

The Coptic Church in St. Louis

- Established in 1976 when half a dozen Coptic families immigrated to USA, and chose to come to St. Louis. The first service was at the chapel of Deaconess Hospital.
- We used Church building in University City, Olivette and Creve Coeur before acquiring a place of our own.
- In 1979, the congregation bought a house on Ross Ave and converted the garage to a small chapel.
- In 1984, the congregation purchased 3 Acres of land adjacent to the house and started plans to build a Coptic Style Church building. An Egyptian Architect made the preliminary architectural drawing
- It was not until 1993 that these plans were turned to reality, when with the help of God and the intercessions of St. Mary & St. Abraam we were able to secure a bank loan to start construction. The project started in November 1993, and was completed towards the end of 1994. We encountered the worst weather imaginable and the project completion was delayed three months from mid October '94 to mid January '95.
- Armed with a 24 hour special permit, The Church was consecrated on OCT 1, 1994 by His Holiness Pope Shenouda III. The Pope was assisted by Bishop Serabion then bishop of Ecumenical affairs and Bishop Karas the head of the Monastery of St. Anthony in the California desert near Los Angeles.
- The priests that served St. Louis as resident priests are: Fr. Wissa Bessada, Fr. Akladious Hanna, Fr. Reuis Anba Paula (monk), and Fr. Bassellious Sedrak, here since November 1988.
- Our Liturgy Service is on Sundays: 9:00 AM - 12:00 Noon. Raising of Incense (Vespers Prayers) are on Saturdays: 7:00 PM- 9:00 PM. Everyone is welcome to attend our Church. The services are in Arabic and English, and for the most part it is now in English. Coptic is maintained in all Coptic Churches.
- The Church is glad to explain the Orthodox Christian faith to anyone or any group interested in knowing more about the

Orthodox view. We also are proud of our Egyptian heritage and willing to share the knowledge about Egypt, past, present, and hopes and aspiration for the future.

Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate Diocese of North America



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Coptic Orthodox Church
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We Welcome to Our Church: The Girl Scouts of Greater St. Louis

**Sunday, March 9, 1997
Fact Sheet**

- Copt, comes from Gypt, a Greek Word meaning the Land of the God eptah. Egypt is the Gift of the River Nile. The Copt are the descendants of the Ancient Egyptians, Pharos of Old Egypt.
- The Copts were evangelized by St. Mark, the writer of the Gospel According to Mark. Mark came to Egypt in 48 AD.
- He was a nephew of St. Peter, Son of his sister. In his parents house the Lord Christ performed the Last Super. Also, in the upper room of his parents house the descent of the Holy Spirit (Pentecost) took place, on the 50th day following Resurrection (Easter).
- Mark traveled with Paul which is mentioned in the book of Acts. He also went to Rome with Peter and returned to Egypt where he was martyred (killed) by the Romans in 68 AD.
- St. Mark, Evangelist, Apostle is the first Patriarch of the Church of Egypt, The Coptic Church.
- He ordained, Ananias as his successor, 7 priests, and 12 deacons.
- The Coptic Church is one of four Churches considered the first established: The Church in Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria, and Rome.
- The Coptic Church produced some of the most famous fathers of Christianity:
 - Athanassios, 20th Pope and Patriarch wrote the Creed of Faith while a deacon in Nicea in 325 AD.
 - Cyril the Great completed the Creed by Adding the verses concerning the Holy Spirit.
- St. Anthony the Great is the Father of Monastic Life (Living a celibate life and dedicating life to the service of God).
- St. Paul the Hermit of Thebes is the First Anchorite ‘awal al-swaah’ (Soul Traveler).
- St. Pakhomios is the Father of Communal Life, he is the first to build a monastery for monks to live as a community.
- St. Shenouda (Shenoute) the Archimandrite is the Father of Solitude, living in isolation, but returning back to the monastery for communion and association with other monks..
- After the Arab Invasion, 642 AD, the Copts were given three choices: conversion, death, or paying religion tax for remaining in their faith. Today, the Copts are the largest single minority in Egypt (10%-15%) of the population.
- The Coptic Church through immigration in the second have of the 20th century has followers in all the continents: Africa, Asia, Europe, Australia, and the Americas.
- The head of the Coptic Church is the Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of the See of St. Mark. He is assisted by the bishops. The Pope, the Bishops, and the heads of monasteries and selected head priests form the Holy Synod of the Church.
- Pope Shenouda III is 117th Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria. He was elected in 1971 and continues his relentless effort to manage the affairs of the Church, teach and preach daily working very long hours and maintaining also a very hard life of monasticism. He traveled the globe many times over. Twice in 1996 alone as the Church celebrated his Silver Jubilee.
- Pope Shenouda Came to St. Louis in 1989, and again in 1994 to consecrate the new building.
- We believe in Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The seven sacraments: Baptism, Confirmation (Myroon), Repentance & Confession, Holy Eucharist (Communion), Marriage, Unction (Healing) of the Sick, and Priesthood. The Bible, Tradition, Writings of the Fathers, and Holy Books are the Sources of our knowledge of the Christian Faith. We also believe in the Intercession of the saints and venerate Icons which are consecrated as reminder of those who preceded us in the Orthodox faith.