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September – December Newsletter 2018

A Word from our Vice President, George Yurchak

Sorry for not putting together a newsletter for each of the past three months but now that Christmas is over I intend to catch up. We had a busy 3 months. First, Brandi and Hugh Donohoe's "Journey to Orthodoxy" will be highlighted. Holy Trinity parishioners attended the "Yarmaka Festival" in Mobile where Sheila and George Yurchak were invited to do their Ukrainian dance. CoCo Collins achieved her dream by opening her own business "Happy Works." Several parishioners attended Mobile's GreekFest. Brandi Donohoe and George Yurchak portrayed two parishioners who are buried in Biloxi Cemetery for their annual tour. Fr Dean blessed Mihail Kastrinos's small handmade Greek Orthodox Church on his name day. Brandi Donohoe and Meri Ionescu were presented the Archangel Michael Awards by His Eminence Metropolitan Alexios at a reception in Atlanta for the work they do for Holy Trinity. Holy Trinity recognized the men of our parish as part of the International Men's Day Celebration. We honored our veterans for Veteran's Day. Plenty of baking was going on in preparation for our International Christmas Festival & Pastry Sale. Bel-Air Elementary School asked Holy Trinity to bring its ethnic entertainment to their school for over 170 students. They really enjoyed having us. Holy Trinity had an extremely successful International Christmas Festival & Pastry Sale even though the weather was terrible and it rained heavy all day long. Holy Trinity helped with the Christmas Wonder Concert put on by Nataliya Molsbee at the Mary O'Keefe Cultural Center. Finally, Christmas came early this year for a Ukrainian Orphanage when parishioners donated a \$1,000 to buy them a Bosch clothes dryer which was desperately needed by the orphans. George Yurchak previewed a book for our library – Prayer, Luck, and a Bleeding Heart. We will publish a special edition newsletter of the International Christmas Festival & Pastry Sale when the photos are received.

Our Journey to Orthodoxy – Hugh & Brandi Donohoe

We became disillusioned with the Protestant and Evangelical world. Hugh started to read books about Orthodox Christianity and became interested about the Orthodox faith. He had already converted intellectually before experiencing Orthodoxy. After attending Divine Liturgy for a couple of months, he was converted in his heart as well, becoming



christmated in 2009. Hugh brought Brandi to Divine Liturgy, and she found in Orthodoxy what she had always been looking for and soon became christmated also.

Mobile "Yarmarka" Festival

Sheila and I enjoyed dancing Ukrainian at South Alabama's Russian Yarmarka 2018 Festival at Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church in Mobile. Several parishioners travelled to our sister church to attend and support this festival. It was great seeing friends and eating the delicious ethnic foods. Sheila and I were even interviewed for the Ukrainian Podcast.



CoCo Collins "Happy Works" Ribbon Cutting

Sheila and George Yurchak attended the ribbon cutting ceremony for CoCo Collins' own business, "Happy Works" in Ocean Springs. George Yurchak sat in her therapy chair and her advice to him was to dance, keep dancing and then dance some more. It is great to see CoCo achieve her dream and have her own counseling business.



Mobile GreekFest

Several parishioners took the time to attend the Mobile GreekFest. As always, it is a great festival with plenty of delicious Greek cuisine, music, dancing and entertainment. It was a pleasure seeing many of our friends from Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church at the festival. OPA!



Biloxi Cemetery Tour



Brandi Donohoe and George Yurchak portrayed Nikki Demetrakopoulos and her Uncle Leonidas where they talked about Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church and what it brings to the Mississippi Gulf Coast, as well as the personal history of the two people they portrayed. We also had the pleasure of introducing Nikki's dad, John "Yanni" Demetrakopoulos to the people in the tours. Over a thousand people attended, many pictures were taken and WLOX-TV did a great news story.



Blessing of Mihail Kastrinos' Small Church

Fr Dean blessed a church built by Mihail Kastrinos which he located in his backyard. It is a small replica of a Greek Orthodox Church with many icons from monasteries in Greece that he has visited. Fr Dean blessed it on Mihail's Name Day. Several parishioners attended the blessing and Mihail and Melissa Schwartz provided delicious Greek food for everyone to enjoy. It was a dream come true for Mihail.



Archangel Michael Award Ceremony

Meri Ionescu and Brandi Donohoe received the Archangel Michael Award Medals which were presented to them by His Eminence Metropolitan Alexios at an awards ceremony and dinner at the Metropolis of Atlanta. The award was presented for the work they have done for Holy Trinity. Congratulations to Meri and Brandi!



