



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA
METROPOLIS OF ATLANTA

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church

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September - December 2017 Newsletter

A Word from Our Council President, George Yurchak

Our choir was recognized for the beautiful singing this past year. Photine Hagicostas (30 Years as Choir Director) and Angelos Vamvakas (Chanter of the Choir) received "The Archbishop Iokavos Distinguished Service Award. Several of our parishioners supported Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church's Mobile GreekFest. Paul and Cristina Vance's daughter Ava Marie Vance was baptized by Fr Dean. Fr Dean blessed Mihail Kastrinos's small handmade Greek Orthodox Church on his name day. Jerry Strickland and Chrisanthi Beach were presented the Archangel Michael Awards 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 Veterans Day. Plenty of baking was going on in preparation for our International Christmas Festival & Pastry Sale. We supported the International Seaman Center Christmas Luncheon where Karen Henderson provided the entertainment by singing Christmas carols. Holy Trinity had a extremely successful International Christmas Festival & Pastry Sale this year. Holy Trinity hosted Sisters Marina and Maria from St Elizabeth's Monastery in Minsk, Belarus. Holy Trinity continues to help charities at Christmas.

You Are Not Alone

Christmas is a time to be happy and enjoy the Birth of Christ. But some people feel alone this season. They have experienced some misfortune or ill health and think the Lord has forgotten them. But one needs to remember you are not alone. It may seem like it, but you are never alone.

I Know My Sheep

There is no worse feeling in life then that of loneliness, and many people go through life genuinely believing that no one cares about them. Our streets are filled with individuals whose lives are a reflection of hopelessness. Such feelings affect those on all levels of society. They touch the rich as well as the poor. You do not have to be homeless to feel a sense of abandonment. Often those who seemingly have everything find themselves quite alone, surrounded by their possessions.

As Christians, we must believe with all of our heart that we are never alone. We have a God who cares about us. Christ described himself in John's Gospel as being the

“GOOD SHEPHERD.” “I AM THE Good Shepherd, and I know my sheep and am known by My own.” (John 10:14) What a wonderful thought! Just as a shepherd knows every member of his flock, Christ knows us and loves us all. He is always only a prayer away. He reminds us that *“everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.”* (Matthew 7:8)

It is only human to sometimes feel “down.” Still, we are never “out,” for our Lord is always with us! Take your troubles and worries to Him . . . He will ease them. Turn to Him with your questions . . . He will provide answer. Turn to Him with your questions . . . He will provide answers. Go to Him when you are weary . . . He will give you rest.

--The Orthodox Observer

National Forum of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians

Holy Trinity recognized its choir members: Angelos Vamvakas, Hugh Donohoe, CoCo Collins, Karen Henderson, Ryan Waldrop, Luke Pappas. The beautiful singing was exemplary this year. Angelos Vamvakas received the Archbishop Iakovos Distinguished Service Award for Chanter of the Choir and Photine Hagicostas for 30 years as Choir Director.





GreekFest Mobile

Several of our parishioners supported our sister church, Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church's GreekFest in Mobile. As always they put on a great festival and it is a pleasure to support them. Great food, music, dancing and fellowship. OPA!



Baptism of Ava Marie Vance

Fr Dean baptized Ava Marie Vance, the daughter of Paul and Cristina Vance into the Orthodox faith. It was a beautiful baptism attended by their friends and family.



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.



Archangel Michael Award Ceremony



Jerry Strickland and Chrisanthi Beach received the Archangel Michael Award Medals which were presented to them by His Eminence Metropolitan Alexis at an awards ceremony and dinner at the Metropolis of Atlanta. Chrisanthi could not attend and was presented her Archangel Michael Medal by Fr Dean.



Honoring our Veterans, Veterans Day 2017



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. A display of Holy Trinity parishioners who served in the military is shown. Pictured are Mike Bodisch, 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 the International Women's Day Celebration.

Holy Trinity Participates in Several Charities

Holy Trinity has continued to become involved with several charities. We support "Feed the Hungry" on the Mississippi Gulf Coast where we give monetary donations, collect food to give to special food kitchens and bags of love (we pass out to people we see in need on the streets and those that come to Holy Trinity's doors) as well as providing volunteer help at food shelters. We participate with Focus North America and Youth Villages in their "Christmas Program" where we give various items to families, youth, homeless and people in need. We also participate in the "Kids-Make-A-Wish Program" where our youth hold fund raisers to give to terminally ill kids who have a wish they would like to fulfill. Some of the youth in this program came to our International Christmas Festival and helped by working with our youth. They had such a great time doing this. We also had a booth to support this charity. Holy Trinity with its generosity and thoughtfulness makes smiles a little brighter, there is more laughter, and the world is a better place for these children and their families.

