



Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America
Metropolis of Atlanta

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church

255 Beauvoir Road, Biloxi MS 39531

P.O. Box 8534 Biloxi, Mississippi 39535

(228) 388-6138

www.holytrinitybiloxi.org www.holytrinitybiloxi.org

April 2018 Bulletin



A Message from Fr. Dean



“The Resurrection is the greatest event in our human history, our Divine-human eternity. It is the day which delivers us out of all the worldly days and nights of this life, and brings us into the day with evening, the eternal day of God’s Kingdom. Pascha is the Feast of all feasts and Celebration of all celebrations, which surpasses all other feasts and celebrations just as the sun surpasses the stars.” (St. Gregory the Theologian)

The hymns, prayers and scripture readings of Holy Week remind us who we are and Who God is and the path we are called upon to follow. How many of us truly realize that our life is a gift from God, Who fashioned us in His image and after His likeness? The Gospel passage we hear at the Pascha Divine Liturgy from John 1:3-4 states, “All things were made through Him and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.”

The one thing every person cherishes above all is their very existence. We do everything possible to maintain a healthy life with the hope of living to a ripe old age. Sadly, however, there are many people who do not realize that life is not merely a physical existence. Life must include a sense of peace, contentment and meaning which can only be created by a spiritual lifestyle.

In addition to physical life, God grants us a spiritual life. It is our unique connection to Him. This relationship which was broken by sin and corruption, is refashioned and renewed in the triumph of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ over death. In the Resurrection, Jesus makes all things new. The Risen Christ grants us an abundance life that we can experience within the life of the Church and He also grants us eternal life. The Gospel of John 17:3 clearly states: “And this is eternal life, that they know You the only True God, and Jesus Christ Whom You sent.” We become alive only to the degree which we know God. How alive are you? How well do you know God? Have you committed your whole life to Him? The joyous Resurrection of our Lord and Savior challenges us to move from mere existence to a new, full and abundant life in God.

As a result of the Resurrection, the disciples moved from fear and hiding to boldly proclaiming the Kingdom of God with new power, new wisdom and new enthusiasm. As we celebrate Pascha 2018, will we like the disciples move from where we are and begin to boldly proclaim the Kingdom of God with new power, new wisdom and new enthusiasm?

“Christ is Risen from the dead, trampling death with death and granting life to those in the tombs.” May we all proclaim these words with new power, new wisdom and new enthusiasm!

Christ is Risen! Truly He is Risen!

George, this truly great and glorious Martyr of Christ, was born of a father from Cappadocia and a mother from Palestine. Being a military tribune, or chiliarch (that is, a commander of a thousand troops), he was illustrious in battle and highly honored for his courage. When he learned that the Emperor Diocletian was preparing a persecution of the Christians, Saint George presented himself publicly before the Emperor and denounced him. When threats and promises could not move him from his steadfast confession, he was put to unheard-of tortures, which he endured with great bravery, overcoming them by his faith and love towards Christ. By the wondrous signs that took place in his contest, he guided many to the knowledge of the truth, including Queen Alexandra, wife of Diocletian, and was finally beheaded in 296 in Nicomedia. His sacred remains were taken by his servant from Nicomedia to Palestine, to a town called Lydda, the homeland of his mother, and then were finally transferred to the church which was raised up in his name. (The translation of the Saint's holy relics to the church in Lydda is commemorated on November 3; Saint Alexandra the Queen, on April 21.) If April 23 falls on or before Great and Holy Pascha, the Feast of St. George is translated to Bright Monday.

