

# THE CHAMPION

A Monthly Publication of Saint Athanasios Greek Orthodox Church

APRIL 2023



## MESSAGE FROM FR. PANAGIOTIS

### Journey to Pascha

We regularly use the imagery of Lent as a journey that brings us to Pascha and the Resurrection of Christ. Prayer, fasting, and almsgiving are the vehicles that carry us along the Lenten path. By purifying ourselves through these ascetic practices, we draw closer to Christ, and thereby join Him on His journey from Galilee to Jerusalem, from Jerusalem to the Cross, from the Cross to the Tomb, and from the Tomb to Resurrection. The hymns of Holy Week clearly illustrate this point.

He was saying to His Apostles on the way, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man shall be delivered up, as it is written of Him." Come therefore, and let us accompany Him, with purified minds, and let us be crucified with Him... (Palm Sunday Evening)

This makes our experience of Holy Week more than a simple remembrance of events long past. Holy Week and Pascha are events that we also experience and participate in. We accompany Christ and share in all His experiences, even Crucifixion. The ascetic practices of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving are the ways in which we symbolically are crucified with Christ. Our voluntary crucifixion and sharing in the Holy Week experiences of Christ are essential to our salvation. As St. Paul says in his Epistle to the Romans, "If we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him." So the journey of Holy Week is also about our path to the Cross and Resurrection.

There is no better path to the Cross than through the services of Holy Week. There we hear about Christ's journey: His actions, His prayers, His trials, and we are invited, as indicated in the hymn above, to join Him. The demands of our lives and responsibilities can make it a difficult to prayerfully attend all the services of Holy Week. However, if we crave to rise with Christ, then we must also die with Him. If we desire to be crucified with Him, we must walk alongside Him to the Cross. I challenge us to set aside our external duties and obligations for a week so that we can truly celebrate the Resurrection of Christ and the life we now share with Him.

Καλό Πάσχα! Blessed Pascha

Καλή Ανάσταση! Blessed Resurrection!

*Fr. Panagiotis*

## MEMORIALS

Tazo Vogiatzis (6 Month)

## BAPTISMS

Hannah Hunter  
(daughter of Paul and  
Tiffany Hunter)

## WEDDINGS

Bohland/Tapas (April 29)

# PARISH COUNCIL UPDATE

**Holy Week Services:** As we prepare for Holy Week and the Resurrection of our Lord, please join us for the beautiful services during Holy Week. We also ask that you please follow the guidance of the Parish Council members. As we do every year for Holy Week especially on the days that we have an overflow, once the Church is at full capacity, we will then guide you to the St. Matthew Hall.

**Upcoming Events:** We thank all ministries that have participated in the Wednesday dinner lectures, and all the individuals that provided their Time & Talent to present for us. We will have our annual Loukoumathes Sale on Palm Sunday, Our Community Fellowship will meet on April 7th to fold Palm Crosses and have a pot lock. Our Sunday School Lenten Retreat will take place on April 8th. For children K – 5th grade. Please sign up your children today! Our JOY group will be having a Bowling event on Wednesday, April 19th at Bowlero in Naperville. Please be on the look out for all these events, and please join us!

**Aurora Greek Fest:** Mark your calendar as our Aurora Greek Fest will take place May 19th – 21st. Please be on the look out for Sponsorship information, our Donation list and Gyro Drive. For a successful festival, we also need volunteers. If you have never helped at the festival, now is your time. We have many areas that we need assistance in, be on the lookout for our volunteer sheet once we get close to the festival. If you are interested in making a donation or volunteering, please feel free to contact me.

Wishing all of you a happy and blessed month and a Kali Sarakosti!

