

# THE CHAMPION

A Monthly Publication of Saint Athanasios Greek Orthodox Church

OCTOBER 2023



## MESSAGE FROM FR. PANAGIOTIS

### That all should be saved...

In my article last month, I introduced the community to the verse from scripture which will guide and direct all of our lives and ministries within the community of St. Athanasios. It is in fact a clear statement from the Lord about what He desires i.e. "That all should be saved and come to the knowledge of truth" (1 Timothy 2:4). Over the next few months, I will be continuing to talk to the community about what exactly that means for us, explaining how we work to fulfill God's desire for us and for the world, and breaking this verse down into the four foundations for our lives as devoted Christians and members of St. Athanasios. Those four foundations are God's desire:

That ALL will be saved

1. Our Salvation i.e. the people already within His Church
2. Our Neighbor's Salvation i.e. those not yet in His Church

And come to the knowledge of TRUTH

3. Truly knowing Christ
4. Truly knowing Ourselves

Each of these foundations will require associated spiritual practices that lead to the tangible results of fulfilling God's desire for humanity. For these practices to take root, we will need to progress slowly and with intention. That can be a struggle for me, because if I am honest, I often overlook the progress that has been made in order to focus on how far is left to go. But I thank God that He is giving me this opportunity to be healed of my impatience as we strive for future.

If we are dedicated to our Lord and fulfillment of His desire that all should be saved and come to the knowledge of truth, we will see a deep and profound transformation in our lives and in the community of St. Athanasios. In next month's Parish General Assembly, I and the Parish Council will begin to share our vision for this transformation and future. Please join us on this path toward knowledge and salvation.

*Fr. Panagiotis*

**WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT  
ORTHODOX CHRISTIANITY?**

JOIN US FOR:  
**DISCOVER  
ORTHODOXY**  
Classes are Scheduled on Tuesday  
Evenings at 7:30pm Starting 10/3

**BIBLE  
STUDY**  
Classes are the 1st and 3rd  
Wednesday of the month at 11am

**Open to all people of all faiths!**

Bring this postcard to a Discover  
Orthodoxy class and receive a FREE  
copy of *The Faith* by Clark Carlton

## BAPTISMS

**Peter Michael Panos**  
(Son of Amanda and Nick Panos)

## BLESSINGS

**Nicolleta Klasen**  
(Daughter of Demetra Klasen)

## MEMORIALS

**Ann Helopoulos** (40 Day)  
**Thophanoulla Menelaou** (6 Month)  
**Charalambos Menelaou** (4 Year)  
**Evripides Menelaou** (9 Year)

# PARISH COUNCIL UPDATE



**Church Picnic & Ministry Fair:** On September 10th we had our annual picnic. We thank all parishioners that came to the picnic and fair. A free meal was provided to all parishioners and the opportunity for families to sign up for different ministries as well as for the children to play with one another. Thank you to Liuba for organizing the Ministry fair and thank you to all the Parish Council members that assisted with setting up, grilling the food and clean up.

**Aurora Greek Fest:** By the time you read this we would have just completed the Aurora Greek Fest. Thank you to all the amazing volunteers that helped at the Fest. Many were working all day for the festival to be a success. Thank you to all the parishioners that came and purchased meals and supported the fest. I am thankful to our amazing sponsors that contributed towards the festival to sponsor booths. Lastly, would like to thank my phenomenal committee; Alex Pagonis, Mike & Annette Tsimouris, Brian McAnally and Louie Lambrou. The success of the festival wouldn't be possible with my committee as well as the many volunteers! Thank you!

Please be on the look out for upcoming church events and be sure to join us!

Wishing you all a blessed month!

**Foti Georgopoulos**  
Parish Council President

## Divine Liturgy

THE GREATEST INVITATION

**Enrich your experience with the Divine Liturgy, the Greatest Invitation we will ever receive.**

5 part series designed to help us:

- Grow in the Liturgy mindset away from the "me-centered" mindset of the world.
- Understanding relationships and the importance of being in person with those in our community.
- Learn about the synergy that occurs between our work and God's Grace.
- Be reminded of God's radical love which is experienced most fully in the Divine Liturgy.

Small group facilitators will lead one 90-minute lesson per month. Choose the location and date that is most convenient for you. Please sign up for October and November using the QR Codes below:



**October**



**November**



Scan QR code for an overview of the program.

