Katerina Vamvakas, and Dorothy Porter. Fr Dean or Fr Ezekiel will conduct home visitations and give communion to those parishioners who are ill and can't be with us for Liturgy. Please contact a parish council member or the priest to make arrangements. If we missed someone please contact Nancy Malek at 228-265-1411. We want to pray as a community for those that may be too ill to be with us during church services.



**Prayer Box.** . . We have a prayer box in the Narthex. If there is anyone you wish a prayer said, place their name in the box, or contact Nancy Malek at 228-265-1411.

## **Ethnic Marketplace & Gift Corner**

Please remember the Ethnic Marketplace and Gift Corner for your shopping needs. We have many ethnic items for sale. Included in the Marketplace are olive oil, halva, olives, jellies, pickled tomatoes, seaweed salad, candies, Greek cheeses and coffee, etc. In the Gift Corner we have Greek tablecloths and aprons, icons, bracelets, Greek coffeepot & coffee, jewelry, Greek CDs, incense and charcoal, Russian dolls, nesting dolls, lacquered Russian products, Russian kitchen supplies, Greek T-shirts, etc.

### ***Prioritize Sunday as the Anchor of Your Family's Week***

*The Divine Liturgy is the primary worship service in the life of the Orthodox Church. It is where the Body and Blood of Our Lord and Savior is offered for the forgiveness of sins and eternal life. Simply put, attending the Divine Liturgy as a family should be a priority. The Lord's Day isn't merely the day we go to church – it is the primary day we become the Church – the people of God. (By George Tsongranis)*

### ***Prayer for the Military***

*We thank Thee, O Lord our God for all the blessings which Thou givest us. Thou has kept us by Thy power in good health during the night and Thou has called us up from sleep, that we may enjoy the light of day and to marvel at Thy Majesty. We entreat Thee, O Lord, grant that we may live this day without danger or sin, but full of Thy mercies and Thy divine care. Protect my family and the families of my fellow-servicemen from all evil. Enlighten the peoples who conquer and torture other nations; make them repent and seek peace, leaving other lands and their dwellers free. Open Thou the eyes of our mind to see Thy divine law and incline our hearts ever to do Thy commandments, to the glory of Thine all-holy Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.*

*O Thou Loving Father of us all, Who are here and everywhere, let Thy blessing be upon my loved ones at home. Keep them in Thy gracious care, protect them by Thy power and make their hearts glad in the thought of Thy nearness. Help them and help me to feel that however separated we are by distance, in Thee we are close to each other. Amen.*

Chaplain W. Basil Stroyen, USAF, wrote to Metropolitan Leonty during the Korean War, asking him for a prayer which would be appropriate for use the servicemen under his care. This prayer was sent to him. He had copies made for distribution and for pasting in the Divine Liturgy book, which was used at Services. It was recited by the congregation following the Services and used by many of the servicemen in their daily lives. Just two years ago a copy was sent to him a serviceman, who had kept it in his wallet since 1955. (Source: The Orthodox Herald, May 2003)

## **STEWARDSHIP**

### **PLEASE REMEMBER TO SUBMIT YOUR PLEDGE FOR 2017**

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church is grateful for every donation received throughout the year. Your generous support enables Holy Trinity to spread the teaching of Our Lord Jesus Christ, serve regular Divine Liturgies and Sacraments and provide spiritual nourishment to our faithful, their families and those in need. Your pledge of support is a sign of your heartfelt participation in the life of our parish family and it plays a vital role enabling us to meet our financial responsibilities.

We pray that everybody who attends Holy Trinity and cares for its financial security will make a pledge for 2017. If you haven't received a pledge form you can download it from [www/holytrinitybiloxi.org](http://www/holytrinitybiloxi.org) website, under Stewardship or pick up a hard copy either at the candle counter or from any Parish Council member. You need to make a pledge by January 29. Pledge forms will be available on January 15. We will be mailing you a stewardship form in the event you are unable to come to church. Please take a few minutes to fill out the pledge form and submit it to Craig Henderson (Stewardship Chairman), George Yurchak (President, Parish Council) or Rodney Bridges (Treasurer, Parish Council).

