



THE HOLY TRINITY HERALD

APRIL 2015

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HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH • PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA
OUR VISION: "FAITH. FAMILY. COMMUNITY."

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IMPORTANT NOTICE:

**APRIL 26, 2015
SPRING GENERAL ASSEMBLY
NOTICE & AGENDA
ENCLOSED**

QUICK NEWS



Holy Trinity students participate in the annual Sunday of Orthodoxy procession of the holy icons. Want to see more photos of this event and others in the life and ministries of Holy Trinity Church? See the Community Life Photo Journal on pages 8-10 or visit our online photo gallery site at photos.HolyTrinityPgh.org.

Christ is Risen! Truly He is Risen!



It is the day of Resurrection, people, brilliantly shine! Pascha, the Lord's Paschal! For Christ our God has out of death passed us over into life, and likewise from earth to heaven, as we now sing unto Him a triumphal hymn: Christ is risen from the dead, by death trampling down upon death and to those in the tombs He has granted life.

From the Orthros of the Resurrection

Our Mission: To proclaim and live the Orthodox Christian Faith in its fullness as faithful members of the Body of Christ

THE HOLY TRINITY HERALD

About the Herald

The Herald is the Monthly Newsletter of Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church

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About the Parish

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Holy Trinity Church is a parish of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Pittsburgh (www.odpgh.org) and Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America (www.goarch.org) under the Spiritual Jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople.

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church Parish Administration

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Dean A. Balouris Marios Kritiotis
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Andrew Janis Joyce Athanasiou
Jason Farmakis Stephanie Sedor
Tom Germanos Alex Trilivas
Gerri Valliant

Ministries

Please visit the Holy Trinity website at www.HolyTrinityPgh.org for descriptions and contact information on Holy Trinity Church's ministries, including educations, youth, senior, family and cultural opportunities. There is something for everyone, so please get involved today!



Come on this illustrious day of Resurrection and day of Christ's Kingdom, let us receive the communion of the divine joy from the new fruit of the vine, for eternal life, and highly extol Him as God unto the ages."

From the Resurrection Ode of Pascha

Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Victorious Savior,

At the Great and Holy Pascha this year, I will, God-willing, have the inexpressible joy and blessing of emerging from the Holy Sanctuary as an ordained priest of the Holy Church of Christ, bearing the Holy Light of the Resurrection for the 25th time and proclaiming, "Christ is Risen!" This year, I must admit, will be very real and very welcome news: indeed a "communion of the divine joy."

"Why," you may ask, "is this year any different?" Simply put: funerals. Yes, they are a part of priestly life, and supporting families through that grief is one of the most powerful and intimate experiences of pastoral ministry we have as priests. This year, however, has been especially challenging, so being able to offer that proclamation to those families—and to our own family—is a most welcomed and renewing blessing.

In the weeks leading up to that glorious, triumphant and most wonderful "Good News," I will have had the pastoral blessing and challenge of laying to sleep in the hope of that same Holy Resurrection two members of our parish family: a talented music teacher and student mentor who had just retired in hopes of years of life ahead but instead was called home to the Lord only a little while later; and a loving and gifted adult son of a faithful widowed mother who went to bed peacefully one night and, without warning, never woke up the next morning. The Resurrection proclamation will be for them. I also participated either through prayer or by attending in person the funerals of two of the great theologians of the modern Orthodox world: one (Father Matthew Baker, a father of 6 young children) who was just coming into his prime when he died in a tragic car accident, and another (Father Thomas Hopko) who at 76 could simply not have exhausted his contributions to the Orthodox world if he had lived another 76 years. The Resurrection light will be for them. And to make it all even more personal, in my own immediate and extended family, I had the heavy privilege of burying my own sweet and innocent nephew at 20 years old, a godly woman and mother of our departed koumbara (and mother-in-law of our Church Office Administrator, Mary) and a beloved uncle of age 90. They, too, will stand in that light of that Resurrection Candle. I confess that the cumulative effect of all that pain, grief and loss has me looking forward the refreshing and life-renewing antidote of the Resurrection Proclamation with great anticipation.

I know I am not alone. In the lead-up to that moment, as I stand before the Holy Tomb of Christ on Holy Friday and offer prayers for the souls of all the departed members of the Holy Trinity family, there will be many others from months or years ago who continue to carry the pain of loss from this life of a parent, spouse, child, relative or beloved friend. They and others in this community who carry that ache in the corners of their heart also need to be reminded of that news. So it my great priestly honor and joy to emerge through the darkened Royal Gate with that Holy Light and renew in us all the message of the Risen Christ: "I was dead, and behold, I am alive for, evermore. Amen; and you also will be alive forever" (St. John of Kronstadt, "Homily on Pascha").

I ask you to join me in proclaiming that hope. Death is a painful mystery for everyone. Christ has both the antidote and the answer. But there is a world around us that increasingly suppresses, oppresses and denies Christianity and, in doing so, robs all those in pain of hope. Seek them out. Bear witness of your faith. And when they ask in their emptiness why you believe, worship, sacrifice, give, serve and do everything you do for your Faith and your Church, let them know: "because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all men" (1 Timothy 4.10)... and that hope is waiting for you, too! "Come and see."

With sincere paternal love in the Risen Christ,

HOLY WEEK INFORMATION

Holy Week Schedules of Services

The March issue of The Herald contained a complete schedule of services for Holy Week. It is also available online at www.HolyTrinityPgh.org. Please post it in a conspicuous place in your home and be sure to attend as a family.

Help Decorate Kouvouklion on Holy Friday! April 10

As we prepare to celebrate Pascha, please consider taking the day off from school or work on Holy Friday. All ages are invited to come to the church and help with decorating the Kouvouklion (the Tomb of Christ) with flowers immediately following the 9:30am Service of the Royal Hours (at which our children are invited to do the readings). Please make this one of your offerings of dedicated love and service to the Lord as we honor His Holy Passion in His holy Church. (Please note that this is a family opportunity, not a "drop-off" event. Young children must be supervised by a responsible adult.)

Make Plans for the Anastasi Dinner April 11

Please make plans to attend the Resurrection Orthros, Liturgy and Dinner at Holy Trinity Church on Saturday evening/early morning of Pascha. Following the liturgical celebration of the Resurrection, join your family, friends and other members of Holy Trinity to break the fast and celebrate the Feast of Feasts! A free-will offering is asked to simply help cover costs.

