

# THE CHAMPION

A Monthly Publication of Saint Athanasios Greek Orthodox Church

OCTOBER 2024



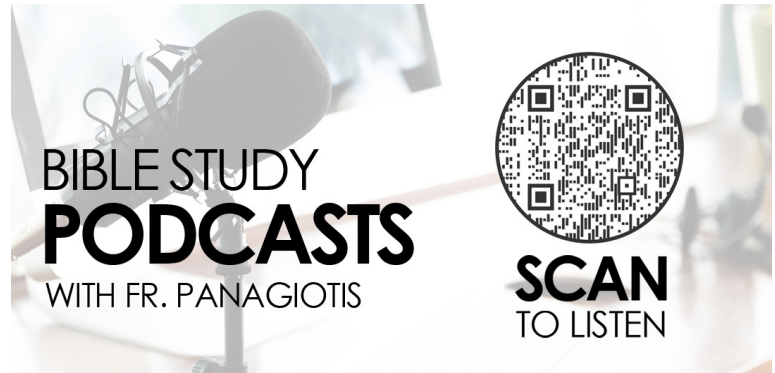
## MESSAGE FROM FR. PANAGIOTIS

October 3rd is the feastday of St. Dionysios the Areopagite, a saint not well known outside of monasteries and the study of mystical theology. He gets his surname "Areopagite" from the Areopagus or Mars Hill located just to the Northeast of the Parthenon on the Acropolis in Athens. It is there that St. Paul preached and brought the Gospel of Christ to the Athenians (Acts 17). St. Dionysios was one of those Athenians gathered at the Areopagus who heard St. Paul's sermon and dedicated his life to following the Lord. He eventually became the Bishop of Athens and ended his life with a martyr's crown.


A collection of deeply mystical and complex writings is attributed to St. Dionysios with one of the most famous being a reflection on the nature and role of hierarchy. St. Dionysios might even be the first Christian to use the word "hierarchy" and when he does, he doesn't have in mind what we might in terms of authority and power that is expressed in a top-down fashion. It isn't even a word he uses as a title for the Bishop, which is often how we use it now. Instead, when St. Dionysios writes about hierarchy, he writes about a diversity of gifts that all function in their proper order.

The reason for the order and structure, according to St. Dionysios, is so that each member can share the gifts that are unique to them with those next to them. In other words, if you have a particular gift or virtue, you may be placed in a position "over" someone else who does not have that same gift. But as Christ reminds His disciples, they are not to rule or execute authority over one another, but rather they are called to serve (Matthew 20:25). So as St. Dionysios explains, hierarchy is the structure and order that God establishes so that you can be properly positioned to offer your gifts in service. In his words, "For the holy constitution of the Hierarchy ordains that some are purified, others purify; some are enlightened, others enlighten; some are perfected, others make perfect; for in this way the divine imitation will fit each one."

Each person has a proper place within the hierarchy, positioned to either offer their gift or receive the gift of another. When this is our understanding of hierarchy it breeds the humility of recognizing that my gifts belong to those around me and that I, myself need the gifts of my brothers and sisters. According to St. Dionysios' teaching on hierarchy, no position within the order is of more value. All are properly placed for the exchange of blessings.



**BIBLE STUDY  
PODCASTS**  
WITH FR. PANAGIOTIS



**SCAN  
TO LISTEN**

In our parish council meeting last month, we spent a lot of time talking about this exact concept. We asked ourselves what are the unique role and the gifts of the Parish Council which we are called to offer to the community of St. Athanasios. And we discussed the gifts that are present within our parish that can benefit the parish council. Ultimately, we arrived at the conclusion that God has positioned the Parish Council to offer its gifts in service to the community by putting greater energy into strategy, long-term planning, and tending to the character of the parish. We recognize that the Parish Council needs the unique talents of those parishioners who are uniquely positioned to offer their service tending to day to day operations.

With next month's upcoming General Assembly and Parish Council Elections, I would like to invite you to reach out and speak to me or Brian McAnally, our Parish Council President, if you are interested in offering your unique gifts in service either on the Parish Council or in any other capacity within the Church.