Questions? Need help with sign up? Contact Maria Lambrou:  
makokoslambrou@yahoo.com | 708-269-9991



# KNOW THE SAINTS

**In October we will be celebrating the Divine Liturgy in honor of two saints whose relics are in our community.**

## **St. Gerasimos of Kefalonia - October 20th**

Saint Gerasimos the New Ascetic of Cephalonia was born in the village of Trikkala in the Peloponnese. As a young adult, he became a monk on the island of Zakynthos. Receiving a blessing from the Elders, the monk went to Jerusalem to worship at the Life-bearing Tomb of the Savior. After visiting many holy places in Jerusalem, Mount Sinai, Antioch, Damascus, Alexandria and Egypt, he returned to Jerusalem where he became a lamp-lighter at the Sepulchre of the Lord.

He was ordained a deacon and then a priest by the Patriarch of Jerusalem, Germanus (1534-1579). Saint Gerasimos maintained the discipline of an ascetic. After a few years he was inspired to go to the island of Cephalonia, where he lived in a cave. He restored a church at Omala, and he founded a women's monastery where he lived in constant toil and vigil for thirty years. For his exalted life he was granted a miraculous gift: the ability to heal the sick and cast out unclean spirits.

At 71 years of age, the venerable Gerasimos knew that he would soon die. He gave his blessing to the nuns and peacefully fell asleep in the Lord on August 15, 1579. Two years later, his grave was opened and his holy relics were found fragrant and incorrupt with a healing power.

## **St. Demetrios of Thessaloniki - October 26**

Saint Demetrios was a Thessalonian, a most pious son of pious and noble parents, and a teacher of the Faith of Christ. When Maximian first came to Thessalonica in 290, he raised the Saint to the rank of Duke of Thessaly. But when it was discovered that the Saint was a Christian, he was arrested and kept bound in a bath-house.

While the games were under way in the city, Maximian was a spectator there. A certain friend of his, a barbarian who was a notable wrestler, Lyaeus by name, waxing haughty because of the height and strength of his body, boasted in the stadium and challenged the citizens to a contest with him. All that fought with him were defeated. Seeing this, a certain youth named Nestor, acquaintance of Demetrios', came to the Saint in the bath-house and asked his blessing to fight Lyaeus single-handed.

Receiving this blessing and sealing himself with the sign of the precious Cross, he presented himself in the stadium, and said, "O God of Demetrios, help me!" and straightway he engaged Lyaeus in combat and smote him with a mortal blow to the heart, leaving the former boaster lifeless upon the earth. Maximian was sorely grieved over this, and when he learned who was the cause of this defeat, he commanded straightway and Demetrios was pierced with lances while he was yet in the bath-house, As for Nestor, Maximian commanded that he be slain with his own sword.



# PARISH CALENDAR

All services are live streamed on our Facebook Page & YouTube Channel.

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

## Sunday, October 1st

Divine Liturgy - 2nd Sunday of Luke/Holy Protection of the Theotokos  
National Church Music Sunday  
Coffee Hour hosted by Choir

## Tuesday, October 3rd

7:30 pm Discover Orthodoxy

## Wednesday, October 4th

11am Bible Study

## Thursday, Oct 5th

6:30 pm GOYA meeting

## Saturday, Oct 7th

6pm Family BINGO Night

## Sunday, October 8th

Divine Liturgy - 3rd Sunday of Luke  
Coffee Hour hosted by JOY & Stewardship Committee

## Friday, Oct 13th

6pm JOY Meeting

## Sunday, October 15th

Divine Liturgy - Sunday of the 7th Ecumenical Council  
11:30 am JrGOYA Fall Garden Cleanup  
Coffee Hour hosted by Hountalas Family and McHaley Family

## Monday, October 16th

7pm Lionheart Series

## Tuesday, October 17th

6:30pm Philoptochos General Meeting  
7:30 pm Discover Orthodoxy

## Wednesday, October 18th

Divine Liturgy - St Luke the Apostle and Evangelist  
11am Bible Study

## Friday, October 20th

Divine Liturgy - St Gerasimos of Kephalaria  
GOYA Retreat

## Sunday, October 22nd

Divine Liturgy - 6th Sunday of Luke  
Coffee Hour hosted in honor of Anna Baroukas

## Wednesday, October 25th

Vespers - St Demetrios  
St Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church  
893 Church Rd., Elmhurst, IL 60126

## Thursday, October 26th

Divine Liturgy - St Demetrios the Great Martyr  
7 pm JrGOYA Fireside with Father

## Sunday, October 29th

Divine Liturgy - 7th Sunday of Luke  
Coffee hour hosted in memory of Demetrios and Despoina Papadimitriou and in memory of Anastasios Vogiatzis

## COFFEE HOUR

Coffee-hour host(s) are needed! Please help us promote fellowship, community, and friendship following the Divine Liturgy by hosting Coffee-hour. There are several open dates. Please call the church office to sign-up today!

