

THE CHAMPION

A Monthly Publication of Saint Athanasios Greek Orthodox Church

FEBRUARY 2023



MESSAGE FROM FR. PANAGIOTIS

Triodion Begins (Preparing for Lent)

Like many old married couples my Pappou mercilessly teased my Yiayia. It was always playful and light hearted. Through this constant teasing our family picked up some of our best and favorite phrases. One in particular was born when Yiayia began her vacation preparations well in advance of what Pappou found reasonable. He commented, "She's getting ready to get ready." This phrase is best used to describe all the energy put into planning how one might plan what to do.

Getting ready to get ready is the perfect way to describe the month of February. We will celebrate Pascha on April 16th, that is the big day to which everything is leading. But before we get to Pascha we will go through Lent, which is a time of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving to get us ready for Pascha. But before we experience Lent to get ready for Pascha, we have to get ready for Lent. So the Church gives us three preparatory weeks before Lent so that we can get ready to get ready. The Synaxarion of the Church describes it thus, "The present three Feasts, of the Publican and the Pharisee, the Prodigal Son, and the Second Coming, were devised by the Holy Fathers as a preliminary exercise and an incentive to prepare us and make us ready for the spiritual arena of the Fast" (Synaxarion of the Publican and the Prodigal). During these weeks, this year the weeks of Feb 5th, Feb 12th, and Feb 19th, the Church will gradually introduce fasting, scripture readings, different services of the Church, and even social events, all to get us ready for the spiritual journey of Lent.

Fasting – The week of Feb 5th is a fast free week. The week of Feb 12th is a regular fasting week, with a strict fast on Wed & Friday. The week of Feb 19th is known as Cheesefare week because we begin to fast from all meat on Feb 20th but dairy is still allowed until Feb 27th. The full strict fast begins on Clean Monday, Feb 27th. So you see we have a gradual increase of our fasting over the course of three weeks. This is to help us ease into the practice of fasting.

Scripture Readings & Different Services – If you follow the daily readings of the Church, you will notice that on Feb 22nd there are no readings from the New Testament. That day also has a different (Lenten) order to the services. During Lent the structure of the services change and we read from the Old Testament during the weekdays instead of the New Testament. Again the Church is introducing and easing us into the changes of Lent before Lent actually begins.

Social Events – This really ties the above two things together. Since we are easing into the Fast, Feb 19th is the last day to consume meat. Thus the tradition of the Glendi or Apokriatiko celebration began as a way to celebrate the last day of meat consumption and festive spirit before beginning the somber fast of Lent.

Please join us for our Parish Glendi on February 18th for a festive evening before the Lenten season. I pray that you find this three week period in February beneficial as we get ready to get ready for Pascha.

Fr. Panagiotis

MEMORIALS

Afrodite Botsis (40 Day)
Christos Deligiannis (2 Year)
Theodora Stamatopolous (3 Year)

FUNERALS

Afrodite Botsis
Aspasia Koulos

BLESSINGS

Peter Michael Panos
(Son of Nickolas and Amanda Panos)

WEDDINGS

Zoe and Skyler Sherwin

PARISH COUNCIL UPDATE



On January 8th, we had the swearing in of our new Parish Council members, and at the end of service, we held a meeting for elections of the Executive Board. I would like to thank my fellow Parish Council members for electing me, and for Fr. Panagiotis for the trust they all have in me to serve another year as your President. Below you will see the Executive Committee for 2023.

Brian McAnally – 1st Vice President
Tracey Collins– 2nd Vice President
Jim Kuncel – Treasurer
Aaron Mundie – Assistant Treasurer
Frank Demas – Recording Secretary
Anna Caniglia – Corresponding Secretary

Vespers & Feast Day: On January 17th and January 18th, we celebrated the vespers and feast day of our beloved Saint Athanasios. Thank you to all that assisted with preparations and also for attending so that we can all celebrate our Church's feast day. We thank His Grace Bishop Timothy of Hexamilion for being with us on our Vespers Service.