Agape Vespers & Paschal Candy Hunt. April 12

The Church School ministry is again sponsoring the annual Paschal Candy Hunt on the lawn of the new church (weather permitting) on Pascha following the Agape Vespers Service at 12:00 p.m. All the children are invited to come for this beautiful and bright service. It is an especially good way for those with small children who are not able to attend the midnight service to share in a special celebration of Pascha. Donations of candy are needed. they may be dropped off at the Church Office at any time.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Church School Graduation Date May 31

Attention Church School Staff, Parents and Students: Please note that the last day of Church School for this semester will be May 31. Church School Graduation will be held on that day, and all students are asked to attend and sit with their class during Liturgy. Following the service, the Church School will have a graduation celebration and picnic lunch.

COMMUNITY NEWS & EVENTS

Stewardship Update: Meeting the Call

Why is it when church leadership talks about Stewardship we sometimes cringe? In our last segment we talked about the fear of losing or being without as one of the reasons we are reluctant to give or increase our giving. Let us not forget that God has provided 100 percent of what we have and He expects us to act in the same manner or spirit of giving as He does. In a segment from Fr. Barnabas Powell pertaining

to an article he titled "The Widow's Test", he discusses the relevance of our time, possessions, money, abilities and how we use them to support our journey in life. Combining these aspects together "serve as a spiritual diagnostic" of our deepest values, our spiritual maturity and what we value as our real loves. The scripture reference comes from Luke 20:46-47; 21:1-4 and basically provides an opportunity to assess how much we are trusting God. He further goes on to say that God doesn't look at how much we give, but rather how much we keep back for ourselves. Holy Trinity is a church community with a mission. That mission is to do God's work on the earth through loving, giving, nurturing, sharing, serving, growing and sustaining. All these characteristics describe godly Stewardship. We don't need to spend countless hours wondering if we are called to respond, the "need" is the call. Holding back our resources will preclude our community from meeting those needs at the level God has called us to offer, so we should each ask God how He wants to use the resources He has given us to meet the needs of our Church's mission. Let us all be encouraged to follow the example of the widow by becoming better stewards and depending on God's mercy for our survival.

Saint Photios Metropolis Awards Banquet April 18

His Eminence Metropolitan Savas invites all the clergy and laypersons of the Metropolis of Pittsburgh to celebrate and give thanks for its honored devout stewards of faith, time and talents at the Second Annual Saint Photios Awards Banquet, Saturday, April 18, 2015, at 4:00pm at the Wyndham Grand Pittsburgh Hotel. Tickets are \$75 per person for adults, \$25 for children, and net proceeds benefit the Metropolitan's Benevolent Fund. Reservations can be made by calling Mary Doreza at 412-877-3415. This year's Holy Trinity honorees are Leo Loomis and Mary-Magdalene Welsh. Please join us in celebrating them and all the others. Reserve today!

GOYA Meeting April 19

The GOYA teen ministry will hold a meeting on Sunday, April 19, following Liturgy. All teens are asked to attend.

Spring General Assembly. April 26

The Regular Spring General Assembly will be held on Sunday, April 26, following Divine Liturgy. An agenda is enclosed with this issue.

Cemetery Spring Cleanup Notice

From our Cemetery Committee: "Those having Christmas and other winter decorations on memorial stones please remove over the next two weeks. Decorations left after that will be removed and discarded prior to starting cutting grass." Thank you for helping keep Holy Trinity cemetery beautiful!

Holy Trinity's Taste of Greece Labor Day Weekend

Please mark Wednesday, September 2, through Sunday, September 6 on your calendar for the next "Taste of Greece" festival. The Festival Committee is asking everyone, new members and old hands, young and young at heart, to pledge a donation of their time and talents so that we can continue to grow both the success of the festival and the fellowship with all our Holy Trinity church family members!

Part of a regular series of contributions by our resident "Gheronda" (respected elder clergy), Father John Androutsopoulos

APRIL 2015 – "THE VOICE OF HOLY TRINITY CHURCH"



Father John Androutsopoulos

The Crucifixion of Christ

You have ransomed us from the curse of the law by your precious blood. Nailed to the Cross and pierced with the lance, you have poured immortality on humankind, Glory to You, Our Redeemer.

In Remembrance of Me

The Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread...In the same way also

the cup. (1 Corinthians 11:23,25)

The night before Jesus' death, he gathered his disciples in an upper room, and there they were to have the last supper together. Prior to this, after God led the Hebrews to safety in Canaan, they celebrated the Passover annually in remembrance of God's kindness to them in their deliverance. But on this night, Jesus put new meaning into this observance. Here the Master was eating with his chosen 12 for the last time. One was to betray him. The climax came when suddenly he ceased speaking in words and began speaking in symbols and actions.

"The Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, 'This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way also the cup, after supper saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.'"

Jesus is telling his disciples to take his body and blood and live his life for him. In a little while he would be taking his body out of this world, and they were to be his visible body, think his thoughts, perform his acts and deeds, and live his life. Thus, the Lord's Supper (Holy Communion) can be for us a vital part of our religious life. We experience the cleansing of sin, and become filled with the living Christ, who will give us strength to live the life he is calling us to live.

He Humbled Himself

"He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross." (Philippians 2:8)

Chapter 2 of Paul's letter to the Philippians talks about what Jesus Christ did for us, and how we should accordingly live our lives. The cross was not only the culmination of Jesus' sacrifice for us; it is also the symbol of our life in Christ.

The Word of God, the second person of the Blessed Trinity, became incarnate as a human being, setting aside the status and honor that were rightfully His. But this was not enough; for our sake he accepted death as a criminal, thereby paradoxically receiving glorification at the right hand of God the Father. Now Jesus Christ is to be exalted by all creation, for all eternity. We cannot merely be grateful that Jesus Christ gave His life up for us; we must also imitate him. "Christ suffered for you, leaving you as an example, that you should follow in His steps." (1 Peter 2:21). The way that Christ took in His return to the Father is to be our way to the Father.

"Lord Jesus Christ, thank you for coming among us and dying for our sake. We want to enter more deeply into the mystery of your death for us. We want to imitate you." Beloved, our destination is to imitate the human nature of Christ and to approach the perfect.

