

WEEKLY BULLETIN

The Voice

December 25, 2022, Vol. 39, No. 52

Feast of Christmas



SAINT ELIA

ORTHODOX CHURCH

A Parish of the Orthodox Church in America

64 W. Wilbeth Rd., Akron, Ohio 44301

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www.saintlia.com

www.facebook.com/sainteliaakron

His Eminence Alexander, Archbishop of Toledo, Bulgarian Diocese, OCA

Very Rev. Mūred Archpriest Father Don Anthony Freude, Parish Rector

Rev. Protodeacon James M. Gresh, Attached

SAINT ELIA THE PROPHET PARISH

2022 Parish Council

President: John Bohush

V. President: Subdeacon Terrence Bilas

Secretary: Subdeacon Aaron Gray

Treasurer: Reader Joshua Wherley

Members: Veronica Bilas, Bud Graham

Sarah Costadinova

COCA Representative: Mary Marcin

Choir Director: Subdeacon Terrence A. Bilas

Assistant Directors: Anastasia Bohush

Deaconisa Heidi Gresh, Reader Michael Luc

Church School: Anastasia Bohush

Sisterhood of St. Juliana:

President: Veronica Bilas, Vice President, Sandy Graham, Secretary: Sarah Niglio; Treasurer: Mary Magensky

Workers of St. Elizabeth the New Martyr:

Coordinators: Reader Aaron Gray, Veronica Bilas

Scheduled Readers

Sunday, December 25 - Reader Michael Luc

Sunday, January 1, 2023 - Reader Joshua Wherley

Sunday, January 8, 2023 –Hours – Mary Beth Gray

Epistle - Subdeacon Aaron Gray

Sunday, January 15, 2023 – Deaconisa Heidi Gresh

TO OUR PARISH FAMILY WITH MUCH LOVE

As we celebrate the beautiful Feast of Christmas – of our Lord Jesus’ coming and being born in the flesh – we remember how God the Father promised to send a Messiah. God kept that promise and sent His Son.

By joining our human family, Jesus made it possible for us to be in God’s family. In Jesus, a human life has borne for us the awesome power of divine love.

In Jesus God’s love is made accessible and tangible and comprehensible, once for all. But we are constantly forgetting this gracious revelation. The pace and pressure of everyday life, the tendency we have for modelling God’s love on our own – which we know full well is not always stable and constant – the fear of surrendering to the transforming power of God’s love – all these, and more, dull our awareness.

Jesus was born into a family of listeners. Mary and Joseph received the word of His birth with faith, love and obedience – all essential qualities of a listening heart. And now we are His family who are called to listen to Him with the ears of our heart.

And so we need a Christmas every year. We need to be surprised again by what love is, and remember it is possible in our world. We need to let it find a home in us and allow it to accomplish its purpose.

May your Christmas be filled with the love of Jesus and may you share that love with one another.

In Christ’s love,
Father Don and Popadia Donna

SCHEDULE OF DIVINE SERVICES

DECEMBER 2022



Feast of CHRISTMAS
The Nativity According to the Flesh
of our Lord God and Savior
Jesus Christ.
Christ is born! Glorify Him!

Saturday December 24 -Christmas Eve *Strict Fast*

5:00 pm Vigil of Christmas – Compline and Matins
Matins Gospel: Matthew 1:18-25

Sunday, December 25 – Christmas Day

9:10 am 3rd and 6th Hours: Reader Michael Luc

9:30 am Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great

Epistle Reader: Reader Michael Luc

Epistle: Galatians 4:4-7 Gospel: Matthew 2:1-12

SECOND DAY OF THE FEAST OF THE NATIVITY.

Synaxis of the Most Holy Theotokos. Holy Righteous Ones: Joseph the Betrothed, David the King, and James, the Brother of the Lord.