Foti Georgopoulos  
Parish Council President



MAY 19-21, 2023

## Saturday of Lazarus Retreat

APRIL 8, 2023 (10:30 AM)

Calling all Kindergarten through 5th grade students, join us on Saturday, April 8th for the Saturday of Lazarus Retreat! You'll get to learn all about the raising of Lazarus during lunch, crafts, music, and game time! You will also have a chance to meet with Father and venerate Saint Lazarus's relics. And, the beloved cooking session is back; we'll be baking Lazarakia cookies again! Join us for this retreat and better prepare yourself for Pascha! There is a \$20 attendee registration fee and lunch/snacks will be provided to our students.



Register for  
Retreat



Retreat Leader  
Sign Up



## SATURDAY OF LAZARUS Retreat

10:30AM TO 2PM | STUDENTS K - 5TH GRADE  
SAINT ATHANASIOS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH  
\$20 ATTENDEE REGISTRATION FEE

K - 5th grade students, join us for lunch, crafts, music, and games all in preparation for Pascha!

# STUMP THE PRIEST

I've heard that Orthodox Christians aren't allowed to wear crosses that show Christ on it. Is that true?

While the preference among Orthodox Christians is to wear a cross that does not have a depiction of Jesus being crucified, that is not true in all cases, nor is it "not allowed". As I said, we have a preference for a bare cross. This is because the bare cross reminds us that although Christ died on the cross, He was taken down, buried, and resurrected. Burial for crucified criminals was rare. More often, the Romans simply left the bodies on a cross until they fell down in various states of decomposition. So a bare cross worn by Orthodox Christians is a reminder of the care that His followers had for His body, and Christ's ultimate resurrection.

But that does not mean that wearing a cross with a depiction of Christ's body is prohibited. In fact if you look at most of the crosses worn by clergy, they typically do depict Christ during His crucifixion. Likewise, the handheld blessing crosses used by the clergy, are not bare, but have the body of Christ on them. By virtue of these clergy crosses being larger, they are often made with an image of the resurrection on the reverse. So the front portrays Christ's death and the back portrays His resurrection.

Either way, wearing a cross, be it a bare cross or a cross depicting the crucifixion, is a daily reminder of our Lord and His great mercy. Without the Cross there is no Resurrection and without the Resurrection the Cross is meaningless. One always points to the other. As long as we keep that in mind, we give glory to God.



## HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

### SATURDAY OF LAZARUS

8:30 am Orthros & 9:30 am Divine Liturgy

### PALM SUNDAY

8:30 am Orthros 9:30 am Divine Liturgy  
Bridegroom Service 7:00 pm

### HOLY MONDAY

Bridegroom Service 7:00 pm

### HOLY TUESDAY

Bridegroom Service 7:00 pm

### HOLY WEDNESDAY

Holy Unction 3:00 pm  
Last Supper Service with  
Holy Unction 7:00 pm

### HOLY THURSDAY

Vesperal Liturgy 6:30 am  
12 Gospels 7:00 pm

### HOLY FRIDAY

Great Hours 9:00 am  
Apokathelosis 3:00 pm  
Lamentations 7:00 pm

### HOLY SATURDAY

Proti Anastasi 9:00 am  
Anastasi Orthros 11:30 pm  
Resurrection Service Midnight

### PASCHA

Agape Service 11:00 am

# 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)

## Saturday, April 1

10am Philoptochos Lenten Retreat

## Sunday, April 2

Divine Liturgy – Mary of Egypt  
7pm Contrition Vespers

## Monday, April 3

6pm Great Compline

## Wednesday, April 5

11am Bible Study  
6pm Presanctified Liturgy  
7:30 pm Lenten Dinner & Lecture  
Sunday School/Oratorical Festival

## Friday, April 7

6 pm Community Fellowship – Palm Folding  
& Potluck Dinner

## Saturday, April 8

Divine Liturgy - Saturday of Lazarus  
10:30 am Saturday of Lazarus Retreat

## Sunday, April 9

Divine Liturgy - Palm Sunday  
11am Loukoumades Sale  
11am Philoptochos Easter Sales  
7pm Bridegroom Service