Forgive Them

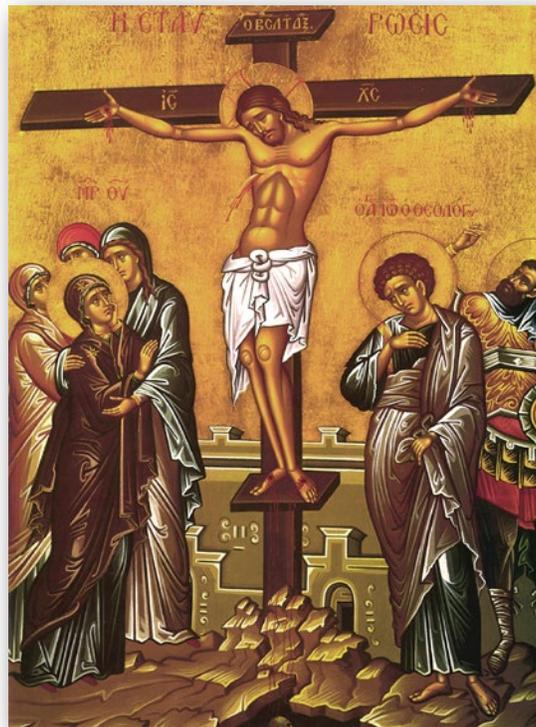
"Father, forgive them for they do not know what they are doing." (Luke 23:34)

Jesus is eager to offer salvation. It is almost as if he searches our hearts to find some opportunity, however small, for forgiving our sins. He certainly extended such loving forgiveness to the good thief. The two criminals who were executed with Jesus had led lives of crime. One of them, however, simply admitted that his punishment was just and asked Jesus to remember him in his kingdom. Jesus' response was immediate and unconditional: "I promise you, today you will be with me in paradise" (verse 43). No one else in the gospel accounts receives such firm assurance of salvation from Jesus. And by our standards, few deserved it less, yet such is Jesus' eagerness to forgive.

Jesus not only forgave his executioners, but he prayed to his Father to forgive them too. It is one thing to not hold a grudge against someone who has wronged us. But it is something else for us to publicly defend them and take their part. That is what Jesus did for his enemies: He pleaded with His Father on their behalf. Such is Jesus' eagerness to forgive.

Can we, therefore, ever again doubt whether God is really willing to forgive us for our sins and give us a fresh start? What more could God have done to convince us of His love for us than to send His Son to forgive those who were putting him to death and to plead on their behalf? Will He not also plead on our behalf?

Turn to Chapter 8 of Paul's letter to the Romans and read



verses 31 to 39 slowly, reflecting on these verses in light of the crucifixion. Father in heaven, we bow down before You. Our hearts cannot put into words our gratitude for Your love for us, the love You demonstrated in Your Son Jesus. May You be praised forever.

Christ Is Risen – Truly He Is Risen

This is the day the Lord has made. Let us exalt and rejoice in it. The day of the resurrection! O, people, let us be radiant. It is Pascha, the Lord's Passover, for Christ God has carried us over from death to life, from earth to heaven, as we sing a victory hymn.

From the day it happened, people have interpreted the Resurrection of Jesus Christ in different ways. His enemies, confronted by an empty tomb, explained it this way: "Say His disciples came by night and stole the body while we were asleep." St. Matthew in his Gospel reports the soldiers who guarded Christ's tomb were given money to say that. If we accept that explanation, of course, it means Christ did not rise at all. His dead body was simply stolen and put somewhere else.

Another approach advanced by some critics would see the Resurrection of Jesus as imagined by His excited and emotionally exhausted disciples. They were victims of hysteria. Again, if we subscribe to this explanation, Christ did not really rise; His disciples only imagined He did.

Some would rather ignore the question altogether. They would like to see the Resurrection as merely symbolic. What matters is that Christ's spirit be continued in the world of Believers. As long as men of faith continue to live as Christ lived, then He is risen, He is not dead. This explanation, too, ignores the mystery of the empty tomb.

However, the witness of the Apostles, of Mary Magdalene, of St. Paul, is that Jesus Christ did rise from the dead, physically, in His body. They did not say this because they believed it, or they liked to believe it, or they imagined it. They said it because they first saw Him and then believed. "I have seen the Lord." That is what Mary Magdalene says to the rest of the Apostles when she returns from the empty tomb and her encounter with the Risen Lord.

Far from indicating a gullible group of people, the gospels indicate that the disciples were hardheaded and unwilling to accept the fact that Jesus rose from the dead. You remember the story of Thomas. He was absent when Jesus first appeared to His disciples in the upper room. He would not take the word of his brothers that Jesus had risen and they had seen Him. "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, and put my finger into the place

of the nails, I will not believe." When Jesus appeared again to His disciples in the upper room, He invited Thomas to do just that. "Thomas, bring here your finger and see my hands, and bring here your hand and put it into my side, and be not unbelieving but believing." Beloved, for your information, Thomas did not actually put his hands on the print of the nails, nor did he put his hand into Jesus' side. (Read John 20:19-31.)

His apostles and disciples were eyewitnesses of Christ's Resurrection. They were not deceived. St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "He has appeared to Peter, and afterwards to the twelve. Then He appeared to over 500 of our brothers at once, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. Then He appeared to James and afterwards to all of the apostles."

Pascha Not "Easter"

According to the Orthodox Church, the word "Easter" is not used interchangeable with the word Pascha. The word "Easter" is of pagan origin. It means the rising of new life in spring. According to the writing of Bede, an 8th century historian, "Easter was the name of an Anglo-Saxon goddess and was a feast at the beginning of spring."

Pascha on the other hand comes from the Jewish word "Pesach" which means Passover. Passover comes from the biblical story of the tenth plague that God brought on Egypt (Exodus 12:3-40). A destroying angel killed the first-born in every Egyptian home, but passed over the Israelite houses. The name also refers to the passing over of the Israelites from slavery to freedom.