Schedule of Services for April

April 1 – Palm Sunday Divine Liturgy at 10 am with Fr Paul

April 2 - Monday Bridegroom Service at 6 pm with Fr Paul

April 3 - Tuesday Bridegroom Service at 6 pm with Fr Paul

April 4 - Wednesday Unction Service at 6 pm with Fr Paul

April 5 – Thursday Last Supper Liturgy 9 am with Fr Paul

April 5 - Thursday Reading of the 12 Gospels Service at 6 pm with Fr Paul

April 6 - Friday Decorating the Kovouklion (Epitaphios) at 9:30 am

April 6 - Good Friday Vespers/Lamentations Service at 5:30 pm with Fr Paul

April 7 - Saturday Divine Liturgy of St Basil at 9 am with Fr Paul

April 7 - Saturday Evening Nocturns/Matins Service at 11:30 pm

followed by Resurrection Liturgy on April 8 with Fr Paul

April 8 - Sunday Agape Vespers at 2 pm with Fr Paul

followed by the Agape Luncheon

Fr. Paul will be available for Confession during Holy Week. Please make an appointment.

April 14 – Saturday Vespers Service at 6:00 pm with Fr. Ezekiel

April 15 – Sunday Divine Liturgy at 10 am with Fr Dean

April 22 – Sunday Divine Liturgy at 10 am with Fr Ezekiel

April 29 – Sunday Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am 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

A Brief Summary of Orthodox Holy Week . . .

Saturday of Lazarus . . . This day is the beginning of the end. By raising Lazarus from the dead, Christ proves once again that He is God, the Lord of life.

Palm Sunday . . . The pious Hebrew people in recognition of Christ's divinity raise palms and proclaim Him King of the Jews. As the believers honor Him, the unbelievers seek more intensely to conspire against Him

Monday . . . We remember Joseph, the son of Jacob, who was betrayed by his brothers and sold into slavery. After much suffering, there came triumph for him in Egypt. He is, thus, a prototype of Christ. The Gospel for the day tells about the barren fig tree, speaking of the world's failure to bear fruit in Christ.

Tuesday . . . Presents the parable of the wise and foolish virgins. The end is coming. There is also the condemnation of the hypocritical Scribes and Pharisees.

Wednesday . . . Presents the story of the woman who poured precious ointment on Jesus. Her action of love is in contrast to that of Judas who betrayed the Master. This is also the time for Holy Unction services for the sick.

Thursday . . . Depicts the Last Supper of Christ with His Apostles, including the washing of feet of the disciples, the betrayal of Judas, and the agony in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Holy Friday . . . Is the day of the crucifixion and Death of Christ and His burial in the tomb.

Holy Saturday . . . Speaks of the entombment of Christ and His descent into Hades, the realm of the dead. It begins in mourning but ends with the glory that is to burst forth on the Great Day of Resurrection.

And so the drama of our salvation unfolds before us. Rather, we re-live this drama here and now. This is the essence and meaning of the Christian Year, we are part of this drama. Christ speaks to us now. Christ suffers for us now. Christ dies for us. Christ is entombed for us and we visit His grave. **It is only after all this that we can shout forth on Resurrection Day, CHRIST IS RISEN . . .**

The Drama of Holy Week, Christ's Triumph Over Sin and Death . . . Holy Week (schedule of services is above) is set apart in the Orthodox Ecclesiastical Year so that we might slow down our pace and mediate upon and relive the glory and the agony of

that week in our Lord's life which opened once again to all creation, the doors of Paradise. The events of that week are presented to us by the church as a drama, which unveiling its mysteries to us, helps us identify with them and elevates us in the all-embracing movement toward our Lord's triumph over sin and death.

The scenes take place in Jerusalem. The players are real. The events are historical. And because all humans are ultimately involved in this drama, there can be no passive audience. It demands participation. Commemorative worship, through faith, takes us back to these events and causes us to relive them. To fully benefit from this annual Holy Week drama, to experience a transformation in our lives and spiritual growth, we must participate in the services.

