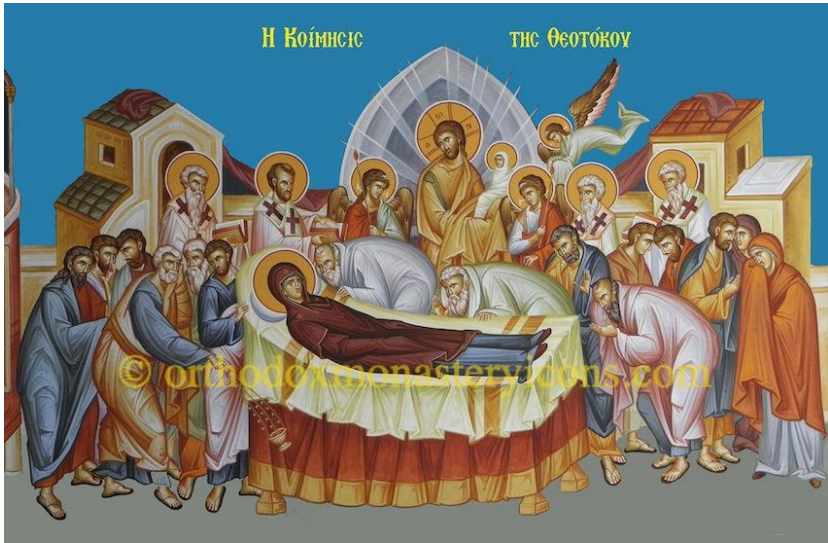


WEEKLY BULLETIN

August 13, 2023, • Vol. 40, No. 31
THE VOICE



The Dormition of the Theotokos

SAINT ELIA ORTHODOX CHURCH

A Parish of the Orthodox Church in America
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*His Eminence Alexander, Archbishop of Toledo, Bulgarian Diocese, OCA
Very Rev. Mitred Archpriest Father Don Anthony Freude, Parish Rector
Rev. Protodeacon James M. Gresh, Attached*

SAINT ELIA THE PROPHET PARISH

2023 Parish Council

President: Veronica Bilas
V. President: Sandy Graham
Secretary: Subdeacon Aaron Gray
Treasurer: Reader Joshua Wherley
Members: Subdeacon Terrence Bilas,
Bud Graham, Sarah Kostadinova,
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: Anastasia Bohush,
V. President: Sandy Graham
Secretary: Katherine Hodge
Treasurer: Mary Magensky

Workers of St. Elizabeth the New Martyr:

Coordinators: Subdeacon Aaron Gray, Veronica Bilas

Scheduled Readers - 2023

Sunday, August 6 - Reader Michael Luc
Sunday, August 13 - Reader Nicholas Morelli
Sunday, August 20 - Reader Joshua Wherley
Sunday, August 27 - Sue Ellen Turscak
Sunday, September 3 - Hours - Mary Beth Gray
Epistle - Subdeacon Aaron Gray

SCHEDULE OF DIVINE SERVICES

The Dormition Fast- August 1-14

10th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST – Tone 1

Leavetaking of the Feast of the Transfiguration

Saturday, August 12

5:00 pm Great Vespers and Confessions

Sunday, August 13

9:10 am 3rd and 6th Hours: Reader Nicholas Morelli

9:30 am Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom

Epistle Reader: Reader Nicholas Morelli

Epistle: 1Cor. 4:9-16 Gospel: Matthew 17:14-23

THE DORMITION OF OUR MOST HOLY LADY THEOTOKOS AND EVER-VIRGIN MARY

Monday, August 14

6:00 pm Vigil - Matins and Lamentations

BLESSING OF FLOWERS AND HERBS

Tuesday, August 15

8:00 am Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom

11th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST – Tone 2

Afterfeast of the Dormition of the Theotokos

Saturday, August 19

5:00 pm Great Vespers and Confessions

Sunday, August 20

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

9:30 am Baptismal Divine Liturgy of Saint John

Chrysostom -- Baptism of Nora Elizabeth Keathley

Epistle Reader: Reader Joshua Wherley

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE READINGS

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 4:9-16

⁹ For I think that God has displayed us, the apostles, last, as men condemned to death; for we have been made a spectacle ^{to} to the world, both to angels and to men. ¹⁰ We *are* fools for Christ's sake, but you *are* wise in Christ! We *are* weak, but you *are* strong! You *are* distinguished, but we *are* dishonored! ¹¹ To the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and we are poorly clothed, and beaten, and homeless. ¹² And we labor, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure; ¹³ being defamed, we ^{do not} entreat. We have been made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things until now.

