



# THE CHAMPION

A Monthly Publication of Saint Athanasios Greek Orthodox Church

APRIL 2024



## MESSAGE FROM FR. PANAGIOTIS

*"O Champion General, I your City now inscribe to you triumphant anthems as the tokens of my gratitude, being rescued from the terrors, O Theotokos. Inasmuch as you have power unassailable, From all kinds of perils free me, so that unto you I may cry aloud: Rejoice, O unwedded Bride."*

One of the most beloved hymns of the Lenten Season is Ἡ Ὑπερμάχῳ Στρατηγῷ /O Champion General. It is sung the first 5 Sundays of Lent as well as during the Friday Night Salutation or Akathist services. The hymn itself is sung from the perspective of a city which is crying out and giving thanks to the Theotokos for her protection from a siege. This is why she is referred to as the Champion General. She marshals the powers of heaven to protect the inhabitants from the dangers outside their walls.

The City of Constantinople would need just such a General when it came under siege for the first time in 626AD. For a month, the city maintained high morale even though they were under constant bombardment from 80,000 Avar troupes. Chanting this very hymn, the inhabitants of Constantinople regularly processed an Icon of the Virgin Mary around the walls of the city, even though doing so would put them in range of the enemy. Under the protection of their Champion General Constantinople rebuffed the attacks and was able to drive away their enemy.

Ἡ Ὑπερμάχῳ Στρατηγῷ /O Champion General eventually became a vital hymn during the Lenten Season because of the symbolism of warfare and deliverance. The warfare we experience during Lent is spiritual.

Maybe our defenses have been weakened through fasting, ie maybe we are a little more tired, or irritable. The enemy sees our vulnerability and strikes. We come under attack from our thoughts, temptations, and sins. Left to our own defense we may be overtaken.

The Friday Salutation services during Lent are our version of the procession around the city walls. Like the people of Constantinople, we gather to cry out to the Theotokos asking for her defense and deliverance from the sins that war against us. Our battle with sin is most pronounced during the period of Lent, making our prayer to the Theotokos all the more opportune.

Join the Salutation services each Friday of Lent, asking our Champion General to "Entreat your Son and our Lord and Master, using your boldness as a mother, so that he may open to me the loving mercy of his goodness" (Compline Prayer to the Theotokos).

## BAPTISMS

Nico Piraino (Son of Joe and Yoita Piraino)

Niko Moehle (Son of Brett & Eleni Moehle)

## MEMORIALS

Athanasios (Tommy) Moriates (40 Days)

Fr. Steve Bithos (40 Days)

Peter Stamatopoulos (3 Year)

Theodore Stamatopoulos (4 Year)

Marino Stamatopoulos (13 Year)

## FUNERALS

Dean Kerhulas

Catherine Patsavas

## Community Palm Folding Pot Luck

April 26, 2024

6:00PM

Saint Matthew Hall

No Experience Necessary. ALL Are Welcome.



# PARISH COUNCIL

## Lenten Services and Holy Week:

We invite all to come and seek the salvation that comes through the true knowledge of Christ and oneself.

Please continue to join us in worship for the Monday, Wednesday, Friday Lenten Services. These services will continue through April. Be sure to join us for the Lenten meals and lectures after the Presanctified Liturgy Service on Wednesday evenings. Conitron Vespers will be held at St. Athanasios on April 14th. Divine Liturgy Saturday of Lazarus Service will be held on April 27th.

Please join us for the beautiful services during Holy Week. We will continue to use St. Mathew Hall as an overflow once the main church is at capacity. Please follow the guidance of our ushers and parish council members. You can find dates and times for all services in the weekly bulletins, in the monthly Champion, and the parish calendar on our website.

## Upcoming Events:

Please mark your calendars and save the dates. There are also other events and services that may not be listed here so be sure to review the parish calendar for more information.

- Spring Parish Assembly April 21st
- Palm Folding April 26th
- Loukoumades Bake Sale April 28th (Palm Sunday)
- Good Friday Retreat May 3rd
- Metropolis/District Level Oratorical Festival May 11th
- Aurora Greek Fest May 17th 18th 19th
- Metropolis of Chicago Junior Olympics May 25th & 26th

Wishing everyone a blessed month and a Kali Sarakosti!

