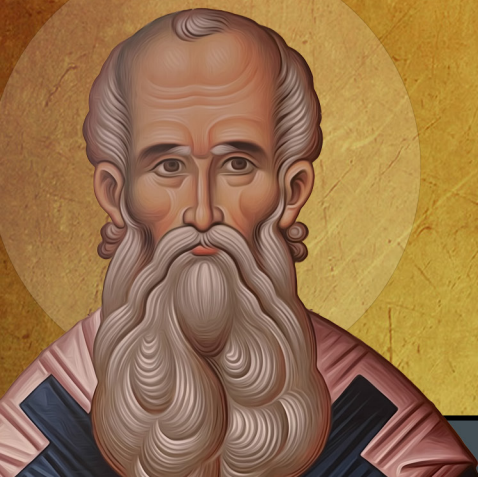




THE CHAMPION

A Monthly Publication of Saint Athanasios Greek Orthodox Church

AUGUST 2026



MESSAGE

FROM FR. PANAGIOTIS

As summer begins to wind down and many families return from vacations and prepare for a new school year, the Church invites us to pause and celebrate one of the most beloved feasts of the year: the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos on August 15.

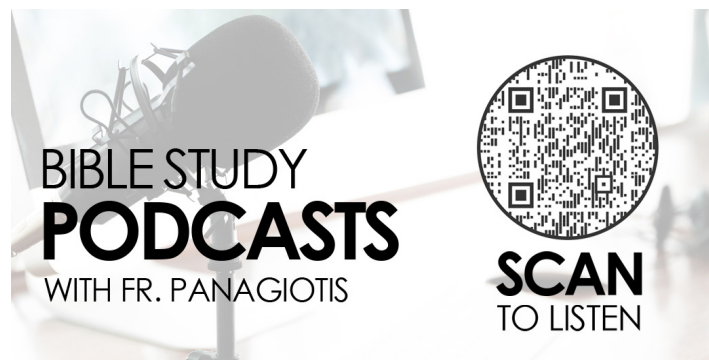
You may have heard this feast called the "Summer Pascha." Just as we celebrate Christ's victory over death at Pascha, the Dormition proclaims the hope of the Resurrection. The Virgin Mary truly experienced death, as every human being does, but death could not hold the one who bore the Author of Life. Thus, her Son carried her into His kingdom and her death is transformed into a momentary sleep. Her Dormition reminds us that for those who belong to Christ, death is not an ending but a passage into eternal life. It is a feast filled with both tenderness and hope, reminding us of the destiny God has prepared for all who love Him.

The Church prepares us for this great feast with the Dormition Fast from August 1–14. Though only two weeks long, this brief lent is a beautiful opportunity to simplify our lives, renew our prayer, and to remember the victory of life over death.

One of the greatest treasures of these two weeks is the celebration of the Paraklesis services. Together we gather to sing hymns asking the Theotokos to intercede before her Son on behalf of the whole world. We bring to her our worries, our illnesses, our fears, our children, our parents, our friends, and even those with whom we struggle. The Gospel calls us to pray not only for those we love but also for our enemies, and what better place to do so than before the loving mother of our Lord?

I encourage you to make every effort to attend the Paraklesis services this August. Bring the names of your loved ones. Bring the names of those who have hurt you. Bring your own burdens as well. The Mother of God never ceases to lead us to her Son, who alone is the source of healing, peace, and salvation.

May the Most Holy Theotokos continue to protect our parish family and intercede for each of us as we prepare to celebrate her glorious Dormition.



MEMORIALS

Gust Christofidis (40 Days)
John Sandas (7 Years)
Bessie Trambas (13 Years)
Georgia Stavropoulos (16 Years)
Georgia Sacallaris (49 Years)
Gust Sacallaris (49 Years)
John Stavropoulos (67 Years)
Ekaterina Laikos (70 Years)
Eleni Stavropoulos (73 Years)
Anastasios Stavropoulos (76 Years)
Ekaterina Leikos (70 Years)
Demetrios Stavropoulos (84 Years)

