

Oak Creek, Wisconsin

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Founded in 1968, the only Coptic Orthodox Church in Wisconsin was holding their Divine Liturgies in a Lutheran Church in Waterford. The church, with a small congregation of approximately 50 families, required a nave that could seat 350 people. Space directly below the nave will serve fellowship and future classrooms.

Deeply rooted in Egyptian tradition and heritage, the congregation searched for the proper site on which they could build a church that truly reflected Coptic symbolism. The new church has been planted on a 12 acre site in Oak Creek. Future projects that are part of the site master plan include a cultural center and educational building.



With an Interstate on its western boundary, wetlands to the west and south, and a site that had an elevation change of over 12 feet, placing the building was a challenge. In particular, a requirement for an east facing altar and congregation during Mass directly contradicted the site's natural topography. The ultimate sighting of the church placed the building on the highest point. This provides great visibility for the church and, even more important, the symbolism that the church serves as a protective arc from outside dangers. The two towers that flank the entrance further enhance this symbol of protection.

The 11,500 square foot two-story church is crowned with a 24 foot diameter dome atop a 90 foot long barrel vault. The dome symbolizes Heaven, while the barrel vault symbolizes an inverted Arc.

The symbolism and heritage of the Coptic Orthodox Church is incorporated throughout the interior and exterior design of the building.