

THE CHAMPION

A Monthly Publication of Saint Athanasios Greek Orthodox Church

MARCH 2025



MESSAGE FROM FR. PANAGIOTIS

That All Should be Saved and Come to the Knowledge of Truth (1 Tim 2:4)

It was the firm teaching that the salvation of Christ belongs to all mankind and His specific command to share that salvation with all nations (Matthew 28:19) that drove the Apostles to impart the joy of our Lord's resurrection to the world. Likewise, as a parish, guided by the words of St. Paul that God desires "that all should be saved and come to the knowledge of truth" the message of salvation is reaching out into the community around St. Athanasios. Thus, at the beginning of this Lenten Season, we will welcome 17 new Catechumens into our parish.

A Catechumen is someone who is preparing to join the Orthodox Church, either through the sacrament of Baptism or Chrismation. These 17 new Brothers and Sisters in Christ have been drawn to God through His call and found in St. Athanasios a loving and nurturing home.

It is to them and the Catechumens that came before them that we owe this most special and meaningful time of year: Lent. The period we call Lent began as the 40 day fast that Catechumens would undertake before their initiation into the Church, which always coincided with the celebration of Pascha. But it was not just the Catechumens who prepared for this blessed day. As Fr. Alexander Schmemmann writes, "This preparation involved the entire community, which thus was preparing itself for the reception of the new members. And it is from this double preparation – that of the catechumen and that of the Church – that there developed the pre-paschal liturgical season which today we call Great Lent."

Look how beautifully Lent tends to the needs of all, just as St. Paul said. Those in the Church pray and fast to prepare to celebrate Pascha with new brothers and sisters, while those new to the Church pray and fast to prepare to celebrate Pascha as members of the Church.

It is our prayer that as we continue to fulfill God's desire that all should be saved that we continue to welcome Catechumens into the parish and that the established members of the Church rejoice as our lives are enriched by their presence, just as theirs will be by ours.

May the Lord strengthen us through the preparation of the Lenten Season so that together we may all share in the light of the Resurrection.



1965-2025

MEMORIALS

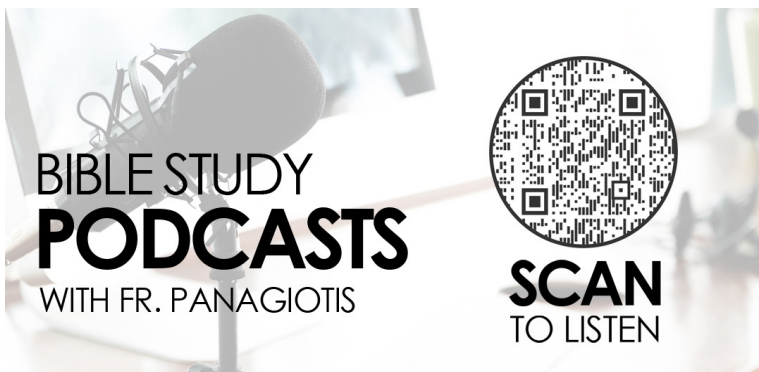
Anastasios Bujouves (9 day)	Helen Metrou (5 years)
Ioannis Gastouniotis (40 days)	Patricia Vourtsis (5 years)
Athanasios Moreates (1 Year)	Nicholas Metrou (9 years)
George Bujouves (2 years)	Chris Bujouves (33 years)
Christos Deligiannis (4 Years)	Nicholas Vourtsis (42 Years)

FUNERALS

Ioannis K Gastouniotis

BAPTISMS

Rosette Kotlarz (Daughter of Diane & Jason Kotlarz)
Nash Rio (Son of Danielle Tsevas & Jake Rio)



PARISH COUNCIL

Your 2025-2026 parish council has begun with enthusiasm, introducing an onboarding guide detailing council roles, parish history, our 3-year vision, mission, initiatives, standing committees, 2025 projects, meeting schedules, and contact info. We've appointed lead chairpersons for each committee, and we're advancing our 2024/2025 ministry goals.

We're grateful for your support in our stewardship and capital campaigns, especially for helping us eliminate our mortgage as we celebrate our 60th anniversary. Phase two of the capital campaign focuses on church maintenance. Our 2025 Stewardship Campaign, themed "Your Own from Your Own," aims for a 15% increase over last year's contributions.

