

# THE CHAMPION

A Monthly Publication of Saint Athanasios Greek Orthodox Church

SEPTEMBER 2024



## MESSAGE

FROM FR. PANAGIOTIS

As diverse as America is culturally, there seems to be one thing that unites us all in the current age, Busyness. How many times have we had the following conversation:

*"Hey, how have you been."*

*"Oh, you know, busy."*

*"Yea, me too. We've got so much going on."*

Busy has become our default state of being. As a nation, we have a culture of busyness. We are busy with work, putting in more hours than ever before. We are busy with social media, where we hustle to present the perfect content to our followers. We are busy with school, where it seems we are doing more resume/college application curating than actual learning. We are busy with recreation, where even our free-time is dictated by keeping up with the pace of others vacations and hobbies.

Busyness has become so ingrained in our culture as modern Americans that it has become a virtue. We keep busy to show those around us that we are the kind of people that have an important job, are a successful student, or proficient athlete, or influence with our followers. This has been the case for years now as evidenced by a 2017 article in The Atlantic titled 'Ugh, I'm So Busy': A Status Symbol for Our Time.

In such a culture, busyness becomes the most effective tool of the evil one. If we are busy, our attention is too fragmented, or our minds too anxious to experience the presence of God. We are on guard against the devil's attacks on our faith but have missed his offensive on our calendars. He doesn't need to tempt us to reject the Lord. He just needs to add more and more to our plate so that sports replace worship, work replaces mercy, our phones replace the scriptures, and anxiety replaces prayer.

Stillness then is a necessary practice for Christians, as God encourages in the Psalms, "Be still, and know that I am God" (Psalm 45:11). More than simply slowing down, we need to take moments to be still, quiet, and restful.

With the start of the Ecclesiastical and ministry year, as a parish we want to focus on this practice: Prayerful Stillness. In our ministries this year we will have opportunities to learn how to embody what the Orthodox tradition calls Hysechia or Stillness in mind, body, and soul. Separate Men's & Women's Small Groups will gather to push back against the culture of busyness. Our Reliquary Room will be available for private reflection in the presence of the saints.

God beckons us to leave busyness for the sake of our souls, when He invites, "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). Within the counter-cultural practice of stillness we come to salvation and the knowledge of truth (1 Tim. 2:4).



## MEMORIALS

Desi Stamatopoulos (40 Days)

Alexandra Pieri (3 Months)

Athanasios Moraites (6 Months)

Anna Helopoulos (1 Year)

Harry Koulos (1 Year)

Stellina Tselikis (2 Year)

Nicholas Patsavas (18 years)

# PARISH COUNCIL

*"That all should be saved and come to the knowledge of truth."*

We are excited to get back into full swing with our ministries. September 1st begins our ecclesiastical new year. Lots of exciting events and ministries are set to begin. Sunday School, Joy, Jr. Goya, GOYA, Choir, Men's Group, Philoptochos, Bible Study, Aurora Greek Festival and our new AGAPE Ministry just to name a few. Please check your emails, our website, The Champion, parish calendar, & weekly bulletins for more information and dates on all of our Saint Athanasios Ministries. We have a lot to offer for all age groups.

**Ministry Year Kick Off Picnic:** We will have our ministry fair and picnic on September 8th. There will be food, fun and games for all. This is an opportunity for all of us to come together in fellowship. It also is a time to meet and welcome our new parishioners if you haven't. Please visit the tables that will be set up for our Ministry Fair to learn more about our ministries that we offer at Saint Athanasios. Looking forward to seeing everyone there!

**Aurora Greek Fest:** The fest will take place September 27th-29th. Please be on the lookout for literature and emails with information about the festival. Sponsorship opportunities are still available. Please contact our church office or Foti Georgopoulos if you are interested in volunteering or a sponsorship.

Our stewardship and capital campaign committees have been continuing to educate and communicate the parish throughout the summer months on our progress. We are making great strides towards our goals. We ask if you have not pledged yet for your 2024 stewardship and capital campaign that you please pray about it and pledge from your heart. Thank you to everyone who has made their pledges. "Well done good and faithful servant"

For those of you who might have missed it, I would like to invite you to please watch/listen to Father Panagiotis' Sermon from 8/4/24. "Let Us Use Them." You can find the link in the August 9th bulletin, YouTube, or our website. It helps us to put things into perspective if you will and is a blessing to hear. St. Paul exhorts us to use the gifts that God has given us for the benefit of others.

