

# THE CHAMPION

A Monthly Publication of Saint Athanasios Greek Orthodox Church

JULY/AUGUST 2023



## MESSAGE FROM FR. PANAGIOTIS

### We are Fellow Workers with God...

(1 Corinthians 3:9)

Fitness trainers are fond of the saying, "Summer bodies are built in the winter." Meaning the choices, habits, and hard work that is put in during the off season are what lay the foundation for success. So, while the summer is the time to show off a physique which was built in the winter, it is also the time to build the ministries which will serve the people of God in the fall-spring. July and August are some of the most intense and important for the upcoming 2023-2024 ministry year. It is at this time that each of the ministries prayerfully prepares and plans.

Over these two months, each of the parish ministries is hard at work, putting together their calendar of events, writing their curriculum, and collecting new volunteers. This year I have asked each of the ministries to consider how they might better collaborate with one another so that each of the parish ministries might work together for the common interest of God's people. Taking our cue from the writing of St. Paul, we discussed how we are called to minister together, not only being directed by God, but also assisting and supporting one another as "fellow workers with God." We came up with a great little game that I called "Ministry Speed Dating" to help our ministry leaders.

The ministry leaders sat in two rows facing each other and had 2 minutes to introduce their ministry and brainstorm ideas for future ministry collaboration and support. After 2 minutes they rotated chairs until each ministry had a chance to speak with every other ministry leader. Although it produced some unlikely pairings, each round brought a spirit of excitement and creativity.

Taking the energy from our "Speed Dating" experiment, the ministry leaders began the important task of bringing these ideas to life. Over the coming ministry year, we will see much more fellow work among our ministries and parishioners. Most importantly, we will refine our ministries so that we are fellow workers with God.

I thank all of the ministry leaders in our parish for their dedication and sacrifice to serve God's people, for their prayerful approach to joining in God's work, and for the bonds they build when working with one another.

*Fr. Panagiotis*

## MEMORIALS

Eugene Deligiannis (40 Days)

Demetrios Zafiroopoulos (3 Month)

William Plattos (6 Month)

Sultana (Sally) Corichides (1 Year)

Christina Wallace (11 Year)

## BAPTISMS

Ryan (son of Karen & Eric Raestas)

Luca (son of Alex & Christina Jimenez-Benetatos)

# PARISH COUNCIL UPDATE



**Summer Camp:** Our youth from grades Kindergarten – 5th grade participated in our Summer Camp. Thank you to Voula for coordinating this Summer Camp, and all the volunteers that assisted. Our GOYA kids were also a huge help to assist with the summer camp. All the kids had a great time, pictures from our summer camp is on our Facebook page.

**Golf Outing:** Our Annual Golf Outing took place on June 12th. Thank you to the great job of the committee for a fun filled day of golf and games on the course. We thank all the volunteers that assisted that day.

**Upcoming Events:** During the summer months, we try to also have some activities but also events for our parishioners. We are doing a Monastery pilgrimage to several monasteries around the area. July 19th we are visiting St John Chrysostomos Monastery, August 13th Serbian Orthodox Monasteries. Car pool is available. Contact Spiro Deligiannis if you would like to participate and for more information.

**Aurora Greek Fest:** As we have just completed our Aurora Greek Fest in May; it is time to start thinking about the Aurora Greek Fest again! The Aurora Greek Fest will take place September 22-24. Please mark your calendar to volunteer. We have completed the finances for the Festival and all invoices have been paid. An email will be sent out to all parishioners in regards to how well we did financially. Thank you all again for your continued support.

Wishing you all a wonderful, healthy, and safe Summer!

Foti Georgopoulos  
Parish Council President



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NOON TO 7 PM  
(SUNDAY)