We are looking to expand our Coffee Hour Ministry. If you are interested in joining, please reach out to the office.



## FOOD PANTRY



Thank you for the continued support with both donation of food and time. This month, we are focusing on back to school. See below, for monthly request. When dropping off, please remember to ask for a weight and submit to the church office or Christina Valavanidis. We are grateful for your support! (No Expired Food or partially opened packaged foods. Please do not bring toys or pantry items such as flour, sugar, spices, etc.) This month's request is:

### Juice Box and Crackers

Please contact Christina Valavanidis at [christina.valavanidis@gmail.com](mailto:christina.valavanidis@gmail.com) with any questions.

# PHILOPTOCHOS

Philoptochos welcomed more than 30 women to our Mezze and Membership kickoff event on Sept. 16. We enjoyed chicken kebabs, dolmades, tzaziki and whipped feta spreads, spanakopita and tyropita, and baklava sundaes! Thank you to Samantha Dulles and Tori Kappas for organizing a lovely afternoon.

We met with GOYA on Sept. 18 to inventory and pack up donations for Operation Classroom. We collected more than 300 personal hygiene products, which will be delivered to Bartlett High School so they can establish a care closet for students. Thank you to everyone who donated, and to Leah Fanning and Margarita Altidis for organizing the donation drive.

The board voted at its September meeting to donate \$1000 for the Maui Greek Orthodox Mission to aid in wildfire relief. (Some of you may have witnessed the myrrh streaming icon from Hawaii that was here several years ago.)

Family Bingo is almost here! We hope you'll join us on Saturday, Oct. 7 for a night of fun and games. If you are available to help the night of with setup/cleanup or serving food, please contact Leah Fanning or me.

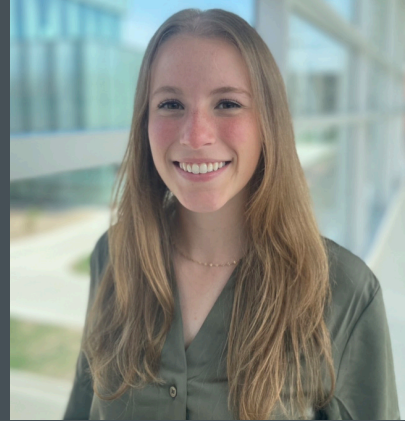
Our first general meeting of the year is set for Tuesday, Oct. 17 at 6:30. We are looking for someone to host. If you are willing, please contact Sue Manos.

Our next Feed the Hungry date is Tuesday, Nov. 7. Meal assembly will be at church Monday, Nov. 6 and distribution will be Tuesday morning at Annunciation Cathedral. Please contact Sue Manos if you can help with planning.



# COLLEGE MINISTRY

During the next few months, the Saint Athanasios College Ministry is glad to introduce to the Parish our College Students who are expected to graduate in May of 2024, and to highlight their profiles. This profile is for Marina Jacobson



## Marina Jacobson

Marina Jacobson is attending the Iowa State University of Science and Technology, with her major in Aerospace Engineering. Her favorite classes so far have been "Astronomy", "Flight Training" and "Aerodynamics". The Orthodox Church she attends while at College, is the "Holy Transfiguration" OCA church. She expects to graduate in May of 2024 and her short-term plan after graduation is to find a job as Design Engineer, focusing on mechanical and structural design of aircrafts. In the future, she would like to continue working in the same area and performing research in aircraft design and testing. She would also like to travel to lots of places and experience different cultures.

Marina has been playing frisbee for 10 years and is part of the "Ultimate Frisbee" Team at her College, where she serves as Vice President and as one of the three Team Leads. She also enjoys watching the Chicago Bulls games with her brothers. Marina enjoys as well being a member of the "Women in Science and Engineering" club at Iowa State and networking with other women in STEM majors. Her favorite season is Spring. She likes sushi, calamari, fries and baklava and her favorite College restaurant is "Wasabi". What she likes most about the Saint Athanasios Parish is its nice and engaging community, the fact that people remember who she is and that she is not forgotten.