Blessing an Easter Basket . . . We will continue the Slavic Tradition of Blessing of the Easter Basket this year. Parishioners brought 15 -20 Easter Baskets to be blessed last year. If you have the Church Cookbook see it listed under Slavic Traditions for the full meaning. The baskets are blessed after the Resurrection Service at Pascha. The blessing of the Easter Baskets stems from the Christian communities desire to ask God's blessing on the foods that will break the Lenten Fast. The religious significance attached to the foods in the basket are symbolic of Christ Himself, our true Passover. Each Basket traditionally starts with a Church Candle and the following items:

Pascha – An Easter Bread made with egg yolks and dough. It represents “Christ—the Bread of Life.”

Meat – Usually ham, kielbasi or hard salami. This represents the fatted calf prepared for the prodigal son (fallen mankind) on his return to his father (our Heavenly Father).

Cheese – Either an egg, or cottage cheese. This symbolized the moderation that all Christians should have in all things.

Eggs – The egg is symbolic of the grave and life renewed by breaking out of it –The Resurrection! Red eggs are used to symbolize the blood Christ shed for us.

Salt – represents the truth of the message of Christ.

Horseradish – is a reminder of the bitter drink that was given to Christ on the Cross.

Butter – symbolizes the Lamb of God and represents the sacrifice Christ made for all people.

Youth can put their special items in to be blessed (e.g. jelly beans, etc). Foods are placed in a basket so they can all be touched by the Holy Water when blessed after the Resurrection Liturgy. A ***candle*** is brought, placed in the basket and lit just prior to blessing. The basket is covered by a white cloth when brought to the Church. So please bring your Easter Baskets to be blessed. It is a special tradition. For further information contact George Yurchak.

Symbols in the Orthodox Paschal Celebration **Excerpts from Fr. Anthony Coniaris**

There are some thoughts so deep that words are powerless to express them. They have to be acted out if they are to be expressed at all. One such event is the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus. How can we express this great happening with mere words? How can we describe it? What can mere words say to help us capture its full

meaning? Very little. This is why the Orthodox Church tries to preach the Resurrection through her liturgy and the magnificent Resurrection service. The Resurrection is acted out before us and we are allowed to participate in it to help us capture its meaning existentially.

The Darkened Church

The Church gradually sinks into total darkness, symbolizing the darkness of the grave, the darkness of man's life without God, the darkness of despair, the darkness of meaninglessness, the darkness of evil. This is part of the darkness in which we stand—the darkness that is within us and around us. We are— all of us— threatened by this darkness. But the glorious message of Easter is that in darkness there is light. “In Him (Christ) was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it.” This is the message we hear proclaimed in the Easter Gospel lesson. God's light shines in the darkness and cannot be put out. God has come into the world in Christ Jesus and has met the full force of sin and death and has won the victory. This is the heart of our Orthodox Christian faith.

The Paschal Candle

At the stroke of midnight the Paschal Candle is illuminated at the altar— the candle that represents Christ the Light of the World. The door to the sanctuary swings open representing the opening of Christ's tomb, and the priest appears holding the light representing the Resurrected Christ. “Come, receive light from the unwaning light,” he sings, “and glorify Christ who is risen from the dead.” The worshipers light their candles from the Paschal candle, passing on the light to their neighbors until the whole Church is ablaze with the new Light of the Resurrection proclaiming to the world that Christ is risen, that through His Resurrection our darkness has been changed into light, our has become life, our midnight has become dawn, a dawn of victory. In Greece one of the most panoramic sights is to stand on a mountain and look down on a village or a great city as the people come out from church following the midnight Easter liturgy. One sees thousands of flickering flames coming out of churches and spreading to all parts of the city or the countryside. What a meaningful custom this is. Neitzche said once that Christ still buried. We Christians— he said— keep Him buried in the sepulchers which are our Churches and we will not let Him out. The beauty of the custom of taking home the lighted Easter candle is that we carry the living, resurrected Christ out of our Churches and into our homes. How quickly the darkness of this world would vanish if everyone who confessed allegiance to Christ would go out into every area of life and let the light of the Resurrected Christ shine brightly and unashamedly.