## Monday, April 10

7pm Bridegroom Service

## Tuesday, April 11

7pm Bridegroom Service

## Wednesday, April 12

3pm Holy Unction  
4:30 pm Philoptochos Easter Sales  
7pm Mystical Supper

## Thursday, April 13

6:30am Vesperal Liturgy  
7pm Passion of the Lord

## Friday, April 14

9am Great Hours  
11:30 am Holy Friday Luncheon  
3pm Un-nailing Vespers  
7pm Lamentations

## Saturday, April 15

9am Proti-Anastasi Service  
11:30pm Anastasi with Paschal Orthros & Liturgy

## Sunday, April 16 PASCHA

11am Agape Vespers

## Wednesday, April 19

6:30pm JOY Bowling

## Sunday, April 23

Divine Liturgy – Thomas Sunday/ St George the Great Martyr

## Wednesday, April 26

11am Bible Study; Book of Exodus

## Sunday, April 30

Divine Liturgy

## 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



On behalf of the ministry Food Pantry, we wanted to thank all our parishioners for continuing to support our initiative and providing food to those in need. We are in need of volunteers to assist with drop off, please see below for details. 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! This month we are asking for

### Canned Vegetables and Tuna

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

# PHILOPTOCHOS

The highlight of our February was definitely our spectacular Glendi! Almost 200 parishioners and their friends and family came together to dance, dine, and have a good time. Big thanks go out to the committee: Rose Pagonis, Stephanie Altidis, Sia Panos, Leah Fanning and Margarita Altidis, who worked so hard to make it a success. Attendees got to dance to both Greek and American music, enjoy a delicious meal and dessert, and the kids enjoyed a face painter. We hope this can become an annual tradition. We await next month for the total amount raised and donated to the Greek American Rehab Center in Wheeling.

Look for Easter bread and dye sales die starting on Palm Sunday until we run out!

Thank you to everyone who helped cook and bake for our Lenten Meal and Lecture on March 8th. There were so many people attending church and then breaking bread together. Dr. Perry Hamalis gave a wonderful lecture. Special thanks to Elli Koulos for coordinating the meal.



## Community Palm Folding Pot Luck

April 7, 2023

6:00PM

Saint Matthew Hall



## BOOKSTORE

Our Blessed Holy Week and Easter will be in our midst soon. Stop in our Bookstore for decorated candles, Holy Week liturgical and Lenten books, icons of the Mystical Supper and Resurrection, spiritual wall banners, Easter greeting cards, and various gifts for adults and children. Also give thought to your planning for May events, such as weddings, graduations, and Mother's Day, especially if you need custom icons, which take time for the Monasteries to paint and deliver. Our Bookstore team of Jean Demas, Rose Pagonis, Thanea Walter, and Amanda McKinney are happy to help you! Kalo Pascha!



# STEWARDSHIP

The Stewardship committee would like to update you on the status of our 2023 Stewardship Campaign ... **GIVING THANKS**, which is less a theme and more a way of life for us as Orthodox Christians.

As we embrace our Stewardship program, it is important for all of us to understand the definition of Stewardship as defined by the Chicago Metropolis:

- 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 Time, Talents, and Treasures that we have received from Him.
- Stewardship puts our faith in action and demonstrates our trust in God.

THANK YOU to those who have made their 2023 pledge ... your commitment to God and His Church is greatly appreciated.

For those who have not yet made their 2023 commitment, please take 10 minutes out of your day and complete your 2023 Stewardship pledge. As you make your 2023 commitment, please think beyond your Treasures commitment and also consider what Time and Talents you can also commit to our beloved Saint Athanasios.

Finally, we are also looking to expand our Stewardship Committee, so we can expand our internal Stewardship outreach, communication and education. If you are interested in joining the Stewardship "team", please reach out to Pete Nassos.

Thank you again to those who have made their 2023 commitment and if you have any questions regarding our 2023 program, please contact either Fr. Panagiotis or Pete Nassos.