## Brian McAnally

Parish Council President



**MAY 17-19**

**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](http://www.auroragreekfest.com)

# LENTEN CONFESSION SCHEDULE

Sign up here for the sacrament of Holy Confession. If you are unavailable during any of the scheduled slots, or they are all full, please reach out to [office@saintathanasios.com](mailto:office@saintathanasios.com) to find an alternative date and time.



**SCAN FOR  
APPOINTMENT**





## Welcoming 8 New Catechumens

On Sunday March 17th, we welcomed eight new future members of our parish, who officially were recognized as Catechumens. The word Catechumen refers to someone who is preparing for initiation into the Church, either through Baptism or Chrismation. Three of our Catechumens will join the Orthodox Church through Baptism, and the other five will join via Chrismation. As a community we rejoice to see the spread of the Gospel and eagerly await their initiation on Holy Saturday (May 4th), through the hands of His Eminence Metropolitan of Chicago.



## Lenten Dinners & Lectures

Join us each Wednesday evening of Lent for a Meal and Lenten Lecture following the Presanctified Divine Liturgy.

4/3 - St. Dymphna (Pres. Nichole)

4/10 - Missions in Korea (Dn. Perry Hamalis)

4/17 - Oratorical Festival

4/24 - Hymns of Holy Week (Kostas Mavrogiannis)



# 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)

**Monday, April 1**  
6 pm Great Compline

**Wednesday, April 3**  
11 am Bible Study  
6 pm Presanctified Liturgy  
7:30 pm Lenten Dinner & Lectures: "St. Dymphna"  
(Pres Nichole)

**Thursday, April 4**  
6:30pm GOYA meeting

**Friday, April 5**  
7 pm Salutations to the Theothokos

**Sunday, April 7**  
Divine Liturgy - Sunday of the Holy Cross  
11 am Choir Rehearsal  
6:30 pm Conitron Vespers & Celebration of Books  
Holy Apostles Greek Orthodox Church  
2501 S Wolf Rd, Westchester, IL 60154

**Monday, April 8**  
6 pm Great Compline

**Wednesday, April 10**  
6 pm Presanctified Liturgy  
7:30 pm Lenten Dinner & Lectures: "Missions in Korea:  
(Dn. Perry Hamalis)

**Friday, April 12**  
7 pm Salutations to the Theothokos

**Saturday, April 13**  
9:30 am Philoptochos Lenten Retreat at St George

**Sunday, April 14**  
Divine Liturgy - Sunday of St John Climacus  
11am Choir Rehearsal  
6 pm Conitron Vespers

**Wednesday, April 15**  
6 pm Great Compline  
7 pm Lionheart Series

**Wednesday, April 17**  
11 am Bible Study  
6 pm Presanctified Liturgy  
7:30 pm Lenten Dinner & Lectures: Oratorical Festival

**Friday, April 19**  
6 pm GOYA meeting  
7 pm Akathist Hymn

**Sunday, April 21**  
Divine Liturgy - Sunday of St. Mary of Egypt  
11 am Parish Spring Assembly  
6pm Conitron Vespers  
St Constantine and Helen Greek Orthodox Church  
108 N 5th St, Rockford, IL 61107

**Monday, April 22**  
6 pm Great Compline

**Wednesday, April 24**  
6 pm Presanctified Liturgy  
7:30 pm Lenten Dinner & Lectures: "Hymns of Holy Week"  
(Kostas Mavrogiannis)

**Thursday, April 25**  
7 pm JrGOYA Fireside with Father  
7:30 pm Choir Rehearsal ("Dress Rehearsal" for Holy Week)

**Friday, April 26**  
6 pm Palm Folding

**Saturday, April 27**  
Divine Liturgy - Saturday of Lazarus  
11 am Choir Rehearsal

**Sunday, April 28**  
Divine Liturgy - Palm Sunday  
No Sunday school classes  
11am Loukoumades Bake Sale/ Easter Bread & Dye Sale  
11:30 am JrGOYA Garden Clean-up  
7 pm Bridegroom Service

**Monday, April 29**  
7 pm Bridegroom Service

**Tuesday, April 30**  
7 pm Bridegroom Service

## 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. 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:

### Canned Vegetables

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

# PHILOPTOCHOS

March Madness for Philoptochos was our Apokreatiko Glendi! Judging by the crowds on the dance floor and the number of children chasing balloons all over St. Matthew Hall, I have to conclude it was a huge success! We are grateful for the support of so many parishioners, which will enable us to make a significant donation to Orthodox Christian Fellowship. Thank you to the committee for the countless hours they put in to put this event together: Stephanie Altidis, Margarita Altidis, Leah Fanning, Sia Panos, Thanea Walter and George Manos. I would be remiss if I didn't also thank Pete Nassos and Scott Fanning for everything they did in the kitchen on Friday and Saturday.