I pray you have a blessed month.

**Brian McAnally**

Parish Council President



## SEPT 27-29

**LOCATION**  
SAINT ATHANASIOS  
GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH  
1855 EAST FIFTH AVE  
AURORA IL

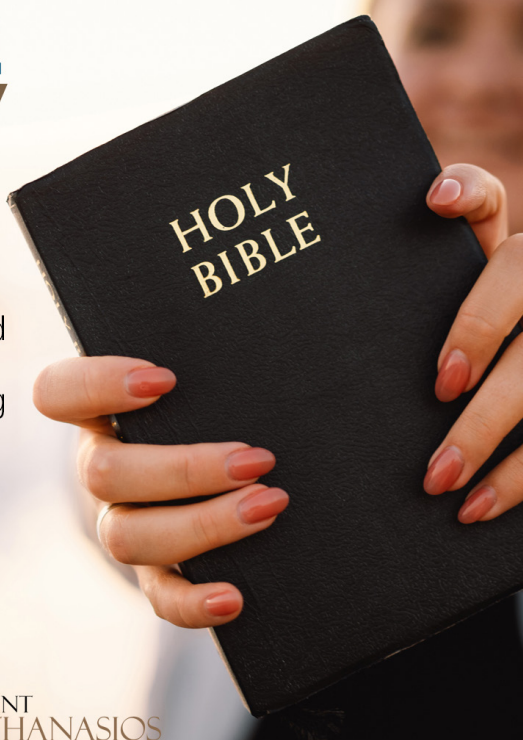
**CARRY OUT  
CATERING**  
630.851.6106

**FEST TIMES**  
NOON TO 9 PM  
(FRIDAY & SATURDAY)


NOON TO 7 PM  
(SUNDAY)

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

## BIBLE STUDY



Join our Bible Study this Fall as we explore Creation (Genesis 1-3). Sessions are the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month at 11am starting September 18th.





# DISCOVER ORTHODOXY



Join us to learn more about the Orthodox Church. Discover Orthodoxy teaches the basics and foundations of Orthodox Christianity, our theology, worship, spirituality, and practices. The class is intended both for those who are preparing to join the Orthodox Church and for Orthodox Christians who wish to deepen their understanding of the faith. Classes start at 7pm on the following dates:

10/8	12/17
10/22	1/14
11/12	1/28
11/19	2/11
12/10	2/25

# SUNDAY SCHOOL



Sign up for Sunday School!! Have your students join us in learning about Christ's love by registering them for the upcoming Sunday School year! First day of Sunday School is September 8th. Payment can be made at the end of the registration form. Cost is \$40.00 per child.

SCAN TO REGISTER  
YOUR STUDENT



## MINISTRY YEAR KICKOFF & PICNIC

Join us on  
**September 8th**

*The Parish invites all to  
celebrate the new ecclesiastical  
year and the showcasing of all  
of our Ministries.*



# 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, September 1st**

Divine Liturgy - Indiction  
(Beginning of the Ecclesiastical Year)

## **Thursday, September 5th**

6pm Men's Group Dinner

## **Friday, September 6th**

6pm JOY Meeting

## **Saturday, September 7th**

10am Choir - Welcome Back Social and Rehearsal

## **Sunday, September 8th**

Divine Liturgy - Sunday Before Holy Cross/Nativity of the Theotokos  
Sunday School Starts  
11am Ministry Year Kick-off Picnic

## **Friday, September 13th**

7pm - Vespers - Exaltation of the Holy Cross  
Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church  
7560 Archer Rd, Justice, IL 60458

## **Saturday, September 14th**

Divine Liturgy - Exaltation of the Holy Cross  
11am Agape Kick-off

## **Sunday, September 15th**

Divine Liturgy-Sunday after the Holy Cross

## **Monday, September 16th**

7pm - Vespers - St Sophia & Her Three Daughters  
St Sophia Greek Orthodox Church  
525 Church Rd., Elgin, IL 60123

## **Tuesday, September 17th**

9am Divine Liturgy - Saints Sophia, Faith, Hope and Love  
St Sophia Greek Orthodox Church  
525 Church Rd., Elgin, IL 60123

## **Wednesday, September 18**

11am Bible Study

## **Saturday, September 21st**

4pm GOYA Kick-off at Oakhurst Forest Preserve

## **Sunday, September 22nd**

Divine Liturgy - 1st Sunday of Luke

## **Thursday, September 26th**

7pm JrGOYA Fireside

## **Friday, September 27th**

12pm Aurora Greek Fest

## **Saturday, September 28th**

11am Philoptochos Metropolis luncheon at Concorde Banquets  
12pm Aurora Greek Fest