Christ is the New Passover, the living sacrifice. While in the Old Passover, the angel of death passed over the children of Israel, Christ, the New Passover conquered death and opened the gates of paradise. The Pascha or Resurrection of our Lord is to us who believe in Him the crowning event of Christian history, for the Pascha of our Lord is the key-

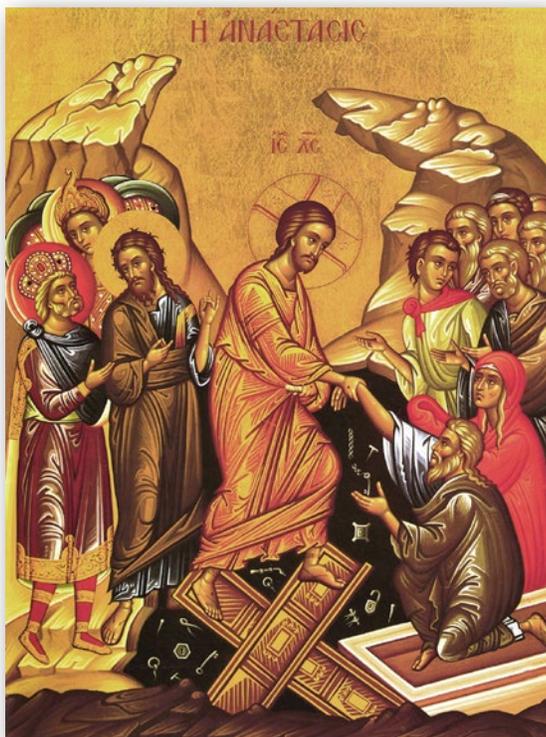
stone of Christian faith and hope.

The Date Of Holy Pascha

These regulations of the First Ecumenical Council are as follows:

1. "That Easter must always be celebrated on a Sunday."
2. "That Easter must never be celebrated on the same day as the Jewish Passover."
3. "That Easter should never be celebrated on or before the vernal equinox of any year."

*With the love of the Risen Lord,
Rev. Fr. John K. Androutopoulos
Protosphyriar and Internal Missionary*



Hello, my precious children!

I'm so..o..o excited! Spring is here, and that mean so many great things. We mice really like running through fields and the tall new grass. It's a great place to play hide-and-seek with my sister, Zoe.

But of course, the best thing is that Pascha is coming, too! My Yiayia says Zoe is old enough to hold her own candle this year, so she is really looking forward to our priests coming out of that darkened sanctuary with the candles lit, chanting, "Christ is risen from the dead!" Will you be there this year? If so, please watch out for us little ones under foot!

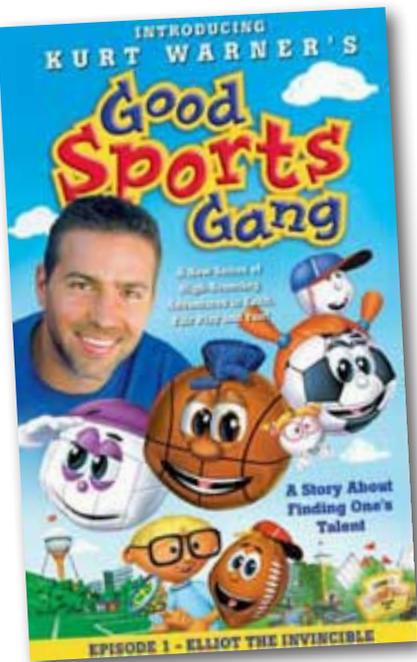
Another thing that comes with spring is lots of sports and games. I actually have a great DVD in my library about that called, "The Good Sports Gang." It's an episode of "Elliot the Invincible," and its part of an inspiring project by Superbowl MVP Kurt Warner.



In this episode, the Good Sports Gang gets a locker room call for an important mission. They must help a little boy named Elliot find his talent. The problem is, Elliot thinks he can not do much of anything. Elliot has a great dream of being a good player and captain of the team, but he keeps falling down. He always says, "I'm sorry, I'll do better next time!" But his teammates and the other team finally tell him there is not going to be a next time, for he is unable to do anything right!

Elliot wants to be just like them (at least with their sports talents!), but he needs self-confidence. The Good Sports Gang has to help him find the special gift that makes each person special. Elliot first has to see that what he has inside is more important than being captain of the team. Everyone has special gifts that are worth sharing with others.

You have special gifts, too! Maybe you can build things. Or you might be able to teach other people. Or maybe you will be a doctor some day, but for now you are just good at helping mommy and daddy around the house. No two gifts are alike, just like no two people are alike, because we are each God's own one-of-a-kind creation!



The Gang tells Elliot that God, our Heavenly Father, will show him the way and that He loves him. They also tell him God has a plan for him, just like He has a plan for each of us. But before we find out what it is, we have to ask God what He wants us to do. That's a lot different from telling God what we want to do!

So, like Elliot, my precious children, we must always place our trust in God and ask Him what is best for our life. All the rest, as it says in Matthew 6.33, will be added by God: "Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well."

Christ is Risen!

Love in Christ,
Spero

WORSHIP — BYZANTINE MUSIC — LITURGICAL COOKING — ICONOGRAPHY — OUTREACH PROJECTS

FAITH AND Family Wednesdays

AT HOLY TRINITY CHURCH
NOW IN ITS SECOND YEAR!

Feel like you don't know enough about your Faith? Want to understand the Bible better? Like to learn more about living an Orthodox life? The “Faith and Family Wednesdays” ministry offers guides, teachers and practical experience in all these areas and more. It also provides a great opportunity to spend time around your Holy Trinity family and enjoy worship, fellowship, growth and sometimes just fun! It's a great way to live and learn your faith between Sundays!

ABOUT THE SERIES

The most important thing about the schedule is simple: be there at 6:30 and there will be both a blessing and an opportunity for you. And bring the entire family, because there is something for them, too! The worship service goes from 6:30-7:15pm. After a brief fellowship break, there is a series of simultaneous learning, growth and activity sessions from 7:15-8:30pm. All sessions will take place in the various facilities of Holy Trinity Center. There are three tracks each week: Studies, Growth and Orthodox Family Life. Topics and specific activities will vary from month to month, and information will be published in the Herald, the Bulletin on the email list and on the website.

As we continue the second year of this exciting ministry, many thanks are due to all the teachers, contributors and special guests who have made this series possible. Welcome back to all the participants as well, whose feedback from last season was essential to making adjustments that the Spiritual Life Ministry hopes will make this experience even better this year.