## **HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH STEWARDS FOR 2016**

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the 2016 Stewardship Program as of December 31. Holy Trinity has received pledges from 63 parishioners for a total of \$36,840.

Chrisanthi Beach	Cristian & Meri Ionescu	Donna Rocconi
Mike Bodisch	Mihail Kastrinos	Jerry Strickland
Rodney & Karen Bridges	Chrisie (Soula) Kiessling	Melissa & Giorgios Swartz
CoCo & Steve Collins	Karen Kohl	Lisa Taylor
John Collins	John & Cornelia Koniditsiotis	Angelos & Elizabeth Vamvakas
Nicoletta Conner	Al & Cathy Lawson	Akaterina Vamvakas
George Contas	Rena Lohrbach	Vasili & Maria Vamvakas
John Demetrakopoulos	Eva Magiros	George Vaporis
Cally & Bernie DeSantis	Mary Makris	Eleni Vganges
Hugh & Brandi Donohoe	Nancy & Karl Malek	Demetri Vlahos
Norman Foskey	Stratos Mandas	Vona & Greg Wawryszcuk
Terry & Julia Foskey	George & Janie Mavrormihalis	Karen Weinberg
Virginia Freeman	Jessie Mavromihalis Martin	George & Sheila Yurchak
Natalya Gray	Louis & Linda Peters	Yelena Zheletska
Angelo & Photine Hagicostas	Nataliya Petrovska	
Craig & Karen Henderson	Tom & Pat Portaritis	

## **Church Directory**

Member – Jerry Strickland

### **Liturgical Services**

Sundays – Divine Liturgy 10:00 am

### **Church Clergy**

Rev. Fr. Dean Gigicos

Rev. Fr. Ezekiel Vieages

**Chanter** – Angelos Vamvakas

### **2016 Parish Council**

President – George Yurchak

Vice President – Craig Henderson

Treasurer – Rodney Bridges

Secretary – CoCo Collins

### **Librarian**

Hugh Donohoe, Brandi Donohoe

### **Historian**

Brandi Donohoe, Akaterina Vamvakas

### **Maintenance and Repair**

Chair – Craig Henderson

### **50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration**

Chair- George & Sheila Yurchak

### **Youth Education & Culture Committee**

Chair – George Yurchak

### **Greek Culture**

Chair – George Yurchak

**Ukrainian Culture**

Chair – Nataliya Petrovska

**Romanian Culture**

Chair – Meri Ionescu

**Georgian Culture**

Chair – Medea Ghurtskaia

**Moldovan Culture**

Chair – Alexandru Tulburi

**Russian Culture**

Chair – Anna Slepova

**Kazakhstan Culture**

Chair - Natalya Grey

**Belarousian Culture**

Chair – Darya Borst

**Parish Ministries**

Youth Ministries – George Yurchak

Youth Group Chair – Joseph Lawson,

Korina Bodisch

Feed the Hungry Chair – Donna Ricconi, Virginia  
Freeman

Sunday School – Akaterina Vamvakas

Ladies of the Agape Chair – Nancy Malek

Stewardship Chair – Craig Henderson

Reader – Rodney Bridges, John Collins

Adult Education – George Yurchak

Prayer/Study Group – Nancy Malek

Outreach – Karen Weinberg, Akaterina Vamvakas

Technology – Karen Kohl, Spiro Vganges

Web Master – Steve Collins, Spiro Vganges

Pastoral Assistant – Craig Henderson, Spiro Vganges

Alter Boys – Joseph Lawson, Lefteri & Costas Vganges

Sunshiners – George Vaporis

Strategic Planning – Chair, CoCo Collins

**Staff**

Kiosk – George Yurchak

Office Administrator – Sheila Yurchak

Publications Editor – Sheila Yurchak

Cleaning – Chrisanthi Beach, Akaterina Vamvakas