Monday, December 26

9:30 am Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom

THIRD DAY OF THE FEAST OF THE NATIVITY

Holy Protomartyr and Archdeacon Stephen

Tuesday, December 27

9:30 am Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom

JANUARY 2023

29th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST Tone 4

Sunday Before the Theophany of our Lord Baptism

Forefeast of the Theophany,

The Circumcision of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ

St. Basil the Great, Archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia

Saturday, December 31

4:00 pm Great Vespers and Confessions

Sunday, January 1, 2023

9:10 am 3rd and 6th Hours: Reader Joshua Wherley

9:30 am Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom

Epistle Reader: Reader Joshua Wherley

Epistle: Hebrews 11:9-10, 17-23, 32-40

Gospel: Matthew 1:1-25

THE HOLY THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST

Thursday, January 5

6:00 pm Vespers Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great

DIVINITY IN A STABLE

There was no room in the inn, but there was room in the stable. An inn was usually a gathering place where the problems of the world were discussed, and where opinions were stated on every subject. The inn was the rallying place of the popular and the successful. The stable, on the other hand, was a place for outcasts, the ignored, the forgotten. The world might have expected the Son of God to be born – if He were to be born at all – in an inn. A stable would be the last place in the world where one would have looked for Him.

No worldly mind would have ever suspected that He Who could make the sun warm would one day have need of an ox and an ass to warm Him with their breath; that He who clothed the fields with grass, would Himself be naked; that He, from Whom came planets and worlds, would one day have tiny arms that were not long enough to reach the heads of the animals; that the Eternal Word would have to learn to speak; that the all-powerful would be wrapped in swaddling clothes; that salvation would be in a manger. No one would ever suspect that God coming on earth would ever be so helpless. And that is precisely why so many miss Him. *Divinity is always where you least expect to find it.*

“We truly keep the Feast of His Birth...we ran with the star; we worshipped Him, along with the Magi; along with the Shepherds, we too were enlightened; and along too with the angels in heaven, we glorified Him.

St. Gregory the Theologian

CHRISTMAS SCRIPTURE READINGS

Epistle: Galatians 4:4-7

But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, Abba, Father!” Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir ³of God ⁴through Christ.

Gospel: Matthew 2:1-12

Wise Men from the East

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, ^[a]wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, “Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His Star in the East and have come to worship Him.”

When Herod the king heard *this*, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born.

So, they said to him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet:

*‘But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
Are not the least among the rulers of Judah;
For out of you shall come a Ruler
Who will shepherd My people Israel.’ ”*

Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, determined from them what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the young Child, and when you have found *Him*, bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also.”

When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary, His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Then, being divinely warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country another way.

Troparion of Christmas

Thy Nativity, O Christ our God, has shone to the world the light of wisdom! For by it, those who worshipped the stars, were taught by a star to adore Thee, the Sun of Righteousness, and to know Thee, the Orient from on high. O Lord, glory to Thee!

THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST 2022
Christ is born! Glorify Him!

Dearly beloved in the Lord,

“For truly you did not turn away from your creature whom you had made, Good One, nor did you forget the work of your hands... when the fullness of time had come, you spoke to us through your Son himself...” (Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great)

Although our first parents turned away from the Lord God in Paradise, the Lord did not abandon them to their decision. In his mercy, God provided them and their descendants a way back to him, the Way Who is his incarnate Son. The Feast of the Nativity of our Lord is one of the great landmarks of human history, as God the Father fulfills the promise that he made to man so long ago.

It is with hearts overflowing with gratitude that we greet the Lord on the day of his birth. We are also grateful for all of the other expressions of Divine mercy that we encounter in our lives – “those we know and those we do not know, benefits manifest and unmanifest, all done for us,” as we say in that other great Eucharistic celebration of our Faith, the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom.

Let us open our hearts to be receptive to all of God’s great gestures of love for us. And having received such great blessings in our own lives, let us use them for the well-being and sanctification of those around us, especially those in the deepest need of our comfort and support.