COMPLETE GUIDE TO APRIL 2015 “FAITH AND FAMILY WEDNESDAYS”

TRACK	WORSHIP	STUDIES	GROWTH	ORTHODOX FAMILY LIFE
DATE/TIME	6:30pm	7:45-9:00pm		
Apr. 1 Sixth Wednesday of Lent	Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts (Evening Communion Service)	SPECIAL LENTEN SERIES: THIS WEEK: FATHER JOHN AND FATHER RADU “LENT AND HOLY WEEK QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS” Covered Dish Dinner after Liturgy (bring a Lenten dish if you can)		
Apr. 8 Holy Wednesday	HOLY WEEK: ATTEND SERVICES EVERY DAY!			
Apr. 15 Third Wednesday of the month	Service of the Hours/ Confession also available	Orthodox Book Club Father Radu	(Free week: Attend the Orthodox Book Club!)	“Journey to Marriage” (Preparation for Pre-Marriage Couples) Father John
Apr. 22 Fourth Wednesday of the month	Service of Paracletis to the Theotokos	SPECIAL PRESENTATION: WATCH BULLETIN & EMAIL FOR DETAILS		
Apr. 29 Fifth Wednesday of the month	Service of the Hours/ Confession also available	FIFTH WEDNESDAY COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECT: WATCH BULLETIN & EMAIL FOR DETAILS		

BIBLE STUDY — BOOK CLUB — JOURNEY TO MARRIAGE — UNDERSTANDING ORTHODOXY — CONFESSION



March 1, 2015: The students and staff of Holy Trinity Church school participate in the annual "Sunday of Orthodoxy" procession of the holy icons on the First Sunday of Lent. The theme of this annual tradition, practiced throughout the Orthodox Christian world since 843, has been that of the victory of the icons. In that year the "iconoclastic controversy," which sought to remove icons from the life of the Church and had raged on and off since 726, was finally laid to rest, and icons and their veneration were restored on the first Sunday in Lent. Ever since, this Sunday has been commemorated as the "Triumph of Orthodoxy."

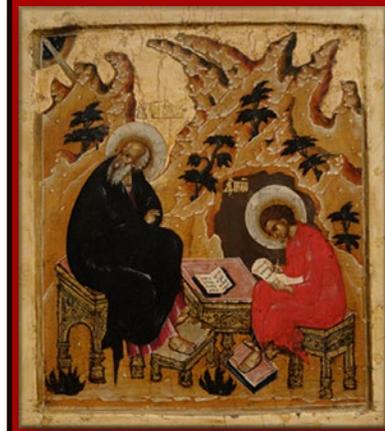




March 14: The HOPE and JOY ministries parents and children undertook the production and distribution of lunches for the needy residents of the Hill District through the weekly lunch ministry of the Greater Pittsburgh Orthodox Clergy Brotherhood and FOCUS Pittsburgh. After lovingly putting together the lunch packages in the kitchen at Holy Trinity Church, the group proceeded to the FOCUS Pittsburgh headquarters on Center Avenue. They were hosted for an informative talk about the FOCUS ministry by its director, Paul Abernathy, and then they distributed the lunches to the nearby residents, many of whom were children who would otherwise not have enough food that day. Thank you to our parents and children for their faithful obedience to the love and Gospel of Jesus Christ in this holy offering of compassion and mercy!



A "BEHIND-THE-SCENES" LOOK AT THE PRODUCTION PROCESS OF THE MONTHLY "GHERONDA'S CORNER" COLUMN



Pictured at left, St. John the Evangelist, according to ancient tradition, dictates the Book of Revelation to his scribe, Prochorus, in a cave on the island of Patmos. Pictured at right, our "Gheronda," Father John Androutsopoulos, sits with his daughter, Kathy, and dictates his monthly article to her as she types it into the computer. Father John, with impaired vision, pours one to two weeks each month into the preparation of this inspired offering of love. The Holy Trinity community offers its thanks to both for this wonderful work!





Above: Holy Trinity Church received a number of new Orthodox Christians into her family recently. Above left are the newly-received John Hastings with his fiancée Athena Pappis and his sponsor, Chris T. Balouris. Above right are Jon Kratsas with his newly-received wife, Jenna and children, Jack, and Grace, along with their sponsors George and Nitsa Kratsas and Harriet Valliant. Congratulations to all and may God grant you many years of blessed life and faith!

Below, Right:: The "Faith and Family Wednesdays Lenten Series" featured a weekly guest presenter. Father Demetrios Carellas spoke on "Faith." Father Sarantos Serviou, with photographic help from Christian Georgiadis, spoke about his "Journeys to the Holy Land," and Presvytera Loredana Bordeianu gave an informative presentation on "The Icons of Lent and Holy Week."



Greek language article from the journal "Pros Tin Nikin" on the celebration of Pascha in the month of April. Also, "A Timely Prayer."



Voula Hareras

Πάσχα τ' Απριλιού

«Καλό μήνα!»

Μέ την άπλή μά τόσο ούσιαστική αυτή εύχή υποδέχεται ο λαός μας και τόν τέταρτο μήνα του έτους. Ο Συναξαριστής της Εκκλησίας μάς πληροφορεί - «Μήν Απρίλιος έχων ημέρας λ'(τριάκοντα). Η ημέρα έχει ώρας ιγ' και ή νύξ ώρας ιά».

Τό όνομα Απρίλιος προέρχεται από τό λατινικό ρήμα *aperire*, πού σημαίνει άνοίγω, γιατί τό μήνα αυτό άνοίγουν, άνθίζουν τά λουλούδια. Γί αυτό από τήν άρχαιότητα άκόμη θεωρούσαν τό μήνα αυτό βασιλιά τής άνοιξης και τόν συνέδεαν μέ τό ξεδίπλωμα τής φύσης.

Οί παροιμίες του λαού τόν θέλουν βροχερό και δροσερό «Αν κάνει ο Μάρτης δυό νερά κι ο Απρίλης άλλο ένα, χαρά σέ κείνον τό ζευγά πού 'χει πολλά σπαρμένα», «ο Απρίλης έχει τή δροσιά κι ο Μάης τά λουλούδια».

Ενα μλήθος από έλληνικά έθιμα, πού διαφέρουν από τόπο σέ τόπο, συνδέουν τό μήνα αυτό μέ τή γιορτή Πάσχα και τήν Αναστάσιμη περίοδο.

