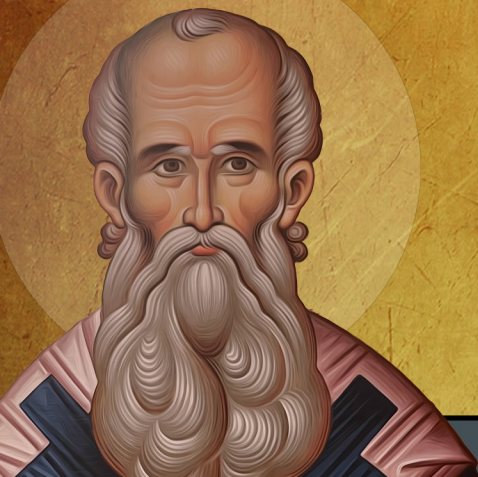




THE CHAMPION

A Monthly Publication of Saint Athanasios Greek Orthodox Church

OCTOBER 2025



MESSAGE FROM FR. PANAGIOTIS

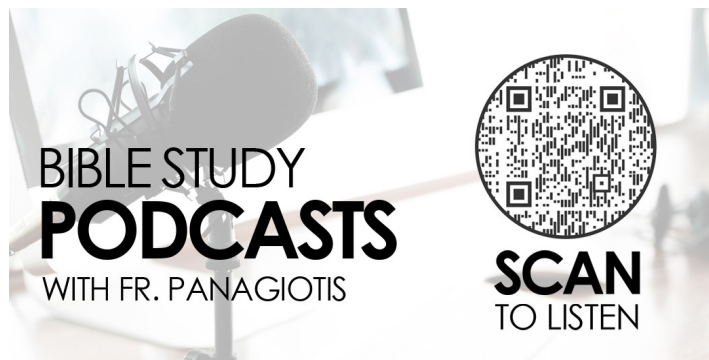
This October, our St. Athanasios parish family has the joy of celebrating a remarkable milestone—our 60th anniversary. For six decades, by the grace of God, our community has been rooted in the Orthodox Christian faith, striving to live the Gospel of Christ.

What began as a small gathering of faithful immigrants and families has grown into a vibrant parish, a spiritual home for hundreds, and a place where generations have been baptized, married, and buried in the hope of the Resurrection. Our story is not only about the past, but about the countless ways God has blessed us and continues to call us forward.

Over the years, St. Athanasios has stood as a beacon of faith, fellowship, and service. We have gathered for Divine Liturgy and the sacraments, taught our children in Sunday School and Greek School, welcomed neighbors through festivals and outreach, and supported one another through both joys and trials. Each ministry, each act of service, each prayer offered has been part of the living witness that defines who we are as a parish family.

As we celebrate this 60th anniversary, we do so not only with gratitude but with renewed commitment to our mission: "That all should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4). Our founders built this parish with faith and sacrifice. Today, we honor their legacy by deepening our love for Christ and His Church and by passing on that same treasure to our children and grandchildren.

We invite you to join us in prayer, fellowship, and thanksgiving on October 19th as we mark this historic occasion. Together, let us remember those who came before us, rejoice in the blessings of today, and look forward with hope to the next sixty years of ministry, growth, and witness.



BAPTISMS

Kassiani Marroquin

Daughter of McKayla & Gerardo Marroquin

Anastasia Sophia Procopos

Daughter of Kellie & Bobby Procopos

Elsie Colette Phillips

Daughter of Andrea & Ryan Phillips

Vivian Bonnet

Daughter of Phoebe & Tyler Bonnet

Amalia Aguilera

Daughter of Nicole & Gorge Aguilera

WEDDINGS

Collin Uveges & Athena Gall

FUNERALS

Dempsey Taylor

MEMORIALS

Naguib Mekhe (40 days)

Nancy Gladis (5 Years)

Spiros Mavrogiannis (5 Years)

PARISH COUNCIL

The parish council will finalize the 2026 Budget this month and present it at the parish assembly on Nov. 16. We invite you to vote and discuss parish matters. Committees are progressing on projects, and Father Panagiotis, Anna Caniglia, Tracey Collins, and I will attend the Metropolis Clergy Laity Assembly on Nov. 5-7.