# STEWARDSHIP

## Stewardship Teachable Moments to our Children

Young Steffen asked his mother as the offering basket approached "Why do you always give me a dollar to put in the basket? Why not a ten-dollar bill? Or, is the church already rich??" The sincere and innocent questions asked by Steffen prompted his mom to lean over and begin to explain what it means to give our Treasures to the church. More specifically, she was able to explain that giving an offering (big or small) is an act of worship to God. This is a good example of a teachable moment for a child to learn about Stewardship.

Children are impressionable and there are so many teachable moments like the one above where parents, church educators, the priest and other parish adults can teach children the importance of thanking Christ for what He has given us. The St. Athanasios Sunday School curriculum includes learning objectives and discussions about how we can give back to Christ. Also stressed to students at all levels is the importance of prayer, almsgiving and fasting which are cornerstones of Orthodox Christian life.

Children can model the lives of the saints who devoted their lives to Christ and the faith. "It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35), "God loves a cheerful giver." (2 Corinthians 9:7), "God shall supply all you need." (Philippians 4:19) may be familiar quotes from the Bible. There are stories behind these quotes and if we learn them and share them with our children, they will be able to see parallels in their Orthodox life that demonstrate acts of Stewardship.

Our St. Athanasios Stewardship program stresses the three entities of stewardship: Giving of Time, Talent and Treasures. Parents can ask themselves the following:

- Are we demonstrating by example what the acts of Stewardship are? Our children watch their parents for direction.
- Have we encouraged participation in the various ministries of the church so they can participate and learn? (Stuffing backpacks for needy children and making sandwiches for the Hungry are two recent examples that gave our children a chance to be a true steward.)
- Do your older children know the impact that giving of Time, Talent and Treasures has on a church and the surrounding community it serves? Discussions about almsgiving and Christ's examples of giving are perfect discussion topics for the drive home from church or at the dinner table.

The teachable moments in our Orthodox life are there if we stay alert, embrace them and understand how to explain them to our children. If we all commit to capturing these opportunities when our children are young, the joy and beautiful gifts of Stewardship will be many.

In His Service,

**Elli Koulos and Pete Nassos**



# JOY

## OCTOBER MEETING

### COME LEARN ABOUT THE JACK-O-LANTERN

Friday October 13, 2023

6:00-7:30 pm

Saint Athanasios

Questions, please reach out to Leah Fanning at 630-664-3220 or Amanda McKinney at 630-533-2839

Email:

[joy@saintathanasios.com](mailto:joy@saintathanasios.com)

Mark your calendars now for our  
November meeting, Friday the 17th.



## BOOK STORE

The Fall season is a great time to visit our Bookstore after Sunday Liturgy to support the mission of our church as well as your spiritual growth. Partaking in the browsing experience of our icons, books, sacred music CDs, and gift items can be an inspiring teaching and engaging experience, much different than shopping online on one's own using a computer or mobile device. Our Bookstore's presence in our Church in St. Matthew Hall makes everyone feel connected to God and to our fellow parishioners. Stop in soon!

# MEN'S GROUP

Men's group consists 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. The "3-legged stool" incorporates social, philanthropic and educational events.

On August 31st the Men's group prepared and served meals for 260 residents of the Hesed House, the second largest homeless shelter in Illinois and located in Aurora. This is truly a humbling experience and is an example of the mission of our Orthodox faith and parish community outreach. This ministry is open to all parishioners to participate. We also hosted a welcoming BBQ on Sept. 12th to celebrate the start of the ecclesiastical year and shared our plans with the 35 men in attendance for 2023-24.

## Our Upcoming Events:

### Lionheart Series

Fr Panagiotis will be leading a 4-part series on what true Christian manhood looks like. Lessons will include men as servant-leaders, men in relationships, overcoming obstacles that stand in the way of authentic manhood, and the pursuit of God in Community. Series held on Mondays; 10/16, 12/18, 2/5 and 4/15.

### Blood Drive

The Men's Group will sponsor a blood drive on Saturday, Nov. 4, 9:00am-1:00pm - open to the entire community and public. Every donor will save up to 3 lives and we do this event semi-annually.

### Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology Fundraising Event

The Metropolis and Alumni Association of HCHC are hosting a premier fundraising dinner on November 9th to provide scholarships for students attending the Hellenic College/Holy Cross School of Theology. This is a great opportunity to support seminarians and future leaders of the Orthodox Church.

### Hesed House Dinners

Our next Hesed House dinner preparation and serving will be Thursday, November 30. Dates for 2024 are 2/29, 5/30, 8/29 and 10/23.