BAPTISMS

Lionel Alejandro Bakas Reyes (son of Adrian Bakas & Andrea Reyes)
Mia Anna Ndrio (daughter of Erin & Bela Ndrio)
Liam & Lucas Zguri (sons of Sabrina & Theodore Zguri)
Victoria & Zoica Zguri (daughters of Dhemetra & Nikolla Zguri)
Liam Demetrios Cherekos (son of Speridon (Deni) & Autum Cherekos)
Andonia Lynn Hazard (daughter of Jared & Panagiota Hazard)

PARISH COUNCIL

As we reflect on the summer life of our parish, we are filled with gratitude for God's abundant blessings. Our community has been more active than ever, with opportunities for worship, fellowship, service, and spiritual growth for every age. None of this would be possible without the faithful dedication of Fr. Panagiotis, our staff, ministry leaders, volunteers, and parishioners who generously share their time, talents, and treasures.

Our summer began with a successful Golf Outing, thanks to the leadership of Frank Demas, George Manos, and many dedicated volunteers, whose hard work made the event a success despite the weather. OCMC Mission Sunday was another tremendous blessing, and it was an honor to welcome Fr. Stephanos Ritsi. We are grateful to Kristin Standish, Elaine Drikakis, Ambrosia Restaurant, and everyone who helped make the day so meaningful.

Our youth have enjoyed a wonderful summer through Faith Navigators Camp and youth group gatherings and activities for all ages. Special thanks to Voula Ortega and the many volunteers who created lasting memories for our children. Our college students and young adults have also continued to grow in faith through monthly Bible study and dinner led by Fr. Panagiotis, with the final bible study taking place on August 3. Soul Sisters has also enjoyed a season of meaningful fellowship and book discussions, concluding its summer gatherings on August 27.

Many parishioners participated in visits to Holy Transfiguration and St. John Chrysostomos Monasteries. We thank Spiro Deligiannis for organizing these spiritually enriching pilgrimages, reminding us of the blessing of having these sacred places nearby. We also look forward to the pilgrimage to the Serbian Orthodox monasteries on August 2.

In July, members of the Parish Council and Philoptochos attended the Clergy-Laity Congress, joining Orthodox faithful from across the country for worship, learning, and fellowship. A few weeks later, during our July retreat, the Parish Council prayerfully began developing a three-year vision for the future of our parish. We look forward to sharing more about this work at our Fall General Assembly.

As summer continues, we look forward to gathering together for our Church Picnic on September 13 and the Aurora Greek Fall Fest on September 25–27. Thank you to everyone who continues to labor with love to make our parish a thriving and welcoming community. May God continue to bless our parish family throughout the months ahead.

Anna Caniglia
Parish Council President

DISCOVER ORTHODOXY

Discover Orthodoxy returns this fall with a new format designed to help inquirers and those preparing to enter the Orthodox Church experience the beauty of the Orthodox Christian faith through both learning and lived practice. Whether you are exploring Orthodoxy for the first time or seeking a deeper understanding of the faith, we invite you to join us on this journey of discovery. Classes begin Sunday, September 6, and meet each Sunday.

SCAN TO VIEW
SCHEDULE





PHILOPTOCHOS OPERATION CLASSROOM




Let's support Laraway Elementary School with at home school supplies.

While the students are provided schools supplies for the classroom,
some don't have the means to have school supplies at home.



Please drop off the following **NEW** items
in the collection box in Saint Matthews Hall:

★ We are looking
to collect
30 OF EACH
of these items by
AUGUST 15.

24 PACK CRAYONS 	12 CT COLORED PENCILS 	10 CT MARKERS 	GLUE STICK 	BLUNT END SCISSORS 
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★ Please reach out to *Leah Fanning* with any questions.

✉ Leah_fanning@yahoo.com





ST. ATHANASIOS
CHURCH
NEW YEAR
PICNIC

Join us on
September 13th
Following Divine Liturgy

All Are Welcome!

PARISH CALENDAR

All services are live streamed on our YouTube Channel.

