



Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America  
Metropolis of Atlanta

### **Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church**

255 Beauvoir Road, Biloxi, MS 39531

P.O. Box 8534 Biloxi, MS 39535

(228) 388-6138

[www.holytrinitybiloxi.org](http://www.holytrinitybiloxi.org)

**February 2018 Bulletin**



### **From Fr Dean**

Athletes don't go directly to the big game, they practice and prepare for weeks in advance. Students don't just go and take a big ACT or SAT exam, they study for weeks to prepare for that exam. Likewise, our Holy Orthodox Christian Church wisely prepares us for weeks to be spiritually ready for the beginning of Great Lent. We learn that like Zachaeus we must **desire** to see God even if it means climbing up into a sycamore tree. Like the Publican, we must be **humble**. Like the Prodigal Son we must **repent**. Meat Fare Sunday is also known as Judgement Sunday. The Bible passage of the day comes from Matthew 25:31-46. Read it and you will see why it is known as Judgement Sunday. Cheese Fare Sunday is also known as Forgiveness Sunday. The Bible passage of the day comes from Matthew 6:14-21. Read it and you will see why it is known as Forgiveness Sunday. After these weeks of spiritual preparation we should be prepared to enter into Great Lent.

In this article I would like to focus on the passage about the Prodigal Son. I believe we are all very familiar with the passage. How he went to his father and asked for his portion of the inheritance, how he received it and then left for a distant land to live life as he wanted. If you recall, as long as he had money and was treating everyone, he had a lot of friends. But as the passage continues, we learn that he spent everything on riotous living and when he ran out of money, his friends ran out on him and he ended up taking a job feeding pigs.

The passage continues to tell us that one day **he came to himself**. In other words, he finally realized the mistake he had made and decided to return to his father and ask for **forgiveness**. He prepared exactly what he was going to say to his father...."I have sinned against you and am no longer worthy to be called your son, received me as one of your hired servants." At least as a hired servant he would have a place to sleep and food to eat.

If you recall, his father watched and waited and forgave and welcomed his son back. He ordered that a celebration be prepared because "this my son was lost and is found". This passage not only teaches **repentance**, but it also teaches that **God is a loving, merciful and forgiving God**, Who never gives up on any of us. He is always there waiting and watching for us even when we move away from Him.

This passage does not apply to individuals as it is usually preached.....it applies to our church and even to our country. Like the prodigal son, even a church can take what it has inherited and squander the teachings and traditions by watering down the truth as it has been passed down from generation to generation. It is possible for a

church to become a prodigal child and lose sight of its real mission which is to lead the faithful to salvation.

When a church loses sight of its real mission, the spiritual journey that the church is supposed to guide us on, becomes a journey to riotous living and the church becomes little more than a country club bearing a saint's name. When a church becomes **spiritually** bankrupt, the faithful begin to run out, just as the prodigal son's friends ran out. If that happens, then even churches, must come to themselves, repent and seek God's forgiveness in order to return to the only path that can lead the faithful to salvation.

It is very clear that our country was founded upon the teachings of the Christian Faith and that the founding fathers and subsequent generations were a people who loved God and followed His commandments. But like the prodigal son of today's gospel, I believe that today's Americans are squandering much of what we inherited from the founders of this Great Nation and all the past generations who worked hard and who sacrificed their lives to protect and defend the freedom they had inherited in order to pass it on to the next generation.

Are we not squandering what we inherited when we sit back and watch the Ten Commandments shunned and thrown out; the American Flag disrespected, prayer removed from the schools; the legal system dictate morality; and the mention of the word **God** spoken in public challenged?

Can we not see that as a nation, we are engaged in riotous living? Listen to contemporary music, go to the movies, watch T.V., log onto the internet; go to the schools; talk with the young people..... you will find every imaginable kind of immorality that has become accepted in today's society. We are plagued with a high divorce rate, spouse and child abuse, rape, adultery, fornication, same sex marriages, drugs, alcohol and the list goes on and on.

Have we forgotten what St. Paul wrote to the Galatians in Chapter 5, verses 19 – 21: “the works of the flesh are plain: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, selfishness, dissension, party spirit, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and the like. I warn you, as I warned you before that **those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.**”

As Orthodox Christians, we teach and believe that no one knows the hour or the day of the second coming. When you read St. Paul's 2<sup>nd</sup> letter to Timothy, however, you cannot help but wonder if we are living in the end times. In Chapter 3 verses 1- 5, St. Paul states: “Understand this, that in the last days there will come times of stress. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, inhuman, implacable, slanderers, fierce, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding the form of religion but denying the power of it.”

Like the prodigal son, as individuals, as families and as a nation, we must turn from all immorality, repent, seek forgiveness from our Heavenly Father and begin once again living God-like lives.

We must also pray! At each service of our Orthodox Christian Church, we offer a petition for our country, the president and for everyone in the service of our country.

We also offer a petition for peace in the whole world. When we hear these petitions are they just words, or do we make them a fervent and sincere prayer? The power of prayer is real and its reach is wide. Through prayer, we can change the direction of our personal lives, our families, and yes even our country.

In Ephesians 5:15-17, St. Paul teaches: "Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is."

With all of these thoughts in mind, let us continue our preparations for the beginning of Great Lent and make this year's Great Lent truly life changing!

