

GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA
METROPOLIS OF ATLANTA

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April 2018 Easter Newsletter



A Word from our Council Vice-President, George Yurchak

Christ is Risen! You will get to meet Bianca Buie, from Romania. Bianca Buie and Margarita Lopareva (from Russia) are making a name for themselves on the Mississippi college tennis courts. Maria Lyapustina, a former parishioner from Russia gives us a few words to live by. This newsletter will then take you through Pascha and Holy Week Services with the many photos taken of our Orthodox family. Then we will highlight the many ethnic traditions/customs of Orthodox Easter.

Meet Bianca Buie

My name is Bianca Anamaria Buie, I am from Baia Mare, Romania, and I am 21 years old. I come from a normal family from North Transilvania, where the mountains and valleys make a beautiful landscape. Currently, I am playing tennis for Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College in Perkinston, Mississippi. I was always an athlete spirit. I started to play tennis when I was 6 and I did not stop since then. This talent and hard work gave me the opportunity to obtain a tennis scholarship in the US beginning with August 2016. My major at Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College is biotechnology and I am going to graduate with an Associate of Science degree this May. At the beginning, It was hard to get used with American culture and southern accent, but after two or three months I felt like I am a part of this world. Recently, I signed with University of Missouri at Saint Louis where I am going to study and play tennis for the next two years. I am excited for this opportunity and I am looking forward to see what the future has for me. I will miss my friends on the coast when I leave. For now, I am ready to go home for the summer and enjoy the next three month with my family and friends from home. My roommate, Margarita Lopareva told me about going to an Orthodox Church so I went with a friend and met many wonderful people who have been so kind to me, George & Sheila Yurchak, Cristian, Meri & Vlad Ionescu, to name a few. They will bring me to Holy Trinity on Sundays. George & Sheila Yurchak come up and support us when we play our tennis matches at MGCCC Perkinston Campus.



Buie and Lopareva Win Regionals in Tennis



Bianca Buie, from Bia Mare, Romania and Margarita Lopareva, from Moscow, Russia, both here on tennis scholarships at MGCCC, Perkinson Campus, blew through the competition and won singles championships. Buie has won two state championships. Lopareva has won one (she will finish her second year at Perkinson next year and more than likely take a second title). Bianca and Margarita have been named Student Athletes of the Week many times for their undefeated play throughout the season. Holy Trinity is lucky to have them and we wish them the best as they compete in the National College Tennis Tournament in Waco, Texas.

Words to Live By, by Maria Lyapustina

Maria Lyapustina was from Ufa, capital of Bashkir Republic, in the middle part of Russia by Ural Mountains. She left us with these words when her Navy husband was stationed in Korea. "First, God is Love and He is in everyone one of us. We just need to find that divine spark inside of us, cherish it and share it with others. Then take everything as it comes, everthing happens for a reason. Just keep in mind that after night, sun always rises. Never give up no matter what, God will never leave His kids, as we are. And one more thing – God's help is not straight. I mean if you ask for patience, He'll give you more tests and challenges. So for my opinion, it's better to stay positive and ask God for love, happiness, joy. And always just have faith." If any of my words will inspire you, dear reader, for something good, it will make me happy. All I ask now, yes, you, please smile. C'mon! You have a beautiful smile!



Words from Fr. Paul and Presvytera Joanie



No words can truly express our joy of being invited to minister to you during Holy Week and Pascha. Your love for Presbytera and I will always be in our hearts. The Holy Trinity Church Community demonstrated to us a firm devotion to God and love of the Orthodox Church. We are so proud to be asked back each year and be allowed to be with you for Pascha. 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 Presbyteria Joanie take the time to come over from Florida to help us with the Holy Week Services. They enjoy coming every year at this special time to serve the Orthodox faithful for Holy Week.

Palm Sunday New Tradition – Palm Crosses and Pussywillows

This is the first year Holy Trinity will give out pussywillow branches in addition to palm crosses.

Pussywillows are a Russian/Ukrainian/Kazakhstan/Georgian/Romanian/Moldovan tradition since they don't grow palm trees in these countries. Fr Paul 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. Craig Henderson, the master chef, again fried the fish for the Palm Sunday Luncheon.