Paul's Paternal Care

¹⁴ I do not write these things to shame you, but as my beloved children I warn *you*. ¹⁵ For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet *you do not have* many fathers; for in Christ Jesus, I have begotten you through the gospel. ¹⁶ Therefore I urge you, imitate me

Gospel: Matthew 17:14-23

A Boy Is Healed

¹⁴ And when they had come to the multitude, a man came to Him, kneeling down to Him and saying, ¹⁵ "Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is [Ⓜ]an epileptic and suffers severely; for he often falls into the fire and often into the water. ¹⁶ So I brought him to Your disciples, but they could not cure him. ¹⁷ Then Jesus answered and said "O [Ⓜ]faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him here to Me." ¹⁸ And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him; and the child was cured from that very hour. ¹⁹ Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?" ²⁰ So Jesus said to them, "Because of your [Ⓜ]unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. ²¹ [Ⓜ]However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting."

Jesus Again Predicts His Death and Resurrection

²² Now while they were [Ⓜ]staying in Galilee, Jesus said to them, "The Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men, ²³ and they will kill Him, and the third day He will be raised up." And they were exceedingly sorrowful.

The Dormition of our Most Holy Lady the Mother of God and Ever-Virgin Mary

Commemorated on August 15

The Dormition of our Most Holy Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary: After the Ascension of the Lord, the Mother of God remained in the care of the Apostle John the Theologian, and during his journeys She lived at the home of his parents, near the Mount of Olives. She was a source of consolation and edification both for the Apostles and for all the believers. Conversing with them. She told them about miraculous events: the Annunciation, the seedless and undefiled Conception of Christ born of Her, about His early childhood, and about His earthly life. Like the Apostles, She helped plant and strengthen the Christian Church by Her presence, Her discourse and Her prayers.

The reverence of the Apostles for the Most Holy Virgin was extraordinary. After the receiving of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, the Apostles remained at Jerusalem for about ten years attending to the salvation of the Jews and wanting moreover to see the mother of God and hear Her holy discourse. Many of the newly enlightened in the Faith even came from

faraway lands to Jerusalem, to see and to hear the All-Pure Mother of God.

During the persecution initiated by King Herod against the young Church of Christ (Acts 12:1-3), the Most Holy Virgin and the Apostle John the Theologian withdrew to Ephesus in the year 43. The preaching of the Gospel there had fallen by lot to the Apostle John the Theologian. The Mother of God was in Cyprus with Saint Lazarus the Four-Days-Dead, where he was bishop. She was also on Holy Mount Athos. Saint Stephen of the Holy Mountain says that the Mother of God prophetically spoke of it: “Let this place be my lot, given to me by my Son and my God. I will be the Patroness of this place and intercede with God for it.”

The respect of ancient Christians for the Mother of God was so great that they preserved what they could about Her life, what they could take note of concerning Her sayings and deeds, and they even passed down to us a description of Her outward appearance.

According to Tradition, based on the words of the Hieromartyrs Dionysius the Areopagite (October 3) and Ignatius the God-Bearer (December 20), Saint Ambrose of Milan (December 7) had occasion to write in his work “On Virgins” concerning the Mother of God: “She was a Virgin not only in body, but also in soul, humble of heart, circumspect in word, wise in mind, not overly given to speaking, a lover of reading

and of work, and prudent in speech. Her rule of life was to offend no one, to intend good for everyone, to respect the aged, not envy others, avoid bragging, be healthy of mind, and to love virtue.