Orthros begins at 8:30am with Divine Liturgy following at 9:30am (unless otherwise noted below)

Sunday, August 2

Divine Liturgy - 9th Sunday of Matthew

12pm Pilgrimage to Serbian Orthodox Monasteries

Monday, August 3

5pm Philoptochos Feed the Hungry lunch assembly

6pm Paraklesis

7pm Young Adult Bible Study

Tuesday, August 4

9:30am Philoptochos Feed the Hungry lunch distribution

6pm Sunday School Teacher Meeting & Dinner

Wednesday, August 5

3pm Hesed House Prep & Deliver

6:30pm Vespers - Feast of the Transfiguration

Holy Transfiguration Greek Orthodox Monastery

17906 IL-173, Harvard, IL 60033, USA

Thursday, August 6

Divine Liturgy - Transfiguration of our Lord

Friday, August 7

6pm Paraklesis

Sunday, August 9

Divine Liturgy - 10th Sunday of Matthew

Monday, August 10

6pm Paraklesis

Wednesday, August 12

6 pm Paraklesis

7pm Choir Rehearsal

Thursday, August 13

6:30pm Joint Jr GOYA & GOYA Nerf War Fight

Friday, August 14

7pm Vespers - Feast of the Assumption
of the Virgin Mary

Assumption Greek Orthodox Church

601 S Central Ave, Chicago, IL 60644, USA

Saturday August 15

Divine Liturgy-Dormition of the Theotokos

Sunday, August 16

Divine Liturgy - 11th Sunday of Matthew

3:30pm Joint Jr GOYA & GOYA: Pool Party at

Mrs. Gunderson's

Sunday, August 23

Divine Liturgy- 12th Sunday of Matthew

Thursday, August 27

7pm Soul Sisters Meeting

Saturday, August 29

Divine Liturgy - Beheading of John the Baptist

Sunday, August 30

Divine Liturgy - 13th Sunday of Matthew

COFFEE HOUR

Coffee Hour Hosts Needed

Help to promote fellowship, community, and friendship following Divine Liturgy by hosting Coffee Hour. Consider hosting for occasions such as Memorials, Namedays, Birthdays, 40-day Blessings, etc - or no occasion needed. You can join another family or multiple people to host as well. For more information and to sign up to host a Coffee Hour, please call the office.



FOOD PANTRY



Thank you to everyone who generously donated food to our Pantry! Your contributions make a real difference in the lives of our community members who need it most.

Please donate food that is Healing to the Hungry - Lean Proteins (Saturated Fats), No Sodium, Low Sugar Fruits, Whole Grain Items. No dented cans or open packaged foods. Expired food can not be accepted. This month's request is:

Baby Food, Baby Cereal, Baby Snacks

Please contact Betty Roussos at bettyroussos@yahoo.com with any questions.

PHILOPTOCHOS

Philoptochos has been busy making plans for the upcoming year over the summer! We attended the National Philoptochos Convention at the end of June, coinciding with National Clergy Laity Conference. We learned a lot about the Orthodox Prison Ministry, the growth of Orthodoxy in South America and all the great things being done by chapters around the country. We came back with many ideas for how to help our local community.

On August 3rd & 4th, we will be preparing and distributing sack lunches at Annunciation Cathedral, as we participate in the Metropolis' Feed the Hungry program. Details and a signup were included in emails sent out in July.

Our kickoff Brunch, Mimosas and Membership, is set for 10 am on Saturday, September 19th in St. Matthew Hall. Our theme this year is Celebrating the Bonds That Unite Generations Through Fellowship, Friendship, and Faith. You are invited to bring your mom, your daughter (18+), your yiayia, and your Orthodox female friends to see what Philoptochos is all about. We would like all members and guests to submit a favorite school age photo of yourself, which will be used as part of our decorations. Please email them to Kara Nassos at karajeannassos@yahoo.com or give them to a board member at church on Sunday.

Sue Manos
Philoptochos President

Mimosas and Membership

Join us for our
MEMBERSHIP BRUNCH
on Saturday, **September 19th**
as we celebrate the bonds that unite
generations through fellowship,
friendship, and faith.



Bring your **mom**, your **daughter (18+)**,
your **yiayia**, or your **Orthodox female friends**.

 **SATURDAY
SEPTEMBER 19TH**

 **10:00 AM –
1:00 PM**

 **ST. MATTHEW
HALL**

More details and registration information
will be available later this summer.

In the meantime,
start digging through photo albums and
email Kara Nassos - (karajeannassos@yahoo.com)
a favorite school age photo of yourself.

Let's raise a glass to faith, family, and friendship!



STEWARDSHIP

“No Vacation from Stewardship“

Summer has a way of slowing life down. We take vacations, spend long weekends at the lake, enjoy quiet evenings outside, and let routines relax a little. Spiritually, summer can feel like a gentle pause too—lighter schedules, fewer meetings, a chance to breathe. But while we may step away for rest, our church never gets a vacation.