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

## ORTHODOX TRIVIA NIGHT

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 9

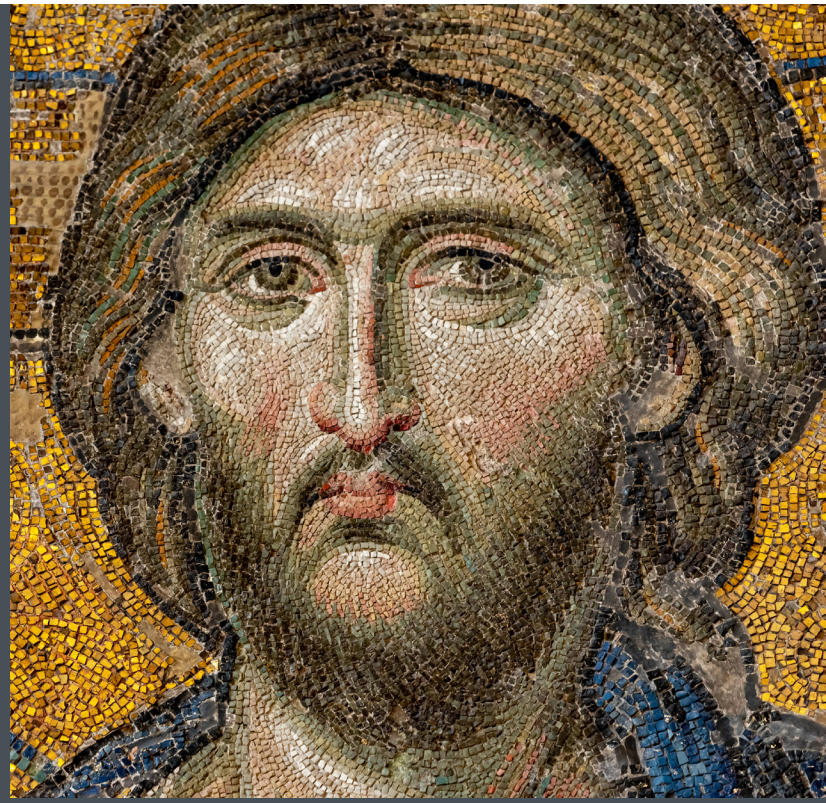
7:00pm Paraklesis

8:00pm Potluck dinner

8:30pm Orthodox trivia

Faith based questions on Orthodoxy, saints, sacraments, icons, St. Athanasios and more ...to confirm what you know, but also to find out why that is so ...and more so to learn more about our faith in a fun and creative manner.

*Sponsored by the Spiritual Renewal Committee.*



# STUMP THE PRIEST

It was announced in Church that Metropolitan Nathanael gave Fr. Panagiotis a new title and new part of his vestments to wear. What do these things mean?

Serving as a clergyman is very similar to serving within the military. There are three offices of clergy: Deacon, Priest, Bishop. Within each office there are different ranks, and the vestments that a particular clergyman wears tells you what their rank is, just like the insignia on a soldier's uniform.

For the priesthood the ranks are:

1. Presbyter
2. Confessor
3. Economos
4. Protospyter (married priests) or Archimandrite (celibate priests)

Each year, at the vespers for his namesday (June 10th), Metropolitan Nathanael bestows new ranks on select clergy. Last month, His Eminence blessed Fr. Panagiotis with the rank of Economos, the second highest rank for a married clergyman. Although the title is purely honorific at this point, originally the Economos was the clergyman responsible for overseeing all of the finances of a Metropolis.



As a sign of this rank, when a priest is made an Economos, he will begin to wear a diamond shaped piece of vestment called an Epigonation. In Greek the word epigonation means upon the knee (Epi-upon Gonata-knee), since it hangs down and rests on the right thigh/knee. The Epigonation originated as a piece of ceremonial clothing within the Byzantine Empire. High ranking officials and military commanders would wear a sword as part of their official dress. The epigonation was a piece of fabric or leather that covered the knee/thigh to protect the wearer's leg from the sword. Eventually the sword dropped out of fashion, but the epigonation stayed as a symbol of rank.

The prayer that the priest says while putting on the Epigonation keeps this connection to the sword and the military nature of clergy as soldiers in God's Kingdom.

Gird your sword upon Your thigh, O Mighty One, and in Your splendor and beauty string Your bow. Prosper and reign because of truth, meekness, and righteousness. Your right hand shall lead You wondrously always, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

