



Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America  
**Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church**  
255 Beauvoir Rd., Biloxi, MS 39531  
P.O. Box 8534, Biloxi, MS 39535  
(228) 388-6138  
www.holytrinitybiloxi.org  
**January 2019 Bulletin**



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

*As we begin this civil New Year, may we celebrate this Sunday's Great Feast, and all its miracles and blessings, as faithful Orthodox Christians: prepared to follow our Incarnate Lord and Savior on the true path of submission to God with humble and contrite hearts—both this year, and all the days of our lives. Καλή Χρονία!*

**+ALEXIOS**

*Metropolitan of Atlanta*

#### From Father Dean:

As we prepare to enter a New Year, with all the blessings, opportunities and yes even challenges that lie ahead, it is important to reflect on how we live our lives. Just as businesses take year end inventories and prepare year end reports, we must do the same in our own personal and spiritual lives. Only when we reflect on the past year honestly and prayerfully, can we plan for 2019.

Needless to say, our relationship to God is of ultimate importance, and that relationship can be deepened and strengthened, if we are willing to pray, read the Bible daily, fast and attend church services regularly throughout the year. In other words as we hear many times in the services “with all the Saints, let us commit ourselves and one another and our **whole** life to Christ our God.”

Everyone makes New Year Resolutions that are quickly forgotten and abandoned. But one New Year's Resolution that we must make and one that should never be forgotten or abandoned is to learn how to better communicate not only with God, but with each other. The best way to communicate is to use two gifts that He has given us.....**love** and **forgiveness**. Only when we make love and forgiveness a part of our lives can we live in harmony with ourselves and with one another, without anger, bitterness, strife or hatred.

As 2018 comes to an end, we need to thank God for all the blessings He has bestowed on us and on our beloved Holy Trinity Church during the past year and through prayer ask Him to walk with us during the New Year.

#### **Schedule of Services**

Sunday Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am on Jan 6 with Fr Dean  
Sunday Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am on Jan 13 with Fr Dean  
Sunday Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am on Jan 20 with Fr Paul  
Sunday Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am on Jan 27 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

2018 – A Year of Faith . . . Holy Trinity still stands in faith as a beacon of Orthodoxy for the Mississippi Gulf Coast. 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 2018.

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.

Our Sunday Religious Education Program was very successful and well attended. Our Lay Prayer Service and Orthodox Book Study Group continued.

Brandi Donohoe and Meri Ionescu were honored with the Archangel Michael Award from His Eminence Metropolitan Alexios at a Metropolis of Atlanta dinner and reception.

We had the most successful International Christmas Festival & Pastry Sale (throughout a daylong pouring rain) 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 City, the Greek Kefi Dancers who came over from Birmingham and our own Gulf Coast Hellenic 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, our own Karen Henderson sing God Bless America, Eyler Coates and Steve Collins playing harp and bagpipes, and finally, Greek musicians Nick Trivelas, Joanna Nixon 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 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 had two baptisms this year: Athena Victory Van Alstyne and Charlize Gray Courtney.

Holy Trinity again participated in the Gulf Coast Historical Society's Cultural Exposition and the Armed Forces Retirement Home Cultural Day. Holy Trinity

supported and attended the opening of a new Russian Cultural/Community Center in New Orleans. Also, as a result of Holy Trinity's International Christmas Festival we have become well known on the coast and this year participated in coast libraries Children Summer Programs called "Libraries Rock" focusing on our ethnic cultures dance and music and Summer Reading Program. Holy Trinity performers were invited into the Public School System to showcase our ethnic cultures dance, music and song at Bel-Aire Elementary School for over 160 students and teachers. Also, the Disability Connection called and asked us to participate in their Gulf Coast Cultural Heritage Program. Holy Trinity was asked to participate in the Biloxi Cemetery Tour this year where Brandi Donohoe and George Yurchak portrayed two parishioners who are buried in Biloxi Cemetery. They talked about Holy Trinity and the two parishioners lives to over 1,000 people who attended the tour. Holy Trinity helped with the "Christmas Wonder" Concert at Mary O'Keefe Cultural Center put on by Nataliya Petrovska-Molsbee.

Holy Trinity hosted 11 Ukrainian orphan boys and girls ages 8 to 15. We treated them to a wonderful day that they said felt like Disneyland to them. Many of our parishioners lent their time, money and talents to see that these children from the other side of the world could have a little sunshine in what may otherwise be a gloomy life. As a result of this visit one of our parishioners visited the Ukrainian Orphanage and found out they were in desperate need of a clothes dryer. Holy Trinity parishioners stepped up and donated \$1,000 for a top of the line Bosch clothes dryer and purchased the dryer and had it installed in the orphanage by the daughter of Natalia Petrovska, Oleksandra Petrovska.

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 24 backpacks filled with school supplies, to the Biloxi School System for disadvantaged school children. We continued with Feeding the Hungry by giving monetary, food donations and "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 also donated a Christmas Tree to one of the kids making his wish come true. 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 devastated North Carolina and Florida we answered the call for Hurricane Relief and took collections to support our sister churches and families in need. Holy Trinity supported her sister parishes by attending the Mobile GreekFest and the New Orleans Greek Festival. Some of our parishioners also attended and supported other Greek Festivals in Pensacola Florida and Bethesda Maryland. Some also attended the Ukrainian Festival in Bethesda Maryland and the Yarmaka Festival in Mobile where Sheila and George Yurchak were invited to do their Ukrainian dance. We continue to increase our library with additional donations of books, CDs DVDs and pamphlets.