## **Sunday, September 29th**

Divine Liturgy - 2nd Sunday of Luke  
12 pm Aurora Greek Fest

# 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



We are happy to introduce Betty Roussos to head the St Athanasios Food Pantry Ministry. When dropping off, please remember to ask for a weight and submit to the church office or to Betty Roussos. We are grateful for your support! ( No expired Food or partially opened packages. Please do not bring toys or pantry items such as flour, sugar, spices, etc.) This month's request is:

## **Baby Food, Baby Cereal, and Baby Snacks**

Please contact Betty Roussos at [bettyroussos@yahoo.com](mailto:bettyroussos@yahoo.com) with any questions.



# PHILOPTOCHOS

Philoptochos members gathered at church in early August to prepare meals for the homeless. With the help of several of our parish youth, we assembled 160 lunches-including roast beef and provolone sandwiches, chips, fruit cups, cookies, granola bars and drinks-which members then distributed outside Annunciation Cathedral. Thank you to everyone who came out to offer their time and talents.

We also wrapped up our personal hygiene drive for West Aurora High School's Beauty Bar. We collected sanitary products, spray deodorant, hair ties and bobby pins, face wipes, cotton balls and Q Tips that will be available to students in the girls' locker room after PE classes.

We invite all women in the parish to join us for our Fall Kickoff event, Mezze and Membership, on Saturday, Oct. 5th in St. Matthew Hall. We will be sharing details of our Fall community outreach project with Radical Love. We are VERY excited about these plans!

Finally SAVE THE DATE for Trivia Night! Test your knowledge of all those little bits of info tucked away in your head on Saturday, Nov. 2nd. More details will be coming in the next few weeks.

Sue Manos  
Philoptochos President



## TRIVIA NIGHT

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2024  
ST. MATTHEW HALL  
1855 E FIFTH AVE. AURORA

6 PM-10 PM

Please join the Women of  
Saint Athanasios Philoptochos  
for our Annual Kickoff Event

## Mezze and Membership

October 5, 2024 | 12 Noon  
Saint Matthew Hall

Mezze, desserts and  
refreshments will be served

RSVP TO SAMANTHA DULLES AT  
[ssdulles@yahoo.com](mailto:ssdulles@yahoo.com)



# STEWARDSHIP

## “A Joyful, Loving, Gratitude based support of our church and its mission”

A few weeks ago, Fr. Panagiotis delivered a poignant sermon titled “Let Us Use Them,” which can be found here: [www.saintathanasios.com/sermons](http://www.saintathanasios.com/sermons). In this sermon, he emphasized St. Paul’s call to use the gifts that God has bestowed upon us for the benefit of others. Fr. Panagiotis’s message focused on the principles of Giving and Generosity, particularly in relation to our support for St. Athanasios Church. This support encompasses both our Capital Campaign—aimed at paying off our current mortgage—and our annual Stewardship Commitment, which helps cover our operating expenses.

Fr. Panagiotis elaborated on the concepts of Stewardship and Generosity, which we have previously shared:

### Stewardship:

- Stewardship is our grateful and loving response to God’s love, grace, and gifts.
- It represents our personal commitment to God and His Church, ensuring its vitality and growth by joyfully and sacrificially offering our talents, time, and treasures.
- Stewardship transforms our faith into action and demonstrates our trust in God.

### Generosity:

- Generosity is a reflection of our gratitude for the gifts God has given us. It encompasses more than just financial contributions; it includes the generosity of volunteerism and the dedication of our time and talents.

These principles should guide us not only in our church life but also in all aspects of our daily lives. They should serve as the foundation for how we give our Time, Talents, and Treasures.

We encourage you to reflect deeply on these concepts and integrate them into your heart as you consider your own Giving and Generosity towards our Church and its broader community.