Usher Ministry

We're excited to launch the new Usher Ministry this month, open to all parishioners, with Frank Demas as chairperson. Roles include greeting, distributing materials, candle management, seating assistance, and more, on a rotating basis. More details will be in upcoming communications.

Lenten Services

As Lent approaches, join us for services starting March 2nd with Forgiveness Vespers, followed by Great Compline on Mondays, Presanctified Liturgy on Wednesdays, and Salutations on Fridays. Lenten discussions and meals will follow Wednesday services. Check our weekly bulletins and website for service times.

Wishing you and your families a Blessed Lent!

Brian McAnally

Parish Council President

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 to find an alternative date and time.



**SCAN FOR
APPOINTMENT**

Lenten Dinners & Lectures

Join us each Wednesday evening of Lent for a Meal hosted by one of our parish ministries and Lenten Lecture following the Presanctified Divine Liturgy.

- 3/5 - Explaining the Presanctified Divine Liturgy (Fr. Panagiotis)
- 3/12 - Diakonia: A Divine Calling (Archdeacon Vasilios Smith)
- 3/19 - Pan-Orthodoxy in America (Fr. Nicholas Anton)
- 3/26 - Living the Lenten Season in our Daily Life (Pres. Nichole)
- 4/2 - Parish Oratorical Festival
- 4/9 - The Life and Legacy of St. Olga of Alaska (Deno Saclarides)





And When You Pray...

The 2025 St. Athanasios Adult Lenten Retreat

March 8 | 9:30 AM - 5 PM

Beginning with Liturgy and ending with Vespers

\$10 | Includes Lunch

Any adult, 18 and older is welcome. Sessions will focus on learning how to pray using the prayers of the Church and the prayers of the heart. This will be a phone-free event.

**SCAN TO
REGISTER**



Register by March 5th

The first 33 people
receive a prayer rope

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

LENTEN PRAYER

The Lenten Prayer of St. Ephraim: O Lord and Master of my life, take from me the spirit of sloth, despair, lust of power, and idle talk. But give rather the spirit of chastity, humility, patience, and love to Thy servant. Yea, O Lord and King, grant me to see my own transgressions, and not to judge my brother, for blessed art Thou, unto ages of ages. Amen.

PARISH CALENDAR

All services are live streamed on our YouTube Channel.

Orthros begins at 8:30am with Divine Liturgy following at 9:30am (unless otherwise noted below)

Saturday, March 1

Divine Liturgy - Holy Ascetics

Sunday, March 2

Divine Liturgy - Forgiveness Sunday

11:30am Usher Training

6pm Forgiveness Vespers (at St Demetrios, Elmhurst)

Monday, March 3

5pm GOYA Lenten Dinner & Compline

6pm Great Compline

Wednesday, March 5

11am Bible Study

6pm Presanctified Liturgy

7:30pm Lenten Dinner & Lecture: "Explaining the Presanctified Divine Liturgy" (Fr. Panagiotis)

Thursday, March 6

7:30pm Choir Rehearsal

Friday, March 7

7pm Salutations to the Theotokos

Saturday, March 8

Divine Liturgy - St. Theodore & Miracle of Kolyva

11am Parish Lenten Retreat

6pm GOYA Feed my Starving Children

Sunday, March 9 (Daylight Saving Times begins)

Divine Liturgy - Sunday of Orthodoxy/Forty

Martyrs of Sebastia Icon Procession/No Sunday School

Monday, March 10

6pm Great Compline

Wednesday, March 12

6pm Presanctified Liturgy

7:30pm Lenten Dinner & Lecture: "Diakonia: A Divine Calling" (Archdeacon Vasilios Smith)

Thursday, March 13

11am Agape Meeting

7:30pm Choir Rehearsal

Friday, March 14

6pm JOY Meeting

7pm Salutations to the Theotokos

Sunday, March 16

Divine Liturgy - Sunday of St. Gregory Palamas

11:30am Philoptochos General Meeting

Monday, March 17

6pm Great Compline

Wednesday, March 19

11am Bible Study

6pm Presanctified Liturgy

7:30pm Lenten Dinner & Lectures: "Pan-Orthodoxy in America" (Fr. Nicholas Anton)