With love in the newborn King,
+Alexander
*Archbishop of Toledo and the Bulgarian Diocese –
Orthodox Church in America*

Nativity of our Lord 2022

To the Clergy, Monastics, and Faithful of the Orthodox Church
in America,

My Beloved Children in the Lord, ***Christ is born! Glorify him!***

‘But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, “Rise, take the Child and his Mother, and go to the land of Israel...”’ (Mt. 2:19-20)

The protagonist, so to speak, for the first two chapters of Saint Matthew’s Gospel is the humble and silent man whom we call the Righteous Joseph the Betrothed. Joseph is called ‘just,’ that is, he walked according to the commandments of God (Mt. 1:19). And, according to the scriptures, in keeping the commandments, a man may learn true knowledge. As the Psalmist says, ‘Teach me good judgment and knowledge: for I have believed thy commandments’ (Ps. 118:66). We find that this is exceptionally true in the case of Saint Joseph. So just, so righteous, was he, that he was worthy to be taught and led by an angel. In an event that is sometimes called the annunciation to Saint Joseph, an angel comes to the righteous man in his moment of doubt concerning the pregnancy of his betrothed, telling him not fear.

And this exhortation not to be afraid is no mere formality, for the next words of the angel disclose a dread and fearful task. The angel asks Joseph to serve the most holy Theotokos and Ever-virgin Mary in place of an earthly husband (‘take Mary your wife’), and to minister to the Lord Jesus Christ in the place

of an earthly father ('you shall call his name Jesus'). This alone—the command to serve as a foster father to the God of all and as a guardian for the Mother of the Light—would be fearful enough. But soon Saint Joseph and the holy Mother and Child for whom he is obliged to care are beset by extraordinary circumstances: a murder plot, an escape to a distant land, and a sojourn in that foreign country. We can only assume that, in Egypt, among strangers, away from home and property, the responsibility to provide for his supposed wife and son weighed very heavily upon this righteous man.

But again, the words of an angel, and this time these are words of relief and joy: 'Go the land of Israel.' Return home to your kin; return home to your property; return home to your people and your customs and your land.

The first time an angel visited the righteous Joseph, he brought a dread order from the Almighty, an order that would have to be carried out under the most trying of circumstances. The second time an angel came, he brought a welcome reprieve.

But in both cases, the just man Joseph was equally obedient to the divine will. When he was commanded to care for Mother and Child, he took up the task without hesitation, no matter what difficulties ensued. And when he was told to return to Israel, he went just as readily.

The same paradoxical way that Saint Joseph protected and cared for the omnipotent Master who holds all creation in the palm of his hand, God has given to us, Orthodox Christians, a

special charge of sacred stewardship. God needs nothing from us, and yet he delights in allowing us to cooperate with him in the work of preaching the Gospel and sanctifying the world.

We might say that, just like the Righteous Joseph the Betrothed, we are, by divine grace, charged with caring for the newborn Christ. For what is the Church but Christ's Body, growing in this world in wisdom and stature until it reaches the measure of the stature of the fullness in the age to come (Lk. 2:52, Eph. 4:13)? And we all share a responsibility, according to our station in life, to care for the Church through prayer, financial support, sacramental participation, and sharing and teaching the faith.

And then, on another level, we are each charged to care for Christ in our life, in our own heart. Saint Paul wrote to the Galatians that he was in travail until Christ be formed in them (Gal. 4:19). Each of us is called to reveal Christ in our life, to become a saint, to become Christ by grace. Through baptism and the Eucharist we have all received Jesus Christ within ourselves, as it were as a new-born Child. By prayer, careful practice of the virtues, attentiveness to our thoughts, and the cultivation of authentic love for God and man, we allow Christ to grow in us, until, we pray, it is no longer we who live, but Christ who lives in us (Gal. 2:20).

