



Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America
Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church
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March 2019 Newsletter



A Message from our Council President, George Yurchak

Welcome to Spring and the start of "Our Lenten Journey." This month we will profile a new parishioner, Helena Docherty. Leah Somers will talk about her "Journey to Orthodoxy." George Yurchak writes an article on the "Importance of Family." We celebrated International Women's Day honoring the women of Holy Trinity. Elena Shilova became a U.S. citizen. Jordan Zanetis and his wife Catherine and Alexandru Tulburi and Cristiana Macovei had baby girls.

Parishioner in the Spotlight – Helena Docherty

My name is Helena Docherty (neé Srbová) .

I was born in the Czech Republic when it was Czechoslovakia and lived in Prague. I emigrated to the USA in 1988, directly to Saint Louis, MO where I studied respiratory therapy. I graduated in 1995 and spent the next 22 years working at one of the largest hospitals in this country, the Barnes-Jewish hospital in Saint Louis city. That is where I



met my husband Martin. He is an emergency medicine and trauma physician. He was born in Scotland and joined the 41st Highland division of the British army at the age of sixteen as a bagpipe player. He emigrated to the USA to study medicine and join the US Army Reserves. We were married right before Christmas in 2015. He is currently the chief of emergency medicine of the 7242 Medical Support unit in Gulfport. He works part-time in Saint Louis (till this September) and part-time at the VA hospital in Biloxi. We moved to Gulfport in September 2017. I work as a volunteer at the Gulfport Galleria of Fine Art on the 24th street downtown.



My mother Miloslava Srbova lives with us together with our chowchow dog Sian. I met Natalie in January 2019 at Starbucks, D'Iberville and we became friends. She offered to take me to see an orthodox service and I gladly accepted. I was baptized in a roman catholic church and so was my husband. But I felt the most comfortable in the eastern orthodox church the first time I went with Natalie. I felt so pleasantly surprised and honored when my name was called during the International Women Day celebration to represent the Czech culture group. I feel welcome and accepted in your church and for that I want to thank you all.

My Journey to Orthodoxy – Leah Somers

Leah was chrismated into the Orthodox Church in 2015. Her grandparents were Byzantine Catholic in Sicily, but she was raised in evangelical Christianity. Leah was curious about theology, church history and the origins of her own religious roots. She was blessed to become friends with some Orthodox people and soon she was reading all she could about Orthodoxy. And by God's grace, found her spiritual home.

“Family is Everything” by George Yurchak

What do you have if you don't have family? You have loneliness and no one to rely on. The only people who seem to be there for us in our times of need are our family. No matter what happens, loving family members support us and lift us up when we need it.

Growing up, my Baba (grandmother) who lived in Coaldale, Pennsylvania, was the center of the Yurchak family. All the Yurchaks would gather at her house for Easter and Christmas to celebrate the birth, death and resurrection of Jesus. While alive she held our family together year after year. We came from Virginia, New Jersey and cities in Pennsylvania to attend these get-togethers. At Christmas the whole family would gather together for Holy Night Supper. At Easter we would all prepare Easter Baskets to be blessed after the Resurrection Service and then come together to eat the blessed food from our baskets that had meaning of Jesus' life. Now that Baba is gone and the Yurchak family is scattered across the country, my mother and father have always been there for me. I am fortunate to have them in my life still.

As a young adult, I had my military family which was very important because we were always being assigned to a new job worldwide every 3 or 4 years. The only constant was the military family where we got together, supported each other and helped one another should a problem arise because we had no one, depending what country or state we lived in. The military was our family and you can ask any of the veterans at Holy Trinity about their military family and how much it meant to them.

As a mature adult, I have my Orthodox family which has now become very important in my life, as well as my wife Sheila. The Orthodox family is the “constant.” There is an Orthodox Church wherever you live. It may be Greek, Russian, Ukrainian, Serbian, Romanian, but it is there for you. The Orthodox Church invites you in, the members welcome you and you become part of that family. I find the smaller Orthodox Churches are more welcoming than the larger Orthodox Churches, because you are an individual rather than a number. My wife Sheila had not gone to church much as an adult, but when she came to Holy Trinity it became her family, getting Chrismated into the Orthodox faith where it has become an important part of her life.