Thursday, March 20

7:30pm Choir Rehearsal

Friday, March 21

5pm GOYA Service Project & Salutations

7pm Salutations to the Theotokos

Saturday, March 22

6pm Men's Group: March Madness Party

Sunday, March 23

Divine Liturgy - Sunday of the Holy Cross

Monday, March 24

7pm Vespers - Feast of Annunciation

Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral

1017 N LaSalle Dr, Chicago, IL 60610

Tuesday, March 25

Divine Liturgy - Annunciation of the Theotokos

Wednesday, March 26

6pm Presanctified Liturgy

6pm JrGOYA Meeting

7:30pm Lenten Dinner & Lectures: "Living the Lenten Season in our Daily Life" (Pres. Nichole)

Thursday, March 27

7:30 pm Choir Rehearsal

Friday, March 28

7pm Salutations to the Theotokos

Sunday, March 30

Divine Liturgy - Sunday of St John Climacus

No Sunday School

Monday, March 31

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!

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 to everyone who generously donated food to our Pantry! Your contributions make a real difference in the lives of our community members who need it most. We are so grateful for your kindness & support.
2024 total - 691lbs of Food!

Please donate food that is Healing to the Hungry - Lean Proteins (Saturated Fats), No Sodium, Low Sugar Fruits, Whole Grain Items. No dented cans or open packaged foods. Expired food can not be accepted. This month's request is:

Canned Tomatoes, Tomato Paste/Sauce & Pasta Sauce

Please contact Betty Roussos at bettyroussos@yahoo.com with any questions.

PHILOPTOCHOS

Thank you to everyone who supported our Apokreatiko Glendi! We had a great turnout and will be making donations to Philoxenia House and the Nancy Gladis Scholarship Fund. I am especially appreciative of all the time and effort that was put into the planning by our committee: Stephanie Altidis, Leah Fanning, Margarita Altidis, Connie Patsavas-Romios and Sia Panos. Thanks too to our kitchen crew, cleanup team and everyone else who lent a hand. Without all of your talents, we would not have been able to put on such a successful event!

We have a number of activities coming in March.

- The Metropolis is hosting a Womens Safety Seminar Saturday, March 5th, 12:30 am, at St. George Church in Chicago. Please refer to my weekly email for more information.
- The Metropolis Lenten Retreat is coming up on Saturday, March 15th, 9 am, at Annunciation Church in Milwaukee. If anyone is interested in attending, let me know so I can RSVP.
- We are hosting the Wednesday Lenten Dinner on March 19th. A signup sheet is available. Please see the weekly email for the link.
- The Metropolis Blankets for Babies event will be held Saturday, April 5th, 10 am, at Sts. Peter and Paul Church in Glenview. Sewing skills are not required! If anyone is interested in attending, please contact me for more details.

Don't forget about our cookbook, No Meat, No Problem! It's filled with recipes that you will enjoy making during Lent. Cookbooks are available after Liturgy in St. Matthew Hall for \$20 (\$25 if you want it mailed). You can also contact Thanea Walter or Mary Kyes to get a copy.

Sue Manos
Philoptochos President

AGAPE MINISTRY

We were lucky to attend the Hearing Fair during our February meeting where we learned about the new hearing loop being installed. We were also able to have our hearing screened. Join us next month on March 13th at 11am. Check the bulletin for the topic as it gets closer. Contact Samantha for more information or to be on the email distribution list. 312.504.4448 or agape@saintathanasios.com

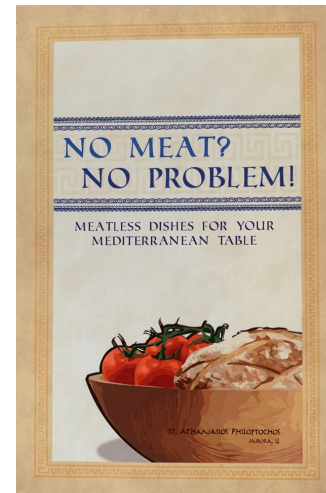
Looking ahead: April: No meeting

May 4th. Agape will host coffee hour.



ST. ATHANASIOS PHILOPTOCHOS SOCIETY
AURORA, ILLINOIS

COOKBOOK SALE



\$20 PER COPY
\$25 PER COPY WITH POSTAGE & HANDLING

Please make checks payable to Saint Athanasios Philoptochos

Purchase at Church OR Send your order to
Mary Kyes 7402 Canterbury Place Downers Grove, IL 60516
with your mailing address, telephone number, and payment.