## MEMORIALS

Soterios Gardiakos (40 Days)  
Catherine Patsevas (6 Months)

## FUNERALS

Lillian Hagan

## BAPTISMS

Christian  
(Son of Bill & Dessi Vardouniotis)  
Amalia  
(Daughter of Juan Carlos Gutierrez Alboronoz & Chrissy Lemberis)

## WEDDINGS

Alec Jones & Dakota Bessert  
Mia Pierlas & Jon Ross

# PARISH COUNCIL

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

## Aurora Greek Fest

We had another fun and successful festival last month. Thank you to Foti Georgopoulos and his committee for all of their hard work and dedication in organizing and preparation. Thank you to all of the volunteers that helped before, during and after the festival and to those who came out and supported Saint Athanasios. We could not have done it without you. Also, a big thank you to our donors and sponsors for their contributions to the festival. The festival was not only a fundraiser for our parish but was a time that we all came together and had some fun, got to know each other and our new parishioners, and shared our faith with the community. We are already looking forward to the spring festival May 16 17 18 2025 so mark your calendars.

## Ministry Year Kickoff Picnic

We held our annual ministry fair and picnic Sept. 8th. Thank you to everyone who attended and signed up for our various ministries. If you were not able to attend and would like to sign up or need more information on ministries that you are interested in, please contact Liuba Kichakov in the church office and she can direct you to the proper ministry leaders. Thank you to Liuba for organizing the event, our ministry leaders, Foti and his team for the food preparation, and the volunteers that helped set up and clean up. Looking forward to a blessed and exciting new ministry year.

## Parish Council

One of our 2024/2025 ministry year initiatives was for the parish council to hold a retreat style meeting by the end of September to articulate the spiritual role of the parish council. We held our September meeting and discussed what changes we would need to make in order for this to happen and be effective. We focused on how and what it would look like to transition from an organizing/founding board to a governing board. A governing board would allow the parish council to primarily focus on the spiritual health and the direction/vision of our parish. The parish administrator would take on more responsibility on the day-to-day operations side, a Director of Operations roll. The board would utilize the talents and gifts of our parishioners to form the needed committees and other ministries. We would also like to change the way that we conduct the business portion of our parish council meetings and so that we can allow more time to focus on the strategic/spiritual side. This strategy, the role changes, and the parish involvement is healthy for our spiritual growth. It meets our overall vision for St. Athanasios which is "that all should be saved and come to the knowledge of truth."

We will be holding the parish council elections next month on November 17th, so please reach out to me or Father Panagiotis if you are interested in the parish council or other opportunities within the church to serve our parish.

Wishing each of you a blessed month.

**Brian McAnally**

Parish Council President

# PARENT UNIVERSITY

Join us for Parent University, where we'll explore the challenges facing today's youth and how to navigate them as Orthodox Christian parents. Enjoy light refreshments, engaging discussions, and insights from knowledgeable guest speakers.

**OCTOBER 29, 2024: DIRECTION OF YOUTH MINISTRIES**

**JANUARY 21, 2025: AN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN HOUSEHOLD**

**APRIL 29, 2025: TACKLING CHALLENGES IN TODAY'S ORTHODOX YOUTH**

Classes begin at 7:00 PM.  
Scan QR Code to Register.





# SUNDAY SCHOOL

We had such a joyful and blessed start to the year, and we're excited to share a few moments from the day. From welcoming familiar faces to meeting new friends, the classrooms were filled with excitement and faith. The students engaged in meaningful lessons, participated in activities, and began their journey of growing in Christ together. Take a look at these snapshots and see the enthusiasm and love that filled our first Sunday School session. We can't wait to continue this journey throughout the year!



METROPOLIS OF CHICAGO

**Fundraiser**  
HELLENIC COLLEGE/HOLY CROSS GREEK ORTHODOX SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

**NOV 14**  
EMPRESS BANQUET HALL  
ADDISON, IL  
6:30 PM COCKTAILS  
7:30 PM DINNER

**Join Us to Help Raise Funds to Educate the Future Leaders of the Orthodox Church**

Hellenic College is that rare undergraduate with a higher purpose: to foster the moral and spiritual as well as intellectual development of every student.