## STEWARDSHIP STATS

- Number of Pledges received: 167
- Amount Pledged: \$225,190
- Average Pledge: \$1,348
- 2023 Stewardship Goal: \$325,00
- 69% of our 2023 Stewardship Goal already pledged



**DOWNLOAD  
PLEDGE CARD**



# JOY BOWLING PARTY APRIL 19

**6:30 - 8:00 PM**

All kindergarten to 8th grade  
kids are invited

**Bowlero**

1515 Aurora Ave. | Naperville

Contact Chrissy Pagonis  
at 630-817-5700 to RSVP

# MEN'S GROUP

Thank you all for your support and participation in this ministry. March was a busy month for us. A social outing, teaming up Philoptochos for Easter baskets and then cooking on two separate occasions. You can read more below.

## March Madness Get Together

On Saturday, March 18, we gathered at the Spartan Ale House in Naperville to watch some college basketball games. Great time to catch up.

## Easter Basket Team Up with Philoptochos

On Friday, March 24, we worked with Philoptochos to fill Easter baskets for the Aurora Interfaith Food Pantry.

## Lenten Dinner Meal

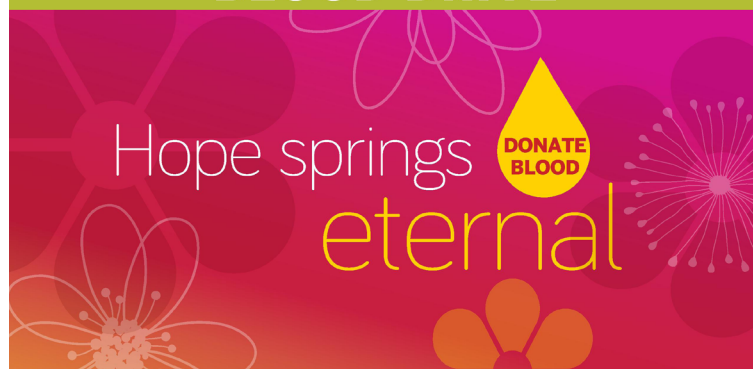
On Wednesday, March 29, the Men's Group cooked and served a Lenten meal after Presanctified Liturgy.

## Hesed House Dinner Service

The Men's Group continued our quarterly dinner service at Hesed House on Thursday, March 30. We served cooked and served over 175 meals.

If anyone is interested in learning more about the Men's Group, please contact **Spiro Hountalas** ([naperspike@aol.com](mailto:naperspike@aol.com)), **Peter Metrou** ([pnmlawyer@aol.com](mailto:pnmlawyer@aol.com)) or **Nick Dagiantis** ([ndagiantis@gmail.com](mailto:ndagiantis@gmail.com)).

## BLOOD DRIVE



**Saturday  
May**

**6**

**9:00am - 1:00pm**

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

**PHOTO ID IS REQUIRED.**

Call (630) 723-2589 with  
eligibility questions.

## 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.

**EVERY DONOR WILL SAVE UP TO 3 LIVES!**



## Students: Participate in The Oratorical Festival


APRIL 5, 2023 (12 PM)

Calling all 7th to 12th grade students: Participate in the Oratorical Festival! The St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival is a nationwide program of the Department of Religious Education (DRE) of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, where Orthodox youth present speeches discussing the Greek Orthodox faith and the Church. Participants start at the Parish level, then proceed to the District or Metropolis level. And then, two finalists representing each Metropolis of the Archdiocese advance to the National Finals. Participants at the National Finals may be eligible for awards ranging from \$500 to \$2000. Our high school classes will be incorporating the topics of the Oratorical Festival to prepare our students with this competition.

**Scan QR Code  
to Download  
Festival Packet**



THE GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF CHICAGO  
39<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL  
Saint John Chrysostom Oratorical and Fine Arts Festival



George Bentley, 1st Place, Iconography - Senior Division  
Ascension of Our Lord, Lincolnshire, IL

Saturday, April 29, 2023  
— Host Parish —  
Ascension of Our Lord Greek Orthodox Church  
Lincolnshire, Illinois  
For more information, please contact [oratoricalfestival@gmail.com](mailto:oratoricalfestival@gmail.com).