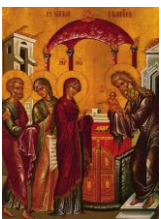
### **Schedule of Services**

Sunday Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am on Feb 4 with Fr Dean  
Sunday Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am on Feb 11 with Fr Ezekiel  
Sunday Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am on Feb 18 with Fr Ezekiel  
Sunday Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am on Feb 25 with Fr Dean

### **Visitors**

*A warm welcome to Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church.  
We are glad to have you worship with us today.  
While Holy Communion is reserved for Orthodox Christians,  
we invite those who are not Orthodox Christians to  
remain until the end of the worship service,  
and receive a blessing from our Lord Jesus Christ,  
through the offering of the Blessed Bread.*

***Please remember to allow the children to receive Communion first.***  
*Please join us for Fellowship Hour in our Social Hall after Liturgy*



### **Presentation of Our Lord and Savior in the Temple – February 2nd**

When the most pure Mother and Ever-Virgin Mary's forty days of purification had been fulfilled, she took her first-born Son to Jerusalem on this, the fortieth day after His birth, that she might present Him in the temple according to the Law of Moses, which teaches that every first-born male child be dedicated to God, and also that she might offer the sacrifice of a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons, as required by the Law (Luke 2:22-24; Exodus. 13:2; Lev. 12:6-8). On this same day, a just and devout man, the greatly aged Symeon, was also present in the temple, being guided by the Holy Spirit. For a long time, this man had been awaiting the salvation of God, and he had been informed by divine revelation that he would not die until he beheld the Lord's Christ. Thus, when he beheld Him at that time and took Him up into his aged arms, he gave glory to God, singing: "Now let us Thou Thy servant depart in peace, O Master . . ." And he confessed that he would close his eyes joyfully, since he had seen the Light of revelation for the nations and the Glory of Israel (Luke 2:25-32). From ancient times, the Holy Church has retained this

tradition of the churching of the mother and new-born child on the fortieth day and of the reading of prayers of purification.

**Souper Bowl Sunday February 4 . . .** February 4 will be “Souper” Bowl Sunday and the Youth of Holy Trinity will be taking a collection for a charity of their choice. We ask that all parishioners bring a non-perishable food item and dry bags of pet food and a small monetary contribution to Liturgy on Sunday, February 4. The non-perishable food items will go to a local food bank or soup kitchen. The pet food items will go to the Humane Society of South Mississippi. The monetary contribution will go to a charity that supports local youth.

**Blessing of the Homes, Feb. 11 . . . .** Fr Ezekiel will bless the homes of Caleb Bridges, Virginia Freeman, and Karen Komenko in that order on Sunday Feb. 11, after religious education.

**Armed Forces Retirement Home (AFRH) Cultural Day, Feb.26 . . . .** Holy Trinity will support AFRH ‘s Cultural Day on Feb. 26 at 2:30. The Gulf Coast Hellenic Dancers and the Ukrainian Dancers will provide entertainment. Additionally we will provide 2 or 3 display tables that showcase our Greek, Russian, Ukrainian, Romanian heritage. If you are interested in helping with the display tables, please contact George or Sheila Yurchak.

**Disability Connection: Cultural Heritage Program . . . .** Holy Trinity will participate In this program as part of the Gulf Coast Heritage Tour Project which will study the cultural history and traditions that make up the coast, i.e., churches that were started, festivals that celebrate the heritage and foods that continue the traditions. We have been advised that our International Christmas Festival is one of the biggest events within the south six counties of Mississippi, and the Tour wants to include Holy Trinity in their film project.

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

**February Birthdays . . .** Happy Birthday to Kathy Grindstaff – Feb 4<sup>th</sup>, Kristin Beddoe – Feb 7<sup>th</sup>, John Peters – Feb 9<sup>th</sup>, Nataliya Molsbee – Feb 19<sup>th</sup>, John Michailos – Feb 23<sup>rd</sup>, Kally Vlahos and Jessie Beddoe – Feb 28<sup>th</sup>. If we don't have your birthday or we missed you, please contact Sheila Yurchak at 228-831-5820 or [georgeyurchak@yahoo.com](mailto:georgeyurchak@yahoo.com).

**Anniversaries for February. . .** Rodney and Karen Bridges celebrate their 3<sup>rd</sup> wedding anniversary on Feb 1. Louis and Linda Peters will celebrate their 40<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary on Feb. 19. If anyone else has an anniversary in February,

please let Sheila Yurchak know so we can recognize your anniversary. And may God Grant you many, many years.

**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, and Nancy Malek for making the Prosforo 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.

**Get Well . . .** Prayers and blessings to Fr Jim Karagas, Karen Bridges, Elizabeth Vamvakas, Alan Koskan, Photine and Angelo Hagicosostas, George Vaporis, Lela & Mitch Roberts, Nancy Malek, Virginia Freeman, Freddie Nosser, Tom Portaritis, Katerina Vamvakas, Nikki Arnold, and Jessie & Sophia Beddore. 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.

### **Religious Education**

Fr Dean and Fr Ezekiel will continue the 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, etc. 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).

### **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)*

## **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 Feb 18. Pledge forms will be available at church. Please take a few minutes to fill out the pledge form and submit it to Craig Henderson (Stewardship Chairman), George Yurchak (Vice-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 Mavromahalas  
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 – Craig Henderson

Vice President – George Yurchak

Treasurer – Rodney Bridges

Secretary – Brandi Donohoe

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