## BOOK REVIEW

By Natallia Kasmouskaya

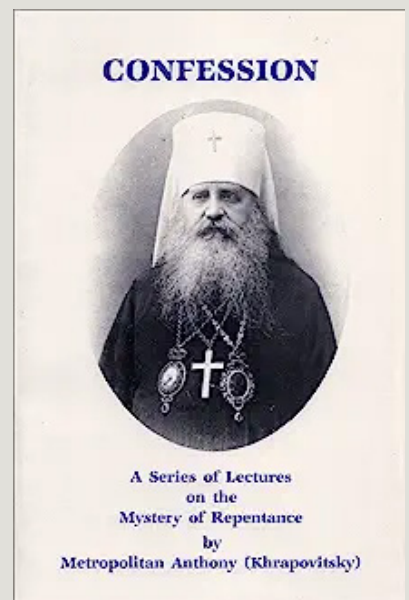
### **CONFESSION: A Series of Lectures on the Mystery of Repentance by Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky).**

Spiritual insight is packaged in this small book of 112 pages discussing one's soul with the voice of pastoral love of the author himself. Even though Confession seems to address spiritual Fathers, the book can be an every day life manual. Each chapter is dedicated to a particular passion one may struggle with, knowingly or unknowingly.

One can take value from numerous practical applications, such as how to expel envy from your heart, and how to find spiritual healing due to unbelief and weak faith, etc.

The book is almost offering "confession" without the confession and therefore, could be a good resource in preparing for confession as well, or may encourage one who avoided confession to move forward with it realizing that there is great spiritual force in the hands of faithful clergy for forgiveness of our sins.

To summarize, here is a quote from the book: "Lead religious life and you will find out for yourself the difference between temptation from the devil and those from your own evil will".



# 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, July 2nd

Divine Liturgy - 4th Sunday of Matthew

## Sunday, July 9th

Divine Liturgy - 5th Sunday of Matthew

## Monday, July 10th

7:00 pm Choir Federation Rehearsal

## Sunday, July 16th

Divine Liturgy - Sunday of the Holy Fathers of the 4th Ecumenical Council

## Wednesday, July 19th

7:30 pm Choir Rehearsal

## Thursday, July 20th

Divine Liturgy - Elias the Prophet

## Sunday, July 23rd

Divine Liturgy - 7th Sunday of Matthew

## Wednesday, July 26th

Divine Liturgy - St. Paraskevi

7:30 pm Choir Rehearsal

## Thursday, July 27th

Divine Liturgy - St Panteleimon the Great Martyr

## Sunday, July 30th

Divine Liturgy - 8th Sunday of Matthew

## Tuesday, August 1st

7pm - Paraklesis

## Wednesday, August 2nd

7pm - Paraklesis

## Friday, August 4th

7pm - Paraklesis

## Saturday, August 5th

7pm - Vespers - Holy Transfiguration Greek Orthodox Monastery  
17906 IL-173, Harvard IL 60033

## Sunday, August 6th

Divine Liturgy - Transfiguration of our Lord

## Monday, August 7th

7pm - Paraklesis

## Tuesday, August 8th

7:30 pm Choir Rehearsal

## Wednesday, August 9th

7pm - Paraklesis

## Friday, August 11th

7pm - Paraklesis

7pm - Jr GOYA/GOYA Kickoff

## Sunday, August 13th

Divine Liturgy - 10th Sunday of Matthew  
12pm Farmer's Market

## Monday, August 14th

7pm - Vespers - Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary  
Assumption Greek Orthodox Church  
601 S Central Ave, Chicago, IL 60644

## Tuesday, August 15th

Divine Liturgy - Dormition of the Theotokos

## Wednesday, August 16th

7:30 pm Choir Rehearsal

## Sunday, August 20th

Divine Liturgy - 11th Sunday of Matthew

## Wednesday, August 23rd

7:30pm Choir Rehearsal

## Sunday, August 27th

Divine Liturgy - 12th Sunday of Matthew

## Tuesday, August 29th

Divine Liturgy - Beheading of John the Baptist

## Thursday, August 31st

6pm - Men's Group at Hased House

# 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

## Pancake Mix/Baking Mix

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

# PHILOPTOCHOS

Board elections were held on May 15th at the home of Kristin Standish. Congratulations to the new board members, who will serve a 2-year term:

- President-Sue Manos
- 1st VP--Christina Valavanidis
- 2nd VP--Leah Fanning
- Treasurer--Thanea Walter
- Assistant treasurer--Mary Kyes
- Recording Secretary--Elli Koulos
- Corresponding Secretary--Connie Patsavas-Romios
- Board member—Stephanie Altidis
- Advisor—Samantha Dulles

A huge thank you to outgoing President Samantha Dulles, who led our chapter for the past four years, and guided us through a pandemic! Her spirituality, creativity and humor have been a blessing to us all.