Στίς κεντρικές και βόρειες περιοχές τής πατρίδος μας ο θάνατος και ή άνάσταση του Λαζάρου, προπομπός και προάγγελος τής άνάστασης του Θεανθρώπου, έκφράζεται μέ ένα άπλό παιδικό έθιμο, κυρίως κοριτσιών μικρής ήλικίας, πού δρατώντας άνθοστόλιστα καλαθάκια και ένα σύμβολο-όμοίωμα του Λαζάρου ξεκινώντας από τήν Εκκλησία γυρνούν τά σπίτια, άφηγούμενα τά του θανάτου και τής έγέρσεως του Κυρίου. Οί μικροί καλαντιστές άμείβονται μέ άβαφα αυγά, καρπούς και πλήθος εύχών.

Θρησκευτικά καθήκοντα και συμβολικές πράξεις συνυπάρχουν και συμβαδίζουν ιδιαίτερα τή Μ. Εβδομάδα. Τή Μ. Τετάρτη, οί νοικοκυρές, «άναπιάνουν» (=άνανεώνουν) τό προζύμι για τό ζυμωμα του ψωμιού όλης τής χρονιάς. Τή Μ. Πέμπτη βάφουν τά αυγά και τοποθετούν το πρώτο βαμμένο στό εικονοστάσι, κρατώντάς το για χρόνια, ώσπου νά γίνει ο κρόκος του κεχριμπάρι. Η παράδοση θέλει τά αυγά κόκκινα, στό χρώμα τής θυσίας. Μετά τή Θεία Λειτουργία οί νοικοκυρές ζυμώνουν τά κουλούρια και τά ψωμιά τής Λαμπρής.

Η εύαίσθητη γυναικεία φύση έξάλλου προσεγγίζει μέ ιδιαίτερα έκφραστικό τρόπο τήν κορυφαία στιγμή του Πάθους του Κυρίου μέ τό στολισμό του 'Επιταφίου, τή νύχτα τής Μ. Πέμπτης μέσα στην κατανυκτική άτμόσφαιρα του ναού. Τό Μ. Σάββατο μετά τήν πρώτη Ανάσταση σφάζεται ο λαμπριάτης ή πασχάτης, τό άρνί πού προορίζεται για τό πασχαλινό τραπέζι. Τό διαλέγουν νά είναι άσπρο, άρτιμελές και γερό και τό στολίζουν μέ κόκκινη κορδέλα, για νά ξεχωρίζει από τά άλλα. Μέ τό αίμα του σταυρώνουν τό κατώφλι τής πόρτας του σπιτιού «για τήν υγεία και τό καλό», όπως λένε.

Τό Μεγαλοβδόμαδο ή βιωματική συμμετοχή στό πένθος άποκλείει διασκεδάσεις και κάθε είδους έκδηλώσεις και θέλει τούς πιστούς νά μένουν ώρες πολλές στους ναούς,

παρακολουθώντας τό Πάθος του Κυρίου. Μετά τήν Ανάσταση όμως, «ήρθαν τά Πασχαλόγιορτα, ήρθαν τά πανηγύρια». Στά χοροστάσια τής Λαμπρής, στον περίβολο τής Εκκλησίας, μετά τή Δεύτερη Ανάσταση, συμμετέχει όλο τό χωριό, άδελφωμένο και χαρούμενο.

Μέ τό Πάσχα και τήν άνοιξη είναι στενά δεμένη και ή έορτή του Αγίου Γεωργίου. Σέ πολλά μέρη τής πατρίδος μας ο Απρίλιος άναφέρεται ως Αηγιωργίτης ή Αηγιωργάτης. Οί βοσκοί θεωρούν τή γιορτή του όρόσημο για τίς μετακινήσεις τους από τά χειμαδιά στα ψηλά. Στην έορτή του οί κτηνοτρόφοι προσφέρουν ζώα και μοιράζουν τό γάλα σέ όσες οικόγένειες έχουν ανάγκη, ή κάνουν τάματα νά τούς άποκαλύψει ο Άγιος χαμένα ή κλεμμένα ζώα. Ιδιαίτερα στα νησιά, πού υποφέρουν από λειψυδρία, ο Άγιος είναι ο «φονέας» του θεριού, πού «κρατούσε τό νερό τής πηγής». Τό Ασπροβδόμαδο ή Λαμπρόσκολα είναι ή έβδομάδα τής Διακαινησίμου, πού άκολουθεί τό Πάσχα. Ο έορτασμός συνεχίζεται μέ χορούς και λιτανευτικές περιφορές εικώνων σέ ξωκκλήσια. Τήν Παρασκευή τής Διακαινησίμου, έορτή τής Ζωοδόχου Πηγής, γίνεται πανηγύρι στην έξοχή, όπου συχνά υπάρχει θαυματοργό άγίασμα.

Η χαρά για τήν Ανάσταση συναντήθηκε μέ τή φυσική άγαλλίαση τής άνοιξης και δημιούργησαν τό Ελληνικό Πάσχα, στ' Απρίλη τίς όμορφιές και τίς χάρες, όπως τό θέλει ή Ορθοδοξία και ή Παράδοσή μας. Τόσο άναγκαία και ταιριαστή ή συμπόρευση, πού ίκανοποιεί και άναπαύει κάθε έκφραση τής νιώθει και τήν άναζητά και τήν έπιδιώκει. Καλό μήνα, λοιπόν!

«Πρός τήν Νίκη»

ΕΠΙΚΑΙΡΟΣ ΠΡΟΣΕΥΧΗ

Κύριε Παντοκράτορ, Φιλάνθρωπε, Υπεράγαθε πλαστουργέ μας, δίκαιε Κυβερνητά και Εξουσιαστά του παντός, άπλωσε την πανσθενή δεξιάν σου, πρόλαβε Συ την καταστροφήν, κατάπαυσε τους πολέμους και τους βομβαρδιασμούς, αναχαίτισε την κακίαν, ειρήνευσε τα έθνη, φώτισε τους ηγεμόνας αυτών. Επανάφερε εντω απείρω ελέει Σου την πίστιν στις ψυχές προς αληθινήν θεογνωσίαν, καμέ να επεκτάθη η ειρηνοποιός Εκκλησία Σου επί της γης, να κατακτήση αυτή τις καρδιές, να μαλακώση τα αισθήματα, να ανυψώση τα ήθη, να αποδίωξη τις έχθρες και τις αντεκδικήσεις. Εκεί που η αποστασία μας οδηγεί σε απελπιστικόν αδιέξοδον, εκεί είναι η ώρα η ιδική Σου, Κύριε, «καιρός του ποιήσαι», για να ανοίξουν λεωφόροι μετανοίας και σωτηρίας. «Ελθέτω η βασιλεία σου», Φιλάνθρωπε, «Γενηθήτω το θελημά σου», το άγιον και προσκυνητόν, το «ευάρεστον και τέλειον», «ως εν ουρανώ, και επ'ι της γης.»