Upcoming Events: Our Philoptochos is doing an Apokriatiko dinner on February 18th, please contact Rose Pagonis to make your reservations, for a fun night! Our Joy Group is going to Altitude Trampoline on February 22nd all kids from kindergarten – 8th grade are asked to join. Be sure to check our Church calendar for future events.

Wishing all of you a happy and blessed month!

Foti Georgopoulos
Parish Council President

Aurora Greek Fest



SAVE THE DATE!

MAY 19-21, 2023

ICE CREAM SOCIAL

FEBRUARY 26, 2023

ST. MATTHEW HALL

Please join us before Forgiveness vespers to partake in what some might say is the best form of dairy before lent starts. And then stay for Forgiveness vespers as we enter the Lenten period.



STUMP THE PRIEST

Can you clarify our church's views on organ donation?

Thank you for this question. In response to organ donation there are two, seemingly contrary, views to look at. These are presented by the OCA in a piece related to Bioethics:

First there is the view which maintains that since we are all created in the image of God, the harvesting of organs should be considered a form of mutilation and be thereby prohibited by the Church.

The other perspective is that there is no greater gift that a dying person can give than to donate a vital organ(s) so that someone's life may be improved and/or prolonged. In fact, it might even be said that we are morally obligated to provide these organs, which we will no longer need, as a gift of unconditional brotherly or sisterly love for our neighbor.

Some express the fear that the bodies of humans will be viewed as simply a source of 'spare parts'. This is hardly the situation, at least in this country, whereby Hospital and Medical Centers go to great lengths to insure informed consent; that is to say, a person's organs upon death are not be taken without the expressed written consent of the patient. If an Orthodox Christian has died without leaving written consent to remove his/her organs, they should not be removed.

I present both views together so as not to deny the existence of the first. Organ donation can and sometimes does find opposition within the teaching of the Orthodox Church (we will present some examples). However, the vast majority of pastoral guidance counsels the second view, that organ donation is a gift of life to another and therefore is an act of love and sacrifice for our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Fr. Stanley Harakas clarifies the situations wherein the Church would counsel against organ donation when he states the following in the GOA Pastoral Guidelines for Bioethics:

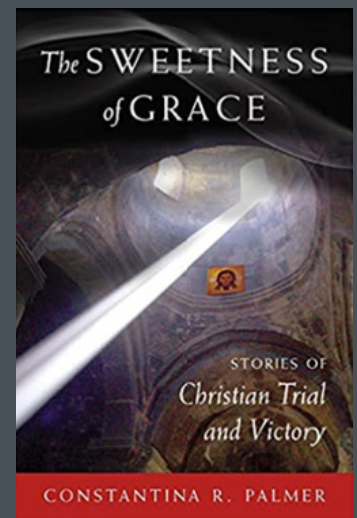
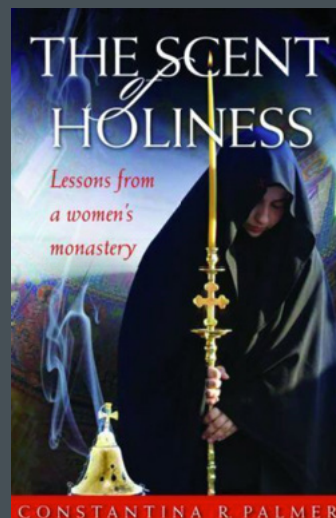
Organ transplants should never be commercialized nor coerced nor take place without proper consent, nor place in jeopardy the identity of the donor or recipient... The death of the donor should never be hastened in order to harvest organs for transplantation to another person.

As we can see, these are extreme circumstances. Yet the Church would oppose organ donation if the prospect of potential donation hinders and alters the current course of healthcare for the patient in order to obtain their organs in a timelier manner. The human person must be revered and cared for to the best of the medical staff's ability, and only when the union of their soul and body has been severed are we to see any difference in the course of action by the medical staff between a patient who has elected to donate their organs and a patient who has declined.

The other situation wherein the Church speaks against organ donation is when it is conducted for monetary gain. Now of course in the United States this very act is illegal, so the Church makes no controversial statement here. The question becomes then, do we differentiate between intact organs and bodily tissue or fluid. I would argue that treating our bodies as commodities is contrary to the dignity of the human person. So yes, selling (as opposed to donating) things such as blood, hair, plasma, reproductive cells etc. is contrary to the spirit of sacrifice required in order to actually share a part of your being with another.