One of our parishioners became a U.S. citizen this past year: Natalia Petrovska. Our Young Adults have been active this year with Korina Bodisch being accepted into the Mississippi Governor's Program for an article she wrote on "Women's Rights."

Nikolai Konstantinov received his Degree from Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College at Jeff Davis.

Now we look forward to 2019 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. Blessings will take place on:

- Sunday, January 13, homes West of Gulfport by Fr Dean,
- Sunday, January 20, homes in Biloxi by Fr Paul,
- Sunday, January 27, homes East of our church by Fr Dean.

If you would like your home blessed, contact George Yurchak at 228-860-3376 or [georgeyurchak@yahoo.com](mailto:georgeyurchak@yahoo.com) who will make the arrangements with Fr Dean and Fr Paul, and accompany them to your home.

**January 13, Vasilopita** . . . We will have the Greek tradition of cutting the Vasilopita Bread on January 13 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 9 & 23** . . . will resume on Jan. 9 from 5:30 – 7:00 pm. Led by Nancy Malek.

**Russian Christmas on a Ship Program, Now on January 16** . . . Holy Trinity will once again visit a ship in Gulfport Harbor to help Ukrainian and Russian seamen help celebrate their Russian Christmas (usually January 7 but delayed) since they are away from their home and families. We will bring the seamen gifts, sing Christmas carols and say the Lord's Prayer with them. We will also get a tour of their ship. We will meet at Gulfport Harbor at 11:30 am for the 12 noon – 1 pm Christmas Program on the ship. Let's support this program because the crew enjoy it. Contact George Yurchak if you are interested in attending (friends are welcome) at 228-860-3376 or [georgeyurchak@yahoo.com](mailto:georgeyurchak@yahoo.com). Complete details will be provided where to go on Sunday January 13.

**General Assembly Meeting, Sunday February 3.** . . At the General Assembly we will bring everyone up to date on business from 2018 and a look ahead into activities in 2019. Treasurer's report will also be provided along with a Stewardship update.

**2019 Church Calendars** . . . The 2019 Church Calendars are available in the Church Narthex. They were donated by Nataliya Petrovska-Molsbee in memory of several relatives.

**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, 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 228-297-0526 or sheilayurchak@yahoo.com.

**Anniversaries for January.** . . Brandi and Hugh Donohue will celebrate their 4<sup>th</sup> 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 2018 International Christmas Festival & 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 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 – 228-860-3376 or georgeyurchak@yahoo.com.

**Get Well** . . .Prayers and blessings to Fr Jim Karagas, Karen Bridges, Elizabeth Vamvakas, Photine and Angelo Hagicostas, George Vaporis, Mitch & Lela Roberts, Nancy Malek, Virginia Freeman, Tom Portaritis, and Nikki Arnold. 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.



**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 2019. Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church wants to have all pledges in as soon as possible but no later than January 31 and 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 2019. 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. 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 (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 December 31.

Chrisanthi Beach  
Mike Bodisch  
Caleb Bridges  
Rodney & Karen Bridges  
Robert Brouillette III  
John & Donna Collins  
Steve & CoCo Collins  
Nicoletta Conner  
George Contas  
John Demetrakopoulos  
Bernie & Callie DeSantis  
Hugh & Brandi Donohoe  
Norman & Shelby Foskey  
Terry & Julia Foskey  
Virginia Freeman  
Natalya Gray  
Angelo & Photine Hagicostas

Craig & Karen Henderson  
Elen Ifantis  
Cristian & Meri Ionescu  
Mihail Kastrinos  
Chrisie Soula Kiessling  
Karen Kohl  
Karen Komenko  
John & Cornelia Koniditsiotis  
Allen & Irene Koskan  
Al & Kathy Lawson  
Maria & Peter Loukatos  
Rena Lohrbach  
Cristina Macovei  
Eva Magiros  
Karl & Nancy Malek  
Kyriaki Jessie Martin  
Louis & Linda Peters

Nataliya Petrovska  
Tom & Pat Portaritis  
Melissa Schwartz  
Jerry Strickland  
Leah Summers  
Lisa Taylor  
Alexandru Tulburi  
Angelos & Elizabeth Vamvakas  
Katerina Vamvakas  
George Vapouris  
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

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

#### **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, Akaterina Vamvakas

#### **Facilities**

Chair – Craig Henderson

Cristian Ionescu

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

Chair – George Yurchak

**Greek Culture** Chair – George Yurchak

**Ukrainian Culture** Chair – Nataliya Petrovska

**Romanian Culture** Chair – Meri Ionescu

**Moldovan Culture** Chair – Alexandru Tulburi

**Russian Culture** Chair – George Yurchak

**Kazakhstan Culture** Chair - Natalya Gray

#### **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 – Meri Ionescu

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

Web Master – Steve Collins

Pastoral Assistant – Craig Henderson, Caleb Bridges

Altar Boys – Joseph Lawson

Society of Wisdom – George Vapouris

Strategic Planning – Chair, CoCo Collins