The ministries continue. The lights stay on. The air conditioning hums through hot August days. Our priest still visits the sick, prepares sermons, and offers sacraments. The building still needs care, insurance still needs to be paid, and programs still need support. Even when pews are a little emptier, the work of the Church remains steady.

This is why Stewardship matters in every season. Time, Talent, and Treasure are not year-round obligations—they are year-round expressions of love. When we pledge, volunteer, or offer our skills, we help ensure that our Parish remains strong even during quieter months.

If summer has given you space to reflect, consider how your Stewardship fits into the rhythm of your faith. Can you offer a bit more of your Treasure to help us meet rising costs? Can you share a Talent that strengthens our ministries? Can you give a little Time as we prepare for a busy fall?

We may take time off—but the Church doesn't. Your Stewardship keeps our parish vibrant, welcoming, and ready for every season ahead.

In His Service,
St. Athanasios Stewardship Ministry



**Weddings
Baptisms
Christmas
Easter**

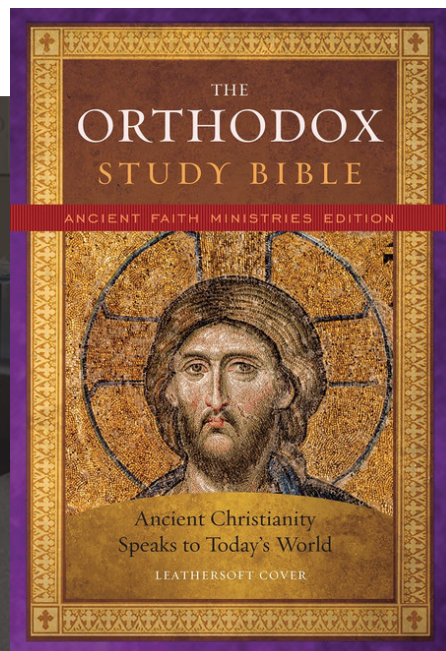
dahliawb.com

630.596.6826

BOOK STORE

August and early September are back to school times from a lovely Summer vacation. Help you and your loved ones continue in the spiritual journey with books from our Bookstore. “When God Made You” and “A Child's Guide to the Psalms” are two excellent titles to peak the interest of children and to move them away from screen/device time. “The Orthodox Study Bible,” “Toolkit for Spiritual Growth,” “Pocket Prayer Book for Orthodox Christians,” and “102 Orthodox Saints,” are just a few recommendations for teens, young adults, and adults to continue their thirst for peace and prayer. We also have small icons for college students to have on their desks in their dorms as they begin their time away from home. Stop in soon to browse and shop!

Thank you, Your Bookstore Team



MEN'S GROUP

Thank you all for your support and participation in this ministry.

For those of you that may not be familiar with us, we are a Group of Orthodox friends who gather to share their experiences about life, their philosophies, values, and ideas. We meet to provide charity, support, mentoring and build fellowship among the Orthodox community of men in the western suburbs.

Welcome Back Dinner

Come join us for annual Welcome Back dinner in early September. This will be a great opportunity to catch up with friends, meet new members, and learn about our upcoming activities. More details to be announced soon.

Aurora Greek Fest

Volunteers are needed to prep and cook at the Aurora Greek Fest – September 25-27. Please consider your time to help make this festival a success!

Food Pantry

Each month, our church collection of donated food needs to be delivered to local food pantries. We need volunteers to transport our donations. If you are interested, please contact us for more information.

You can like and follow our Facebook page by searching for "Men's Group of St Athanasios Greek Orthodox Church"

We welcome men (21+) to join us as we grow our mission. If interested, please contact Spiro Hountalas (naperspike@aol.com), Peter Metrou (pmetrou@gmail.com) or Nick Dagiantis (ndagiantis@gmail.com).



SOUL SISTERS BOOK STUDY

There's still time to join us! Women of our parish are invited to our book study, "Seven Holy Women" from Ancient Faith Publishing. Together, we'll be inspired by the powerful stories of lesser-known female saints in a welcoming and faith-filled discussion.

Next Meeting: **Thursday, August 27 at 7:00 p.m.**

Location: **Home of Maria Lambrou**

Whether you've attended previous sessions or are joining for the first time, we'd love to have you!