The circumstances of the Dormition of the Mother of God were known in the Orthodox Church from apostolic times. Already in the first century, the Hieromartyr Dionysius the Areopagite wrote about Her “Falling-Asleep.” In the second century, the account of the bodily ascent of the Most Holy Virgin Mary to Heaven is found in the works of Meliton, Bishop of Sardis. In the fourth century, Saint Epiphanius of Cyprus refers to the tradition about the “Falling Asleep” of the Mother of God. In the fifth century, Saint Juvenal, Patriarch of Jerusalem, told the holy Byzantine Empress Pulcheria: “Although there is no account of the circumstances of Her death in Holy Scripture, we know about them from the most ancient and credible Tradition.” This tradition was gathered and expounded in the Church History of Nikēphóros Callistus during the fourteenth century.

At the time of Her blessed Falling Asleep, the Most Holy Virgin Mary was again in Jerusalem. Her fame as the Mother of God had already spread throughout the land and had aroused many of the envious and the spiteful against Her. They wanted to make attempts on Her life; but God preserved Her from enemies.

Day and night She spent her time in prayer. The Most Holy Theotokos often went to the Holy Sepulcher of the Lord, and here She offered up fervent prayer. More than once, enemies of the Savior sought to hinder Her from visiting her holy place, and they asked the High Priest for a guard to watch over the Grave of the Lord. The Holy Virgin continued to pray right in front of them, yet unseen by anyone.

In one such visit to Golgotha, the Archangel Gabriel appeared to Her and announced Her approaching departure from this life to eternal life. In pledge of this, the Archangel gave Her a palm branch. With these heavenly tidings the Mother of God returned to Bethlehem with the three girls attending Her (Sepphora, Abigail, and Jael). She summoned Righteous Joseph of Arimathea and other disciples of the Lord and told them of Her impending Repose.

The Most Holy Virgin prayed also that the Lord would have the Apostle John come to Her. The Holy Spirit transported him from Ephesus, setting him in that very place where the Mother of God lay. After the prayer, the Most Holy Virgin offered incense, and John heard a voice from Heaven, closing Her prayer with the word "Amen." The Mother of God took it that the voice meant the speedy arrival of the Apostles and the Disciples and the holy Bodiless Powers.

The faithful, whose number by then was impossible to count, gathered together, says Saint John of Damascus, like clouds and eagles, to listen to the Mother of God. Seeing one another, the Disciples rejoiced, but in their confusion, they asked each other why the Lord had gathered them together in one place. Saint John the Theologian, greeting them with tears of joy, said that the time of the Virgin's repose was at hand.

Going into the Mother of God, they beheld Her lying upon the bed, and filled with spiritual joy. The Disciples greeted Her, and then they told her how they had been carried miraculously from their places of preaching. The Most Holy Virgin Mary glorified God because He had heard Her prayer and fulfilled Her heart's desire, and She began speaking about Her imminent end.

During this conversation the Apostle Paul also appeared in a miraculous manner together with his disciples Dionysius the Areopagite, Saint Hierotheus, Saint Timothy and others of the Seventy Apostles. The Holy Spirit had gathered them all together so that they might be granted the blessing of the All-Pure Virgin Mary, and more fittingly to see to the burial of the Mother of the Lord. She called each of them to Herself by name, She blessed them and extolled them for their faith and the hardships they endured in preaching the Gospel of Christ. To each She wished eternal bliss and

prayed with them for the peace and welfare of the whole world.

Then came the third hour (9 A.M.), when the Dormition of the Mother of God was to occur. Several candles were burning. The holy Disciples surrounded her beautifully adorned bed, offering praise to God. She prayed in anticipation of Her demise and of the arrival of Her longed-for Son and Lord. Suddenly, the inexpressible Light of Divine Glory shone forth before which the blazing candles paled in comparison. All who saw it took fright. Descending from Heaven was Christ, the King of Glory, surrounded by hosts of Angels and Archangels and other Heavenly Powers, together with the souls of the Forefathers and the Prophets, who had prophesied in ages past concerning the Most Holy Virgin Mary.

Seeing Her Son, the Mother of God exclaimed: ***“My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God My Savior, for He hath regarded the low estate of His Handmaiden”*** (Luke 1:46-48) and, rising from Her bed to meet the Lord, She bowed down to Him, and the Lord bid Her enter into Life Eternal. Without any bodily suffering, as though in a happy sleep, the Most Holy Virgin Mary gave Her soul into the hands of Her Son and God.