Holy Cross is a graduate school of theology that educates and forms Orthodox Christian men and women for service to the Church and society. Whether preparing for the holy priesthood or for lay vocations in which they can put their faith into action, HCHC students make up a vibrant community engaged in pursuing the eternal truths of Christ's message of salvation for all the world.

**TICKETS** \$125 (PERSON) | \$1,250 (TABLE)

**KEYNOTE SPEAKER**

**DR. DEMETRIOS KATOS**  
President, Hellenic College Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology

RSVP BY NOV 7  
**SCAN QR CODE**  
OR CALL 630.851.6106

Hosted by  
ST. ATHANASIOS MEN'S GROUP & THE HCHC ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

## BLOOD DRIVE

*Stronger Together*

**Donate Blood**

**WEDNESDAY  
NOVEMBER**

**6**

**1:00PM -5:00PM**

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

**PHOTO ID 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](http://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.



# 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)

## Wednesday, October 2nd

11am Bible Study

## Thursday, October 3rd

7pm Men's Group Religious Seminar

## Saturday, October 5th

12pm Philoptochos Kickoff Luncheon

## Sunday, October 6th

Divine Liturgy - 3rd Sunday of Luke  
National Church Music Sunday

## Tuesday, October 8th

7:30 pm Discover Orthodoxy

## Thursday, Oct 10th

11am Agape Meeting  
7pm Spiritual Committee: Soul Sisters group meeting

## Sunday, October 13th

Divine Liturgy - Sunday of the 7th Ecumenical Council  
11:30 am Philoptochos General Meeting

## Wednesday, October 16th

11am Bible Study

## Friday, October 18th

Divine Liturgy - St Luke the Apostle and Evangelist  
6pm JOY meeting

## Sunday, October 20th

Divine Liturgy - 6th Sunday of Luke

## Tuesday, October 22th

7pm Discover Orthodoxy

## Wednesday, October 23rd

3pm Hesed House Prep & Deliver

## Thursday, October 24th

7pm JrGoya Firesides

## October 25th

GOYA Retreat  
7pm Vespers - St Demetrios  
St Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church  
893 Church Rd., Elmhurst, IL 60126

## Thursday, October 26th

GOYA Retreat  
Divine Liturgy - St Demetrios the Great Martyr

## Sunday, October 27th

GOYA Retreat  
Divine Liturgy - 7th Sunday of Luke  
11am Choir Monthly Rehearsal

## Monday, October 28th

Divine Liturgy - Holy Protection of the Theotokos

## Tuesday, October 29th

7pm Parent University

## 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 your continued support with donations of food and time. As a reminder, please purchase Low Salt items and make sure that cans are not dented, as they will not be accepted. When dropping off items at Aurora Interfaith Food Pantry (1110 Jericho Rd, Aurora, IL), please ask for the weight. We are very grateful for your support. This month's request is:

**Canned Fish/Meat, Canned Chili & Canned Stews**

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



# PHILOPTOCHOS

The ladies of Philoptochos invite all women of the parish to our fall kickoff event, Mezze and Membership, on Saturday, October 5th in St. Matthew Hall. We will be launching our fall philanthropy project in partnership with Radical Love to put together a "new neighbor kit" of items for a family that has recently moved to the area. We will be asking for monetary donations to purchase kitchen, bedroom and bathroom items; as well as toiletries and cleaning supplies.

Our next general meeting will take place after liturgy on Sunday, October 13th. Please join us for a light breakfast as we talk about upcoming plans.

Mark your calendars for Saturday, November 2nd for Trivia Night! Cost is \$20 per person. Teams can be up to 10 people. Refreshments are byo. Proceeds from Trivia Night will go to Radical Love.

