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.
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!

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.”

October 21, 2023 — Gala Celebration

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

**Welcome and Presentations**

**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.”

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

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
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.
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, Kabeek 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.

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