Ministries - Parish ministries have started for the New Ecclesiastical Year. Ministry spotlight presentations, which ran through early this month, highlighted their impact. View them via email if missed. Thank you to all presenters for sharing their dedication.

Capital Campaign - Phase two of the capital campaign continues. Thank you to those who pledged and to chairmen Mike Tsimouris and Phil Nassos. The landscape project is complete, and we need continued support for upcoming projects.

Stewardship - Thank you for your 2025 stewardship contributions. If you haven't pledged, please do so to meet our financial goals. Kudos to Pete Nassos, Elli Koulos, and Jim Kundl for their updates and efforts toward stewardship independence.

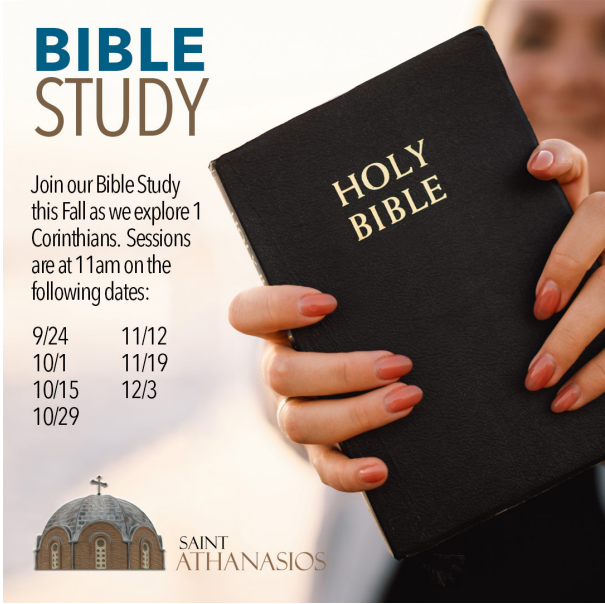
60th Anniversary Banquet - Join us on Oct. 19 at 5 PM at Stonebridge Country Club to celebrate St. Athanasios' 60th anniversary with music, food, dancing, and drinks. Secure tickets online or via the office.

Aurora Greek Fest - Last month's festival was a success. Thank you to Tracey Collins, Frank Demas, volunteers, donors, and sponsors for their hard work and support in making it a fun, community-building event.

Church New Year Picnic - The Sept. 7 picnic was a great success. Thank you to Liuba Kichakov, Nick Dagiantis, and volunteers for organizing and preparing food for this enjoyable fellowship event.

Wishing everyone a blessed New Ecclesiastical Year!

Brian McAnally
Parish Council President

A promotional graphic for Bible Study. It features a woman's hands holding a black Bible with 'HOLY BIBLE' written in gold. The background is a soft-focus image of a person. Text on the left reads 'BIBLE STUDY' in large blue and brown letters. Below that, it says 'Join our Bible Study this Fall as we explore 1 Corinthians. Sessions are at 11am on the following dates:'. A list of dates follows: 9/24, 10/1, 10/15, 10/29, 11/12, 11/19, 12/3. At the bottom left is a small icon of a church dome, and at the bottom right is the text 'SAINT ATHANASIOS'.

SPIRITUAL GROWTH



WALKING WITH THE SAINTS

Join us this Fall for Soul Sisters & Men's Group, gathering to be inspired by the lives of the saints. Each session will include prayer, discussion, and fellowship as we discover how these holy men and women can guide our own walk with Christ. Meetings: 7:00pm - 8:30pm in St. Matthew Hall.

SOUL SISTERS

10/9 (Saint Maria of Paris)
11/13
12/11
1/8 - Combined w/ Men's Group
2/12

SCAN TO
REGISTER



MEN'S GROUP

10/2
11/6
12/4
1/8 - Combined w/ Soul Sisters
2/5

SCAN TO
REGISTER





1965-2025

HONORING
THE PAST

CELEBRATING
THE PRESENT

EMBRACING
THE FUTURE



St. Athanasios Greek Orthodox Church 60th Anniversary Dinner

*Join us for an Evening Celebrating Yesterday,
Today & Tomorrow!*

**Sunday, October 19, 2025
5:00 PM**

Stonebridge Country Club

2705 Stonebridge Blvd, Aurora, IL 60502

Pack your passport of cherished moments, bring your good cheer, and join us for this meaningful celebration of six decades of community, love, and Orthodox faith! Together, we will honor our founders, celebrate our shared journey, and look forward to the future of our vibrant church family!