Questions?

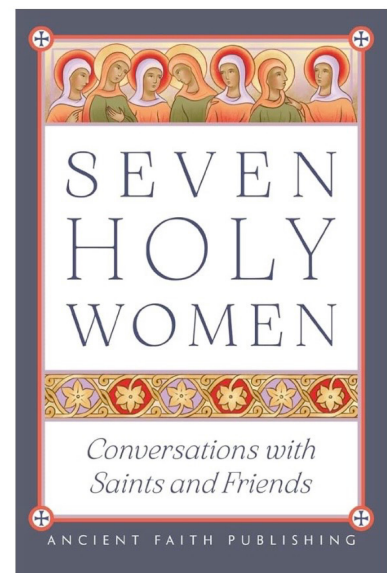
Contact Maria Lambrou at makokoslambrou@yahoo.com

HESED HOUSE



In June, Hesed House ministry had 10 volunteers help prepare and serve dinner to approximately 230 Hesed House guests. The next Hesed dinner is August 5th.

For sign up availability contact Bill Collins at bctc@sboglobal.net.





SUNDAY SCHOOL

First Day of Sunday School - **September 13th**

JOY MEETING

September 13th during the Church Picnic

GOYA MEETING

September 21st at 6:30pm to 8pm

JR. GOYA MEETING

September 24th at 6:30pm

Joint Jr. GOYA & GOYA

Bardwell Night - September 30th at 6:30pm to 8pm

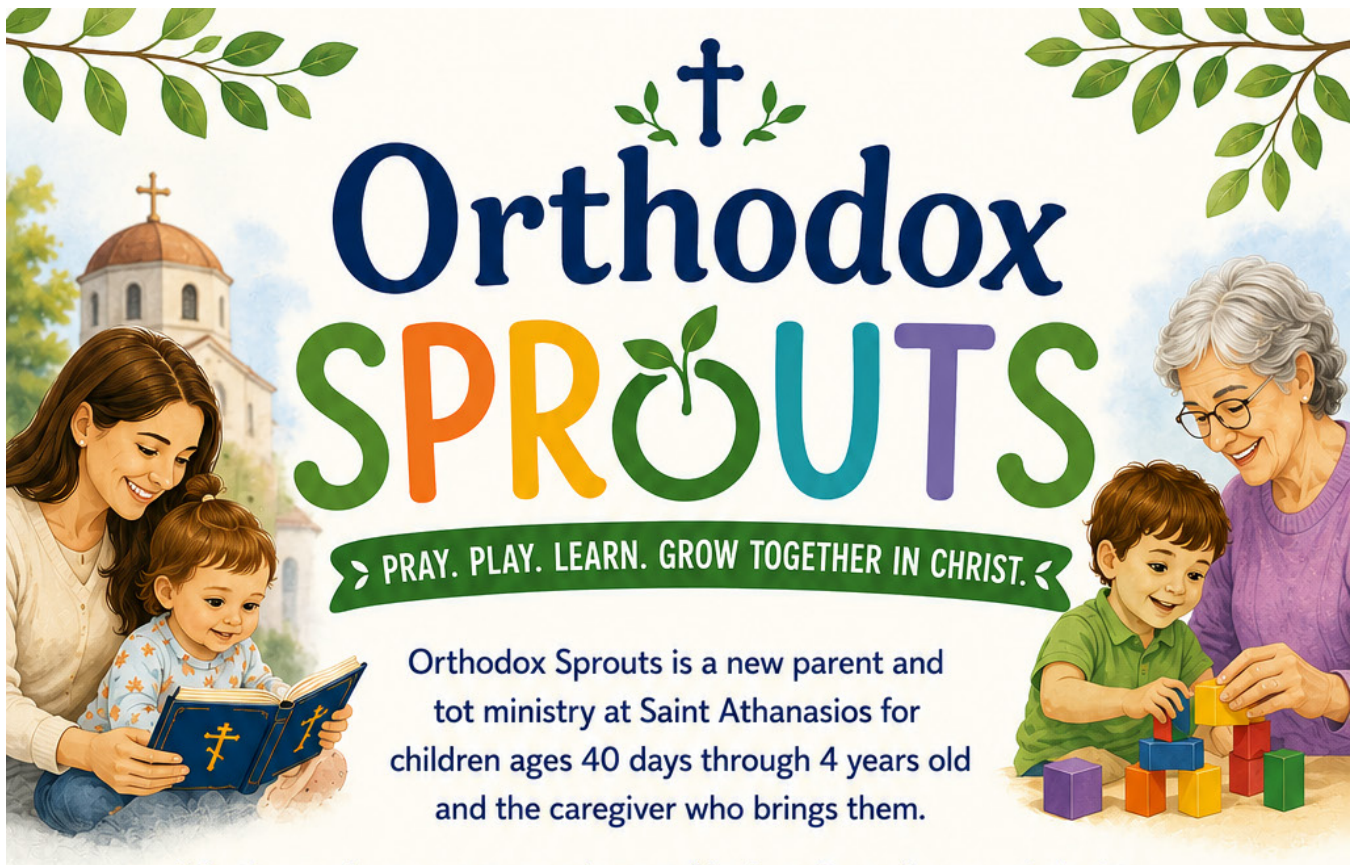
SUNDAY SCHOOL REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN!

