



Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America
Metropolis of Atlanta

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church

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April 2019 Bulletin

A Message from Fr. Dean



Our Spiritual Journey During Great Lent

Great Lent, beginning with Clean Monday and ending with Christ's Resurrection, is a period of fasting, praying and repenting that strengthens our faith in the Lord.

Pre-Lenten services help prepare us for our spiritual renewal.

Three **Saturdays of the Souls** honor both the Saints of our church and deceased Orthodox Christians awaiting judgment. **Meat Fare Sunday** marks the last day to eat meat before Great Lent. **Cheese Fare Sunday** marks the final day to eat oil and dairy products.

On the first Sunday of Great Lent, **The Sunday of Orthodoxy**, we bring our icons from home to commemorate the return of icons to the church in 843 A.D. Great Lent continues on the second Sunday with **The Feast Day of St. Gregory Palamas** followed by the third Sunday with the **Adoration of the Holy Cross**. The Cross, a symbol of the victory of good over evil, gives the faithful worshippers the courage and reassurance to continue on their spiritual journey.

The fourth Sunday of Lent is dedicated to **St. John of the Ladder (Climacus)**. The fifth Sunday of Lent is **The Feast Day of St. Mary of Egypt**.

On **The Saturday of Lazarus**, the day before Palm Sunday and the start of Holy Week, the Divine Liturgy is held to celebrate the divine love that brought Lazarus back to life.

Palm Sunday celebrates Jesus' triumphant journey into Jerusalem on a donkey. We receive a palm cross on this day as a symbol of our willingness to follow Our Lord Jesus Christ to the Cross.

The **Holy Monday** service urges us to be spiritually prepared to receive Jesus by lighting our lives with faith and good works.

The **Holy Tuesday** service asks us to repent our sins and to forgive others.

The sacrament of Holy Unction takes place on **Holy Wednesday**.

On **Holy Thursday** morning, we recall the washing of the Disciples' feet and the mystical supper of Christ the Martyr. In the evening, the solemn service is the Matins of Holy Friday during which time we commemorate the Passion of Jesus Christ. Through the Twelve Gospels, we remember He willingly endured the spittings, scourgings, buffetings, scorn, mocking, nails, spear, the Cross and death to take away our sins.

Holy Friday is one of the holiest days of the year. In the morning, the Royal Hours are offered as we keep vigil at the side of the crucified Christ. During the

afternoon Apokathelosis service, the priest takes Jesus' body from the Cross, wraps it in a white cloth and places it on the altar, as a sign of His burial.

In the evening, the beautiful hymns of the Lamentations are chanted with both sorrow and joy. The Kouvouklion with the Epitaphios is taken around the Church with the faithful following holding a lighted candle symbolizing their commitment to Jesus who is the light of the world. When re-entering the Church, we walk under the raised Kouvouklion holding the Epitaphios to symbolize that we pass through death into life in Jesus.

Holy Saturday is a day of hope. We anticipate Jesus' victory over death. Since the liturgy anticipates the resurrection, bright vestments are worn

Shortly before midnight, the church is darkened. The faithful receive the resurrection light from the priest and form a procession out of the church to hear the good news of Jesus' triumph. The faithful sing, "Christ is Risen."

The **Easter Divine Liturgy** follows with everyone prepared to receive Holy Communion. The priest reads the magnificent sermon of St. John Chrysostom. At the **Agape Vespers** on Pascha, we gather to share the joy of the Resurrection and to express God's love for us and our love for each other. The Gospel from John 20:19-25 is read in many languages to symbolize that the news of the Resurrection has spread to all nations. The fast of Great Lent is broken.

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 7 – Sunday Divine Liturgy at 10 am with Fr. Dean

April 12 – Friday Akathist Hymn at 6:30 with Fr. Dean

April 14 – Sunday Divine Liturgy at 10 am with Fr. Dean

April 21 – Palm Sunday Divine Liturgy at 10 am with Fr. Paul

April 22 - Monday Bridegroom Service at 6 pm with Fr. Paul

April 23 - Tuesday Bridegroom Service at 6 pm with Fr. Paul

April 24 - Wednesday Unction Service at 6 pm with Fr Paul

April 25 – Thursday Last Supper Liturgy 9 am with Fr Paul

April 25 - Thursday Reading of the 12 Gospels Service at 6 pm with Fr Paul

April 26 - Friday Decorating the Kovouklion (Epitaphios) at 10:00 am

April 26 - Good Friday Vespers/Lamentations Service at 5:30 pm with Fr Paul

April 27 - Saturday Divine Liturgy of St Basil at 9 am with Fr Paul

April 27 - Saturday Evening Nocturns/Matins Service at 11:30 pm

followed by Resurrection Liturgy on April 28 with Fr Paul

April 28 - 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.

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

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 meditate 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, April 20 at 10:00 am. Please volunteer your time to help.

Palm Sunday Luncheon, April 21 . . .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 28 . . . The Agape Feast will be on Pascha, April 28, 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.

Bible Study, Wednesday, April 3 & 17 . . . Nancy Malek will conduct a lay prayer service and book study from 5:50 pm -7:00 pm on Wednesday, April 3 & 17.

Religious Education

By weekly Orthodox study every other Wednesday. Lay service starts at 5:30 pm. Study session starts at 6:00 pm. **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 – 228-860-3376 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 ethnics 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 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, Virginia Freeman, Nancy Malek, Tom Portarits, Nicki Arnold, George Vaporis, Elizabeth, Vasili, and Katerina Vamvakas. 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 thank 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 2019

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the 2019 Stewardship Program as of March 31, totaling \$37,070. Holy Trinity has received fifty-seven pledges from the following:

Chrisanthi Beach
Mike Bodisch
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Katerina Vamvakas
George Vaporis
Eleni Vganges
Spiro Vganges
Kosta Vlahos
Demetri Vlahos
George & Sheila Yurchak

Church Directory

Liturgical Services

Sundays – Divine Liturgy 10:00 am

Church Clergy

Rev. Fr. Dean Gigicos

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

2018 Parish Council

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Ukrainian Culture Chair – Nataliya Petrovska Kirby

Romanian Culture Chair – Meri Ionescu

Moldovan Culture Chair – Alexandru Tulburi

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Kazakhstan Culture Chair - Natalya Gray

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Kiosk – George Yurchak

Publications Editor – Sheila Yurchak

Artist in Residence – Sheila Hemenway

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 Komenko, Akaterina Vamvakas

Web Master – Steve Collins

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Altar Boys – Joseph Lawson

Society of Wisdom – George Vaporis

Strategic Planning – Chair, CoCo Collins

Greek Dance Instruction – Steve & CoCo Collins

Art Coordinator- Helena Docherty