Then began a joyous angelic song. Accompanying the pure soul of the God-betrothed and with reverent awe

for the Queen of Heaven, the angels exclaimed: ***“Hail, Full of Grace, the Lord is with Thee, blessed art Thou among women! For lo, the Queen, God’s Maiden comes, lift up the gates, and with the Ever Existing One, take up the Mother of Light; for through Her salvation has come to all the human race. It is impossible to gaze upon Her, and it is impossible to render Her due honor”*** (Stikherion on “Lord, I Have Cried”). The Heavenly gates were raised and meeting the soul of the Most Holy Mother of God, the Cherubim and the Seraphim glorified Her with joy. The face of the Mother of God was radiant with the glory of Divine virginity, and from Her body there came a sweet fragrance.

Miraculous was the life of the All-Pure Virgin, and wondrous was Her Repose, as Holy Church sings: ***“In Thee, O Queen, the God of all hath given thee as thy portion the things that are above nature. Just as in the Birth-Giving He did preserve Thine virginity, so also in the grave He did preserve Thy body from decay”*** (Canon 1, Ode 6, Troparion 1).

Kissing the all-pure body with reverence and in awe, the Disciples in turn were blessed by it and filled with grace and spiritual joy. Through the great glorification of the Most Holy Theotokos, the almighty power of God healed the sick, who with faith and love touched the holy bed.

Bewailing their separation from the Mother of God, the Apostles prepared to bury Her all-pure body. The holy Apostles Peter, Paul, James, and others of the Twelve Apostles carried the funeral bier upon their shoulders, and upon it lay the body of the Ever-Virgin Mary. Saint John the Theologian went at the head with the resplendent palm-branch from Paradise. The other saints and a multitude of the faithful accompanied the funeral bier with candles and censers, singing sacred songs. This solemn procession went from Sion through Jerusalem to the Garden of Gethsemane.

With the start of the procession there suddenly appeared over the all-pure body of the Mother of God and all those accompanying Her a resplendent circular cloud, like a crown. There was heard the singing of the Heavenly Powers, glorifying the Mother of God, which echoed that of the worldly voices. This circle of Heavenly singers and radiance accompanied the procession to the very place of burial.

Unbelieving inhabitants of Jerusalem, taken aback by the extraordinarily grand funeral procession and vexed at the honor accorded the Mother of Jesus, complained of this to the High Priest and scribes. Burning with envy and vengefulness toward everything that reminded them of Christ, they sent out their own servants to disrupt the procession and to set the body of the Mother of God afire.

An angry crowd and soldiers set off against the Christians, but the circular cloud accompanying the procession descended and surrounded them like a wall. The pursuers heard the footsteps and the singing but could not see any of those accompanying the procession. Indeed, many of them were struck blind.

The Jewish priest Athonios, out of spite and hatred for the Mother of Jesus of Nazareth, wanted to topple the funeral bier on which lay the body of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, but an angel of God invisibly cut off his hands, which had touched the bier. Seeing such a wonder, Athonios repented and with faith confessed the majesty of the Mother of God. He received healing and joined the crowd accompanying the body of the Mother of God, and he became a zealous follower of Christ.

When the procession reached the Garden of Gethsemane, then amidst the weeping and the wailing began the last kiss to the all-pure body. Only towards evening were the Apostles able to place it in the tomb and seal the entrance to the cave with a large stone.

For three days they did not depart from the place of burial, praying and chanting Psalms. Through the wise providence of God, the Apostle Thomas was not to be present at the burial of the Mother of God. Arriving late on the third day at Gethsemane, he lay down at the tomb and with bitter tears asked that he might be

permitted to look once more upon the Mother of God and bid her farewell. The Apostles out of heartfelt pity for him decided to open the grave and permit him the comfort of venerating the holy relics of the Ever-Virgin Mary. Having opened the grave, they found in it only the grave wrappings and were thus convinced of the bodily ascent of the Most Holy Virgin Mary to Heaven.

On the evening of the same day, when the Apostles had gathered at a house to strengthen themselves with food, the Mother of God appeared to them and said: “Rejoice! I am with you all the days of your lives.” This so gladdened the Apostles and everyone with them, that they took a portion of the bread, set aside at the meal in memory of the Savior (“the Lord’s Portion”), and they exclaimed: “Most Holy Theotokos, save us”. (This marks the beginning of the rite of offering up the “Panagia” (“All-Holy”), a portion of bread in honor of the Mother of God, which is done at monasteries to the present day).