**CLASSES BEGIN
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13**

Registration is open for students in Pre-K through High School, and families may register at any time throughout the year with our rolling admission. Registration also includes our youth ministries—JOY (K-5), Jr. GOYA (6th-8th Grade), GOYA (High School)—as well as our new Tot Ministry.

**REGISTER
TODAY!**





Orthodox SPROUTS

> PRAY. PLAY. LEARN. GROW TOGETHER IN CHRIST. <

Orthodox Sprouts is a new parent and tot ministry at Saint Athanasios for children ages 40 days through 4 years old and the caregiver who brings them.

Whether you're a parent, grandparent (Yiayia or Papou!), nanny, babysitter, or another loved one caring for a little one, you'll find a welcoming community where you and your child can **pray**, **play**, **learn**, and **grow** together in Christ.



Each gathering includes prayer, Bible stories, music and movement, hands-on activities, free play, and fellowship—creating opportunities for both children and caregivers to learn, connect, and grow together in Christ.



PRAYER



BIBLE
STORIES



MUSIC &
MOVEMENT



HANDS-ON
ACTIVITIES



FREE PLAY



FELLOWSHIP



BEGINNING JANUARY 2027



ONE MORNING
GATHERING



ONE EVENING
GATHERING

Orthodox Sprouts is hoping to meet twice each month, with one morning and one evening gathering to accommodate a variety of schedules.



More information, meeting dates, and registration details will be announced this fall.

To register your child and get on our mailing list, please sign up here:



<https://forms.gle/qkwdufjKWLATicjA9>



or email orthodoxsprouts@saintathanasios.com



Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these. ~ Matthew 19:14



AGAPE



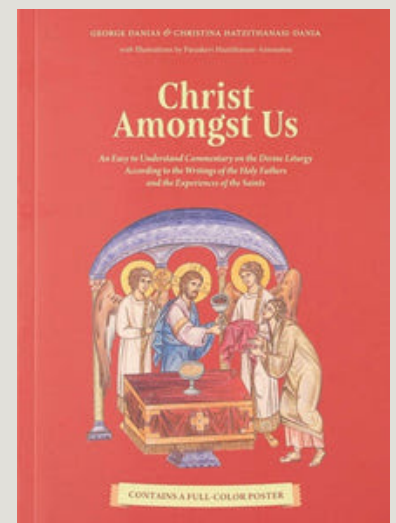
We had a great end of the year lunch in June at Olive Garden. Twenty of our Agape members got together to break bread and kick off summer! Join us for our kick off event at the church in St. Matthew Hall on September 10th, at 11am. Contact Samantha Dulles for more information at agape@saintathanasios.com



DID YOU KNOW...?