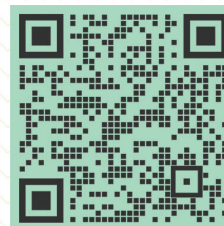
Tickets

Adults: \$100

Children (12 & Under): \$25

Please note: Tickets are limited — **Reserve Early!**

Use the QR code to purchase your tickets online or to make a donation. You can also make your reservation at 630-851-6106.



www.saintathanasios.com

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)

Wednesday, October 1

11am Bible Study

Thursday, October 2

7 pm Small Groups (Men)

Sunday, October 5

Divine Liturgy - 2nd Sunday of Luke

Monday, October 6

6:30pm JrGOYA Night

Thursday, Oct 9

11am Agape Meeting

6:30 pm GOYA Night

7pm Small Groups (Soul Sisters)

Friday, October 10

6pm JOY Night

Sunday, October 12

Divine Liturgy - Sunday of the 7th Ecumenical Council

11:30 am Philoptochos General Meeting

Tuesday, October 14

7pm Discover Orthodoxy

Wednesday, October 15

11am Bible Study

Saturday, October 18

Divine Liturgy - St Luke the Apostle

9:30 am GOYA Pumpkin Patch Outing

Sunday, October 19

Divine Liturgy - 3rd Sunday of Luke

5pm 60th Anniversary Banquet at

Stonebridge Country Club

Monday, October 20

Divine Liturgy - St Gerasimos of Kephalaria

Saturday, October 25

Pilgrimage to Assumption GOC in Homer Glen

7pm Vespers - St Demetrios

St Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church

893 Church Rd, Elmhurst, IL 60126

Sunday, October 26

Divine Liturgy - 6th Sunday of Luke/St Demetrios

the Great

11:30am Monthly Choir Rehearsal

Tuesday, October 28

7pm Discover Orthodoxy

Wednesday, October 29

11am Bible Study

4pm Blood Drive

DISCOVER ORTHODOXY

Classes start at 7pm on the
following dates:

9/23 12/9

10/14 12/23

10/28 1/13

11/11 1/20

11/25 2/10

COFFEE HOUR

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

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 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. We are so grateful for your kindness & support.
2024 total - 691lbs of Food!

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:

Spices, Seasoning Packets, Herbs and Bouillon Cubes

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

PHILOPTOCHOS

We had a great turnout for our Mezze & Membership kickoff event! We are excited to partner with Mutual Ground in Aurora this year, and plan to invite someone to speak about how we can help the organization sometime later this fall. We are also exploring opportunities for hands-on service at the Aurora Interfaith Food Pantry, as well as Hesed House.

We have launched our membership drive for 2025-26. You can pay your dues by seeing a board member after liturgy in St. Matthew Hall or by Zelle using our email, philoptochos@saintathanasios.com.

Thank you for your generous support of Operation Classroom. We donated 53 games to OC Allen Elementary School. We are exploring other ways to help local schools throughout the year.

Our next general meeting will be after liturgy on Sunday, Oct. 12th. Looking ahead, we will be hosting coffee hour for Philoptochos Sunday on Nov. 9th. Look for more information and how to sign up in the next couple of weeks.

Sue Manos
Philoptochos President

**SCAN TO TAKE THE
PHILOPTOCHOS
INTEREST SURVEY**



Icon Adornment

**Workshops to learn the process
of adorning the icons throughout
Lent, including Holy Week and
the Kouvouklion on Holy Friday.**

**9/12 3:30 pm
10/18 11am
12/23 1pm**

**Contact Sherry at
marina.h14grk@gmail.com**



STEWARDSHIP

What is Stewardship ...