In His Service,  
**Elli Koulos and Pete Nassos**

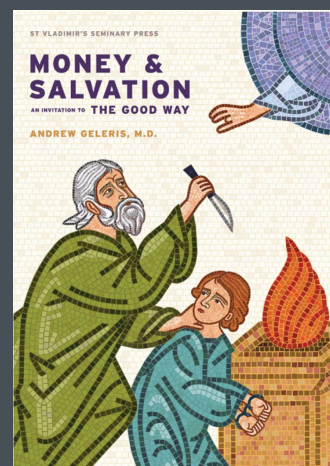
# SPIRITUAL GROWTH



In an effort to promote the spiritual growth of our faithful, St. Athanasios has established the Spiritual Growth Ministry. Our focus this ecclesiastical year is on the importance of stillness and prayer in our daily lives. The Bible gives us many examples where God makes His will known to his faithful through stillness. In Psalm 46:10 we read, “**Be still and know that I am God**“. When we are still, we begin to slow down and see how God is continually present in our lives. In stillness, we start to talk to God; to pray. Through prayer, we begin to recognize what God is asking of us. Stillness and prayer go hand-in-hand. Please consider participating in this year’s initiatives to better assist you in drawing closer to God the Father His Son and Holy Spirit.

# BOOK STORE

Too often, our hierarchs, clergy, and lay leaders speak to our people about giving to meet the needs of the church or the needs of the poor, and we forget to teach that the true need for each and every one of us is simply to give. God did not recommend that we give only when there is some perceived need or a capital campaign for a project. God commands that we give for our salvation. This short but profound book, **Money & Salvation: An Invitation to the Good Way**, by Andrew Geleris, M.D., explores the deeper spiritual meaning—and necessity—of financial giving. Stop in our Bookstore to purchase this book and to browse our many other spiritual items for your Fall season needs.





# MEN'S GROUP

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

## Hesed House Dinner

Thank you for your participation in the Hesed House dinner service on Thursday, August 29. The Hesed House ministry, led by Bill Collins, will now be the lead for future dinners. We plan to work with Bill and the team to continue this successful and rewarding event.

## Welcome Back Dinner

On Thursday, September 5, please join the Men's Group for our annual Welcome Back Dinner. Enjoy food, drinks and hear about our upcoming/ongoing activities.

## Men's Workshops

Fr. Panagiotis will be leading a three-part workshop on busyness and stillness. More information on dates/times to be announced.

## 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](mailto:naperspike@aol.com)), Peter Metrou ([pnmetrou@gmail.com](mailto:pnmetrou@gmail.com)), Bill Collins ([bctc@sbcglobal.net](mailto:bctc@sbcglobal.net)) or Nick Dagiantis ([ndagiantis@gmail.com](mailto:ndagiantis@gmail.com)).



Hesed House Ministry will be serving dinner at Hesed House on October 23rd. Serving dinner at Hesed House includes food preparation, cooking and cleaning up at Church Starting around 3pm. Dinner service at Hesed House includes serving dinner at the family shelter / adult shelter, or both, as well as cleaning up when dinner service is completed.

Contact Bill Collins if interested in participating, [bctc@sbcglobal.net](mailto:bctc@sbcglobal.net)

# JR GOYA

Attention all Junior High Students and Parents: Mark your calendars for our Fall Firesides. We will meet at church at 7pm on **Thursdays: 9/26, 10/24, and 11/21.**

If you haven't already, join our group in the app Remind. Once you've downloaded the app, look for our "class" by searching the code 384fd42. We look forward to seeing everyone on Thursday, September 26th.

**Questions? Email us at: [jrgoya@saintathanasios.com](mailto:jrgoya@saintathanasios.com).**





# AGAPE MINISTRY

**SEPTEMBER 14 | 11:00 AM**

*Stand up in the presence of the aged, show respect for the elderly and revere your God.” ~Leviticus 19:32*

We are very excited to introduce our new Agape Ministry, geared toward the senior parishioners of St. Athanasios, in hopes of bringing this vibrant group together on a more steady and organized basis. Please join us for our Kick-off Event on Saturday, September 14th, at 11 am (after the Exaltation of the Cross Liturgy). We will be meeting in St. Matthew Hall for some light refreshments and a quick meeting explaining what we will be doing for the rest of the year.

For questions, please contact Samantha Dulles at 312.504.4448 or [agape@saintathanasios.com](mailto:agape@saintathanasios.com).

We are excited to offer our seniors the opportunity for fellowship regularly. The group meets monthly for various activities and outings. Our door is always open, and we look forward to welcoming new members.

May they teach us through their wisdom and joy for many years.



## CAPITAL CAMPAIGN: 25 BY 25

I hope you and your loved ones are all well and that you are enjoying the summer. For many of us, the summer months are a time for extra outdoor activity; going on a long bike ride, the swimming pool, long walks or hikes in our favorite park. We may not realize it at the time, but being outdoors and engaged in a physical activity has many benefits including teaching us simple life lessons.