There are many other aspects of “family.” Pets, our dogs and cats, who we have many of, are an integral part of our family. We especially adopt and bring home the senior dogs and cats who are on death row (as I call it) and are ready to be put down. We give them some extra years of life and they give us their love in return as loyal family members who always welcome us home.



I also have my “Facebook” family that is worldwide. There is Fr Stephen Close and Presvytera Annette in Colorado, Oleksandra Petrovska in the Ukraine, Tatiana in Greece and many more who we constantly stay in touch with.

Runaway kids and soccer kids I coached became like family. When I worked in a runaway home in Nebraska for 6 months I developed a connection to the kids who walked in the door. Their primary problem was their parents didn't give them attention or talk with them. I became close to them in the home and we became like family--

helping them learn to cook, clean the home, and give them the discipline they did not like but in reality they wanted.

The boys and girls I coached soccer in Hawaii were like family. I would take a van load to soccer practice and soccer games because their parents did not have the time for them. I was like their father giving them the attention they craved. I got angry at one girl for her attitude in practice, told her to go home, and if she came to the soccer game that weekend she would only play half the game (and she was one of my star players). She came. Whenever teams were chosen each season, she did everything she could to get on my team, which she always did. Her parents never gave her much attention. Girls in our neighborhood would always yell “Hi Dad” and I would have to see if it was my daughter Tanya because they were all blond. The kids were always wanting to know what we were having for supper so they invited themselves. I often wonder how those kids are doing now as adults. It would be great to reunite with my soccer family again.

International Women’s Day

In recognition of International Women’s Day, Holy Trinity recognized its women for all that they do for their family, their church, their community and their country. To honor our women we gave red roses to all the women and then served them a special luncheon. Thank you for all that you do. As Sheila Yurchak said, “I am proud of the woman I am today, because I went through hell and high water becoming her.”

*Though Holy Trinity is small,
We are very diverse.*

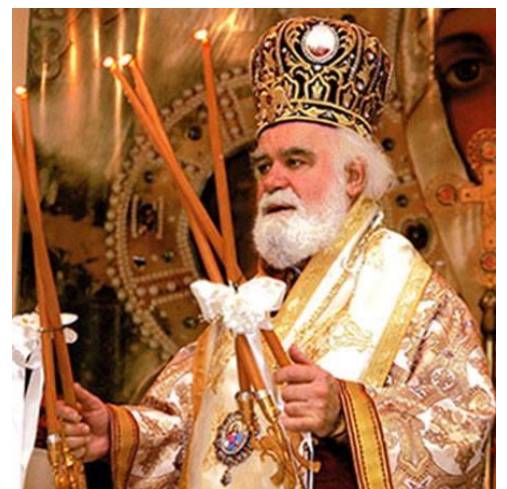


Pictured are Betelhem (Ethiopia), Korina (Hungarian roots), Helena (Czech Republic), Natalia (Ukraine), Elena (Uzbekistan), Malama (Greece), Tamara (Russia), Fr Dean, Nadiya (our youngest girl Romanian), Fadia (Syria), Meri (Romanian), Katya (Bulgaria) and Karen USA)



Pictured are Soula (Greek), Olga (Russian), Maria (Greek), Eleni (Greek), Sheila (British Isles roots), Fr Dean, Virginia (USA), Amalia (Romanian) Irene (Greek), Fanoula & Chrisanthe (Greek)

***“We are no longer just Greek Orthodox,
Russian Orthodox or Romanian Orthodox.
We are all one family united through
Our Orthodox Faith.”
His Eminence, Metropolitan Alexios
At the Occasion of Holy Trinity’s 50th
Anniversary.***



Elena Shilova Receives US Citizenship

Elena Shilova who is one of our parishioners from Uzbekistan, and in the US Air Force, proudly received her United States Citizenship recently. Congratulations Elena!



Beautiful Springtime Babies

Two Orthodox families have recently announced the birth of new babies. Jordan and Catherine Zanetis welcomed a baby girl Bojidara (Dara), their second daughter.

Alexandru Tulburi and Cristiana Macovei welcomed a baby girl Caroline Alexandra, their third child.



To fall in love with God is the
Greatest Romance,
To seek Him is the
Greatest Adventure,
To find Him is the
Greatest Human Achievement.

-- St Augustine