In the past couple months, our Champion articles have focused on the “numbers” behind Stewardship. This month we would like to return to the Spiritual side of Stewardship by revisiting the definitions of Stewardship and Generosity:

Stewardship is our grateful and loving response to God's love, grace and gifts to us. It is our personal commitment to God and His Church to ensure its vitality and continuous growth by joyfully and sacrificially offering of our talents, time and treasures that we have received from Him. Stewardship puts our faith in action and demonstrates our trust in God.

Generosity reflects the gratitude we have to God for the gifts He has given us. It is not just about money; it is the generosity of volunteerism, dedicating time and talents, as well.

Both of these definitions talk about that we should be grateful for the gifts that God has bestowed upon us and that we should offer Him our Stewardship of Time, Talents, and Treasures in return.

As we have said many times before, Stewardship is the lifeblood of our Parish, ensuring that our ministries thrive, our mission expands, and our Church remains a source of faith and community.

We would like to leave you with this final thought from St. Paisios the Athonite: Thank God for everything you are, everything you have and everything you achieve.

By thanking God, you will realize that these are not your achievements, but His gifts and, thus, you will feel humble.

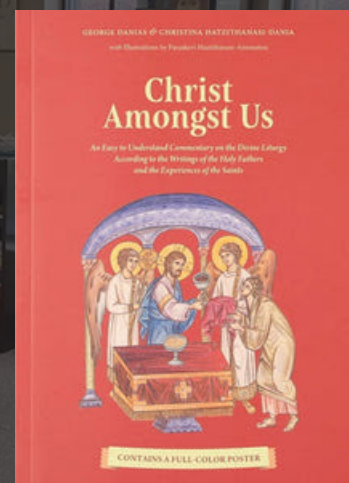
Thank you for your continued giving of your Time, Talents, and Treasures ... they are making a difference in our Community and the Communities that we reside in.

In His Service,
The St. Athanasios Stewardship Committee
Pete Nassos, Elli Koulos, & Jim Kundl



BOOK STORE

Christ Amongst Us: An Easy to Understand Commentary on the Divine Liturgy, by George Danias, Christian Hatzithanasi-Dania will help adults and children understand the wonders of the Divine Liturgy. The authors compiled this resource, based on stories and illustrations from the Holy Monastery of Paracletos, that sets a foundations for spiritual growth. Purchase this book to place the Divine Liturgy into the center of your life, and Father Panagiotis will refer to passages in this book throughout the ecclesiastical year.



MEN'S GROUP

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

We had a great turnout at our annual welcome back for dinner on Thursday, September 11th at church. Tasty food and good discussions!

Lives of the Saints

Our first of five small group sessions will take place on Thursday, October 2. Come join us as we focus on different saints across the centuries, uncovering their stories, struggles, and enduring impact on the Church and world.

St. Athanasios 60th Anniversary Dinner

Please join us as we celebrate our church's anniversary on Sunday, October 19 at Stonebridge Country Club. Live music and dancing, appetizers, dinner and dessert will make a memorable night!

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" If anyone is interested in learning more about the Men's Group, please contact Spiro Hountalas (naperspike@aol.com), Peter Metrou (pnmtrou@gmail.com), Bill Collins (bcto@sboglobal.net) or Nick Dagiantis (ndagiantis@gmail.com).



HESED HOUSE

HESED HOUSE DINNER SERVICE WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 3

Cooking @ 3:00 PM

Dinner @ 7:00 PM

**Volunteers Needed to
Cook and Serve!**



Hesed House ministry will prep, cook, transport and serve dinner to Hesed House guests on Wednesday, December 3rd, 2025 starting at 3pm at St Athanasios. Hesed dinner to be served at 7pm. In August approximately 200 Hesed guests were served dinner by St Athanasios volunteers. If interested contact Bill Collins at bcto@sboglobal.net

DONATE BLOOD

**Wednesday
October**

29

4:00 PM - 8:00 PM



SAINT ATHANASIOS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH BLOOD DRIVE

sponsored by the Men's Group

St. Matthew Hall
1855 E FIFTH AVE
AURORA, IL 60504

GOVERNMENT PHOTO ID REQUIRED

APPOINTMENTS PREFERRED; walk-ins welcome!
To schedule, go to www.versiti.org/IL, load the Versiti Donor app,

CALL 800-7TO-GIVE, or Scan QR Code

**EVERY 2 SECONDS
IN THE U.S. SOMEONE NEEDS
BLOOD**

**EVERY DONATION
SAVES UP TO 3 LIVES!**





JOY

OCT. 10, 2025 | 6:00 - 7:30 PM

JOY Meeting— At Church. RSVP in the Band App.