Our end-of-year party was held at the home of Sherry Haralambopoulos on June 7th. We had a nice turnout and enjoyed a catered meal from Sharko's. Thank you to Shery for hosting!

We made 25 Blankets for Babies at Thanea Walter's home on June 15th. Thank you to Thanea for organizing and hosting this event. Twelve Philoptochos members plus a few friends turned out to cut and tie fringe! Blankets for Babies is a Metropolis initiative, and the blankets will be donated to children's hospitals in the Chicago area.

We hope to participate in the Metropolis' Feed the Hungry project over the summer. We would be responsible for making about 125 sack lunches and distributing them outside Annunciation Cathedral in Chicago on a Tuesday morning. Details will be forthcoming.

We have a number of activities in the works for fall, including a kickoff event and fall fundraiser. More details to come!



## 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 10th. Payment can be made at the end of the registration form. Cost is \$35.00 per child. Scan QR Code to register your student!



Please contact **Voula Ortega** at [sundayschool@saintathanasios.com](mailto:sundayschool@saintathanasios.com) with any questions.

Register

# STEWARDSHIP

**WOW** ... is all we can say when we saw all the Stewards of all ages donating their Time and Talents at the recent Spring Festival. **THANK YOU** for your commitment, which illustrates the fact that you understand what Stewardship is all about. In addition to the Time you took to be present and volunteer your Time, our Stewards donated their Treasures to support the festival. This shows that when Time, Talents, and Treasures come together we can accomplish anything and overcome any "barriers" that we encounter along the way.

In this article, we want to focus on what **Time, Talent, and Treasures** Stewardship provides us. The following are some examples of what Stewardship supports and provides us.

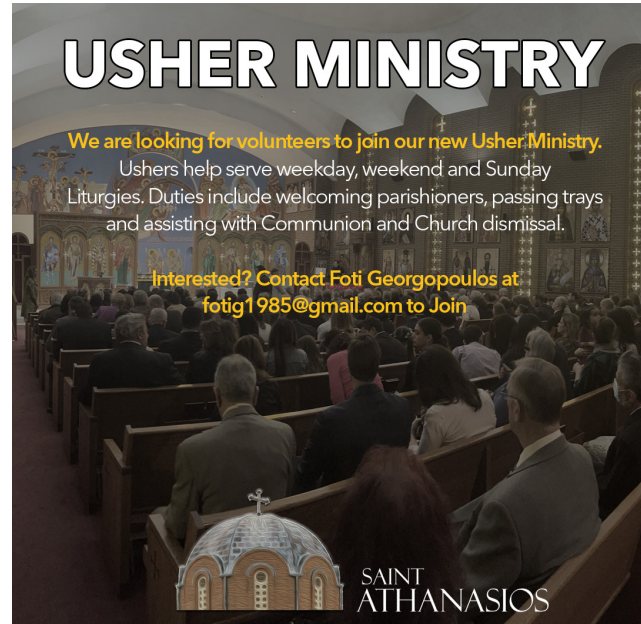
- **Ministries** ... Sunday School, Youth activities, Philoptochos, Men's Group, and many more
- **Our Church** .... A place to worship and exchange fellowship with our fellow Parishioners
- **Outreach & Evangelism** ... Helping those within our Parish Community and those outside it, and spreading the Lord's word and Orthodoxy
- **Parish Communications and Administration** ... Parish Council, Office Staff, Website development and maintenance, Champion, Weekly Bulletin and Updates, etc.
- **Pastoral Activities and Sacraments** ... Weekly services, baptisms, weddings, funerals, confession, bible studies, meeting with Catechumens, Parishioner visits, house blessings, hospital visits, and many, many more
- **Giving Back** ... a place where we can give thanks to the Lord for what he has given us by giving back with Love and Appreciation.

Stewardship is foundational to every aspect of our Church life. It is core to our faith, beliefs, and our everyday life. Without giving our Time, Talents, and Treasures, these items would not exist.

**GIVING THANKS**, our 2023 Stewardship Campaign, is less a theme and more a way of life for us.

Thank you again for your gifts of Time, Talents, and Treasures.