BOOK OF THE MONTH

Stop in the Bookstore for two books by Constantina R. Palmer that will generate the feeling of love for our Orthodox faith. "The Scent of Holiness: Lessons from a Women's Monastery" will enlighten you about the spiritual life of nuns. "The Sweetness of Life: Stories of Christian Trial and Victory" includes conversations and discussions about the sweet and difficult aspects of the life of Orthodox nuns, monks, and lay people who have lived experiences in South Korea, Greece, and North America. These books show that our Orthodox faith is a global belief of Christians throughout the world.



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)

Thursday, February 2nd

Presentation of Our Lord in the Temple
Divine Liturgy

Sunday, February 5th

Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee
Divine Liturgy
40 Day memorial – Afrodite Botsis
2 Year memorial – Christos Deligiannis
3 Year memorial – Theodora Stamatopolous
Coffee Hour hosted by Botsis and Condos families (in memory of Afrodite Botsis)
11am Philoptochos General Meeting

Tuesday, February 7th

7:30pm Discover Orthodoxy

Wednesday, February 8th

11am Bible Study: Exodus

Thursday, February 9th

7pm Vespers - St. Haralambos
Holy Taxiarchai & St Haralambos Greek Orthodox Church
7373 N Caldwell Ave, Niles, IL 60714

Friday, February 10th

Divine Liturgy – St. Haralambos

Sunday, February 12th

Sunday of the Prodigal Son
Divine Liturgy
Coffee Hour hosted by JOY

Thursday, February 16th

3pm GOYA Mission Trip Fundraiser at That Burger Joint

Saturday, February 18th

Saturday of the Souls
Divine Liturgy
6pm Apokreatiko Glendi

Sunday, February 19th

Judgement Sunday (Meatfare Sunday)
Divine Liturgy
12pm Choir Rehearsal

Wednesday, February 22nd

11am Bible Study
7:30pm Discover Orthodoxy
JOY Trampoline Park

Saturday, February 25th

Holy Ascetics
Divine Liturgy

Sunday, February 26th

Forgiveness Sunday
Divine Liturgy
5pm Ice Cream Social
6pm Vespers – Forgiveness Vespers

Monday, February 27th

Clean Monday – Green Lent Begins
College Ministry Day of Prayer
5pm GOYA Lenten Dinner
6pm Great Compline

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!



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! As we start the new year, please consider bringing the below listed foods

Cereal and Canned Soup

Please contact Christina Valavanidis at christina.valavanidis@gmail.com with any questions.

PHILOPTOCHOS

Philoptochos had a very busy December! First, we would like to thank all of the parishioners who helped with our Salvation Army Tree by buying a gift for the children in need. Once again, we were able to make some children very happy by providing presents underneath their Christmas tree this year. Thank you to Betty Poulakidas and Connie Romios for chairing this event again this year. Extra thanks to Connie for putting together beautiful goodie bags for our homebound parishioners (as well as thanks to the bakers). Finally, we ended a productive calendar year with a Christmas party at the home of Jean Demas. Thank you to Jean for hosting a lovely evening!

Save the date! We will be having our first meeting of the year on Sunday, February 5th, right after liturgy. There will be a speaker coming from Hessed House to talk about how Hessed House helps our community and the scope of services provided. Please stay to listen to this brief talk so we can understand more about the population we serve and how we can get more involved. See you there!



You're Invited!

APOKRIATIKO GLENDI

Sponsored by Philoptochos



February 18 | 6 PM
St. Matthew Hall
\$50/person
\$25 for kids up to 12 | 4 & under free

RSVP to Rose Pagonis:
(630)-248-5475 | rose@rosepagonis.com

STEWARDSHIP

Our 2023 Stewardship Campaign, GIVING THANKS, is less a theme and more a way of life for us as Orthodox Christians. The question of the Psalmist "What shall I give to the Lord in return for all His benefits towards me?" (Psalm 116:2), is answered in every liturgy when we pray, "Let us offer ourselves and one another and our whole life to Christ our God."