Today, celebrating the Nativity of the Savior in the flesh, may we all take Saint Joseph as our example as we seek to foster Christ in the Church and in our own hearts. Let us practice the

commandments, discern the will of God, and do his will, even when the circumstances are difficult.

Truly, this world is an Egypt, and caring for Christ and his Church as Saint Joseph did always involves obstacles and challenges. But if we sojourn with the Christ-child in Egypt, faithfully attending to him in our lives and our communities, we can be assured that we, like Saint Joseph, will one day hear those welcome words: 'Go to the land of Israel'—that is, come, ye righteous, and enter the heavenly mansions the Father has prepared for you from before all ages (Mt. 25:34).

By caring for our infant Savior and Lord in this way, we show our willingness to cooperate with the grace of God, God who so desired to have us as his fellow-workers, his brethren, and his friends that he deigned to be born in a cave and laid in a manger, on a cold night 'while gentle silence enveloped all things, and night in its swift course was now half gone' (Wis. 18:14). To him, our newborn God and Lord, be all glory, honor, and adoration, together with his eternal Father and his most holy, good, and life-giving Spirit.

With the blessing of the newborn Messiah, who is Lord and God before the ages, I remain sincerely yours in Christ,

+ Tikhon

Archbishop of Washington

Metropolitan of All America and Canada

CHRISTMAS FLOWERS DONATIONS

Please make your donations for the flowers and decorations for our Christmas celebration. We will need to shop and purchase them in time. Thank You!

2023 CHURCH CALENDARS

Through the generosity of ANTHONY FUNERAL HOME, the 2023 Church Calendars have arrived and are available on the front pew in the Church. Please pick up your calendar.

2023 OFFERING ENVELOPES

The boxes of 2023 Offering Envelopes will be sent to your home by mail by the Church Budget Envelope Co. in December 2022. If you do not receive them, please inform Fr. Don.

STEWARDSHIP

Sunday, December 18, 2022

Candles: \$ 59.00

Bookstore: 17.00

Christmas Flowers: 30.00

Sunday Offering: \$ 840.00

TOTAL: \$ 946.00

Tithley Offerings: \$ 173.02

PayPal: 25.00

TOTAL: \$ 198.02

**REMEMBERING THOSE SERVING IN THE
ARMED FORCES**

Subdeacon Anthony Freude, son of Fr Don and
Popadia Donna Freude
Egor Cravenco, son of Serghei and Ludmila
Cravenco

REMEMBERING OUR SICK AND SHUTINS

Archbishop Benjamin
Archbishop Nathaniel
Joseph Boyle (brother of Kathy Gray)
Phyllis (sister of Rose Marie Vronick)
Florence Lambo
Martin Vronick
Rose Marie Vronick Nicoletta (Nikki) Bober
Pani Dolores Zuder
Matushka Myra Kovalak
Mitered Archpriest Daniel Kovalak
Matushka Christine Zebren
Matushka Laryssa Hutnyan
Ted Theodore
Sarah Costadinova
Geoffrey Michael Lubic
Kalie Obeng-Fiorg

Rose Marie Vronick
Village of St. Edward
at Green, 3813 Fortuna Drive 44312

Help those in need during the Nativity season!



During the fasting seasons of the Orthodox Church, we are called upon to fast not only for reasons of self-control and prayer, but also for reasons of love: to deny ourselves something so that we may share what we have saved with someone else who is in need.

During this year's Nativity Fast our parish charitable group, the *Workers of St. Elizabeth*, will be collecting items for the **Peter Maurin Center**. Located just 5 minutes north of St. Elia at 1096 Old South Main St., the Center serves unsheltered and marginalized individuals and families in the greater Akron area by offering meals, warm clothing and other necessities, and friendship.