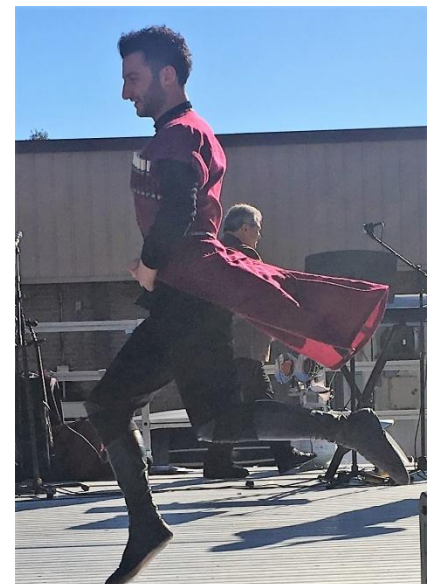
International Seaman's Center Christmas Luncheon

George Yurchak (who is on the Board of Directors) his wife Sheila, Jerry Strickland and Karen Henderson attended the International Seaman's Center Christmas Luncheon. Karen Henderson provided the entertainment by beautifully singing several Christmas carols to all those in attendance.



International Christmas Festival & Pastry Sale

We had a very successful International Christmas Festival & Pastry Sale. This event is dedicated to the spirituality, culture, art, music, and food of the many different ethnic cultures that make up Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church. Close to 1000 people came and enjoyed the cultural and entertainment program, tasted the delicious foods and bought gifts for their family and friends. Santa and Misses Claus visited our festival and offered free pictures for the kids and even adults. They listened to Karen Henderson sing "God Bless America" to open our festival, Nick Trivelas on the bouzouki and his daughter Megan Jensen sing and play the keyboard.







They listened to the Victory Belles representing the National WWII Museum sing a tribute of WWII and Patriotic songs as well as Christmas carols including "White Christmas" made famous by Bing Crosby. They watched the Georgian Dance Ensemble who came down from New York City and performed energetically choreographed dances from their home country of Georgia. They watched our local Greek, Ukrainian and Russian dancers perform the folk dances of their countries. They toured Holy Trinity and learned about Orthodox Tradition, including iconography. Our church community was committed to bringing and enriching the Mississippi Gulf Coast with our own unique cultures and authenticity. We honored our Veterans and Law Enforcement with dinner/lunch discounts.





Our Pastry Sale was a huge success as always and the people enjoyed the many different pastries we had to sell, inside and outside the church. We had a great festival day with beautiful weather, no rain, lots of sunshine and good temperatures (considering we had 30 degree weather and snow the day before) – courtesy of Fr Dean. We essentially sold out of Greek, Russian, Romanian, Moldovan, Uzbekistan/Kazakhstan, German, Hungarian, Belarusian and American foods and almost all pastries. Many of the pastries (close to \$1,000) left over were donated and hand delivered to First Responders on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. We had plenty of kids activities from a climbing wall/slide to face painting, etc.





A big thank you goes out to all the Holy Trinity volunteers that made this happen. A special thanks goes out to all those outside Holy Trinity who came and gave their time and Saturday to help make the festival a success – the Marines who came from the Seabee Base, the Air Force personnel from Keesler Air Force Base, Khanna and Steve Gibson and Bradley Pracher who help Holy Trinity whenever we have a special event, Corina Gestring and her family that come from Florida the Yia-Yias that came from Northern Mississippi, Drex Security personnel who volunteered to provide security, Craig Courtney who managed the outside food and kitchen, the kids that came and gave their time and especially the

terminally ill kids from Kids-Make-A Wish. The people of the Gulf Coast expressed much thanks to me for a great festival and pastry sale that Holy Trinity put on and look forward to coming again next year. They also said this International Christmas Festival & Pastry Sale was so much better than last year's.



Visit from Sisters Maria & Marina from Belarus

Holy Trinity had the pleasure of hosting Sisters Maria and Marina from St. Elizabeth's Monastery in Minsk, Belarus. Karen Kohl and Katerina Vamvakas provided transportation to and from the New Orleans. The Sisters participated in the Lay Prayer Service led by Nancy Malek. After which they made a presentation of what their monastery does, answering many questions. The Sisters allowed those in attendance to purchase some of their handcrafted items which they put on display for sale. Meri and Cristian Ionescu hosted them at their house for the evening and on their ride back to the airport in the morning, Karen and Katerina stopped at Pass Christian Beach to allow Sisters Maria and Marina to enjoy something they had never seen before and were very appreciative of the support Holy Trinity provided throughout their visit.



*Christ is Born!
Glorify Him!*



*God Bless America!
Happy New Year 2018!*