On St. Patrick's Day we assembled 150 snack bags for area youth through Radical Love. We partnered with JOY on this project. Not only did JOY decorate the lunch bags, they also selected the items to include in the bags. The completed bags will be distributed through Hesus House and Batavia High School to students who lack access to nutritious food on the weekends.

Philoptochos is currently accepting applications for our annual scholarship. All high school seniors are invited to apply for this \$1500 award. For more information, please contact Margarita Altidis at 630-362-5022. Deadline is May 1st.

Philoptochos is providing a lenten dinner following the presanctified liturgy on Wednesday, April 10th. Everyone is welcome. We will once again be selling egg dye, tsoureki and phyllo on Palm Sunday and through Holy Week until we run out. Philoptochos members will be available after all after services. Wishing everyone a blessed and holy Lent.

Sue Manos  
Philoptochos President



# ORATORICAL FESTIVAL

Calling all 7th to 12 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 the QR code for more information including festival topics, criteria, etc.



## Oratorical Festival



Scan the QR code with your phone's camera for more information, criteria, and festival topic notes.

# GOOD FRIDAY RETREAT

Calling ALL Sunday School Students (Kindergarten to 12th grade)! Join us for our Good Friday Retreat on Friday, May 3rd from 9am to 3pm. This retreat is centered around deep reflection and spiritual renewal all in preparation for Christ's crucifixion and resurrection. Participate in activities, lessons, discussions, and service experiences centered around how Christ's crucifixion is His highest act of love for us. Light breakfast and lunch to be provided. School excuse letters are available for registrants to provide to their schools for excused absences. \$10 registration fee per attendee. To volunteer, contact [sundayschool@saintathanasios.com](mailto:sundayschool@saintathanasios.com).

**GOOD FRIDAY RETREAT**

MAY 3 | 9AM - 3 PM

SUNDAY SCHOOL STUDENTS  
(KINDERGARDEN TO 12TH GRADE)

SCAN TO REGISTER

# STEWARDSHIP

## Generosity ... Joyful, Loving, and Grateful support of our church and its mission

Last month we introduced the concept of Generosity and how it applies to Stewardship as well as our everyday life. This month, we would like to “dig” deeper into this topic and how it is connected to Stewardship and the Bible.

As we presented in our March article, Generosity is defined in the following manner ...

- 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.

If you look at the definition of Stewardship, you will see that Generosity is a core principle of Stewardship ...

- Stewardship is our grateful and loving response to God's love, grace and gifts to us.

As you read through the Bible, you will see that Generosity is embedded throughout it and many verses strengthen the basic concepts of Stewardship and Giving ...

- Generous people give more than asked - Exodus 36:1-7
- Generous people give in response to a cause - 2 Corinthians 8 and 9
- Generous people give out of their substance, large or small – Luke 21:1-4
- Generous people give more than just money - Luke 10:25-37
- Generous people give even when it does not make sense – Genesis 45
- Generous people give to help others even when they differ from them – Luke 7:1-10
- Generous people give to see the impossible become possible – John 6:1-13
- Generous people give when others will not – Philippians 4:15-16
- Generous people give because of their own spiritual transformation – Luke 19:1-9

## Generosity and Christianity ... A Joyful, Loving, Gratitude based support of our Church and its mission

“For God so Loved the world that He Gave His only begotten Son...”  
John 3:16

Now is the time to personally reflect on these passages and how Generosity is ever present in your life.

