



Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America  
Metropolis of Atlanta  
**Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church**  
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**August 2017 Bulletin**



### **A Message from Father Dean**

On August 15<sup>th</sup> our Holy Orthodox Church celebrates a solemn feast day of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of our Lord. We know her by many names....Virgin Mary, the Theotokos (to bear God), Panayia (all holy), and Aeipartenos (ever virgin) to mention a few. Whatever term you chose to use, it is on August 15<sup>th</sup> that we commemorate her Falling Asleep to this world.

Other than knowing that we are supposed to fast, I wonder how many of us really understand the importance of this feast day and really understand the great help that the Virgin Mary could be for us in coming closer to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

According to Holy Tradition, as the time drew near for the Virgin Mary to fall asleep to this world, she went to the Mount of Olives and prayed there. Later she made all the preparations for her burial. Meanwhile, as though through a miracle, all the Apostles except Thomas, returned to Jerusalem and gathered at Gethsemane where the Virgin Mary lived. She prayed with them and told them that she would be with God in heaven very soon. Then she fell into a deep sleep and died. The Apostles carried her saintly body to the final resting spot she had chosen. Some icons of the Falling Asleep of the Virgin Mary show a man with his hands cut off. Tradition tells us that a man tried to disrupt the funeral procession and attempted to overturn the funeral pall. To prevent that from happening an angel appeared and cut off his hands. Legend also has it that the Apostle Thomas who was not present when the Resurrected Jesus first appeared to the Disciples did not arrive in time for the Virgin Mary's burial. He wanted to go to the tomb and pray. The other Disciples took him to her tomb and to their astonishment, the Virgin Mary's body was not there. This is how the belief in her bodily ascension originated. We must understand that she did not ascend alive nor that she was resurrected in the same way Jesus was. The Orthodox Church has never declared the Assumption to be a doctrine of the Church, however, hymns of our Church reflect that she ascended into heaven. And yes, this is consistent with Holy Scripture. In I Corinthians 15, St. Paul states that our bodies will be resurrected and reunited with our souls, but in a different way than what is familiar to us in this life.

To better understand why and how we honor the Virgin Mary, we need to examine our Orthodox Church's teachings on the veneration of saints. Have you ever stopped to think that each Orthodox Christian Church depicts our role models, our heroes in the many icons in the church. The icons are not merely for decoration, they are teaching tools. They are the prophets, the apostles, the martyrs, the saints, and

yes the Virgin Mary. They are our role models because they trusted God for their salvation. They are our role models because they demonstrated how to make that faith work and help us come closer to God by following their example.

The saints were people just like you and me who were able to make Christ's love and grace a way of life 24 hours a day, 7 days a week in spite of the difficulties, the uncertainties, the perplexities and the many temptations that besieged them day in and day out.

Saints are people who let God's light and grace shine through them. Saints are the hands of God by which He accomplishes His work in the world. Even after death to this world, Saints perform works of love as intercessors in Heaven as they pray for us. They are what we call the Church Triumphant, because they overcame temptations. You and I, who are still in this world are what we call the Church Militant because we are still fighting temptations. Whether one is in the Church Triumphant or the Church Militant, we are all part of the same family, God's family and we are all praising and glorifying God together.

Among the Saints, our Holy Orthodox Church reserves a special position of honor for the Blessed Virgin Mary. She is referred to as the most honored of the Saints in view of the fact that she bore Christ. She is always depicted in the icons with Jesus. The only icon that Jesus is not present is the icon of Annunciation when the Archangel announced to her that she would bear Christ. It was at the Annunciation that we see Mary as the greatest example of mankind's free response to God's offer of salvation. God did not force His will upon Mary, but waited for her response. And her response was "I am the Lord's handmaiden, let it happen to me as you have said."

The Virgin Mary said YES to God. Her YES gave all of us an opportunity to use our free will and to declare our YES to God. She showed us how to say YES so that God can dwell in us, too.

During the Vespers of the August 15<sup>th</sup> feast day, the following hymn is heard.

"Come let us form a chorus, let us fill the Church with hymns of praise at the Falling Asleep of the Ark of God. For today heaven has opened its bosom; it receives the woman who gave birth to the Source of Life."

I pray that everyone will fill the Church with hymns of praise, not only on August 15<sup>th</sup>, but at each service during the year.