Sue Manos  
Philoptochos President



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

# SOUL SISTERS

All women of St. Athanasios ages 18 and above are invited to participate and explore the theme for this ecclesiastical year: "Stillness and Prayer as a Cure for our Busy Lives"

Soul Sisters will meet monthly on Thursday evenings in St. Matthew Hall from 7-8:30 pm. Whole group fellowship followed by small group discussions.

Mark your calendars for the second Thursday: Oct. 10, Nov. 14, Dec 12, Jan. 9, Feb 13.

Questions? Contact Maria Lambrou:  
makokoslambrou@yahoo.com or 708-269-9991





# STEWARDSHIP

## The Act of Generous Giving

Stewardship can feel awkward to some. It may provoke curiosity, introspection and even guilt. Where does this awkwardness come from? Is it because discussing money/treasures makes us feel uncomfortable because it's personal? We might suggest that when we connect this topic to the teachings of the Bible, it is more clear and less awkward. Let's commit to learning more.

Stewardship, Generosity and Giving are not synonymous. Stewardship is the act of being a Steward. Giving is an act, and Generosity is an attitude. Giving can be done without being generous, but you cannot be generous and not give.

Giving is a learned exercise, one that needs practice. We have heard Jesus say it is more blessed to give. Here is the "why" behind His statement: When you keep what you have, you will be blessed. The more you keep the more you have, the more you have the more you can spend on yourself, etc. If you give, on the other hand, two people will be blessed by "your" money—you and the recipient. Keeping blesses one—giving blesses two. Hence it is more blessed to give than to receive (keep). We do not discover the second blessing until we actually do it, and it is probable that the more we do it the more addictive giving becomes.

God is a giver, and it takes faith to be a generous giver. That may be why our relationship with money impacts our relationship with God. Money is an emotional topic, especially in times when people are struggling financially. Every time we give, we acknowledge that everything we have has been given to us by God. He is our lifeline, our source for everything. So when we give, we are pleasing Him by showing Him how we manage our finances and that we want to please Him.

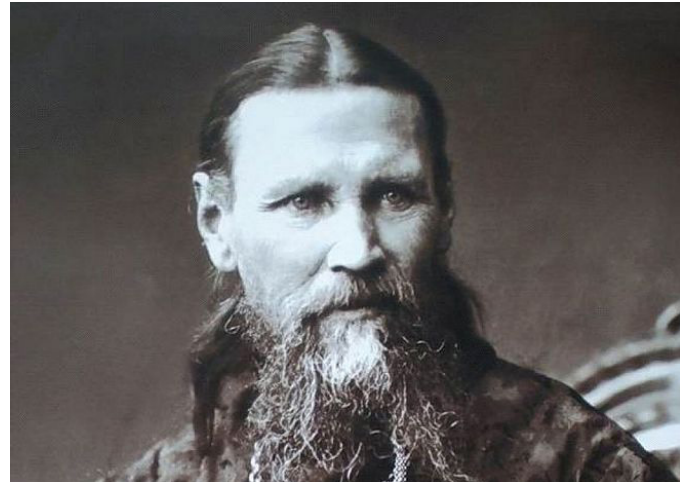
We have discussed often about the totality of Stewardship being not only Treasures, but Time and Talent and that it comes from the heart. Let's dig deep, pray and understand the spiritual implications of our relationship to money and God. When we make God our highest priority, and we honor Him, it releases a spirit of love and triggers acts of Generosity.

### Scripture References:

- Luke 12:15-21 (The rich farmer who gives no credit to God),
- Mark 4 (The parable of the 4 seeds)
- Revelation 3: 14-17 (God's letter to the church of Laodicea)
- Mark 14: 3-9 (Jesus teaches the heart of a giver)
- 2 Corinthians 8:8 (generosity amidst poverty tests our love of God)

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

# SPIRITUAL GROWTH



St. John of Kronstadt (October 19th), in *My Life in Christ*, wrote: "Prayer is the breathing of the soul; prayer is our spiritual food and drink." May we take to heart the words of this great contemporary saint. "Why is it necessary... for you to eat and drink... or to work every day? In order to support the life of the body, and strengthen it. It is also absolutely necessary to pray in order to support and stimulate the life of the soul..." May we consider prayer as important as we consider the care of our physical body, that our soul might live in Christ.