The Litany of Completion and the Kiss of Peace

After the Great Entrance, the deacon intones a series of supplications called the Litany of Completion: For the precious gifts here set forth, let us pray to the Lord. For this holy house and those who enter it with faith, reverence and the fear of God let us pray to the Lord. (...) Commemorating our most holy, most pure, most blessed and glorified Lady the Theotokos and ever-virgin Mary, together with all the saints, let us commit ourselves and one another and all our life unto Christ our God. Next the deacon exhorts the faithful, Let us love one another that with one mind we may confess. That is, let all love one another so that together, in unity and love, they may confess their faith in the Triune God. (...) Without resolving our differences with others, without forgiving and loving them we cannot approach the Holy Altar and sit at the Lord's table. This is His command to us: If therefore you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift there, before the altar. First go your way and be reconciled to your brother, and then offer your gift. (Matthew 5:23-24)



"Christ is Amongst Us" by George Danias & Christina Hatzithanasi-Dania with Iconography by Paraskevi Hatzithanasi-Anthonatou pages 53-55

Book is on sale
in the bookstore

68TH ANNUAL CHOIR CONFERENCE

OCTOBER 9-11, 2026

Registration is now open for the Federation of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians 68th Annual Choir Conference hosted by St. Athanasios on October 9-11, 2026! The conference is open to choir singers, chanters, or anyone who is interested in learning more about music in the Orthodox church. Visit <https://chicagofederation.org/conference2026/> to register or reach out to Margarita Altidis margarita.altidis@gmail.com if you have any questions or are interested in donating.

SOWING THE WORDS OF PRAISE



68TH ANNUAL FEDERATION OF GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH MUSICIANS CONFERENCE

OCTOBER 9-11, 2026 | ST. ATHANASIOS, AURORA, IL

CALLING ALL CHOIR MEMBERS, CHANTERS, OR ANYONE INTERESTED IN CHURCH MUSIC!

Registration includes all workshops & rehearsals, as well as meals, including an awards & celebration banquet!

For questions about the registration process, email: webmaster@chicagofederation.com

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS



WEBSITE & REGISTRATION



[CHICAGOFEDERATION.ORG](https://chicagofederation.org)

YOUNG ADULT BIBLE STUDY

JUNE 1 | JULY 6 | AUG 3

Topic: **Discerning the Future**
Location: Conference Room
Dinner will be served.

We encourage all college students and young adults to join us!
Please bring a Bible if you have one.

MONASTERY PILGRIMAGE



Sunday, August 2 Serbian Orthodox Monastery of St. Sava & New Gracanica Serbian Monastery

Venerate incorrupt saint and visit impressive architectural
Orthodox churches & iconography.

12(noon) Depart from St. Athanasios

1:30pm Venerate relics of Saint Mardarije at St. Sava with presentation given by Fr. Markarije

3:00pm Visit Protection of the Most Holy Mother of God Monastery / Church

4:15pm Depart from New Gracanica

5:30pm Arrive at St. Athanasios

***Contact Spiro J. Deligiannis (630-677-5014) for further
information and/or expression of interest to attend/join, as
well as to coordinate carpool logistics.***

OCMC FUNDRAISER LUNCHEON

Thank you to all who attended, to all who donated, and to all who helped make our luncheon a success! We had a wonderful sermon and presentation from Father Stephanos Ritsi of the Orthodox Christian Mission Center. With God's help we raised almost \$4000 for the cause. Thanks again, and may God bless your generosity!





MODERN STEAKHOUSE WITH A GREEK ACCENT.

Beyond our delicious line-up of Prime Steaks, Chops, and Seafood, we offer an authentic selection of Greek Specialties, including Whole Oven Roasted Branzino, Lamb Racks & Greek Potatoes, Classic Pastitsio, and much more. Check out the **Greek Classics** on our menu for all your favorite Mediterranean flavors.

CityGate
GRILLE

Reservations 630.718.1010
www.citygategrille.com



CityGate Centre | Rte. 59 & Ferry Rd., Naperville | A Calamos Family Property



Gyros Drive

We Need Your Help!

Donate a Gyro Cone

\$150 Per Cone

37 Cone Goal!

Contact Tracey for donations at
AuroraGreekFest@saintathanasios.com
or call 630.643.0023



AURORA
GREEK
FEST

SEPT 25-27

LOCATION

SAINT ATHANASIOS
GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
1855 EAST FIFTH AVE

AURORA IL

CARRY OUT

CATERING

630.851.6106

FEST TIMES

NOON TO 9 PM
(FRIDAY & SATURDAY)

NOON TO 7 PM
(SUNDAY)



www.auroragreekfest.com

AUGUST 2026



DORMITION
OF THE
THEOTOKOS

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THE CHAMPION



SAINT
ATHANASIOS

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