Decorate for Palm Sunday/Easter Clean Up. . .We plan to decorate for Palm Sunday and to clean up the church and grounds in preparation for Pascha. Cleanup will take place on Saturday, March 31 at 10:00 am. Please volunteer your time to help.

Palm Sunday Luncheon, April 1 . . . Master Chef Craig Henderson will again prepare his Tilapia specialty. We will also have Greek salad, potatoes and green beans. If anyone would like to bring a dessert to share, please bring one.

Agape Feast, April 8 . . . The Agape Feast will be on Pascha, April 8, after Agape Vespers at 2:00 pm. The Church will cook lamb, potatoes and green beans. Everyone is asked to bring a dish, especially traditional ethnic dishes to be shared by all. We will also have an Easter Egg Hunt for the young kids. For information contact George Yurchak.

Lay Prayer Service/BookStudy , April 11 & 25 . . . Nancy Malek will conduct a lay prayer service and book study from 5:50 pm -7:00 pm on Wednesday, April 11 & 25.

Ladies of Agape Meeting, April 15 . . . Ladies of Agape will hold its quarterly meeting on Sunday April 15 after fellowship hour. We will be voting on changing our group name.

Parish General Assembly Meeting, April 22. . . There will be a Parish General Assembly Meeting scheduled for Sunday April 22 following Divine Liturgy. Financial reports will be provided. Stewardship will be discussed. A recap of the International Christmas Festival will be provided. We will discuss our 2018 goals, where we plan to go in 2018 and other new business. We will also discuss the bell tower and our outdoor sign. Please plan to be there for this very enlightening meeting. You will need to have filled out your stewardship pledge and be current through the end of March to vote.

Religious Education

Fr Dean and Fr Ezekiel will continue their weekly religious education classes after Sunday Coffee 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 at georgeyurchak@yahoo.com.

Birthdays for April . . . Happy birthday to Eleni Vganges, April 1st, Anastasia Aron, April 2nd, Oksana Kozhanova, April 3rd, Angelos Vamvakas, April 6th, Zoe Mavromihalis-Nelson, April 10th, Carl Malek, April 16th, Rena Lohrbach, April 18th.



Anniversaries for April . . . Angelo and Photine Hagicostas, Apr 26th.

Fellowship Hour After Liturgy . . . Holy Trinity needs every parishioner to sign up and host a fellowship hour after Sunday Liturgy. Everyone should be proud to host a fellowship hour. Show your culinary creativity. Bring your favorite ethnic foods.

Hosting a fellowship hour makes everyone more a part of the church community.

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.

Church Thanks . . .Thanks to all those who have given their time and talents in helping out at Holy Trinity. 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 parishioners who have brought their special food items in February for our after Liturgy fellowship hour. Many thanks to Virginia Freeman, Nancy Malek, and Eleni Vganges for making the Prosforo throughout the year.

Get Well . . . Prayers and blessings to Fr Jim Karagas, Karen Bridges, Lela & Mitch Roberts, Photine Hagicostas, Angelo Hagicostas, Alan Koskan , Virginia Freeman, Nancy Malek, Freddie Nosser, Tom Portarits, Nicki Arnold, George Vaporis, Elizabeth and Katerina Vamvakas. Fr Ezekiel or Fr Dean 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.

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.

Prayer for Parents: Entrusting Us with the Gift of Family

O Lord, Heavenly Father. You have blessed us with the gift of family and have entrusted us with their spiritual upbringing. You commanded that we should teach our children about You in our lives, when we sit in our house, when we walk by the way, when we lie down, and when we rise.

Guide us, O Lord, every moment of the day as we work toward this awesome task.

