



Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America  
**Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church**  
255 Beauvoir Rd., Biloxi, MS 39531  
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**January 2017 Bulletin**



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

### **From Father Dean**

2017 is history, but the accomplishments of the past year will have a positive impact on us and our beloved Holy Trinity Church for years to come. Much was done in 2017.....our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, a beautiful mosaic of the Holy Trinity over the front door of the church, new tile in the Narthex, new carpet in the sanctuary, new round tables, new storage shed, the cry room, landscaping and the list goes on and on. However, more important than any of these is the spiritual growth that has taken place and which constantly continues to grow.

With the beginning of a New Year, we will be facing new challenges and new opportunities. During the New Year, all of us need to make certain commitments. We need to live honestly and commit our whole life to Christ our God in order to secure a Christ-centered life for ourselves and our families. We need to return to God the first fruits of the gifts he bestows upon us. We need to commit to spreading the good news of Jesus Christ by the way we live, talk, work and act. We need to anchor our personal commitment to Christ and through Him our service to others around us. As individuals, these are commitments that face us.

As a community, we need to continue to pray together and work together in peace and harmony to accomplish that which is good for the whole church. During 2018 we will be asked to give our support to the new parish council, a council made up of dedicated individuals eager to lead our parish to greater achievements. If we continue to pray together and work together, following the example of the past parish councils, the many dreams we have will become realities in the days to come.

As your family gathers around the table for the first meal of the New Year offer the following prayer:

“O Lord our God, Who has placed time and seasons under Your authority; Who, in infinite compassion and goodness, has counted us worthy to enter a New Year of Your loving kindness, bless the New Year and keep us in peace.

Loose, remit, and forgive any sins that we have committed during the past year, and keep us free from sin in the New Year.

Enlighten us with the light of Your truth and Your divine commandments. Establish in our souls Your holy will and guide us to every work that is good and pleasing to You.

Guard our Holy Church with Your divine grace. Remember, Lord, our nation; train up the youth; protect the elderly; encourage the faint-hearted; gather the

scattered; bring back those who have gone astray, and reunite them to Your holy Church.

Overshadow our land with Your might, and grant it gentle rain and an abundance of the fruits of the earth.

Guide the hearts of our civil leaders and support and strengthen them, together with our armed forces and everyone who is in the service of our country.

Let Your kingdom come upon us, O Lord; the kingdom of love, goodness, peace, and justice; and make us worthy to praise and glorify, with one mouth and one heart, Your most honorable and majestic name, of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen”

### **Schedule of Services**

Sunday Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am on Jan 7 with Fr Dean  
Sunday Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am on Jan 14 with Fr Ezekiel  
Sunday Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am on Jan 21 with Fr Ezekiel  
Sunday Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am on Jan 28 with Fr Dean

### **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

2017 – A Year of Faith . . . Holy Trinity stills stands in faith as a beacon of Orthodoxy for the Mississippi Gulf Coast as we celebrated our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, our Golden Anniversary. As we look back over the past year, we have much to be thankful for. It was a year of challenge and joy. Fr Dean, Fr Ezekiel and Fr Paul continued serving Divine Liturgy and Holy Week Services throughout 2017.

Our Golden Anniversary was the most memorable event of 2017 for Holy Trinity. In 1967, a park of hope and faith made Orthodoxy come alive in Biloxi. Land was donated for an Orthodox Church. Two priests, Fr Gaines, a Greek Orthodox priest, brought and kept the early Orthodox community together, while Air Force Chaplain Margatich, got Keesler Air Force Base to donate a chapel that was to be demolished, to the Orthodox community to make this possible. As our parish moves forward we are no longer strictly Greek. We continue to welcome new members from a wide range of geographic and ethnic backgrounds, including a growing number of new converts to Orthodoxy. Today is God’s time for us . . . and this is God’s place for us. Holy Trinity will live on!

Your Parish Council and Ladies of the Agape worked hard, but you worked harder to make it happen. We had a beautiful mosaic of the Holy Trinity installed over the front door of the church, new tile and medallion in the Narthex, new carpet in the sanctuary, new round tables in the Fellowship Hall, a new storage shed, the cry room renovation plan, and beautiful landscaping on the grounds.