In His Service,  
Elli Koulos and Pete Nassos

# COLLEGE MINISTRY

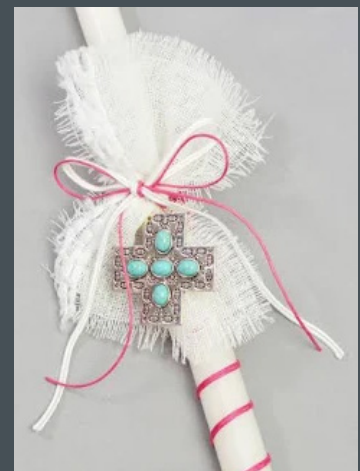
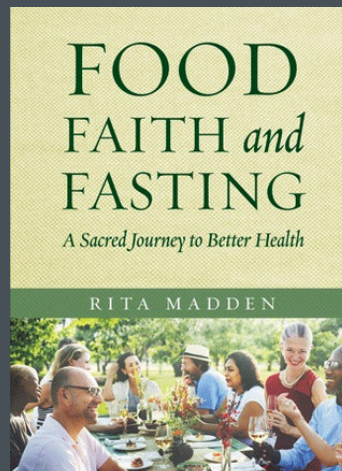


## James Perozzi

- College attending? **Bradley University**
- Areas of study? **Major: Mechanical Engineering**
- Favorite class so far? **Heat Transfer**
- Estimated graduation date? **May 11, 2024**
- Local Orthodox church in your college town? **All Saint's Greek Orthodox Church**
- Future plans (short term)? **Move to Wisconsin and find a job. Make enough money to buy old Japanese sports cars.**
- Favorite sport and/or team? **Football | The Bears!**
- Hobbies, interests: **Working on cars, playing the drums, cooking, airplanes!**
- Favorite local college restaurant/pub? **Brienzo's Wood Fired Pizza**
- Favorite home restaurant or type of food? **Kokkinisto**
- Favorite season? **Summer**
- Where do you see yourself in 5 years from now? **Hopefully, working a decent job in the aircraft or automotive industry, and in my spare time, fixing cars in my garage with my girlfriend.**
- What do you like most about the Saint Athanasios Parish? **The sense of community and in a sense, the fact that it is small and tight-knit.**

# BOOK STORE

Our Lenten season is a time for prayer, reflection, and fasting. Check out our Bookstore to browse the many Lenten books to help with your spiritual journey. Also see our fasting cookbooks to get ideas on how to prepare your meals to keep you and your family physically healthy. Later in April, we will have decorated candles for sale for adults and children to use at the Anastasi and Agape services to help light the way to our salvation. Stop in soon!



# MEN'S GROUP

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

Here are details on upcoming events.

## Lenten Dinner

The Men's Group is sponsoring a Lenten dinner on Wednesday, April 3 after Presanctified Liturgy. If you are able to bring a dish to prepare, please let us know.

## Lionheart Series

Our fourth and final session will be Monday, April 15. Look for registration details in the Friday bulletin email.

## 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 (pnmlawyer@aol.com) or Nick Dagiantis (ndagiantis@gmail.com).

MEN'S  
RESOURCE

FAITHTREE.ORG

# LIONHEART SESSIONS

A VIDEO-BASED  
SMALL GROUP STUDY FOR THE  
MEN IN YOUR COMMUNITY

## 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, April 15, 2024



Please contact Nick Dagiantis at ndagiantis@gmail.com with any questions.



MAY 25-26, 2024

CONTACT MARIA LAMBROU FOR MORE INFO

[saintathanasiosjro@gmail.com](mailto:saintathanasiosjro@gmail.com)

# JR GOYA

Join us for our final "Fireside with Father" Thursday, April 25th. Even if you haven't come all year we invite you to join us as we wrap up our year long series. 7pm at the Botsis Home 1176 Hobson Mill Dr in Naperville. Also mark your calendars for our year end lunch on Sunday, May 19th. After Liturgy we will be gathering together in Saint Matthew Hall to have lunch at the Festival and celebrate a successful year of ministry.



Monday, June 10, 2024

Save The Date!



Presented by  
Saint Athanasios Church

## Location

  
**THE LINKS**  
- AT CARILLON -  
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

# BIBLE STUDY

Join our Bible Study this Spring as we take a look at the Names of Jesus. Sessions are the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month at 11am.



SAINT  
ATHANASIOS



# Lenten Donations

2024

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 22
2nd Salutation	March 29
3rd Salutation	April 5
4th Salutation	April 12
Akathist Hymn	April 19

## 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





CATER YOUR NEXT  
EVENT WITH US

Leg of Lamb | Souvlaki | Greek Chicken  
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847-893-6314  
www.eatatambrosia.com  
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www.basilsdining.com

## The Healy Chapel



### Aurora Facility

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630-897-9291

healychapel@sbcglobal.net



### Sugar Grove Facility

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Montgomery, IL 60538 630-892-1100



## 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)



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

APRIL 2024



PALM  
SUNDAY



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# THE CHAMPION



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