WEEKLY BULLETIN

August 11, 2024, Vol. 41, No. 31
SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
Afterfeast of the Transfiguration

THE VOICE

SAINT ELIA ORTHODOX CHURCH

A Parish of the Orthodox Church in America

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His Eminence Alexander, Archbishop of Toledo, Bulgarian Diocese,
Very Rev. Mitred Archpriest Father Don Anthony Freude, Parish Rector
Rev. Protodeacon James M. Gresh, Attached

SAINT ELIA THE PROPHET PARISH

2024 Parish Council

President: Veronica Bilas
V. President: Sandy Graham
Secretary: Subdeacon Aaron Gray
Treasurer: Reader Joshua Wherley
Members: Subdeacon Terrence Bilas, Bud Graham, Jefferson Hodge, Nicholas Morelli

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

Sunday, August 11 - Sue Ellen Turscak
Sunday, August 18 - Bud Graham
Sunday, August 25 -- Sandy Graham
Sunday, September 1 – Reader Nicholas Morelli
Sunday, September 8 - Reader Michael Luc
Sunday, September 15 – Reader Joshua Wherley

SCHEDULE OF DIVINE SERVICES

THE DORMITION FAST

August 1-14

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Tone 6 – Afterfeast of the Transfiguration

Saturday, August 10

5:00 pm Great Vespers and Confessions

Sunday, August 11

9:10 am 3rd and 6th Hours: Sue Ellen Turscak

9:30 am Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom

Epistle Reader: Sue Ellen Turscak

Epistle: Romans 15:1-7 Gospel: Matthew 9:27-35

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

Wednesday, August 14

6:00 pm Vigil - Matins and Lamentations

BLESSING OF FLOWERS AND HERBS

Thursday, August 15

9:30 am Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST – Tone 7

Afterfeast of the Dormition of the Theotokos

Saturday, August 17

5:00 pm Great Vespers and Confessions

Sunday, August 18

9:10 am 3rd and 6th Hours: Bud Graham

9:30 am Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom

Epistle Reader: Bud Graham

Epistle: 1 Cor. 1:10-18 Gospel: Matthew 14:14-22

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE READINGS

Epistle: Romans 15:1-7

Bearing Others' Burdens

15 We then who are strong ought to bear with
the [a]scruples of the weak, and not to please
ourselves. **2** Let each of us please *his* neighbor
for *his* good, leading to [b]edification. **3** For even Christ
did not please Himself; but as it is written, "The
reproaches of those who reproached You fell on
Me." **4** For whatever things were written before were
written for our learning, that we through the [c]patience
and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. **5** Now
may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be
like-minded toward one another, according to Christ
Jesus, **6** that you may with one mind *and* one mouth
glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Glorify God Together

7 Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also
received [d]us, to the glory of God.

Gospel: Matthew 9:27-35

Two Blind Men Healed

27 When Jesus departed from there, two blind men
followed Him, crying out and saying, "Son of David,
have mercy on us!"

28 And when He had come into the house, the blind men came to Him. And Jesus said to them, “Do you believe that I am able to do this?”

They said to Him, “Yes, Lord.”

29 Then He touched their eyes, saying, “According to your faith let it be to you.” 30 And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly warned them, saying, “See *that* no one knows *it*.” 31 But when they had departed, they [a]spread the news about Him in all that [b]country.

A Mute Man Speaks

32 As they went out, behold, they brought to Him a man, mute and demon-possessed. 33 And when the demon was cast out, the mute spoke. And the multitudes marveled, saying, “It was never seen like this in Israel!”

34 But the Pharisees said, “He casts out demons by the ruler of the demons.”

The Compassion of Jesus

35 Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease [c]among the people.

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

Commemorated on August 15

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 on 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.

According to Tradition, that from the compiler of Church history Nikēphóros Callistus (fourteenth century), the Mother of God "was of average stature, or as others suggest, slightly more than average; Her hair golden in appearance; Her eyes bright with pupils like shiny olives; Her eyebrows strong in character and moderately dark, Her nose pronounced and Her mouth vibrant bespeaking sweet speech; Her face was neither round nor angular, but somewhat oblong; the palm of Her hands and fingers were longish...

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 at 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 went often to the Holy Sepulchre of the Lord, and here She offered up fevent 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 in to 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. A number of 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.

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"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!"

The Feast of the Dormition of the Mother of God is celebrated from August 15 – 23.

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 censed**.**

Please bring your flowers and herbs to the Vigil and Lamentations on Wednesday 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 Thursday morning. August 15, at 9:30 am.

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
Kristopher Barnhart: son of Diego and Chanelle - Naval Station Great Lakes in Chicago

REMEMBER OUR SICK AND SHUT-INS

Archbishop Alexander
Archbishop Benjamin
Archbishop Nathaniel
Archpriest Emil Huntyan
Archpriest Andrew Moulton
Florence Lambo
Martin Vronick
Pani Dolores Zuder
Mitered Archpriest Daniel Kovalak
Matushka Myra Kovalak
Matushka Christine Zebren
Matushka Laryssa Huntyan
Subdeacon Martin Paluch
Sarah Nigilo
Melissa Trace
Halina Woroncow
Carl Nickoloff
Joseph Taylor (nephew of DiPuccio Family)
Brian Gable (Protodeacon James' nephew)

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Monday, August 12 at 6:30 pm

WELCOME

We wish to welcome to our Parish family of S. Elia, Subdeacon David and Melissa Trace, and David Anderson. May God grant you peace, health and happiness for Many Years.

DEACONATE ORDINATION

Subdeacon Aaron Innocent Gray will be ordained a Deacon of the Orthodox Church in America on Sunday, October 6, by His Eminence our Father and Archbishop Alexander.

The Annual Conference of the Bulgarian Diocese of Toledo will be held that weekend, October 4 to 6, here at Saint Elia.

OUR STEWARDSHIP, August 4, 2024

Candles:	**$ 63.00**
Improvement Fund:	**5.00**
Special Donation:	**5.00**
Tray Offerings:	**465.00**
TOTAL:	**$ 538.00**
PayPal:	**3.00**
Tithely Donations:	**$ 650.40**
TOTAL OFFERNGS	**$1,191.00**