



25th Anniversary Newsletter Edition

*Enter His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with hymns;
Give thanks to Him and praise His name (Psalm 100:4)*

As we bid farewell to 2023, we reflect on the incredible first quarter of a century we've shared as a church community. The fall months were alive with events, activities and, most importantly, blessings.

We're excited to share this tableau of our 25th Anniversary Celebration with you. Relive the joy, the sentiments, and the awesome moments as we celebrated the past, honored the present and now prepare for the next 25 years. It's a testament to the blessings that continually surround us.

Thank you for being a vital part of our church family.

Founders Day & Memorial

The Divine Liturgy was first celebrated in our community on October 18, 1998. On October 15, 2023, many of our 76 charter families from our founding were present. It was special opportunity to recognize these people who with God's blessing took the bold steps to begin our parish. They are living examples of those who are commemorated in every Divine Liturgy throughout the existence of our parish. We held a memorial for our founders who have since fallen asleep in the Lord. Our founders have inspired our newcomers by their presence and by sharing our story.



October 21, 2023 — Gala Celebration

Tribute to Fr. Steve for faithfully leading our parish for 25 years

Fr. Steve's Four Pillars

“Jesus has pledged to provide for Church. The Church must pledge to be obedient to our Lord’s instructions and He will provide everything that His Bride needs.

His instructions are:

- Love one another (Jn. 15:12)
- Partake of my Body drink My Blood (Jn. 6:55)
- Go out into the world making disciples of all nations (Matt. 28:19)
- Feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, visit those in prison etc. (Matt. 25:36-44)

If the Church is doing these things then Jesus will provide Her with whatever She needs. Doing as instructed is our job. Providing is God’s job. He will provide.”



Welcome and Presentations

Smiles, hugs, and laughter filled the Hilton banquet reception area as everyone gathered for a joyful celebration. His Eminence Metropolitan Gregory of Nyssa and the all the clergy led the formal opening activities. Dennis Kokenes, our MC, recognized our honored guests. Dino Kokenes and Joanna Dendrolivanos led the Greek and American anthems respectively. Deidre Lepkowski, Philoptochos Vice President; Despina Gallis, Parish Council President; Fr. Andreas Houpos, Proistamenos; and His Eminence Metropolitan Gregory offered their greetings and remarks .

Maria Mortis introduced a special video with remarks from many of our young adults who grew up with Fr. Steve as their Parish Father and shared how he impacted and shaped their lives. She then presented to both Fr. Steve and Presbytera Maria gifts of appreciation from the community. Everyone was touched, many with tear-filled eyes, as Fr. Steve reflected on his experience and time as our beloved priest.

After a delicious dinner, Dennis Kokenes presented a video overview of the Commemorative Book, ***A History of St. Nektarios Greek Orthodox Church, the First 25 Years***. He challenged the room to help underwrite this book in support of our ongoing and future ministries and work of the church. Bidding paddles were going up all around the room. What an incredible expression of our commitment to continue our Lord’s work through our community of St. Nektarios. Thank you to everyone’s participation and generosity!

In Appreciation



Time was also thoughtfully offered to give special thanks:

- To Pam Copsis, Gala Chair and her committee for the 1000 hours of coordination and preparation of the event
- To Dennis and Kabee Kokenes for production of the 25th Anniversary Book
- To Evelyn Klund for over 22 years of service to the Parish
- To Kim Braswell for over 15 years of service



Fr. Jonathan Resmini, Fr. Nektarios Karantonis, Fr. Andreas Houpos, Fr. Steve Dalber, His Eminence Metropolitan Gregory, Fr. Jerry Hall, Fr. William Bartz. Fr. Steven Klund

Gala Celebration — *Let the Dancing Begin*



After the Formalities

Once the formal program was completed, everyone got to their feet. The dance floor was overflowing as Nick Trivelas and the Aegeans performed the Greek and American music. DJ Nagham assisted by Kamal Kadour on the drum provided the Arabic music. The photo booth was non-stop. Families and friends donned boas, hats, glasses and displayed fun props as they took a commemorative photo of the night.