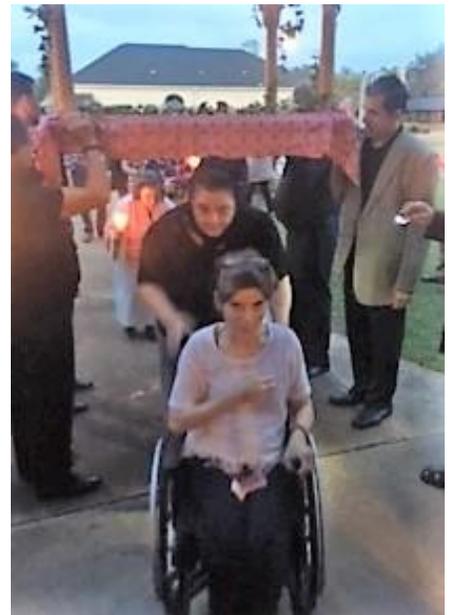


Holy Monday thru Pascha

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 25 Easter baskets and the red Easter eggs. On Easter Sunday we had the Agape Feast for everyone. The Easter Egg Hunt was a success for the youth.









Chrismation of Robert Brouillette and James Edwards

Robert Brouillette and James Edwards were chrismated into the Orthodox Faith on Holy Saturday during St. Basil's Liturgy. Rodney Bridges sponsored Robert and Caleb Bridges sponsored James. Welcome to the Orthodox Family.



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 "Our Father" in Russian.

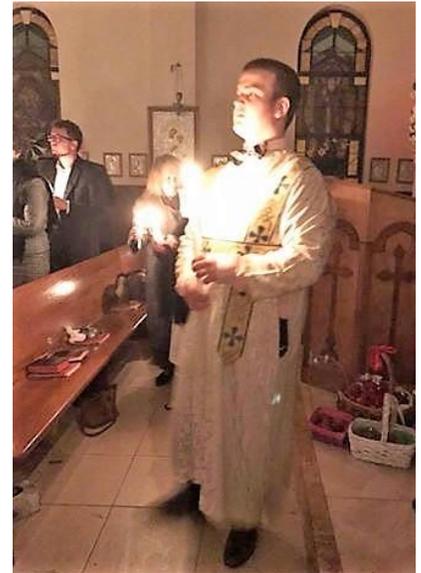


Blessing of Easter Baskets – A Russian and Ukrainian Tradition

The blessing of the Easter baskets started at Holy Trinity many years ago when a few Russian Orthodox families brought Easter baskets to be blessed. Each year this tradition continues to grow 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 abstained for 40 days. The religious significance attached to the foods eaten is 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.



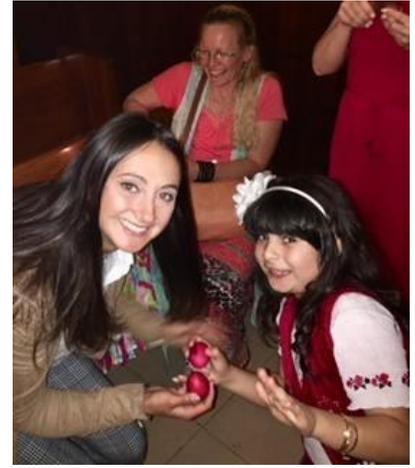
Holy Saturday Resurrection Service



Red Eggs

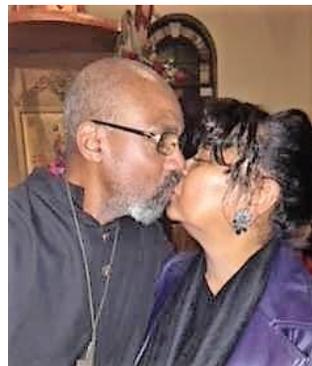
Easter Eggs are dyed red to represent the Blood of Christ, with further symbolism being found in the hard shell of the egg, symbolizing the sealed Tomb of Christ – the cracking of which symbolized His Resurrection from the dead. The red eggs are blessed and passed out to all the parishioners at the end of Resurrection Service. Bianca Buie and Margarita Lopareva, Natasha Percy and Nikolai Konstantinov, Cristina Macovi and Alina Gumeniuc, and Bianca Buie and young Nadiya, are shown tapping their eggs to see who has good fortune.





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. Many of our parishioners are shown exchanging “the Resurrection Kiss.”



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. Sheila Yurchak and Bianca Buie are shown with their lighted candles.



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. Haylie Waldrop decorated some eggs for her basket that was blessed.

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 four 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! Truly He is Risen!***





Youth Easter Egg Hunt

During the Agape Feast, George Yurchak took charge of the Easter Egg Hunt for the youth of our church. Korina Bodisch, Bianca Buie and Vlad Ionescu helped with the Easter Egg Hunt by hiding all the eggs. The kids had a great time hunting for the eggs on this beautiful day.



**Christ Is
Risen!**



**Indeed He Is
Risen!**