In your Service,  
Pete Nassos & Elli Koulos



## JR GOYA KICKOFF EVENT AUGUST 11, 2023 (7:00 PM)

Calling all 6th, 7th & 8th graders.....Join us for our first Jr. GOYA event of the 2023/2024 school year. We will gather to attend Paraklesis service and then spend some time learning about another and our plans for the year. Parents please plan to have your child at church by 7pm. Pick up with be promptly at 8:30pm.

Please contact **Amelia Botsis** at [jrgoya@saintathanasios.com](mailto:jrgoya@saintathanasios.com) with any questions.

## GOYA KICKOFF

FRIDAY, AUGUST 11  
Details to come!

Text @STAGOYA to 81010  
to receive updates

QUESTIONS?  
CONTACT MARGARITA ALTIDIS AT  
[GOYA@SAINTATHANASIOS.COM](mailto:GOYA@SAINTATHANASIOS.COM)

# MEN'S GROUP

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

Our upcoming events for the rest of 2023

## Hesed House Dinners

We will be preparing and serving dinner for over two hundred residents on the Thursdays of August 31 & November 30. The Hesed House is the second largest homeless shelter in Illinois and is located in Aurora. This effort has become a truly fulfilling mission of our Orthodox faith and community outreach of our parish. The effort is also open to all our parishioners to participate.

## BBQ Get Together

Come join us for a BBQ on Thursday, September 7th at church. We will be grilling, eating and enjoying refreshments. This will be a great opportunity to catch up with friends, meet new members and learn about our upcoming activities.

## Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology Fundraising Event

We are working with the Metropolis and Alumni Association of HCHC on a dinner event to benefit the Hellenic College/Holy Cross School of Theology this fall. This will be the first time an event like this is being held on a Chicago Metropolis event level. This will be a fantastic opportunity to support seminarians and future leaders of the Orthodox Church. Date and additional details to follow shortly.

## Blood Drive

The Men's Group will sponsor a blood drive on Saturday, November 4, 9:00am-1:00pm. Every donor will save up to 3 lives! More details will follow.

You can like and follow our Facebook page by searching for "Men's Group of St Athanasios Greek Orthodox Church"

We welcome men (21+) to join us as we grow our mission. If interested, please contact Spiro Hountalas (naperspike@aol.com), Peter Metrou (pnmlawyer@aol.com) or Nick Dagiantis (ndagiantis@gmail.com).



## Monastery Pilgrimages

Holy Transfiguration Greek Orthodox Monastery (June 24)

St. John Chrysostomos Greek Orthodox Monastery (July 19)

Serbian Orthodox Monasteries (August 13)

Contact Spiro J. Deligiannis (630-677-5014) for further information and/or expression of interest to attend/join.

# SAINT ATHANASIOS BIBLE BOO CAMP

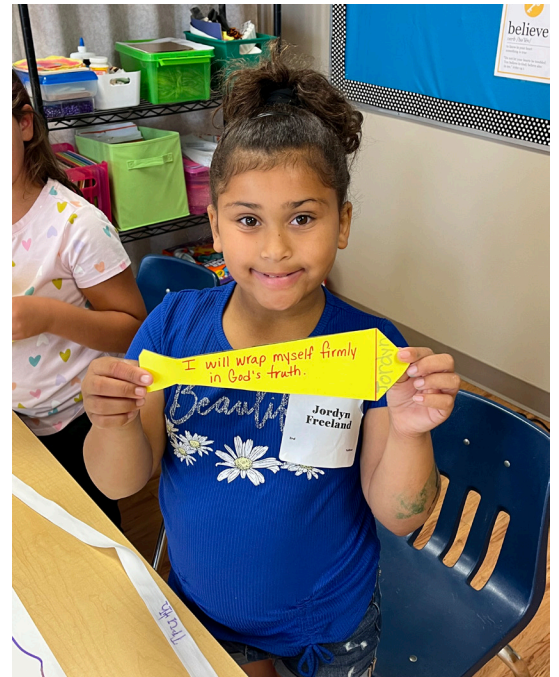
SUMMER CAMP 2023



Summer Camp 2023 was a huge success! Thank you to all those who participated and helped plan this program. From the student volunteers, session leaders, and behind-the-scenes planners, our participants are thankful for your efforts and had a blast learning all about how they can be warriors for Christ!







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JULY/AUGUST 2023



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