Parish Clergy and Staff: Fr. Nektarios, Marko Milich, Nina Dzyak, Sam Herron, Kim Braswell, Samara Clewell, Silva Awaimrin, Jim Keown, Fr. Andreas, Caroline Mellekas, and Evelyn Klund.
Not pictured: Alec Giles, Sofia Nicolopoulos, Nadina Garbu, and Tony Wilson

November 5, 2023 — Family Day Celebration



Come and Imagine our Future *A Ministry Center Field Day*

Our parish family gathered to celebrate our 25 years as a parish and to imagine the future, with the completion of the Ministry Center and renovation of the Spiritual Life Center. Both will allow our expanding parish family to continue the work that has been started to “be present” as we build for the future, provide a place where all belong, and grow in faith.

The day’s festivities centered on Field Day activities for all ages—basketball shoot-outs, tug-of-war, 3-legged race, spoon and egg relay, corn hole — and inflatables that captured everyone’s imagination. Thanks to the head coaches and their assistants who kept everyone on track and awarded much deserved medals. A photo booth captured our athletes and highlighted the Ministry Center. Special thanks to the countless volunteers who set up for the event—and of course the kitchen crew whose game day food was perfect. The frappes and funnel cake food truck rounded out the menu.

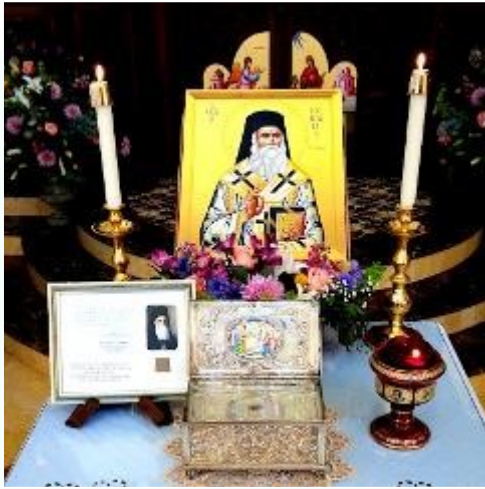
In particular, we are grateful to the steering committee for their planning and implementation: Mike Burgan, Despina Gallis, Evelyn Klund, Kabee Kokenes, Deidre Lepkowski, Caroline Mellekas, Maria Mortis, and Theodora Sexstone.

And we look forward to more field days and celebrations in the Ministry Center!





Celebration of the Feast of St. Nektarios



It is always a blessed event to celebrate the feast day of our patron saint, Saint Nektarios of Aegina, the Wonder Worker.

Our celebration began on **Saturday, November 4th** with a viewing of the film, *Man of God*. The Orthodox Film Club hosted this

screening about the life of St. Nektarios. At the end of the movie, Fr. Andreas led an engaging question and answer session.

In anticipation of the feast day, we held a procession with his holy relic on **Sunday, November 5th**. Following the Divine Liturgy, the clergy and chanters then led the congregation out of the temple and around the building. It was a glorious day and a heartfelt expression honoring our beloved St. Nektarios. The procession culminated with everyone venerating the relic under the portico and proceeding to the hall for a festive luncheon in honor of our Patron Saint and our 25th anniversary celebration.

On **Monday evening**, Fr. Andreas, Fr. Paul and Caroline Mellekas offered a presentation on the life of St. Nektarios. On **Tuesday afternoon** we held a Paraklesis service. On **Wednesday**, members of the community came to adorn the icon of St. Nektarios. While the flowers were being prepared, they chanted hymns together. It was a beautiful afternoon. That evening were vespers, Artoclasia (breaking of bread) and anointing the congregation with the oil from the shrine of the Saint. Thank you to the Ladies Philoptochos who then graciously hosted a bountiful reception. The evening ended in the temple with Compline and an Akathist to St. Nektarios.