Vickie Bellios

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Protopresbyter Thomas Hopko, 76, dean emeritus of St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary and noted Orthodox Christian priest, theologian, preacher, and speaker, fell asleep in the Lord in Wexford on March 18. Father John participated in his funeral at the Holy Transfiguration Monastery in Ellwood City on March 23. In his priestly ministry, Fr. Thomas authored numerous books and articles. A prolific speaker and preacher, he spoke at conferences, retreats, public lectures, and Church gatherings of all kinds, many of which were recorded. Father Thomas performed countless duties on behalf of the Church, including representing the Church at intra-Orthodox gatherings and ecumenical meetings. Many of his podcasts are available online at www.ancientfaith.com/specials/hopko_lectures. May his memory be eternal!

THE 55 MAXIMS OF ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN LIFE

By +Father Thomas Hopko (1939-2015)

SUNDAY

1. Be always with Christ and trust God in everything.
2. Pray as you can, not as you think you must.
3. Have a keepable rule of prayer done by discipline.
4. Say the Lord's Prayer several times each day.
5. Repeat a short prayer when your mind is not occupied.
6. Make some prostrations when you pray.
7. Eat good foods in moderation and fast on fasting days.

MONDAY

8. Practice silence, inner and outer.
9. Sit in silence 20 to 30 minutes each day.
10. Do acts of mercy in secret.
11. Go to liturgical services regularly.
12. Go to confession and holy communion regularly.
13. Do not engage intrusive thoughts and feelings.
14. Reveal all your thoughts and feelings to a trusted person regularly.
15. Read the scriptures regularly.
16. Read good books, a little at a time.

TUESDAY

17. Cultivate communion with the saints.
18. Be an ordinary person, one of the human race.
19. Be polite with everyone, first of all family members.
20. Maintain cleanliness and order in your home.
21. Have a healthy, wholesome hobby.
22. Exercise regularly.
23. Live a day, even a part of a day, at a time.
24. Be totally honest, first of all with yourself.

WEDNESDAY

25. Be faithful in little things.
26. Do your work, then forget it.
27. Do the most difficult and painful things first.
28. Face reality.
29. Be grateful.

30. Be cheerful.
31. Be simple, hidden, quiet and small.
32. Never bring attention to yourself.
33. Listen when people talk to you.
34. Be awake and attentive, fully present where you are.

THURSDAY

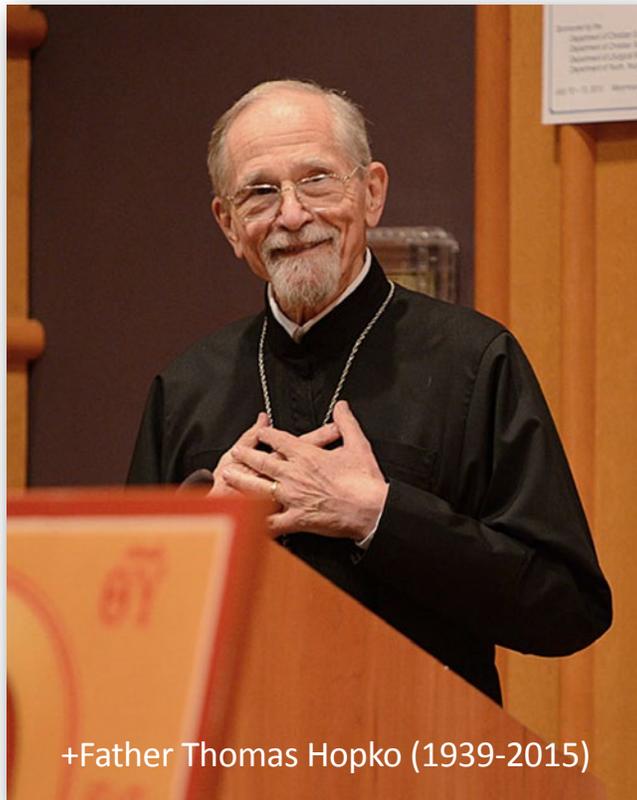
35. Think and talk about things no more than necessary.
36. Speak simply, clearly, firmly, directly.
37. Flee imagination, fantasy, analysis, figuring things out.
38. Flee carnal, sexual things at their first appearance.
39. Don't complain, grumble, murmur or whine.
40. Don't seek or expect pity or praise.
41. Don't compare yourself with anyone.

FRIDAY

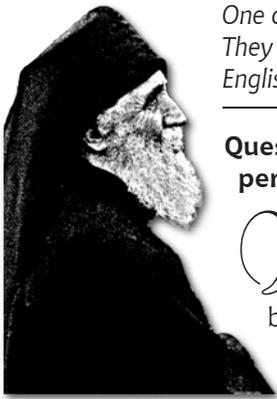
42. Don't judge anyone for anything.
43. Don't try to convince anyone of anything.
44. Don't defend or justify yourself.
45. Be defined and bound by God, not people.
46. Accept criticism gracefully and test it carefully.
47. Give advice only when asked or when it is your duty.

SATURDAY

48. Do nothing for people that they can and should do for themselves.
49. Have a daily schedule of activities, avoiding whim and caprice.
50. Be merciful with yourself and others.
51. Have no expectations except to be fiercely tempted to your last breath.
52. Focus exclusively on God and light, and never on darkness, temptation and sin.
53. Endure the trial of yourself and your faults serenely, under God's mercy.
54. When you fall, get up immediately and start over.
55. Get help when you need it, without fear or shame.



+Father Thomas Hopko (1939-2015)



St. Paisios of Athos

One of the great blessings of Orthodoxy is the presence, prayers and inspired words of the Holy Elders of the Faith. They have been referred to as “precious vessels of the Holy Spirit.” In recent years, many books have been published in English with their writings and talks. This column provides an opportunity for each of us to be blessed by their words.