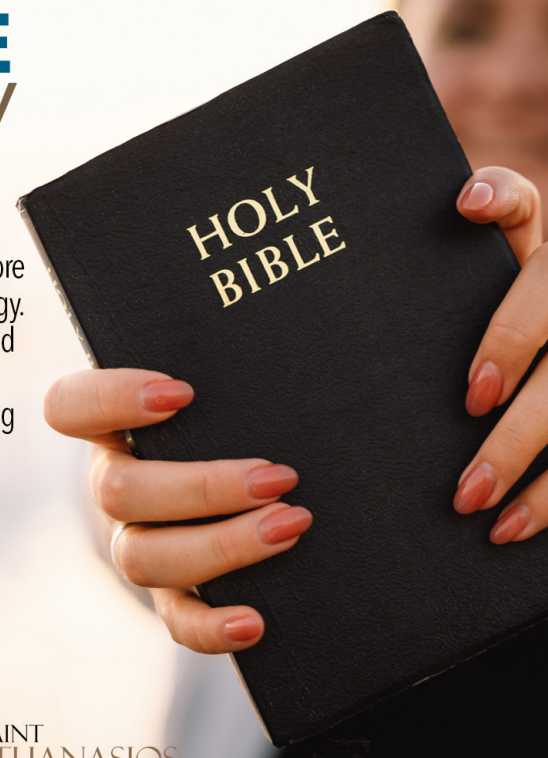
Questions? email mkyes11@comcast.net

Proceeds donated to local charities.



BIBLE STUDY

Join our Bible Study this Spring as we explore Scripture and the Liturgy. Sessions are the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month at 11am starting February 5th.



SAINT
ATHANASIOS

STEWARDSHIP

The Gift You Didn't Know You Had

Jim never thought he had much to offer his parish. He wasn't a speaker, a musician, or a teacher. But one Sunday, he noticed an older woman struggling to carry chairs after a church event. Without thinking, he stepped in to help. The next week, he stayed after liturgy to set up for Holy Week. Then he started fixing wobbly tables and changing light bulbs. Before long, people began to notice his quiet work. "Jim, you're such a blessing," someone said. We couldn't do this without you.

Jim never saw himself as a leader, but his willingness to help strengthened the Parish in ways he never expected.

Stewardship isn't about grand gestures. It's about offering what we have, no matter how small. As St. Peter reminds us, "As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good Stewards of God's varied grace" (Peter 4:10).

Your gift might be simple, but in God's hands, it can make all the difference. What can you offer today?

We are very fortunate to have many "Jims" in our Parish that generously give their Time and Talents ... Thank You. Your generous giving of your Time and Talents is making a difference within our Parish Community and the Communities that we live in.

In His Service,

Elli Koulos and Pete Nassos

COLLEGE MINISTRY



Anthony Standish

Anthony Standish is attending the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado. His major is in Electrical and Computer Engineering, and he expects to graduate in May 2025. His favorite class so far has been "The American Way of War". After graduation, Anthony's plan is to pursue pilot training at the Columbus Air Force Base at Mississippi. In the longer term, he would like to be flying combat search and rescue and air refueling in the Lockheed Martin HC-130J. The Orthodox Church Anthony attends close to the Academy is the "Holy Theophany" Church. What he likes most about the Saint Athanasios Parish is the community, and the fond memories he has made here. Anthony's favorite sport is golf. He also enjoys flying, snowboarding, and tinkering. His favorite season is Summer because of the warm weather which allows for golfing and flying. His favorite restaurant while at College is "Back East Bar & Grill". When at home, he enjoys dining at "Rito's" Mexican Restaurant.

BOOK STORE

As we begin our Great Lent season, please stop in our Bookstore for Lenten related books on prayer, fasting with recipes, and other spiritual titles to help your reflection, repentance, and renewal with Pascha approaching. We also have new religious items in colorful prayer ropes, bracelets, and clip on keychain crosses custom designed and prayerfully made by Gustavo Reyes, Catechumen, who will be confirmed on Holy Saturday. Gustavo also does iconography in the form of oil painting. Please check in with Jean Demas, Bookstore Coordinator, for more information, or for any other custom types of orders from the Monasteries since there is less work being done there during our Holy Lenten period. Stop in soon!



MEN'S GROUP

Thank you all for your support and participation in this ministry in 2024! We hope to continue our successful ministry in 2025 with your help.