Let the words of Christ dwell in us, so that we may teach and guide our family, through our words and deeds, to the saving knowledge of Your everlasting kingdom. Help u, O Lord, be compassionate, kind, and patient throughout our days. If one of us has a complaint against another, help us to forgive each other, as You have forgiven us. Let the peace of Christ rule in our hearts. Above all, help us to remember to put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

We thanks you, Lord, for the many blessings and mercies You continually bestow on us. In everything we do, in word or deed, may we always do so in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through His Holy Spirit. Amen

--Orthodox Observer

On Worshiping During Lent – Lent in the Home by Melissa Tsongranis

Worshiping as a family is something we all need to work on. Sometimes we rush into these Lenten services thinking it is something we have to do and we don't prepare enough to go to these services. "This is why those who think of church services only in terms of obligations, who always inquire about the required minimum can never understand the true nature of worship which is to take us into a different world—that of God's Presence!" So when we consider that quote and really think about what we need to do as a family, we need to quiet down and not just go to the service but to be living them. Teach our children about the service and to teach ourselves about the service. Prepare them to be engaged in the services and to help them afterward to debrief.

Attending Church as a Family: Preparing through Daily Activities by Angie Gialourakis

Some simple suggestions for weaving church life into your daily life at home:

Around the Table—Communications is vital to relationships. One of the best times to communicate as a family is around the dinner table. Start with a prayer of thanks and then take time to listen to each of your children as they share their day, as well as your spouse. It is amazing how much learning can take place as parents listen, really listen, to their children and to each other.

Preparation - Weekend schedules fill up quickly with errands, chores, homework, family and social events, sports, and all the other activities that make our family lives unique. By Sunday morning we confront the leftovers—mainly attending church and Divine Liturgy. As much as possible, plan your weekend around church. Add church to the calendar first, then fill in the other tasks and events. Where conflicts arise, stress the importance of attending church—to praise and thank the Lord for all that is good, to worship as a the Body of Christ, and to attend Sunday School. In this way, we offer God our first fruits rather than our leftovers.

Increase the Sense of Peace - Remove the distractions while preparing for church will greatly increase your chances of on time arrival. A sense of peace will ultimately create a deeper understanding of how and why we pray and commune with God. As children and parents learn Godly peace and love in the home, they will appreciate the Godly peace and love found in the Church. "Fathers and mothers: Go and lead your child by the hand into the Church." -St John Chrysostom

Lent is a Time of Renewal and Preparation Be ready for Easter and its promises. Choose penitential practices that encourage inner renewal and reconciliation with God. Set aside time for prayer, study and participation in Lenten Worship services. Meditate on Christ's sacrifice and its meaning for us today. Observing Lent can help you experience the full joy of Easter.

"Be doers of the word, and not hearers only." James 1:22.

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 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 as soon as possible. Pledge forms will be available at church. Please take a few minutes to fill out the pledge form and submit it to Craig Henderson (President and Stewardship Chairman), George Yurchak (Vice-President, Parish Council), or Rodney Bridges (Treasurer, Parish Council).

HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH STEWARDS FOR 2018

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the 2018 Stewardship Program as of March 28 . Holy Trinity has received forty-one pledges totaling \$32,620 from the following:

Chrisanthi Beach
Mike Bodisch
Caleb Bridges
Rodney & Karen Bridges
Robert Brouillette III
John & Donna Collins
Steve & CoCo Collins
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Hugh & Brandi Donohoe
Norman & Shelby Foskey
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Virginia Freeman
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Angelos & Elizabeth Vamvakas
Katerina Vamvakas
George Vaporis
Eleni Vganges
Spiro Vganges
Dimitrius & Stamatina Virvillis
Costa 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

2018 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

Facilities

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

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Publications Editor – Sheila Yurchak

Cleaning – Chrisanthi Beach, Fanoula Christidis,

Virginia Freeman, Akaterina Vamvakas,

Parish Ministries

Altar Boys – Joseph Lawson

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 Komenko, Akaterina Vamvakas

Technology – Karen Kohl, Spiro Vganges

Pastoral Assistant – Craig Henderson, Caleb Bridges

Society of Wisdom – George Vaporis

Strategic Planning – Chair, CoCo Collins

Web Master – Steve Collins