Look for the bin located near the entrance of church and drop off your items as you come in each week. Below is a list of ideas of items that are currently in need at the Center:

- Hand warmers (many needed!)
- Socks, large athletic type (many needed!)
- Gloves and hats
- Underwear, men and women, all sizes
- Hygiene items, either full or travel size, such as toothpaste, toothbrushes, soap, shampoo, deodorant, lotion, razors (ALL hygiene items very much needed!)
- Boots, waterproof, especially men size 12-14, women all sizes
- Hoodies, especially men size L and XL with zipper
- Akron Metro one-day bus passes
- Meal cards, such as for McDonald's, Burger King, or Subway
- Backpacks, adult
- Flashlights, including batteries

For use in prepared meals at the center, meat donations would also be welcome (these can be stored temporarily in the St. Elia fridge/freezer), such as ground beef, sausage links, pork, chicken breasts, etc.

If you have any questions, please contact Aaron Gray at 330-413-8324 or grayaaron@outlook.com. Thank you for doing your part to help those in NEED.

Orthodox Christian Women

Winter Mini-Retreat
Saturday January 21, 2023
9:30 am to noon

St. George Antiochian
Orthodox Church

3204 Ridgewood Road, Fairlawn 44333
Free Event - Everyone Welcome!
Continental Breakfast provided

“Breaking Christian
Education Paradigms”
Speaker: Robert Snyder

Contact: Nancy Studebaker 330-655-9638 or
nlstudebaker@gmail.com
Sandy Menhorn 330-354-7792 or
sandy.menhorn@gmail.com

For questions or additional information

Metropolitan Tikhon's Letter ON PEACE



The Lord Jesus Christ “is our peace, who has made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility.” He, our King and Master, Savior and God, “came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near” (Eph. 2: 14, 17). As the time of his Nativity comes close, as he draws nigh “in the midst of the years” to “renew” the fruits of his Incarnation (Hab. 3:2), he calls all of us Orthodox Christians, and indeed all who dwell upon the earth, to the peace that is found in him, the Peace that he is: peace with God the Father, peace with our brethren, peace with our neighbors, peace with enemies, peace with ourselves, peace with all.

But as long as, due to human sin, peace continues to elude the world, we nevertheless dedicate ourselves to peace through prayer, self-renewal, and wise words and actions. In particular, on behalf of the Orthodox Church in America, we assure His

Beatitude Metropolitan Onufriy and the suffering Ukrainian Orthodox Church, all Ukrainian Christians and the entire suffering Ukrainian people, of our prayers during this most difficult time.

As your primate, I urge you, the clergy, monastics, and faithful of the Orthodox Church in America, to renew your fasting and prayers for the sake of peace during these final days of the Nativity Fast. Pray especially for peace in Ukraine, for the well-being of the Orthodox Church in both Russia and Ukraine, and for Orthodox Christians living in both countries.

I ask those responsible for celebrating divine services in the churches and chapels of the Orthodox Church in America to continue to pray in particular for the victims of the war in Ukraine, both living and departed, at litanies and other appropriate times. While their form is no longer obligatory, the special petitions included in my February 24, 2022 Statement on War in Ukraine may be used for this purpose.

As we approach the manger where our God and King lies, let us join the Magi from the East with three gifts of our own: fasting and prayers for peace and justice in Ukraine, together with alms for those affected by the war. Doing this, we will present our Lord and Savior with a truly fitting gift for the day of his Birth.

When the Lord Jesus was born of the Holy Virgin,
the whole universe was filled with light.
The shepherds watched in the fields.
The Wise Men worshipped, and the Angels sang.
But Herod was troubled,
for God had appeared in the flesh.
He is the Savior of our souls.



What shall we offer Thee, O Christ,
Who for our sakes hast appeared on earth as a man?
Every creature made by Thee offers Thee thanks:
the Angels offer a hymn; the heavens, a star;
the Wise Men, gifts; the shepherds, their wonder;
the earth, its cave; the wilderness, a manger,
and we offer Thee a virgin Mother!
O Pre-eternal God, have mercy on u