Following the feast day services on **Wednesday**, the congregation enjoyed a celebratory luncheon. The temple was open for several hours for people to continue to venerate the holy relic of the Saint. We closed out our week of celebration, reflection and worship on **Thursday, November 9th** with a Paraklesis service to St. Nektarios.

We are grateful to God, and to the many clergy and faithful who made the commemoration of our patron Saint, Nektarios, so splendid. Thank you to the many parishioners who helped prepare for our feast day celebration and to John Cosmas and to Kim Braswell for the photos. May God bless you. Glory to God who is wondrous in his saints! Happy Name day to Fr. Nektarios and all who celebrate this day.

Holy man of God, St. Nektarios, intercede for us!

May we have his holy prayers and may he help keep us on the path of right faith, unshakeable hope, and Christian love. Holy man of God, intercede for us!





October 22, 2023 —Hierarchal Liturgy

After the Celebration at the Gala on October 21, all the remaining clergy and Deacon Stephen Potter served with His Eminence Metropolitan Gregory of Nyssa.

His Eminence was born in Charlotte and was one of the Charter Members of St. Nektarios Church. He also served on the first appointed Parish Council. In subsequent terms, he served as President for two years. His mother, Antonia Tatsis, sister, Alexandra Tatsis, nephew, Nathan Tatsis; along with many aunts, uncles and cousins reside in Charlotte.



Thank You To Our Founders

**Reposed. May their memory be eternal.*

Alaeddin & Kholoud Alyateem	Steve & Kathy Constantelos	George & Benita *Lynn Husson	Elaine Miller
Yorgos & Cindy Anagnostopoulos	Pete & Pam Copsis	Albert Isaac	Evan Miller
Aphroula* Anderson	George & Helen Couchell	Ghada Isaac	George N. Miller
Gary Anderson	Fr. Steve & Presb. Maria Dalber	George & Kay Kamvouris	John & Cheryl Miller
Michelle Anderson-Law	Effie & Chad Davis	Nancy Kapordilis	Peter* & Mary* Milliones
John & Mimi Anderson	Henry & Donna Dellinger	Tim & Evelyn Klund	Stacy & Susan Milliones
George* & Elaine Anton	Don & Cathy DeWolfe	Dennis & Kabee Kokenes	Michael & Ritsa Neary
Lela * Anton	Ron & Dee Drobonick	Bill & Irene Liapis	David & Kara O'Brien
Sylvia Anton	Elias & Leigh* Elia	David Lowery	Perry Bill Pappas
Andrew & Christie Asimos	Sam* & Doris* Fadel	Mark & Christine Malatras	Peter & Kim Pappas
Lambros Balatsias	Christina Indianos-Filis (Svilich)	Dave & Alexis Maloney	Taso & Donna Roupas
Paul & Anne-Tracy Barros-Ruof	Steve & Elham Flaherty	Jeff Mathews	Jimmy & Mary Roupas
Spencer Burton & Michelle Ostis	Sandy Gallins	Irene Carros Mavroidis	David & Natalie Scott
Barry & Maria Caldwell	Steve & Karen* Gardner	Steve Mavroidis	Doug & Ana* Sistare
Peter & Kathy Cestrone	Gus & Phyllis Gianakopoulos	Ted* & Pota* Mavroidis	Ted* & Madeleine* Solomon
Frank* & Dee* Cockinos	Larry* & Diane Gilbert	Bob & Helen Demmie McKane	Shari Solomon
Dimi Collias	Demetre & Beth Gionis	Hank & Diane McSwain	Matt & Ellen Tedrick
Pete & Mary Collias	Jodi Gorman	June Megremis	David & Lynne Thomas
Daryl & Renee Collins	His Eminence Gregory of Nyssa	Tommy* Megremis	Fr. Paul & Lea Tsahakis
Richard & Bess Collins	Peter & Vangie Harakas	Chris & Nick* Miller	Phillip & Sandra Walker
Stephanie Columbus	Omer & Tina Heracklis	Christopher Miller	Konstantine & Maryann Zitsos