Men's Workshop - Busyness & Stillness

Thank you for attending our third workshop on busyness and stillness on February 27. Our last workshop will be on April 10.

March Madness – March 22

We will be getting together for our annual March Madness viewing party on Saturday, March 22. Look for more details about the venue and time.

Lenten Dinner Meal – April 9

The Men's Group will once again provide dinner after Presanctified Liturgy. Last year we served soup, spanakorizo, gigantes, veggie tray, salad, fruit, just to name a few. More information on how to sign up coming soon.

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 (pnmetrou@gmail.com), Bill Collins (bctc@sbcglobal.net) or Nick Dagiantis (ndagiantis@gmail.com).



NCAA MARCH MADNESS

**MEN'S GROUP
WATCH PARTY**

Saturday, March 22

Poor Boys Pub
283 Montgomery Rd #1653 | Montgomery
Starting at 6:00 PM

BLOOD DRIVE

Hope springs
eternal

**DONATE
BLOOD**

**WEDNESDAY
APRIL**

30

4:00PM -8:00PM

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

PHOTO ID IS REQUIRED.

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, load the Versiti Donor app, call (800) 7TO-GIVE, or scan the QR code below.

EVERY DONOR WILL SAVE UP TO 3 LIVES!



Call (630) 723-2589 with
eligibility questions.



Monday, June 9, 2025

Save The Date!

**OPA
OPEN**

Presented by
Saint Athanasios Church

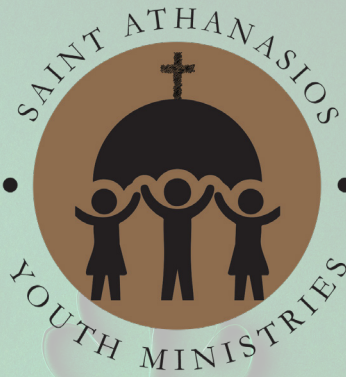
Location	Event Details
 THE LINKS AT CARILLON 21200 S Carillon Dr, Plainfield, IL 60544 (815) 886-2132 www.carillongolf.com	Registration & Lunch: 11:30-12:15 PM Tee Off: 12:30 PM Shotgun-Scamble On course contests for players of all abilities Dress Code: Golf Attire Dinner: 5:30 PM Raffle & Auctions

More Details to Follow Soon



How Do We Sign up?	Questions?
Call church office: 630-851-6106 Web: saintathanasios.com/golf	Contact Frank Demas at 224.805.6920 OR Pete Nassos at panassos@gmail.com

Sponsorship Opportunities Available



JOY

MARCH 14, 2025 | 6:00 PM

JOY Students, join us for our March meeting on **March 14th at 6pm.**

More information and RSVP in Remind.



JR GOYA

MARCH 26, 2025 | 6:00 PM

Jr. GOYAns - join us for Presanctified Liturgy and a Lenten meal as our March meeting on **March 26th at 6pm.**

More information and RSVP in Remind.



GOYA

GOYAns - we have three meetings for the month of March! RSVP for them in Remind:

- GOYA Lenten Dinner & Compline: **March 3 from 5pm to 8:30pm**
- GOYA Feed My Starving Children event: **March 8 from 6pm to 9pm**
- GOYA Service Project & Salutations: **March 21 from 5pm to 7pm**



ORATORICAL FESTIVAL

Calling all 7th - 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. The Oratorical Festival is divided into the Senior Division (grades 10-12) and Junior Division (grades 7-9). Youth get to explore and deepen their faith and hone their speech writing and public speaking skills. 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. All participants at the National Finals receive awards ranging from \$1,500 to \$7,000. Finalists at all levels are eligible to receive the Chrysostom Scholarship to Hellenic College ranging from \$2,500 to \$30,000 per year, to receive a credit for the pursuit of one undergraduate degree. Our high school classes will be incorporating the topics of the Oratorical Festival to prepare our students for this competition.



SCAN
TO LEARN MORE

GOOD FRIDAY RETREAT

Calling ALL Sunday School Students (Kindergarten to 12th grade)! Join us for our Good Friday Retreat on Friday, April 18th, from 9 AM to 3 PM. This year's theme, "Darkness to Light," will guide us in exploring the profound journey from Christ's crucifixion to His resurrection. A light breakfast and lunch will be provided. School excuse letters are available for registrants. The registration fee is \$12 per attendee.