Our Sunday Religious Education Program was very successful and well attended. We had several baptisms and chrismations: Hayley and Ryan Waldrop, Shelby Mcloud and her daughter Julia Fosky. We saw the passing of two of our

beloved parishioners: Irene Stevens, who always said she “loved her little church” and Ioan (John) Curticapiu who came from Romania and loved Holy Trinity and its people (his body was Romania to be buried with his Romanian family). We built upon our stewardship program, increasing membership.

Jerry Strickland and Chrysanthi Beach were honored with the Archangel Michael award from His Eminence Metropolitan Alexios at a Metropolis of Atlanta dinner and reception.

We had a very successful International Christmas Festival & Pastry Sale which was dedicated to the spirituality, culture, art, music and food of the different ethnic cultures that make up Holy Trinity: Greek, Russian, Ukrainian, Romanian, Belarusian, Kazakhstani, Georgian, Moldovan, those with Hungarian and German backgrounds as well as the many converts to Orthodoxy. The Festival included dancing by the Georgian Dance Ensemble who came down from New York State, the Ukrainian, Greek and Russian dancers plus the traditional foods of those ethnic groups. Our entertainment showcased the different cultures: Georgian Dance Ensemble, the Victory Belles from the National World War II Museum and Greek musicians Nick Trivelas and Megan Jensen.

We continued with the Slavic tradition of Blessing Easter Baskets and had a wonderful Holy Week with the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ and a very well attended Agape Feast. We honored 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. Our Lay Prayer Service and Orthodox Book Study group continued.

Our members also participated in Orthodox Retreats at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral in New Orleans and Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church in Mobile. We celebrated International Women’s Day and International Men’s Day at Holy Trinity with a special luncheon and gifts. We conducted a special service on World Marriage Day honoring the vocation of marriage and family.

We continued to be involved in a number of charities. We were involved with 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 continued with Feeding the Hungry by giving monetary, food donations and gift bags of love to those in need. We stay involved with the Kids-Make-A-Wish Program, whose kids have terminal illnesses and want a special wish fulfilled. Some of these kids even helped at our International Christmas Festival working with our kids. We contributed to “Give Kids The World Charity which provides vacations to terminally ill children and their families. We contributed to the Diakonia Retreat Center as part of the Guardian Angel Program.

When Hurricanes Harvey and Irma devastated states from Texas to Florida we answered the call for Hurricane Relief and took collections to support our sister churches and families in need. We supported a local Elementary School in judging

their science fair. When several of our parishioners attended Maslenitsa 2017 at the Russian Embassy in Washington DC our ticket cost went towards various charities in the DC area that St Nicholas and St Johns Russian Orthodox churches support. Holy Trinity supported her sister parishes by attending the Mobile GreekFest and the New Orleans Greek Festival. We continue to increase our library with additional donations of books, CDs DVDs and pamphlets.

Two of our parishioners became U.S. citizens this past year: Cristina Macovei and Nataliya Petrovska-Molsbee. Nataliya even sang the U.S. National Anthem at the swearing in ceremony.

We hosted Sisters Marina and Maria from St. Elizabeth Monestary in Minsk Belarus. The Sisters gave a presentation on what the monestary does and brought some of their handcrafted items to sell.

Now we look forward to 2018 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.

**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 7th; St Anthony the Great, January 17th; Euthymios the Great, January 20th, St Gregory the Theologian, January 25th and the Three Hierarchs, January 30th.

**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 7 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 21 (homes west of our church) by Fr Ezekiel and Sunday, January 28 (homes east of our church) by Fr Dean. 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 Dean and Fr Ezekiel, and accompany him to your home.

**January 7, Vasilopita . . .** We will have the Greek tradition of cutting the Vasilopita Bread on January 7 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.

**Lay Prayer Service and Orthodox Book Study, January 10 & 24 . . .** will resume on Jan. 10 from 5:30 – 7:00 pm. Led by Nancy Malek.

**General Assembly Meeting, Sunday January 28.** . . At the General Assembly we will bring everyone up to date on business from 2017 and a look ahead into activities in 2018. Treasurer's report will also be provided along with a Stewardship update.

**2018 Church Calendars** . . . The 2018 Church Calendars are available in the Church Narthex. They were donated by George Contas in memory of his mother, Stanatia Toula Contas.