### **Schedule of Services**

Sunday Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am on August 6 with Fr Ezekiel  
Sunday Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am on August 13 with Fr Ezekiel  
Tuesday Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am on August 15 with Fr Dean  
followed by Lamentations for the Theotokos  
Sunday Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am on August 20 with Fr Dean  
Sunday Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am on August 27 with Fr Ezekiel

### **Visitors**

A warm welcome to Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church  
We are glad to have you worship with us today  
Please join us for Fellowship Hour in our Social Hall after Liturgy

## Visitors & Sacraments

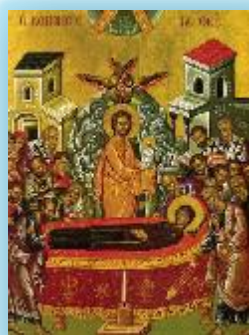
Everyone is welcome in the Orthodox Church & may receive the blessed bread (antidoron) at the end of the service, but only practicing Orthodox Christians may receive the sacrament of Holy Communion.

**August in the Orthodox Church is a month where we pay special religious observance to events in the lives of the three main figures of the Christian world: Christ, the Theotokos, and John the Baptist.**



**The Transfiguration . . .** August 6th Our Lord had spoken to His disciples many times not only concerning His Passion, Cross, and Death, but also concerning the coming persecutions and afflictions that they themselves would endure. Since all these evils were near at hand, but the enjoyment of good things which they hoped to receive in their stead was yet to come, our Savior desired to give them full assurance, evidently and openly, concerning that glory which is prepared for those who endure to the end.

Therefore, fulfilling that which He had promised shortly before, that "there be some standing here which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in His Kingdom" (Matt. 16:28), He took His three foremost disciples and ascended Mount Tabor, where He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became white as the light. Suddenly, together with this dread and marvelous effulgence of light, there appeared those pinnacles of the Prophets, Moses and Elias, who spoke with the Lord Jesus concerning His saving Passion which was about to take place. Standing before Him as reverent servants, they showed that He is the Lord of both the living and the dead, for Moses came forth from Hades, having died many centuries before, and Elias, as it were from heaven, whither he had been taken up while yet alive. After a little while a radiant cloud overshadowed them and out of the cloud they heard that same voice which had been heard at the Jordan at the Baptism of Christ, testifying to the Divinity of Jesus and saying: "This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well-pleased; hear ye Him" (Matt. 17: 5).



**The Dormition of the Theotokos. . .** August 15th - Concerning the Dormition of the Theotokos, this is what the Church has received from ancient times from the tradition of the Fathers. When the time drew nigh that our Savior was well-pleased to take His Mother to Himself, He declared unto her through an Angel that three days hence, He would take her from this temporal life to eternity and bliss. On hearing this, she went up with haste to the Mount of Olives,

where she prayed continuously. Giving thanks to God, she returned to her house and prepared whatever was necessary for her burial. While these things were taking place, clouds caught up the Apostles from the ends of the earth, where each one happened to be preaching, and brought them at once to the house of the Mother of God, who informed them of the cause of their sudden gathering. As a mother, she consoled them in their affliction as was meet, and then raised her hands to Heaven and prayed for the peace of the world. She blessed the Apostles, and, reclining upon her bed with seemliness, gave up her all-holy spirit into the hands of her Son and God.

**Beheading of St John the Baptist . . .** August 29th - Thus Herod, apprehended John the Baptist and shut him in prison; and perhaps he would have killed him straightway, had he not feared the people, who had extreme reverence for John. Certainly, in the beginning, he himself had great reverence for this just and holy man. But finally, being pierced with the sting of a mad lust for the woman Herodias, he laid his defiled hands on the teacher of purity on the very day he was celebrating his birthday. When Salome, Herodias' daughter, had danced in order to please him and those who were supping with him, he promised her -- with an oath more foolish than any foolishness -- that he



would give her anything she asked, even unto the half of his kingdom. And she, consulting with her mother, straightway asked for the head of John the Baptist in a charger. Hence this transgressor of the Law, preferring his lawless oath above the precepts of the Law, fulfilled this godless promise and filled his loathsome banquet with the blood of the Prophet. So it was that all-venerable head, revered by the Angels, was given as a prize for an abominable dance, and became the plaything of the dissolute daughter of a debauched mother. As for the body of the divine Baptist, it was taken up by his disciples and placed in a tomb (Mark 6: 21 - 29). Concerning the finding of his holy head, see February 24 and May 25.

**Dormition of the Theotokos Luncheon, Sunday August 13. . .**

There will be a special luncheon honoring the Dormition of the Theotokos after Liturgy on August 13. The Church will provide the luncheon.

**Decorating the Kovoulukion – August 14 . . .** We will be decorating the Kovoulukion for the Dormition of the Theotokos on Monday August 14 at 10:00 am. Volunteers are needed. Special services will be conducted on Sunday August 13 and Tuesday August 15, 2017.

**Parish General Assembly Meeting – Sunday, August 20 . . .** The next Parish General Assembly Meeting will be held on Sunday, August 20, after Church Services. Please put it on your calendar as we have various items to discuss. We will discuss old items, stewardship, financial update, etc. Plan to attend this very important meeting as it is a way we update everyone on what the church is doing, advise the many new

items that are coming up, and where you can provide feedback to the Parish Council. Please insure you are up to date as of July 31 with your stewardship pledge in order to vote. A list of those current in their pledge will be posted on the bulletin board in the social hall on August 13.