Lenten Donations

2025

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

*prices listed are suggested for covering costs

SALUTATIONS ICON FLOWERS

1st Salutation March 7	\$125
2nd Salutation March 14	\$125
3rd Salutation March 21	\$125
4th Salutation March 28	\$125
Akathist Hymn April 4	\$125

PALM SUNDAY

Feastal Icon Flowers	\$125
Palm Strips for Crosses	\$100
Palm Fronds	\$300
Bay Branches	\$350

BRIDEGROOM ICON FLOWERS

1st Bridegroom(Palm Sunday)	\$150
2nd Bridegroom(Holy Monday)	\$150
3rd Bridegroom(Holy Tuesday)	\$150

HOLY WEDNESDAY

Flour	5LB
Olive Oil	1 bottle
Mystical Supper Icon Flowers	\$125

HOLY THURSDAY

Crucifixion Icon Flowers	\$125
Crucifix Floral Wreath	\$300

GOOD FRIDAY

Kouvouklion Flowers	\$1500
Kouvouklion Carnations	\$300
Rose Petals for Epitaphios	\$25

PASCHA/MISC

Pascha Icon Flowers	\$150
Rose Water	\$30
Lamp Oil	\$30
Red Eggs	



dahlia
weddings and baptisms



**Weddings
Baptisms
Christmas
Easter**



dahliawb.com
630.596.6826

SUMMER CAMP



Calling all Kindergarten through 5th grade students! Join us on June 10-13 for this year's Saint Athanasios Summer Camp titled "With the Mother of Light: A Summer with the Theotokos", where we will journey through the life of the Theotokos and learn how she can guide us closer to Christ! This four-day faith-filled adventure will include games, crafts, music, and more! Children will explore the life of the Virgin Mary—from her early years and her faithful "yes" to God, to her role as the Mother of Christ and her continued prayers for us today. Through engaging activities, storytelling, and prayer, students will discover how to follow her example of faith, obedience, and love for God. Don't miss this special opportunity to grow in faith and friendship!

Scan QR Code to Sign up
and for More Information



2025 PILGRIMAGES

Tuesday, June 24

Holy Transfiguration, Harvard, IL. Nativity of St.. John the Baptist. Liturgy, followed by workshop

Saturday, July 19

St. John Christostomos, Pleasant Prairie, WI. Translation of the Holy Relics of St. Seraphim. Outdoor work opportunity, followed by Vespers.

Sunday, August 10

St. Sava & New Gracanica, Lake County, IL. After feast of the Transfiguration, veneration of incorrupt relics of St.Mardarije.

October 9-13

Columbus Day weekend Helene College/Holy Cross Seminary and St. Nicholas Shrine, Boston and New York City

Dates are tentative, yet all destinations are confirmed, with details forthcoming. Expression of interest, contact Spiro J. Deligiannis (630-677-5014)



HONORING AND REMEMBERING ALL WHO CAME BEFORE US!

by Penny Panayiota Deligiannis

In **June 1964**, several Aurora Hellenes met with Bishop Meletios of Chicago representing the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America to consider the facts. The requirements to establish the first Greek Orthodox Church in Aurora were met and approved by the Bishop, Illinois Secretary of State Paul Powell and with final approval by His Eminence Archbishop Iakovos of North and South America! **Saint Athanasios' first Board Members included President George Andrews, Harry Kouvavas, Sam Bazos, James Deligiannis, Chris Hountalas, Mike Karlos, Harry Koulos, Zoe Chioles, Catherine Kingsley and Dora Stamatopoulos.** (News article from Archives).

The official beginning of Saint Athanasios Greek Orthodox Church began on September 1, 1965 when it received its full Ecclesiastical Charter from the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America (Official Charter Members from Archives).

GENUINE SACRIFICES

"In 1899, newly-arrived 14-year-old **Athanasios Drossos** from Kandyla (Arcadia region), Greece carried water daily to Greek and Italian immigrant men laying down railroad tracks establishing the emerging railroad system in the western United States. One morning, the Greek men reported to the work site but there was no one there. With his limited English, Athanasios was sent to the Italian camp where he eventually understood that it was Christmas Day! Earning only \$1 USD for an entire day's work, life proved so tedious and difficult they had all completely lost track of the days, months and time. Upon realizing it was Holy Christmas, the Greek workers each contributed several cents buying a turkey and wine to celebrate.