Question: Geronda, when can we say a person is reconciled with death?

When Christ lives inside him, then death is a joy. But one must not rejoice in dying just because he has become tired of his life. Few are the people who welcome death. Most people have unfinished business and don't want to die. But the Good God provides for each person a time to die: when he is fully matured.

In any case, a spiritual person, whether young or old, should be happy to live and happy to die, but should never pursue death, for this is suicide.

For a person who is dead to worldly matters and has been spiritually resurrected, there is never any agony, fear or anxiety, for he awaits death with joy because he will be with Christ and delights in His presence. But he also rejoices in being alive, again because he is united with Christ even now and experiences a portion of the joy of Paradise here on earth and wonders whether there is a higher joy in Paradise than the one he feels on earth.

Question: Does death separate us forever?

We must understand that the human person in reality does not die. Death is simply a transfer from one life to the other. It is a separation for a short time. This is like, for example, when someone goes abroad for a year. His family will miss him and worry about him because he will be away from them for a year. If he should go away for ten years, they will worry all the more over his absence for ten years. This is how people should look upon death—as having separated them from the beloved family members.

Let's say, for example, that someone dies and his family members are elderly. They can say, “After ten or fifteen years, we will be together again.” If the family members are younger, they can say, “After fifty years, we will be together again.” Naturally, one is pained by the death of a relative, but this must be faced in a spiritual way. What does Saint Paul say? “That you may not grieve as others do who have no hope” (1 Thess. 4.13).

Question: Geronda, when a person dies, does he become immediately aware of his spiritual condition?

Yes, he does, and says to himself, “What have I done?”...This can be likened to a drunk man who kills his mother and goes on singing and laughing, but who, upon becoming sober and realizing what he has done, will wail and lament and say, “What have I done?” In much the same way, those who commit wrongdoings in this life are like drunken men. They don't understand what they're doing; they don't have a sense of their guilt. But when they die, they become aware of their real condition.

The eyes of their soul are opened and they realize their guilt, because the soul, when separated from the body, moves, sees and perceives with an inconceivable speed.

Question: Do prayers for the departed help?

Who live still have time for repentance, but those unfortunate ones who have fallen asleep cannot improve their condition on their own; they await help from us. This is the reason why we have an obligation to help them with our prayer.

Just as we provide some comfort to the imprisoned with the refreshments and other material goods we bring to them, so are the dead refreshed by the prayers and the sacred memorials offered by the living for the dead are the final chance that God gives to the dead to be helped until the Final Judgment takes place. After the Judgment there will no longer be any possibility for help.

This is the reason why our Church has a sacred memorials with the *kollyva* [specially prepared boiled wheat kernels]. Memorials serve as the best attorney on behalf of the souls of those fallen asleep. They even have the power to bring a soul out of hell. The wheat has a symbolic meaning: “It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption” (1 Cor. 15.42), according to Sacred Scripture.

Question: Geronda, what else can we do for our departed loved ones?

Of all the memorials we can do for the departed, the best is to lead a careful and vigilant spiritual life, which is the struggle to reduce our shortcomings and purify our souls. This is because our freedom from material things and from the mental (soul-destroying) passions, not only provides comfort to us, it also provides comfort to the departed forefathers of our entire family. The departed ancestors experience joy when one of their descendants is close to God. In other words, our struggle to be pleasing to God throughout this life is what gives the greatest joy to the departed, for then we can meet our ancestors in Paradise and live the eternal life together.

Question: When we beseech God to help someone departed who is not in need, is the prayer in vain?

How can prayer be in vain? When we say, for example, “Give rest to the soul of Your servant...” and he is in a good spiritual condition in the other life, he [the departed] is not offended; on the contrary, he is moved. He'll say, “Look at this; I'm in a good condition here and still, they are concerned about me and pray for me.” As a result, this person is moved by *philotimo* to help us all the more and to intercede with God on our behalf. But how can one ever know the spiritual condition of a person in the other life? Pray for all those who have fallen asleep.

Excerpted from “Spiritual Counsels, Vol. IV: - Family Life”



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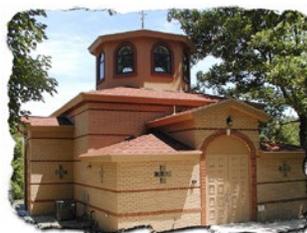
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The Universal Message of the Resurrection for All People

”CHRIST IS RISEN! TRULY HE IS RISEN”

Albanian: Krishti U Ngjall! Vertet U Ngjall!

Arabic: L'Messieh kahm! Hakken kahm!

Chinese: Helisituosi fuhuole! Queshi fuhuole!

Czech: Kristus vstal a mrtvych! Opravdi vstoupil!

Danish: Kristus er opstanden! Kristus er opstanden!

Ethiopian: Christos t'ensah em' muhtan!

Finnish: Kristus nousi kuolleista! Totistesti nousi!

French: Le Christ est réssuscité! En verite il est réssuscité!

Greek: Christos anesti! Alithos anesti!



Hawaiian: Ua ala hou `o Kristo! Ua ala `i `o no `oia!

Iceland: Kristur er upprisinn! Hann er vis-sulega upprisinn!

Indonesian: Kristus telah bangkit! Benar dia telah bangkit!

Italian: Cristo e' risorto! Veramente e' risorto!

Korean: Kristo gesso! Buhar ha sho nay!

Latin: Christus resurrexit! Vere resurrexit!

Nigerian: Jesu Kristi ebiliwo! Ezia o' biliwo!

Norwegian: Kristus er oppstanden! Han er

sannelig oppstanden!

Romanian: Hristos a inviat! Adevarat a inviat!

Russian: Khristos voskres! Voistinu voskres!

Russian: Khristos voskres! Voistinu voskres!

Serbian: Cristos vaskres! Vaistinu vaskres!

Spanish: Cristos ha resucitado! En verdad ha resucitado!

Swahili: Kristo amefufukka! Kweli Amefufukka!

Swedish: Christus ar uppstanden! Han ar verkigen uppstanden!

Turkish: Hristos diril-di! Hakikaten diril-di!

Ugandan: Kristo ajukkide! Kweli ajukkide!

Scripture of the Month: “We have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” (1 Peter 1.3)