**Feed the Hungry, Bags of Love . . .** Ladies of the Agape have implemented a “Bags of Love” program where they give bags of non-perishable items to people in need. These “Bags of Love” are given to people who knock at the door of our Church looking for food, standing on street corners with a sign, etc. We encourage parishioners to keep 1 or 2 bags in their cars so that they can give one to a needy person. Donations are needed for the following non-perishable items: single serve juices, tuna, beanie weenie, pork & beans, Vienna sausages, canned fruits, granola bars, raisins, chips, peanuts, crackers, slim jims, jerky, cookies, etc. You can also donate new socks, toothpaste, toothbrushes, Kleenex, etc. Point of contact is Virginia Freeman.

**Focus North America Backpack Program . . .** Last year we supported Focus North America's Backpack Program, an Orthodox Charity, with their school backpack program. A parishioner donated 20 backpacks and we had parishioners donate for the school items to put in each backpack. The backpacks were given to Biloxi School System to give to needy school children whose parents could not afford the school supplies.

This year we are again participating in Focus North America's school backpack program. A parishioner has again donated 20 backpacks and Holy Trinity has purchased the listed supplies for each backpack at a cost of \$25 per backpack. I am looking for parishioners who would like to donate for the supplies in each backpack. You can donate \$25 for one or more if you like. Please make a check out to Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church for the number of backpacks you want to sponsor. You can mail it to the church or bring it to church and give any Council Member your check. If you would like to mail it send your donation to:

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church  
Backpack Program  
PO Box 8534  
Biloxi, MS 39535

Let's get behind this program and help the kids get a great start on a new school year. I will be contacted on where to take the backpacks, which are ready to go. I want to thank Nancy Malek and Virginia Freeman for getting the supplies and filling the backpacks.

**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 ethnic foods. Hosting a fellowship hour makes everyone more a part of the church community. Thanks to everyone who has stepped up to host fellowship, but we still need volunteers in the future.



**Happy Birthday! Many Years . . .** Tee Pappas - August 4, Cristian Ionescu, & Jean-nine Bodisch – August 6, Christina Burkhart, Janie Mavromihalis - August 7, Nataliya Petrovska and Natalya Percy - August 11 Rodney Bridges, August 14, Alexis Zink, August 18, Mihail Kastrinos, August 20, Natalia Porsche - August 24, Alexis Koskan - August 28, Meri Ionescu, August 29, Soula Kiesserling - August 31. Apologies if we missed your birthday, it means we don't have your info. Let us know.

**Congratulations on their 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. . .** to Helen and George Yurchak, parents of George Yurchak, and John and Minnie Magiros, parents of Evie Magiros. May God grant you many more years together. If we missed your anniversary, please let us know.

### **Religious Education**

Fr Dean and Fr Ezekiel will continue their weekly religious education classes after Sunday Coffee Hour. **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 – 228-831-5820 or [georgeyurchak@yahoo.com](mailto:georgeyurchak@yahoo.com).

**Many thanks** to all who helped and volunteered their time and effort at Holy Trinity. It is hard work but spiritually rewarding. It shows us how we can all come together as an Orthodox Family and grow spiritually by giving of ourselves.

**Get Well . . .**Prayers and blessings to Fr Jim Karagas, Tom Portaritis, Karen Bridges, Elizabeth Vamvakas, Katerina Vanvakas, Alan Koskan, Photine and Angelo Hagicostas, George Vaporis, Lela Roberts, Nikki Arnold, Nancy Malek, Sophia Beddoe, and Virginia Freeman. Fr Dean or Fr Ezekiel 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.

**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.

### **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 coffee-pot & coffee, jewelry, Greek CDs, incense and charcoal, Russian dolls, nesting dolls, lacquered Russian products, Russian kitchen supplies, Greek T-shirts, etc.

## **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)*

### **Prayer for the Military**

***We thank Thee, O Lord our God for all the blessings which Thou givest us. Thou has kept us by Thy power in good health during the night and Thou has called us up from sleep, that we may enjoy the light of day and to marvel at Thy Majesty. We entreat Thee, O Lord, grant that we may live this day without danger or sin, but full of Thy mercies and Thy divine care. Protect my family and the families of my fellow-servicemen from all evil. Enlighten the peoples who conquer and torture other nations; make them repent and seek peace, leaving other lands and their dwellers free. Open Thou the eyes of our mind to see Thy divine law and incline our hearts ever to do Thy commandments, to the glory of Thine all-holy Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.***