Please join us for the new monthly women's small group, Soul Sisters!  
The first meeting will be at church on October 10th at 7:00 pm. Hope to see you there!

# BOOK STORE

Consider our Bookstore items for your upcoming holiday gift giving to reflect symbols of love and faith for those who are celebrating or need spiritual nurturing. We carry vetted book content to help in a world of increasingly challenging times while promoting an Orthodox Christian viewpoint and a thirst to learn and sustain the Word of God. Our items for purchase are also screened for Biblical and theological integrity to offer religious nourishment for learning and a physical space for hospitality and community. Please plan early for any custom orders, and stop in our Bookstore soon!



# MEN'S GROUP

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

## Welcome Back Dinner

On Thursday, September 5, we enjoyed our annual Welcome Back Dinner and watched the kickoff of the NFL Season. Special thank you to Maria's Gyro in Naperville who provided our dinner!

## Men's Workshop - Busyness & Stillness - Thursday, October 3

Fr. Panagiotis will be leading a three-part workshop on busyness and stillness. Please join us on Thursday, October 3 for the first session in St. Matthews Hall.

## IOCC Annual Walk the Walk – Saturday, October 5

A popular event that will raise money to support the humanitarian work of the International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC) on Saturday, October 5. We do have a group that is attending. You can register and select "Men's Group of St. Athanasios."

## Hesed House Dinner – Thursday, October 23

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.

## 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 cooking and serving dinner to Hesed House guests at Hesed House on October 23rd. Prep and cooking will take place at Church starting at approximately 3pm. The meal will then be transported to Hesed House for their dinner service. Volunteers will be needed to help prepare the meal at Church as well as to serve the dinner at Hesed House.

To sign up contact Bill Collins at [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: 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, October 24th.

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

# GOYA RETREAT OCTOBER 25-27

Attention GOYAnS: The GOYA Retreat is October 25, 2024 – October 27, 2024 at the St. Iakovos Retreat Center in WI.

Contact Ms. Altidis for sign up/more information:  
[goya@saintathanasios.com](mailto:goya@saintathanasios.com)



# COLLEGE MINISTRY

## Maria Koultourides

Maria Koultourides is attending Iowa State University at Ames, Iowa. Her major is in Industrial Engineering, and she expects to graduate in December 2024. Her favorite class so far has been “Senior Design Capstone”. Her short-term plan after graduation is to travel for some time and then move to the Chicago area. In the long term, she sees herself working somewhere in Chicago. She would like to work at a company that focuses on safety or ergonomics. The Orthodox Church Maria attends while at college is the “Holy Transfiguration Orthodox Church”. What she likes most about the Saint Athanasios Parish is its welcoming community. Maria’s favorite sports team is the Chicago Cubs. Her favorite season is Summer because she loves warm weather and has more time then to travel and enjoy the outdoors and the beach. Her favorite restaurant while at College is “Café Beaudelaire” and back home, she loves the Lou Malnatis Pizzeria.



# CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

I hope you and your loved ones are all well and that you are enjoying the fall. Fall is my favorite time of year; the humidity is down, the air is crisp, and it is a chance to go outdoors and enjoy your favorite activity. One of my favorite activities is watching, in my opinion, the ultimate team sport, football. In football, every player on and off the field has a role to play in all three aspects of the game. The starting running back owes part of his success to the preparation he received from the athletes on the practice team. Many, many years ago I was told that football resembles life and I believe it does!

Along with football, the fall brings with it the beginning of the Ecclesiastical and ministry year. As Father Panagiotis so eloquently related in the September Champion, this ministry year our focus is on Hysechia, or Prayerful Stillness. In his Champion article Father also reminded us of the availability of the Reliquary for private reflection in the presence of the Saints. I have never used the Reliquary in this way but in the future, I may follow his suggestion.

