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April 2015 Newsletter, Part I

A Word from our Council President, George Yurchak

Christ is Risen! We had a lot happening during the month of April so we will have two newsletters, one devoted to Easter and one for the remaining events that we had at Holy Trinity. We were glad that Fr Paul Mayernick and his Presvytera Joanie was with us for Holy Week, culminating with the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. You will get to meet Joseph Lawson, a new altar boy, who served during Holy Week. In keeping with the Russian and Ukrainian tradition, we blessed Easter baskets that contained many food items not eaten during Lent and represent an offering to the resurrected Christ. Then we had a wondrous Agape Feast that was attended by many of the Holy Trinity Faithful. We had an Easter Egg Hunt for the youth of our church.

Member in the Spotlight – Joseph Lawson



I'm 13 years old and I would probably describe myself as a typical boy. I like to eat, skateboard and play video games. I am currently a seventh grader at St. Stanislaus College in Bay St. Louis, where my family lives. We just moved to Bay St. Louis from Raymond, MS this past June. I really like my new school and friends. My dad is an interior designer and we own an interior design studio/store in Bay St. Louis. We actually kind of live in the store. My mom is a furniture sales rep and travels around Mississippi and Louisiana regularly. I love to travel and have already been to Italy twice along with travels to Germany, Jamaica and Mexico. Every summer I attend Antiochian Village Orthodox Summer Camp. It's one of my favorite places in the whole world. This will be my fourth summer to attend. I love history. And I love to read. Two of my favorite book series are the Lord of the Rings trilogy by JRR Tolkien and Christopher Paolini's Inheritance Cycle trilogy. Our entire family are huge football fans. We absolutely love the Fall because of football season. We are Mississippi State Bulldog fans (my dad graduated from architecture school there) and New Orleans Saints fans. Sometimes we are Green Bay Packers fans because my mom's company is there. And I play junior high football at St. Stanislaus as a defensive nose-guard and offensive guard. I like to hunt. And I like to hang out with my siblings Earl, Sophia and Anastasia. I love food – all kinds of foods. Our family has a very important relationship with food. My parents joined the Orthodox Church in 1991 at Holy Resurrection Orthodox Church (OCA) in Clinton, MS. My saint is St. Joseph of Arimethea. I love the

Orthodox Church because of its Tradition and rich history. I think it is beautiful and wish everyone would understand and join our church. I also love to serve in the altar and help make the service go smoothly.

Holy Week

We were grateful to have Fr Paul Mayernick and Matushka Joanie come over from Florida to help us with the Holy Week services. They expressed their appreciation to the members of Holy Trinity and have many fond memories of Holy Week.

Members of Holy Trinity helped ready the church for Holy Week with placement of palms for Palm Sunday, cooking the Palm Sunday luncheon, 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 the darkness of Hades pre-announcing the joy of the Resurrection. Following the Resurrection Service where Christ is Risen, we had the blessing of over 20 Easter Baskets. On Easter Sunday we had the Agape Feast for everyone, and a Easter Egg Hunt for our church youth.









Blessing of Easter Baskets – A Russian and Ukrainian 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 by all ethnic groups, after the Resurrection Service. 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 obtained 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 foods that many bring to be blessed is Kulich, a rich sweet bread baked in cans and a centerpiece for every Russian family table.



Agape Feast – A Greek Tradition

Following the celebration of Christ's Resurrection at Pascha (Easter), an Agape Feast is held on Easter Sunday. At dawn, a handful of men will arise early and roast the lamb on a spit to represent the Lamb of God. As the lamb roasts more lamb is prepared in the oven along with Greek potatoes and green beans. All families bring a favorite ethnic dish for the Agape Feast and all will partake in an abundant feast. Ouzo, wine and other drinks flow during the Agape Feast celebration. Christ is Risen! Truly He is Risen





Youth Easter Egg Hunt

During the Agape Feast Sheila Yurchak put on an Easter Egg Hunt for the youth of our church. Many of our youth participated which is an annual tradition.



The Easter Candle

At the conclusion of 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.



Red Egg

Eggs are dyed red which depict the agony and blood of Christ and are blessed and passed out to all the parishioners. A red egg is also placed in the blessed Easter basket.

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.



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. Pictured is an example.



The Great Easter Feast by Agni Kama, Our Ukrainian Writer/Artist



This is my Easter basket. At Easter Services there are very nice and soulful people, and a lot of colored lights and candles. When I look at the multi-colored lights, I think that every light is like a soul, and we are all different and yet we are all the same! And you know,

that is the power of humanity! I wish you all a wonderful holiday light, and peace in your soul.

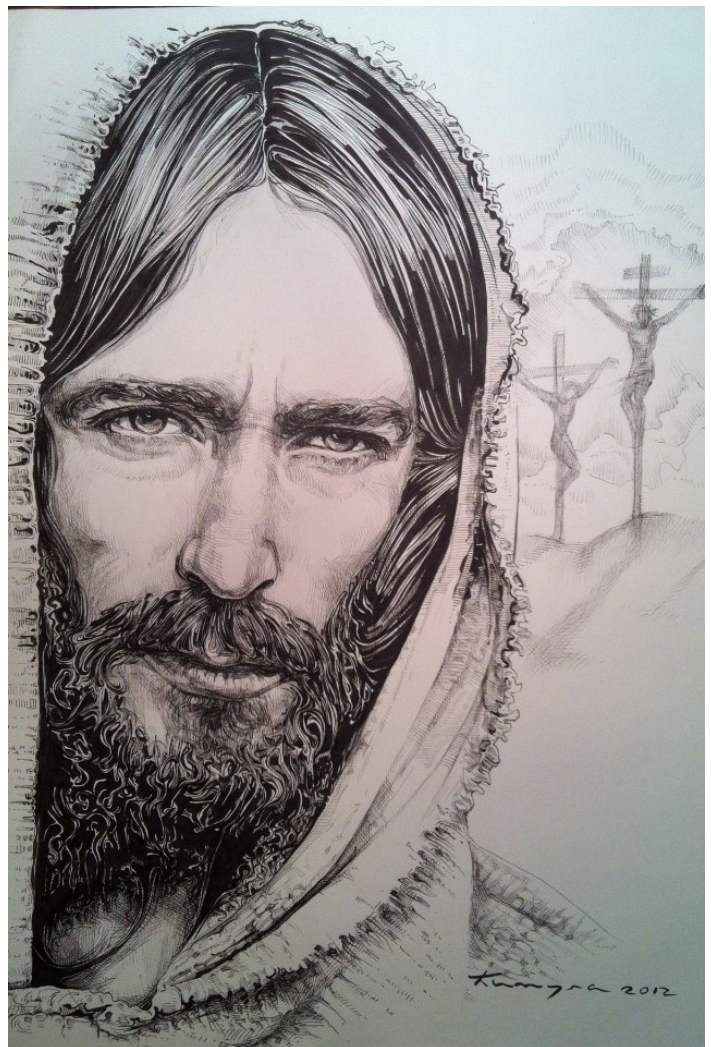


From Tatiana-Pitula Giamalaki – A Friend in Greece



Happy Easter to all friends from Holy Trinity. For me Resurrection of Christ is the symbol of the completion of Christianity. My daughter Alina Axsom had her son baptized at Holy Trinity and is an

artist. This is some of her beautiful spiritual artwork. Alina will be featured in Part II of the April Newsletter with more of her art.



*For the preaching of the cross
is to them that perish foolishness;
but unto us which are saved
it is the power of God. 1 Cor 1:18*