Each Divine Liturgy is a Eucharist, a giving thanks, to the Lord. There we learn to offer our whole self to Him in prayer. When we understand the true meaning of the Holy Eucharist, we bridge the gap between liturgy and life, between our beautiful theology and practical stewardship. As Eucharistic Orthodox Christians, we see the world as God's gift. We offer the world back to God in thanksgiving with the words, "Thine own of Thine own we offer to Thee...."

The Stewardship Committee asks you to reflect upon the gifts and blessings that God has bestowed upon you. Then prayerfully consider how you might offer your thanks to the Lord through your stewardship of Time, Talent, and Treasure. Please complete and return the 2023 Stewardship Commitment Card as a reflection of GIVING THANKS.



DOWNLOAD
PLEDGE CARD

2023
COMMITMENT

SAINT
ATHANASIOS

GIVING THANKS

GOYA LENTEN DINNER FEBRUARY 27, 2023 (5-6 PM)

All high schoolers are invited to attend the GOYA Lenten dinner in St. Matthew Hall starting at 5 pm on Monday, February 27.

Contact Margarita Altidis with any question at margarita.altidis@gmail.com



GOYA "TSIKNOPEMPTI" FUNDRAISER
PROJECT MEXICO MISSION TRIP
February 16 | 3-8 PM
MENTION ST. A GOYA WHEN
YOU ORDER AT OBERWEIS &
THAT BURGER JOINT!
2879 95th St Suite 155, Naperville

CHECK OUT OUR
FUNDRAISING PAGE
HERE!

GOYA

MEN'S GROUP

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

Congratulations to Spiro Hountalas for winning the Vasilopita Throwdown on Sunday, January 8th. Hope he can repeat in 2024!

In late January, we enjoyed an NFL night at Poor Boy's Pub. Food, drinks and football made for a great event. We hope to see the group expand in 2023!

Upcoming Events

- Hesed House Dinner Service – Thursday, March 30

More details for these events will be in the church bulletins and Men's Group Facebook page. 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).



JOY

JUMP INTO FUN!

FEBRUARY 22

6:30 - 8:00 PM

All kindergarten to 8th grade
kids are invited

Altitude Trampoline
1600 Douglas Rd | Oswego, IL



Contact Chrissy
Pagonis at
630-817-5700
with questions

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!

OPA OPEN

Presented by Saint Athanasios Church

Location



21200 S Carillon Dr,
Plainfield, IL 60544
(815) 886-2132
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

Questions?

Contact Frank Demas at 224.805.6920 OR Pete Nassos at panassos@gmail.com

Sponsorship Opportunities Available

DISCOVER ORTHODOXY

Classes are
Scheduled on
Tuesday Evenings
at 7:30pm
Starting 9/27



Lenten Dinners & Lectures

Join us each Wednesday evening during Lent for Presanctified Liturgy followed by a community dinner & Lenten Lecture. Dinners will be hosted by various ministries throughout the parish and we have a great lineup of speakers planned.

March 1 - Dinner: Parish Council; Speaker: Dr. Vaia Papadimitriou

March 8 - Dinner: Philoptochos; Speaker: Dn. Perry Hamalis

March 22 - Dinner & Program: Choir

March 29 - Dinner: Men's Group; Speaker: Fr. Nick Lionas

April 5 - Dinner: Sunday School; Speakers: Oratorical Festival



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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332 W. Downer Pl.
Aurora, Illinois 60506
630-897-9291

healychapel@sbcglobal.net

Sugar Grove Facility

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Sugar Grove, Illinois 60554
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- Lunch
- Dinner

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KITCHEN — BAR — MARKET

CHE FIGATA

ITALY TO TABLE



CHE FIGATA
ITALY TO TABLE

Z·O·R·B·A
COCKTAIL BAR



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TORINO, ITALIA, 1895

TAP IN PUB

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

FEBRUARY 2023



Tridion Begins
(Preparing for Lent)

A Monthly Publication of Saint Athanasios Greek Orthodox Church

THE CHAMPION



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ATHANASIOS

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