During 1965, it was 80-year-old Athanasios Drossos who immediately stepped forward to generously donate monies for this new parish in Aurora, Illinois to be named Saint Athanasios Greek Orthodox Church. In gratitude to God, this special gentleman Athanasios gladly offered wages from his difficult labors and why our beloved parish bears his name. May his beautiful memory be eternal!" recollects Dena Deligiannis.

ONE BIG FAMILY

Irene Panagopoulos reminisced, "We were approximately 30 families in Aurora and incredibly tight-knit. We were always visiting each other's homes...lots of visits! Everyone drove to the closest parish in Joliet to attend Sunday Divine Liturgy. On Saturdays, a priest from Joliet would arrive in Aurora to provide the Divine Liturgy at a location on Lincoln Avenue. It was so much fun to be a part of this big Greek Orthodox family! We all helped each other. The older immigrants generously helped our young families with furniture and whatever we needed. We were united by our mutual love and Orthodox Faith."

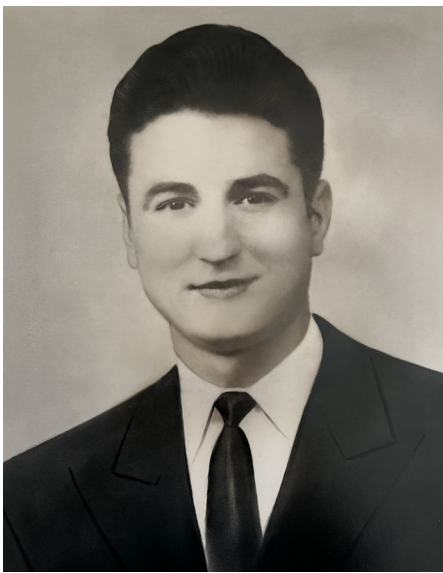
TIGHT-KNIT FRIENDSHIPS

"All of the Greek immigrants arrived from Kandyla and the Arcadia region of Greece. We were all young people, newcomers in America, lovingly received and welcomed by the old-time Greeks who had immigrated during 1890s - 1930s. As Saint Athanasios Greek Orthodox Church became a reality in 1965 in Aurora, our parish became the center of our lives where everyone gathered together. Most children attended Greek school because we wanted them to learn and keep our Greek language. Very happy times!" Tom Theodore fondly recalls.

UTILIZING SKILLS TO RENOVATE FIRST BUILDING & TALENTS TO CREATE MINISTRIES

"With the assistance of AHEPA which many of the men belonged to, AHEPA bought the building on 228 East Galena Boulevard in Aurora which became Saint Athanasios. The men cleaned and fixed it up. The main floor eventually became the church, the upper floor became the Sunday School classrooms while the basement became the social hall and kitchen. We used every part of that building to hold church services, to create the Ladies Philoptochos Society, Sunday School and Greek School from scratch, to organize fundraisers while also hosting social gatherings and parish meals. We wanted to help our parish grow in every way," remembers Sam Poulos.

Bessie Koulos emphasized, "It was difficult work. Together, we did it. People must not forget that Saint Athanasios Greek Orthodox Church in Aurora was built by unselfish Greek Orthodox immigrants who loved God and sacrificed a great deal. We must honor and never forget their memories."



Sam Poulos



Tom & Nicky Theodor



Athanasios Drossos



Iraklis & Irene Panagopoulos



Chris & Bessie Koulos

OFFICIAL LIST OF ST. ATHANASIOS CHARTER MEMBERS

George N. Andrews
Jennie Andrews
Alexandra Bazos
Bessie Bazos
Sam Bazos
Alexandra Brown
Manuel Brown
Zoe Chioles
Gus Cordogan
Chris Dagiantis
James Dagiantis
Peter Dagiantis
Chris Deligiannis

Dena Deligiannis
James Deligiannis
Tom Drosos
Nafsika Georgadou
Tom Gerogakoupoulos
Chris Hountalas
Kalliope Karlos
Mike Karlos
Ademena G. Kingsley
Catherine G. Kingsley
Eva Kontos
Michael H. Kontos
Ruby Kontos

Bessie Koulos
Chris Koulos
Jane Koulos
Nick Koumoutseas
Chris Kousoulas
Harry Kouvavas
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