The sash of the Mother of God, and Her holy garb, preserved with reverence and distributed over the face of the earth in pieces, have worked miracles both in the past and at present. Her numerous icons everywhere pour forth signs and healings, and Her holy body, taken up to Heaven, bears witness to our own future life there. Her body was not left to the

vicissitudes of the transitory world, but was incomparably exalted by its glorious ascent to Heaven.

The Feast of the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos is celebrated with special solemnity at Gethsemane, the place of Her burial. Nowhere else is there such sorrow of heart at the separation from the Mother of God, and nowhere else such joy, because of Her intercession for the world.

“O marvelous wonder! The Fount of Life is placed in the grave, and the grave doth become the ladder to Heaven...” Here at the grave of the All-Pure Virgin, these words strike deep with their original sense and grief is dispelled by joy: “Hail, Full of Grace, the Lord is with Thee, granting the world, through Thee, great mercy!”

BLESSING OF FLOWERS AND HERBS

Today flowers are blessed in church, and people keep them in their homes. During times of family strife or illness, the flower petals are placed in the censer with incense, and the whole house is censured. **Please bring your flowers and herbs to the Vigil and Lamentations on Monday evening, August 14, (6:00 pm)** and place them on the table under the Icon of St. Herman for blessing.

The Divine Liturgy will be celebrated on Tuesday morning, August 15, at 8:00 am.

BAPTISMAL DIVINE LITURGY

*As many as have been baptized into Christ,
have put on Christ, Alleluia!*



Next **Sunday, August 20**, the Baptismal Divine Liturgy will be celebrated for the Baptism and Chrismation of **Nora Elizabeth Keathley**, born on June 4, 2023. Nora Elizabeth is the daughter of Cody and Jessica and sisters Vivian and Harper.. Her Godparents are Juliana Freude and William Paluch.

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Baptism is birth to the life made new by Christ in His Death and Resurrection. *“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”* (John 3:3).

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SISTERHOOD OF ST. JULIANA MEETING

Sunday, August 27, following the Divine Liturgy.

Agenda: “Quarter Auction” preps

REMEMBERING OUR CATECHUMENS

Daniel Slife; Kristopher Barnhart

REMEMBERING THOSE SERVING IN THE ARMED FORCES

Subdeacon Anthony Freude, son of Fr Don and
Popadia Donna Freude

Egor Cravcenco, son of Serghei and Ludmila
Cravcenco

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

Nicoletta (Nikki) Bober

Pani Dolores Zuder

Mitered Archpriest Daniel & Matushka Myra Kovalak

Matushka Christine Zebren

Matushka Laryssa Hutnyan

Subdeacon Martin Paluch

Barbara Harp (sister of Veronica Bilas)

Ted Theodore

Sarah Kostadinova

Melissa Trace

Gerald Gray (father of Subdeacon Aaron Gray)

Kalie Obeng Fiorg

Louis Hakim

Daniel Sugden

Deaconisa Heidi Gresh

OUR STEWADSHIP, August 6, 2023

Candles:	\$ 48.00
Improvement Fund:	45.00
Orthodox Prison Ministry:	20.00
Sunday Offering:	920.00
TOTAL:	\$1,033.00

Tithely Donations:	\$116,55
PayPal Donations:	123.00
TOTAL:	\$239.55

TOTAL OFFERINGS: \$ 1,272.55

WISH LIST

With the rising costs in almost everything, our Parish of St. Elia, along with everybody else, is also facing financial difficulties in the present and more in the future to meet the daily bills on time. Thank you to all who faithfully donate and are willing to help the Treasurer meet these responsibilities on our behalf. If you are able, please consider increasing your offerings by monetary donations and/or by special donations of the Parish needs of items listed on the

WISH LIST:

- Paper towels
- Bathroom Tissues
- Kleenex
- Dishwasher Soap
- Incense (\$20.00 for a half pound)
- Censor Charcoal (\$30.00)
- 4-hour votive candles (\$36.50 a gross)
- 7 Day Votive Candles (\$52.00 for a case of 12)