**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.

**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. Many thanks to Eleni Vganges, Virginia Freeman, Elizabeth and Katerina Vamvakas for making the Prosforo throughout the year. HUUUGE thanks to all those who gave their time and talent to the 2017 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, as well as Fr Paul for Holy Week Services.

### **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.

**Get Well** . . . Prayers and blessings to Fr Jim Karagas, Karen Bridges, Elizabeth Vamvakas, Alan Koskan, Photine and Angelo Hagicostas, George Vaporis, Lela Roberts, Nancy Malek, Virginia Freeman, Freddie Nosser, Tom Portaritis, Jessie and Sophia Beddoe, Katerina Vamvakas, and Nikki Arnold. 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 2018 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 2018. 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 28. Pledge forms will be emailed to everyone on the church email list, and will be available on the kiosk 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 2017**

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the 2017 Stewardship Program as of December 31.

Chrisanthi Beach  
Mike Bodisch  
Caleb Bridges  
Rodney & Karen Bridges  
Steve & CoCo Collins  
George Contas  
John Demetrakopoulos  
Hugh & Brandi Donohoe  
Julia Foskey  
Norman Foskey  
Virginia Freeman  
Stamatina Giallourakis  
Natalya Grey  
Angelo & Photine Hagicostas  
Craig & Karen Henderson

Cristian & Meri Ionescu  
Mihail Kastrinos  
Karen Komenko  
Chrisie Soula Kiessling  
Karen Kohl  
John & Cornelia Koniditsiotis  
Irene & Alan Koskan  
Al & Kathy Lawson  
Eva Magiros  
Nancy & Carl Malek  
George & Janie Mavromahalīs  
Shelby McCloud  
Louis & Linda Peters  
Nataliya Petrovska  
Tom & Pat Portaritis

Melissa Schwartz  
Jerry Strickland  
Lisa Taylor  
Angelos & Elizabeth Vamvakas  
Akaterina Vamvakas  
Paul & Cristina Vance  
George Vaporis  
Eleni Vganges  
Spiro Vganges  
Dimitrios Virvilis  
Kosta Vlahos  
Demetri Vlahos  
George & Sheila Yurchak



## **Church Directory**

### **Liturgical Services**

Sundays – Divine Liturgy 10:00 am

### **Church Clergy**

Rev. Fr. Dean Gigicos

Rev. Fr. Ezekiel Vieages

**Chanters** – Angelos Vamvakas, Rodney Bridges,  
Hugh Donohoe, Luke Pappas, Haylie & Ryan Waldrop

### **2017 Parish Council**

President – George Yurchak

Vice President – Craig Henderson

Treasurer – Rodney Bridges

Secretary – Jerry Strickland

Member – Cristian Ionescu

**Librarian** Hugh Donohoe, Brandi Donohoe

**Historian** Brandi Donohoe, Akaterina Vamvakas

### **Maintenance and Repair**

Chair – Craig Henderson

### **50th Anniversary Celebration**

Commemorative Album - Brandi Donohoe

### **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 – Oksana Kozhanova

**Kazakhstan Culture** Chair - Natalya Gray

**Belarousian Culture** Chair – Darya Borst

### **Staff**

Kiosk – George Yurchak

Office Administrator – Sheila Yurchak, Karen Henderson

Publications Editor – Sheila Yurchak

Cleaning – Chrisanthi Beach, Fanoula Christidis, Virginia Freeman,  
Akaterina Vamvakas,

### **Parish Ministries**

Youth Ministries – George Yurchak

Youth Group Chair – Joseph Lawson, Korina Bodisch

Feed the Hungry – Jerry Strickland, Virginia Freeman, Nancy Malek

Sunday School – Akaterina Vamvakas

Ladies of the Agape Chair – Nancy Malek

Stewardship Chair – Craig Henderson

Reader – Rodney Bridges, John Collins, CoCo Collins

Adult Education – George Yurchak

Prayer/Study Group – Nancy Malek

Outreach – Karen Weinberg, Akaterina Vamvakas

Technology – Karen Kohl, Spiro Vganges

Web Master – Steve Collins

Pastoral Assistant – Craig Henderson, Caleb Bridges

Altar Boys – Joseph Lawson

Society of Wisdom – George Vaporis

Strategic Planning – Chair, CoCo Collins