# USHER MINISTRY

We are looking for volunteers to join our new Usher Ministry. Ushers help serve weekday, weekend and Sunday Liturgies. Duties include welcoming parishioners, passing trays and assisting with Communion and Church dismissal.

Interested? Contact Foti Georgopoulos at [fotig1985@gmail.com](mailto:fotig1985@gmail.com) to Join



# BIBLE STUDY

Join our Bible Study this Spring as we take a look at the book of Exodus and the journey of Israel out of Egypt to await the promised land. Sessions are the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month at 11am February-May.



Monday, June 12, 2023

# Save The Date!



Presented by Saint Athanasios Church

## Location



21200 S Carillon Dr,  
Plainfield, IL 60544  
(815) 886-2132  
[www.carillongolf.com](http://www.carillongolf.com)

## Event Details

Registration & Lunch: 11:30-12:15 PM

Tee Off: 12:30 PM  
Shotgun-Scamble

On course contests for players of all abilities

Dress Code: Golf Attire

Dinner: 5:30 PM

Raffle & Auctions

More Details to Follow Soon



How Do We Sign up?

Call church office: 630-851-6106  
Web: [saintathanasios.com/golf](http://saintathanasios.com/golf)

Questions?

Contact Frank Demas at 224.805.6920 OR Pete Nassos at [panassos@gmail.com](mailto:panassos@gmail.com)

Sponsorship Opportunities Available

SAINT ATHANASIOS

# SUMMER CAMP!

## Summer Camp

June 13-16, 2023

Students grade 1 to 5: Save the date for this year's Summer Camp! Camp is 9am-12pm on June 13 to June 16. 6th graders to high schoolers, we will need volunteers! More information and registration link to come!



## Junior Olympics

May 27-28, 2023

Activities for ages 7-18 include, soccer, tennis, track and field, softball, volleyball, swimming, chess, tavli and more. 10k open for ages 13- adults. Registration coming soon. For more information contact: Maria Lambrou: [saintathanasiosjro@gmail.com](mailto:saintathanasiosjro@gmail.com)



# Lenten Donations

2023

CONTACT THE OFFICE TO DONATE  
630-851-6106  
OFFICE@SAINTATHANASIOS.COM

## HOLY WEDNESDAY

Flour 5LB  
Olive Oil 1 bottle  
Mystical Supper Icon Flowers

## HOLY THURSDAY

Crucifixion Icon Flowers  
Crucifix Floral Wreath (2)

## GOOD FRIDAY

Kouvouklion Flowers  
Kouvouklion Carnations  
Rose Petals for Epitaphios

## PASCHA/MISC

Pascha Icon Flowers  
Clergy Pascha Candle  
Rose Water  
Lamp Oil  
Red Eggs

## SALUTATIONS ICON FLOWERS

1st Salutation	March 3
2nd Salutation	March 10
3rd Salutation	March 17
Annunciation Vespers	March 24
Akathist Hymn	March 31

## PALM SUNDAY

Feastal Icon Flowers  
Palm Strips for Crosses  
Palm Fronds  
Bay Branches

## BRIDEGROOM ICON FLOWERS

1st Bridegroom	Palm Sunday
2nd Bridegroom	Holy Monday
3rd Bridegroom	Holy Tuesday



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Montgomery, IL 60538 630-892-1100



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Once a month, our talented culinary team takes guests on a multi-course flavor journey to exotic destinations . Coming up:

*April 19-Umbria · May 17-Toscana · June 21-Sicily  
July 19-Basilicata · August 16-Calabria · Sept 20-Abruzzo*

**Reservations 630.579.3210 · [www.chefigatakitchen.com](http://www.chefigatakitchen.com)**



KITCHEN — BAR — MARKET

## CHE FIGATA

ITALY TO TABLE



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



A Monthly Publication of Saint Athanasios Greek Orthodox Church

# THE CHAMPION



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ATHANASIOS**

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