The other day, while cleaning up my garage I came across an old pair of hiking boots. My discovery brought back the memory of a summer long ago and my six-day back packing trip on the Appalachian Trail with my son's boy scout troop. The first several days of our trip were very difficult and at the time not much fun. As we hiked the Trail through humid Georgia and into North Carolina, a terrible rainstorm, and multiple winding trails we gained elevation through the thick forest eventually coming upon a clearing. Through the clearing, a few feet from the trail, there was a ledge. As we stood on that ledge we could see the valley floor below us and how far we had climbed. Instantly the sun seemed brighter, we were happier, our spirits were lifted, we realized our hard work was paying off and we were energized to reach the next summit on our trip.

That experience hiking the Appalachian Trail, reminds me of our Capital Campaign and how far we have come on our journey together! To put things into perspective, at the beginning of the year, on January 1, 2024, our mortgage balance was \$191,895.15. As of June 30, 2024, with the help of 64 very generous donors, in six short months, our mortgage balance has been reduced to \$55,915.86!!

As we stand on the ledge high above the valley floor and reflect on how far we have come let's not forget that our journey is not yet complete and that we have several summits to climb to reach our Phase I and II goals. Our next summit, or goal, on our journey is to eliminate our debt by the Church's 60th anniversary.

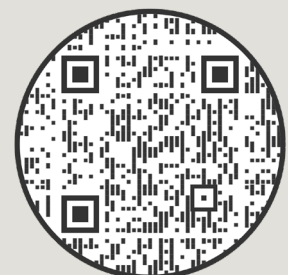
This was our original plan on our way to the ultimate mountain top but we are adjusting our plan in order to get us to the top much quicker. I am confident that with your help we can eliminate our mortgage by the feast day of our patron saint, January 18, 2025.

To that end, I ask that for the next six months our goal is 25 by 25. Let's raise \$25,000 by the beginning of 2025. If we reach that goal, we can begin 2025 with no mortgage and begin to focus on our church's structural needs six months sooner than planned. If 100 stewards, step forward with a one-time donation to the Capital Campaign of just \$250 we will reach this next summit in our journey together.

Let's work together to make 25 by 25 a reality!

For more info please visit our website or use the QR code to find out how you can support the campaign and commit to our Church for future generations.

Mike Tsimouris  
Capital Campaign Chairman







**Gyros Drive**  
We Need Your Help!

**Donate a  
Gyro Cone**

**\$150 Per Cone**  
**30 Cone Goal!**

Contact Foti for donations  
at [fotig1985@gmail.com](mailto:fotig1985@gmail.com)  
or call 630.251.3462



**SPONSOR  
OUR FEST!**

**Sept. 27-29 2024**

Saint Athanasios Church is seeking financial support for our event. To help make our festival a success, we are asking parishioners, community members and local businesses to make a tax deductible donation or sponsor our event. Proceeds will help pay for the cost of food, rentals, licenses, supplies, insurance, etc

The following sponsorships are available:

**Platinum Level \$5,000**

Exclusive Food Booth Sponsor | Full Back Page Ad in Fest Ad Book  
Social Media Recognition | Digital Ad at Fest Entrance

**Gold Level \$3,500**

Exclusive Bar & Beer Garden Sponsor | Full Page Ad in Fest Ad Book  
Social Media Recognition

**Silver Level \$2,000**

Exclusive Bakery Sponsor | Full Page Ad in Fest Ad Book  
Social Media Recognition

**Bronze Level \$1,000**

Choose Between Carryout, Coffee or Loukoumades Sponsor  
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**Athens Level \$500**

Full Page Ad in Fest Ad Book

**OPA Level \$150**

Half Page Ad in Fest Ad Book

To sponsor today, please call Foti Georgopoulos at 630-251-3462 or email [AuroraGreekFest@gmail.com](mailto:AuroraGreekFest@gmail.com). Deadline for sponsorship is Sept. 22, 2024.

**GOYA**

**SEPTEMBER 21 | 4:00 PM**

All high schoolers are invited to the GOYA Kick-Off for GOYA Olympics on September 21st at 4pm. Location is TBD.

To receive updates about GOYA, text [@stagoya](https://www.instagram.com/stagoya) to 81010







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SEPTEMBER 2024

ECCLESIASTICAL  
NEW YEAR



A Monthly Publication of Saint Athanasios Greek Orthodox Church

# THE CHAMPION



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office@saintathanasios.com



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