



Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church

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April (Pascha) 2019 Newsletter



A Word from our Council President, George Yurchak

Christ is Risen! This newsletter will be devoted entirely to Holy Week and Pascha. We were glad, as always that Fr Paul Mayernick and Presvytera Joanie were with us again for the Holy Week, culminating with the Resurrection of Our Lord, Jesus Christ. They really enjoy coming and spending Holy Week with their Holy Trinity family. This newsletter will show Holy Week services through the many photos taken of our Orthodox family. And, we will highlight the many ethnic traditions/customs of Orthodox Easter.

Words from Fr Paul and Presvytera Joanie

Dear Parishioners of Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church Biloxi: No words can truly express our joy of being invited again for Holy Week and Pascha. We are so proud to be asked back each year and allowed to be with you for Pascha. Your love for Presvytera and I will always be in our hearts. The Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Community clearly shows a firm devotion to God and love for the Orthodox Church. Thank you! God Bless you!

Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen!



Journey to Pascha

We were very grateful to have Fr Paul Mayernick and Presvytera Joanie take the time to come over from Florida to help us with Holy Week Services. They enjoy coming every year at this special time to serve the Orthodox faithful for Holy Week.



Palm Sunday – A New Tradition – Palm Crosses and Pussywillows

Holy Trinity will give out pussywillow branches in addition to palm crosses. Pussywillows are a Russian/Ukrainian/Kazakhstanian/Georgian/Romanian/Moldovan tradition since they don't grow palms in these countries. Fr Paul and Fr Ernesto both thought this would be great to give out the pussywillows which they give out in the churches up north. Members of Holy Trinity helped ready the church for Holy Week with placement of palms for Palm Sunday.



Palm Sunday Luncheon

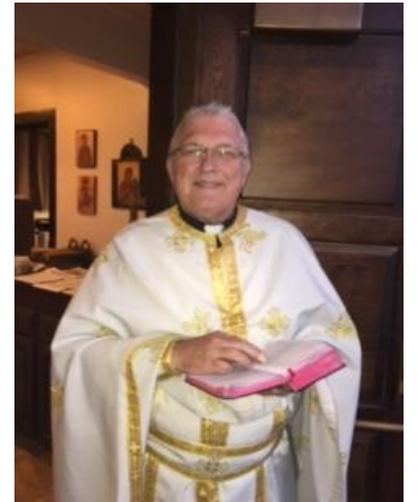
Master Chef, and the Parish Council Vice President, Craig Henderson and his dedicated wife Karen prepared the fried Tilapia for the great and delicious luncheon served. Once again, thank you Craig and Karen.

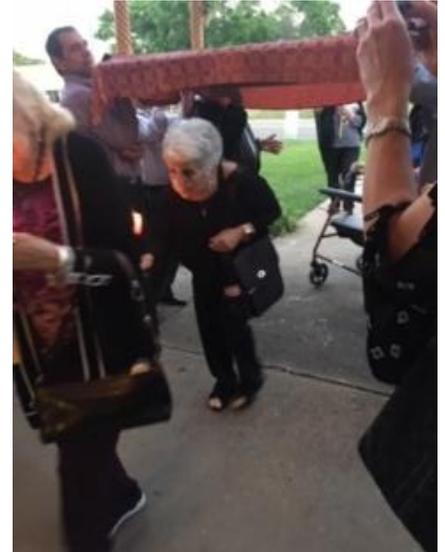




Holy Monday thru Pascha

Several Members helped clean the church for Holy Week Services, decorating the Kavouklion with flowers for the Good Friday service for the procession around the church with the embroidered icon of the entombed Christ, which is not only a funeral procession, but also the Son of God, the Immortal One, proceeding through darkness of Hades pre-announcing the joy of Resurrection. Following the Resurrection Service where Christ is Risen!, we had the blessing of over 18 Easter baskets and the red Easter eggs. On Easter Sunday we have the Agape Vespers and Agape Feast for everyone.





Holy Trinity's Easter Choir

The men and women of Holy Trinity Choir sang beautifully during Easter Holy Week Services. They practiced before each service and led the congregation in the devotional hymns of our Orthodox religion. Our special thanks goes to those choir members for their efforts. Also, Natalia Martin, a Ukrainian from Pensacola came for our Saturday evening and Sunday services.



Natalia sang beautifully, especially "The Lord's Prayer" in Russian. A special thanks goes to our choir members.



Blessing of Easter Baskets – An Eastern European Tradition

The blessing of the Easter baskets started at Holy Trinity many years ago when a few families brought Easter baskets to be blessed. Each year this tradition continues as more and more baskets are blessed - Russian, Ukrainian, Romanian, Moldovan, Kazakhstani, Uzbekistani, and now some Greek families bring their baskets. This blessing stems from the Christian communities desire to ask God's blessings on the foods that will break the Lenten fast from which they have abstained for 40 days. The religious significance attached to the foods eaten are symbolic of Christ Himself, our true Passover. One of the most special of the Russian/Ukrainian foods that many bring to be blessed is Kulich, a rich sweet bread baked in cans and a centerpiece for every family table.





Red Eggs



Easter eggs are dyed red to represent the Blood of Christ, with further symbolism being found in the hard shell of the egg, symbolizing the sealed Tomb of Christ – the cracking of which symbolized His Resurrection from the dead. The red eggs are blessed and passed out to all the parishioners at the end of the Resurrection.

The Easter Candle

At the conclusion of the Resurrection Service, it is customary to take the lighted Easter candle home. It is considered a good omen if one manages to



keep the Easter candle illuminated until they reach home without letting it go out. Pictured is Nadia Pahlevan with her illuminated candles.



The Resurrection Kiss – A Greek Tradition

After exchanging the Easter greeting, it is customary to exchange the kiss of the Resurrection or “Kiss of Love” (Agape), symbolizing the love of Christ among his followers.





Resurrection Service



Decorating Eggs – A Russian and Ukrainian Tradition

In the Russian Orthodox Church, decorating eggs is an artistry. These eggs are given to relatives and friends, and some are placed on the graves of family members. There is the biggest Easter Egg (Pysanka) museum in the Ukraine. It consists of a unique and rich collection of Easter Eggs from different regions of Ukraine and the world.

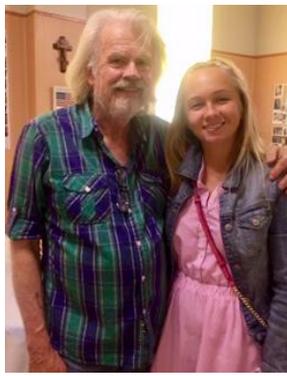
Agape Vespers

Today as we continue to celebrate our Lord's victory over sin, death and the grave at the joyous Agape Vespers the Gospel reading was read in ten languages: Greek, German, Arabic, Amharic (the language of Ethiopia), Spanish, Russian, Italian, French, Latin, and English.



Agape Feast – A Greek Tradition

Following the celebration of Christ's Resurrection at Pascha (Easter), an Agape Feast is held on Easter Sunday. George Vaporis roasted six boneless legs of lamb in the oven along with Greek potatoes and green beans. All families brought a favorite ethnic dish for the Agape Feast and all partook in an abundant feast. Ouzo, wine and other drinks flow during the Agape Feast celebration. Much fellowship and Greek dancing. Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen!



Youth Easter Egg Hunt

During the Agape Feast George & Sheila Yurchak took charge of the Easter Egg Hunt which was limited due to the low number of youth attending the Agape Feast. All kids were given a basket of eggs, stuffed Easter animals and specialty eggs. Apologies to Virginia and Lily for accidentally giving away one of your blessed stuffed animals.