NOV. 14, 2025 | 6:00 - 7:30 PM

JOY Meeting— At Church. RSVP in the Band App.

JR GOYA

OCT. 6, 2025 | 6:30 - 8 PM

Join us for Board Game Night at Bardwell Residences in Aurora! RSVP & details in the Band App.

NOV. 3, 2025 | 6:30 - 8 PM

Service Night

GOYA

OCT. 9, 2025 | 6:30 - 8 PM

GOYA Meeting — At Church. RSVP in the Band App.

NOV. 25, 2025 | 5:00 - 7:30 PM

GOYA Thanksgiving Meal & Akathist of Thanksgiving

JOINT JR GOYA AND GOYA

OCT. 18, 2025 | 10:00 AM - 12 PM

Pumpkin Patch outing from 10am to 12pm.

NOV. 17, 2025 | 6:00 - 9 PM

Shopping Event

PILGRIMAGE TO ASSUMPTION GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

Pilgrimage to Assumption Greek Orthodox Church in Homer Glen, IL to venerate two of the icons on the church's iconostasio that streamed myrrh - St. John the Baptist in 2015 and Christ in 2017. There will be a short Paraklesis service, followed by Fr. Sotirios "Sam" Dimitriou speaking about the icons and the ensuing miracles that have manifested.

Pilgrimage schedule details:

09:15 Meet at St. Athanasios

09:30 Depart for Homer Glen

10:00 Arrive at Assumption

10:15 Paraklesis service (mostly in Greek)

11:00 Fr. Sam to speak about icons and miracles, along with Q&A (mostly in English)

12:30 Depart for return back home

Contact Spiro J. Deligiannis (630-677-5014) if interested in participating and/or if you have any questions.



AGAPE MINISTRY

We had a great time at the September kick-off Agape meeting. We went over the calendar for the year, brainstormed new ideas for speakers and field trips, and enjoyed a delicious lunch. The afternoon ended with BINGO and a hilarious game of "What's in the Box?!" Our next meeting is October 9th at 11am, in St Matthew Hall. We will be hearing from Hadi Finerty, Senior Manager, Education & Outreach at Alzheimer's Association. Lunch will be provided!

Contact Samantha Dulles at 312.504.4448 or agape@saintathanasios.com.



DID YOU KNOW...?

I am with you always, even to the end of the age.
(Mt.28:20). These are the words Christ spoke to his disciples, while He was still with them, here on earth. The Lord's promise becomes a reality at each Divine Liturgy. At the celebration of every Divine Liturgy, Christ comes to our world, is born in a horse's stable, preaches the Good News of the Kingdom, and performs miracles. He is then betrayed, scorned, sacrificed, and finally resurrected. So what is the Divine Liturgy? It is Christ amongst us! And what happens if we are lazy about attending Church? We lose the opportunity that Christ provides for us: to meet and hear him, and to experience His presence in our lives. We miss the opportunity to live within the light of Resurrection, just like His All Holy Mother, the myrrh-bearers and His eleven Disciples. *page 11*
"Christ Amongst Us" by George Danias & Christina Hatzithanasi-Dania with Iconography by Paraskevi Hatzithanasi-Anthonatou



dahliawb.com

630.596.6826

**Weddings
Baptisms
Christmas
Easter**





“When I experience a hard time, I turn everything over to the Hymns to the Holy Theotokos which provide me great comfort and take over! The Chants to Παναγία (Panagia) fill your brain instead of focusing on the problem, regret or rejection. Παναγία is my comfort!”