Honoring our Veterans, Veterans Day 2018

In honor of our Military Service Veterans, our heartfelt thanks go out to all the men and women who proudly served Our Country during times of war and peace. We are proud of their patriotism, their willingness to serve and the sacrifices they made for our great country. God Bless America. Our veterans are: **Mike Bodisch, Robert Brouillette III, George Contas, Bernie DeSantis, Angelo Hagicostas, Craig Henderson, John Koniditsiotis, Tom Portaritis, Jerry Strickland, George Vaporis, Demetri Vlahos and George Yurchak.**

International Men's Day, November 19

Holy Trinity recognized all the men of our parish as part of the International Men's Day Celebration by treating them to a wonderful luncheon in our Fellowship Hall. They were honored for their support to Holy Trinity, their country, their community and most importantly their family. The women of Holy Trinity were recognized earlier this year and given roses and a wonderful luncheon as part of International Women's Day. Maria Lyapustina, her two young sons and mother visited Holy Trinity on this Sunday.





Baking for our International Christmas Festival & Pastry Sale

Plenty of baking was going on in preparation for our International Christmas Festival & Pasty Sale. Ladies and men of Holy Trinity came and baked Greek Koulourakia, Russian Vareneki and Kolachy pastries, Hungarian poppyseed rolls and nut rolls. It is great to see the parishioners pulling together for our annual festival and pastry sale.



“A Balanced Meal is a Greek Pastry in Each Hand”



Holy Trinity Performs for Bel-Aire Elementary Students

Holy Trinity took our ethnic cultural performance to the public school as we performed for over 160 students and teachers. It gave us a chance to show them the various cultures, music, song, and dance that is represented on the Coast. We were happy to share and the students enjoyed our performances. They looked at our cultural display tables and at the end, a long line of students and teachers did a Greek dance around the cafeteria.





Christmas Came Early for Ukrainian Orphans

Holy Trinity made Christmas special this year when parishioners donated \$1,000 to buy a top of the line Bosch clothes dryer for a Ukrainian orphan, an item they really needed. Oleksandra Petrovska, the daughter of one of our parishioners, Natalia Petrovska, bought the clothes dryer and had it delivered and installed to the Ukrainian Orphanage. You can see the appreciation on the smiles from the Ukrainian orphans. Natalia visited this Ukrainian Orphanage this past summer and saw first hand the plight of the Ukrainian orphans.

Holy Trinity experienced first hand what Ukrainian orphans are like when we hosted 11 other Ukrainian orphan boys and girls ages 8 – 15 this past August. The Ukrainian orphans felt like they were in Disneyland with the Holy Trinity experience. We want to thank Holy Trinity parishioners for stepping up and helping these orphans and giving them a Very Merry Christmas – Christ is Born!



International Christmas Festival & Pastry Sale

Holy Trinity's International Christmas Festival was a "smashing success" while the rain came down heavy all day long. Our best festival ever! It ended with Megan Jensen singing "Dancing Queen" and Nick Trivelas and Joanna Nixon doing a fantastic dance to the song.



People from all along the Gulf Coast came, not only from Mississippi, but from Gulf Shores Alabama, Pensacola Florida, Mobile Alabama and Houma Louisiana. The parking lot was jam packed with cars all day long. One family said "nothing could keep us away from your festival. We look forward to it every year." One festival volunteer from Keesler Air Force Base said she had the time of her life and how Holy Trinity people were so wonderful.

We were all under tents, everyone got wet, but the rain could not keep the people away. We “embraced the rain.” There is nothing like having a little rain on your face. Holy Trinity parishioners had an outstanding time showing the people our culture, music, dance, foods and what Holy Trinity is all about.

“Treating the Coast like Family Makes all the Difference”

We want to thank our Greek musicians Nick Trivelas, Megan Jensen and Joanna Nixon; the Victory Belles from the National World War II museum in New Orleans; the Georgian Dance Ensemble, Simon Tsetvasvadze and Sofia Alaniia who came down from New York City; the Kefi Dancers from Birmingham Alabama, and our very own Holy Trinity Gulf Coast Hellenic Dancers.

A Special Edition Newsletter will be forthcoming with many pictures of our International Christmas Festival & Pastry Sale as soon as we get the pictures from our young photographer.



Christmas Wonder

Holy Trinity helped Nataliya Molsbee with her Christmas Wonder Concert at Mary O’Keefe Cultural Center in Ocean Springs. We helped with ticket sales and sold more of our Greek pastries. The Christmas Concert featured 30 children of different ages. The concert was dedicated to those who are not with us anymore. The goal is to



support those who lost loved ones. For them, this time of year is especially hard, so the performance was for the memories of their loved ones. Several Holy Trinity parishioners helped with the show and enjoyed supporting the performances of the children.



Review of "Prayer, Luck and a Bleeding Heart" by George Yurchak

This book was given to me by Robert Nicholson, cousin to Jerry Strickland, one of our parishioners. This book is a story about his experience. Robert had no health problems for the first 50 years of his life before he experienced 3 major heart attacks in two weeks, flat-lined 4 times, was in a coma for 2 months and then had a heart transplant. In his words: "A young girl died so that I might live. I owe so much for my life I have lived. The reality of truth is all I have. I close my eyes and feel the music of contentment and I can only say thank you, GOD!" It is a short book that tells this story as best he can remember. Interesting read. Brandi will put it in the library.