***O Thou Loving Father of us all, Who are here and everywhere, let Thy blessing be upon my loved ones at home. Keep them in Thy gracious care, protect them by Thy power and make their hearts glad in the thought of Thy nearness. Help them and help me to feel that however separated we are by distance, in Thee we are close to each other.***

***Amen.***

*Chaplain W. Basil Stroyen, USAF, wrote to Metropolitan Leonty during the Korean War, asking him for a prayer which would be appropriate for use the servicemen under his care. This prayer was sent to him. He had copies made for distribution and for pasting in the Divine Liturgy book, which was used at Services. It was recited by the congregation following the Services and used by many of the servicemen in their daily lives. Just two years ago a copy was sent to him a serviceman, who had kept it in his wallet since 1955.*

*(Source: The Orthodox Herald, May 2003)*

## **STEWARDSHIP**

### **PLEASE REMEMBER TO SUBMIT YOUR PLEDGE FOR 2017**

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 2017. If you haven't received a pledge form you can download it from [www/holytrinitybiloxi.org](http://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 (Stewardship Chairman), George Yurchak (President, Parish Council) or Rodney Bridges (Treasurer, Parish Council).

### **HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH STEWARDS FOR 2017**

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the 2017 Stewardship Program as of July 31. Holy Trinity has received pledges totaling \$23,620 from the following parishioners:

Chrisanthi Beach	Stamatina Giallourakis	John & Cornelia	Angelos & Elizabeth
Mike Bodisch	Angelo & Photine	Koniditsiotis	Vamvakas
Rodney & Karen Bridges	Hagicostas	Irene & Alan Koskan	Akaterina Vamvakas
Steve & CoCo Collins	Craig & Karen Henderson	Al & Kathy Lawson	George Vaporis
George Contas	Cristian & Meri Ionescu	Eva Magiros	Eleni Vganges
John Demetrakopoulos	Mihail Kastrinos	Shelby McCloud	Spiro Vganges
Hugh & Brandi Donohoe	Karen Komenko	Nataliya Petrovska	Demitrios Virvilis
Julia Foskey	Chrisie Soula Kiessling	Tom & Pat Portaritis	George & Sheila Yurchak
Norman Foskey	Karen Kohl	Nancy & Carl Malek	
Virginia Freeman		Melissa Schwartz	

### **Church Directory**

#### **Liturgical Services**

Sundays – Divine Liturgy 10:00 am

#### **Church Clergy**

Rev. Fr. Dean Gigicos

Rev. Fr. Ezekiel Vieages

**Chanters** – Angelos Vamvakas, Rodney Bridges, Hugh Donohoe, Luke Pappas, Ryan & Haylie Waldrop

#### **2017 Parish Council**

President – George Yurchak

Vice President – Craig Henderson

Treasurer – Rodney Bridges

Secretary – Jerry Strickland

Member – Cristian Ionescu

**Librarian** Hugh Donohoe, Brandi Donohoe

**Historian** Brandi Donohoe, Akaterina Vamvakas

#### **Maintenance and Repair**

Chair – Craig Henderson

#### **50 Anniversary Celebration**

Commemorative Album - Brandi Donohoe

#### **Youth Education & Culture Committee**

Chair – George Yurchak

**Greek Culture** Chair – George Yurchak

**Ukrainian Culture** Chair – Nataliya Petrovska

**Romanian Culture** Chair – Meri Ionescu

**Georgian Culture** Chair – Medea Ghurtskaia

**Moldovan Culture** Chair – Alexandru Tulburi

**Russian Culture** Chair – Anna Slepova

**Kazakhstan Culture** Chair - Natalya Gray

**Belarousian Culture** Chair – Darya Borst

#### **Parish Ministries**

Youth Ministries – George Yurchak

Youth Group Chair – Joseph Lawson, Korina Bodisch

Feed the Hungry Chair – Jerry Strickland, Virginia Freeman, Nancy Malek

Sunday School – Akaterina Vamvakas

Ladies of the Agape Chair – Nancy Malek

Stewardship Chair – Craig Henderson

Reader – Rodney Bridges, John Collins, CoCo Collins

Adult Education – George Yurchak

Prayer/Study Group – Nancy Malek

Outreach – Karen Weinberg, Akaterina Vamvakas

Technology – Karen Kohl, Spiro Vganges

Web Master – Steve Collins

Pastoral Assistant – Craig Henderson, Caleb Bridges

Altar Boys – Joseph Lawson

#### **Parish Ministries**

Society of Wisdom – Chair, George Vaporis

Strategic Planning – Chair, CoCo Collins

#### **Church Staff**

Kiosk – George Yurchak

Office Administrator – Sheila Yurchak, Karen Henderson

Publications Editor – Sheila Yurchak

Cleaning – Chrisanthi Beach, Fanoula Christidis, Virginia Freeman,

Akaterina Vamvakas