- Stephanie Altidis

by Penny Panayiota Deligiannis

In 1997, Stephanie Altidis' family moved to Naperville for its good schools and housing. “In Lombard, we were connected to a welcoming Greek Orthodox parish. The shorter commute to Aurora’s Saint Athanasios Greek Orthodox Church became a matter of survival—a family priority, our little kids Margarita, Chris and Peter attended its excellent Greek School and Sunday School forming friendships via classes,” reflects Stephanie. **“My Greek Orthodox Faith has to be centered around the Church!** I was meeting a nice mix of parishioners and became more involved. **I love Greek School!** Pete Kandalepas invited me to serve on its Board (2001-2009). We visited Saint Athanasios five-six times every week. Apollo Dance Troupe. GOYA. Organizing Dances. **I wanted our children to know God, who they were and where they came from! To understand our Church is there for them! To figure it out as Greek Orthodox children. Experiencing their Hellenic roots in their grandparents’ villages while visiting where their Dad (+Paris) came from and where I come from in Greece! Loving their extended families (relatives)! Helen Halkias is my cousin. Learning the Greek language, Culture, Religion, how to behave, being respectful and giving back to others!** Today, my adult children understand where they came from! **Giving my children to God, I pray for them letting them live their journey—following their own paths. Prayers and guidance are what I can give them now.** As children grow and mature, you let them go a little bit at a time. At the beginning, lots of control is needed. As they departed for college, you let them go!”

Stephanie joined the Saint Athanasios’ Ladies Philoptochos Society (2009) serving as Treasurer, then President (2011-2015) and Board (2015-present). **“I loved the people and Boards I served with and everyone I met.** While President, organizing the parish Feast Day receptions (Vespers) became seamless! **Everybody wanted to help asking what I needed. I would explain what we needed. They gave us things I didn’t even know we needed...coming to us without asking,”** remembers Stephanie. “I enjoyed attending the Metropolis of Chicago events and National Ladies Philoptochos Conference in Arizona. **Our parish Chapter’s fundraising made a difference to major national initiatives in New York: The Philoptochos House and Saint Nicholas Greek Orthodox Shrine!”**

“During a really bad time in my life, a cousin advised **‘Listen to the Small Paraklesis Supplication to the Holy Theotokos (Three Parts)’** I would listen to the First Part which helped me go to sleep. During mornings, I listened to the Second-Third Parts which gave me strength. Like a comforting song seeping into your brain, I’d routinely listen to it a few times each day as certain parts would come back to me. **You let Παναγία come in to comfort you!,”** shares Stephanie. **“In life, you can’t avoid experiencing suffering—you must go through your pain!** You might turn to alcohol, food, gambling, promiscuity leading/tempting you in unhealthy directions. **When you are facing a problem, it’s your choice which way you are going to go. The way you decide to handle it.** I live with my decisions. **How much do you believe in God? You don’t have control. God has control! I can only control myself, what I do. Answers are given! Prayers answered!”**



The Altidis Family: Margarita, Stephanie, Peter, Chris

“I visited Tinos, Greece (Summers—2019, 2024) to thank Παναγία and receive Her blessing! I bought a huge λαμπάδα (lambátha/candle) to express my gratitude to Her. My youngest secured his job. My children are good and have jobs. Our family’s daily provisions lined up to pay for college tuitions. Daily, I visited the Church talking to Παναγία. Pilgrims travel to Tinos expressing their needs to Panagia asking for Her intercession! You felt you were in a hospital. Seeking freedom from whatever inwardly ailed each person. You could feel everyone’s pain and suffering. A unique experience!”

“I experience much joy during Great Lent and the fifteen-day Fast for Panagia attending the Hairetismo Service of the Akathist Hymn. Saint Athanasios has something for everyone. You have to decide and take from the Church what you need, want and will give. Don’t remain isolated! Put yourself out there! Get involved! Become a part of this community! I am who I am. It’s been about my Faith. People have done things to me. Vengeance comes from God. Look what God does. You can be mean...angry. Instead, turn to Him! Wait! Be patient! Let things happen! In ways you can’t believe, things unfold. Forgive! Let go! It’s a process you learn. You decide how you want to be! I don’t like to live in misery, drama, turmoil. I like peace. I’m truly alright!”



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.

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OCTOBER 2025

1965-2025



60TH
ANNIVERSARY
CELEBRATION!

A Monthly Publication of Saint Athanasios Greek Orthodox Church

THE CHAMPION



SAINT
ATHANASIOS

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