### NFL Playoff Watch Party

This event kicks off the calendar year and is planned for Saturday, January 20th.

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 you would like to receive future information via separate e-mail on these events or take on a leadership role, please contact Spiro Hountalas (naperspike@aol.com), Peter Metrou (pnmawyer@aol.com) or Nick Dagiantis (ndagiantis@gmail.com).



## Saturday November

# 4

8:30am - 1:00pm

Helpful tip:  
Make sure to eat a healthy  
meal and drink plenty of  
water before donating.



## SAINT ATHANASIOS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH BLOOD DRIVE

Sponsored by the Men's Group

Located in St. Matthew Hall  
at 1855 E 5th Ave, Aurora

Appointments appreciated; walk-ins welcome!

To schedule, go to [www.versiti.org/IL](http://www.versiti.org/IL), load the Versiti Donor app, call (800) 7TO-GIVE, or scan the QR code below.

Give blood, get noodles! Receive a coupon for a buy one, get one entrée from Noodles & Company, while supplies last. -PLUS- All attempting donors will be entered for a chance to win 1 of 3 DIY project prizes valued at \$2500.\*

\*NO PURCH. NEC. M, OH, IL, IN, and WI residents only; 18+. Ends 11/16/23. One drawing; three (3) winners. Enter by blood donation or online. See Official Rules and online entry form at [versiti.org/DIY](http://versiti.org/DIY). Sponsor: Versiti, Inc., 838 N. 19th St., Milwaukee, WI 53233.



# LIONHEART SESSIONS

Fr. Panagiotis will be leading a 4 part series on what true Christian manhood looks like. Lessons will include men as servant-leaders, men in relationships, overcoming obstacles that stand in the way of authentic manhood, and the pursuit of God in Community. More details to follow.

Save These Dates:

- Monday, October 16, 2023
- Monday, December 18, 2023
- Monday, February 5, 2024
- Monday, April 15, 2024



**SIGN UP**

Please contact Nick Dagiantis at [ndagiantis@gmail.com](mailto:ndagiantis@gmail.com) with any questions.



# FAMILY BINGO NIGHT

OCTOBER 7, 2023 6:00 PM  
SAINT ATHANASIOS CHUCH

Adults - \$15  
Kids 12 and under - \$10

Admission includes dinner, one BINGO card, and tons of fun.

Additional cards and concessions will be available for purchase that night.

50/50 raffle and prizes for ALL Bingo winners

Proceeds will go to Radical Love serving needy children, seniors and immigrants in the Fox Valley area: <http://theradicallove.org>.



**SIGN UP**

**QUESTIONS, PLEASE REACH OUT  
TO LEAH FANNING AT  
[LEAH\\_FANNING@YAHOO.COM](mailto:LEAH_FANNING@YAHOO.COM)**







METROPOLIS  
OF CHICAGO

# Fundraiser

HELLENIC COLLEGE/HOLY  
CROSS GREEK ORTHODOX  
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

**NOV 9**

**EMPRESS BANQUET HALL**

ADDISON, IL

6 TO 9 PM

## Join Us to Help Raise Funds to Educate the Future Leaders of the Orthodox Church

Hellenic College is that rare undergraduate with a higher purpose: to foster the moral and spiritual as well as intellectual development of every student.

Holy Cross is a graduate school of theology that educates and forms Orthodox Christian men and women for service to the Church and society. Whether preparing for the holy priesthood or for lay vocations in which they can put their faith into action, HCHC students make up a vibrant community engaged in pursuing the eternal truths of Christ's message of salvation for all the world.

**TICKETS** \$100 (PERSON) | \$1,000 (TABLE)

**KEYNOTE  
SPEAKER**



**MIKE  
EMANUEL**

Chief Washington  
Correspondent  
FOX News Channel



RSVP BY NOV 2  
**SCAN QR CODE**  
OR CALL 630.851.6106

Hosted by  
ST. ATHANASIOS MEN'S GROUP &  
THE HCHC ALUMNI ASSOCIATION



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Gyros | Pastichio | Mousaka

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### Sugar Grove Facility

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## 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 **Papou's Corner** on our menu for all your favorite Greek flavors.

# CityGate GRILLE

Reservations 630.718.1010  
[www.citygategrille.com](http://www.citygategrille.com)



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OCTOBER 2023



Duccio di Buoninsegna - The Complete Works

THAT ALL  
SHOULD BE  
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**SAINT  
ATHANASIOS**

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