I encourage you to take any avenue that works for you towards Prayerful Stillness. For me, I find the time before the Orthros when the church is relatively empty, surrounded by the iconography of the Saints, to be an ideal time for quiet reflection. Each Saint has a place and although they may not have been a central front of mind figure in the story they had a key role nevertheless. They were and are all part of the team!

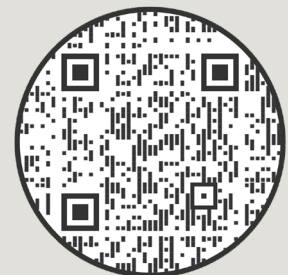
As far as teams are concerned, I am happy to report that as of September 1, 2024, with the help of 76 very generous donors, in eight short months, we have raised \$140,262 towards our Phase One goal of \$200,000.

Within the overall Phase One goal, our 25 x 25 Campaign is off to a great start as well. You may recall that our goal was to get 100 additional donors to donate \$250 each. To date, 31 donors have answered the call and we have raised \$19,375 towards our goal of raising \$25,000 by 2025. We need an additional 69 donors to come forward and help us reach our goal; parish wide participation, in any amount, is just as important as dollars raised.

Like any good football team, we need to build on our strengths, and work on our challenges and get everyone off of the sidelines and into the game. I humbly ask that you take the time to contemplate your current and ongoing role within the Church and our beloved Saint Athanasios and how you can make a difference with the Capital Campaign and get off of the sideline and become part of the team that contributed to the ultimate goal of reaching the summit, “So that all may be saved and come to the knowledge of truth”.

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

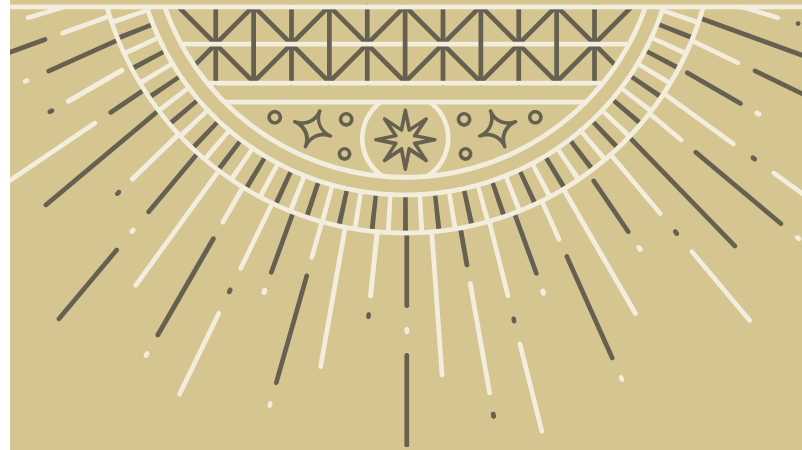


# DISCOVER ORTHODOXY



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



## SAINT ATHANASIOS JOY THE GOSPELS AND THE FOUR EVANGELISTS

*Come learn about Matthew,  
Mark, Luke, and John with fellow  
Kindergarten -5th Grade  
students.*

**OCTOBER 18 | 6:00-7:30 PM**  
**SAINT MATTHEW HALL**

A light snack will be provided. Any questions, please contact Leah Fanning 630-664-3220, Amanda McKinney 630-533-2839, or email us at [joy@saintathanasios.com](mailto:joy@saintathanasios.com)

## CHRISTMAS PAGEANT DECEMBER 15

The planning stages for the beloved Saint Athanasios Christmas Pageant are underway! The Christmas Pageant will be Sunday, December 15th immediately following Divine Liturgy. More information and rehearsal dates to be announced. Please consider sharing your love for this beautiful story with our Church Parish by signing your kiddo up for the pageant! If your child is interested in a role in the Christmas Pageant, please sign him/her up using the link below. Speaking and non-speaking roles are available!

For more information or to sign your child up scan the QR Code.







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EVENT WITH US

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KITCHEN — BAR — MARKET

# CHE FIGATA

ITALY TO TABLE





OCTOBER 2024

St. Dionysios  
the Areopagite



A Monthly Publication of Saint Athanasios Greek Orthodox Church

# THE CHAMPION



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