WEEKLY BULLETIN

The Voice

March 9, 2025, Vol. 42, No. 10

Sunday of Orthodoxy

St. ELIA
ORTHODOX ✝ CHURCH

A Parish of the Orthodox Church in America

64 W. Wilbeth Rd., Akron, Ohio 44301

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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, Rev. Deacon Aaron Gray

SAINT ELIA THE PROPHET PARISH

2025 Parish Council

President: Veronica Bilas
V. President: Sandy Graham
Secretary: Deacon Aaron Gray
Treasurer: Daniel Slife
Members: Anthony Dodovich Bud Graham, Jefferson Hodge, Daniel Ralich

Choir Director: Subdeacon Terrence A. Bilas
Assistant Directors: Anastasia Bohush
Deaconisa Heidi Gresh, Reader Michael Luc

Church School Coordinator: Popadia Donna Freude
Staff: Natalie Slife, Eve Tavenier, Reader Nicholas Morelli. Frances Hakim, Subdeacon David Trace

Sisterhood of St. Juliana:

President: Sandy Graham
V. President: Kathy Gray
Secretary: Katherine Hodge
Treasurer: Mary Magensky
Assistant Treasurer: Anastasia Bohush

Workers of St. Elizabeth the New Martyr:

Coordinators: Subdeacon Aaron Gray, Veronica Bilas

Scheduled Readers 2025

Sunday, March 9 - Sue Ellen Turscak
Sunday, March 16 - Daniel Slife
Sunday, March 23 - Bud Graham
Sunday, March 30 – Sandy Graham

SCHEDULE OF DIVINE SERVICES

SECOND WEEK OF GREAT LENT

FIRST SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT - Tone 4
SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY 40 MARTRYS OF SEBASTE
Saturday, March 8
5:00 pm Great Vespers and Confessions
Sunday, March 9
9:10 am 3rd and 6th Hours: Sue Ellen Turscak
9:30 am Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great
Epistle Reader: Sue Ellen Turscak
Epistle: Hebrews 11:24-26, 32 -12:2
Gospel: John 1:43-51

5:00 pm SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY VESPERS at Presentation of Our Lord Orthodox Church

Wednesday, March 12
6:00 pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts
Friday, March 14
6:00 pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts
Lenten Covered Dish

TODAY, SUNDAY, MARCH 9, 2025

Today is the Sunday of Orthodoxy celebrating the Incarnation of the Son of God becoming man. This belief is expressed especially in the veneration of Icons in the Church.
At the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy, we will process carrying the Holy Icons. Everyone is asked to bring their Icons from home and carry them in procession.

THIRD WEEK OF GREAT LENT

SECOND SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT - Tone 5
Saint Gregory Palamas
Saturday, March 15
5:00 pm Great Vespers and Confessions
Sunday, March 16
9:10 am 3rd and 6th Hours: Daniel Slife
9:30 am Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great
Epistle Reader: Daniel Slife
Epistle: Hebrews 1:10-2:3 Gospel: Mark 2:1-12
Panakhida for the repose of the soul of
Reader William Paluch as requested by the family

5:00 pm LENTEN VESPERS at St. Thomas Church

Wednesday, March 19
6:00 pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts
Friday, March 21
6:00 pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts
Lenten Covered Dish

FOURTH WEEK OF GREAT LENT

THIRD SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT - Tone 6
VENERATION OF THE CROSS
Saturday, March 22
5:00 pm Great Vespers and Confessions
Sunday, March 23
9:10 am 3rd and 6th Hours: Bud Graham
9:30 am Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great
Epistle Reader: Bud Graham
Epistle: Hebrews 4:14-5:6
Gospel: Mark 8:34-9:1

5:00 pm LENTEN VESPERS at St. Elia Church

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE READINGS
SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY

Epistle: Hebrews 11:24-26, 32-12:2

24 By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to
be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, 25 choosing
rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than
to enjoy the [a]passing pleasures of
sin, 26 esteeming the [b]reproach of Christ greater riches
than the treasures [c]in Egypt; for he looked to
the reward.

32 And what more shall I say? For the time would fail
me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson
and Jephthah, also *of* David and Samuel and the
prophets: 33 who through faith subdued kingdoms,
worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the
mouths of lions, 34 quenched the violence of fire,
escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were
made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to fight
the armies of the aliens. 35 Women received their dead
raised to life again.

Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that
they might obtain a better resurrection. 36 Still others
had trial of mocking and scourging's, yes, and of
chains and imprisonment. 37 They were stoned, they
were sawn in two, [e]were tempted, were slain with the
sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and

goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented— 38 of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, *in* dens and caves of the earth.

39 And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, 40 God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.

The Race of Faith

12 Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares *us,* and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking unto Jesus, the [f]author and [g]finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Gospel: John 1:43-51

"**Philip and Nathanael**

43 The following day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and He found Philip and said to him, "Follow Me." **44** Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. **45** Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

46 And Nathanael said to him, “Can anything good
come out of Nazareth?” Philip said to him, “Come and
see.”

47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said
of him, “Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no
deceit!”

48 Nathanael said to Him, “How do You know me?”

Jesus answered and said to him, “Before Philip called
you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.”

49 Nathanael answered and said to Him, “Rabbi, You
are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!”

50 Jesus answered and said to him, “Because I said to
you, ‘I saw you under the fig tree,’ do you believe?
You will see greater things than these.” **51** And He said
to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter[a] you
shall see heaven open, and the angels of God
ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.”

Troparion - *Sunday of Orthodoxy*

We venerate Your most pure image, O Good One;
and ask forgiveness of our transgressions, O Christ
our God. Of Your own will You were pleased to
ascend the Cross in the flesh and deliver Your
creatures from bondage to the Enemy.Therefore with
thankfulness we cry aloud to You: “You have filled
all with joy, O our Savior, by coming to save the
world.”

1st Sunday of Great Lent: Sunday of Orthodoxy

Commemorated on March 9

The first Sunday of Great Lent is called the Sunday of Orthodoxy because it commemorates the restoration of the Holy Icons and the triumph of the Orthodox Faith against the terrible heresy of the Iconoclasts, i.e. those heretics who refused to honor the Holy Icons. For more than a hundred years the Church was disturbed by the evil doctrine of iconoclasm. The first Emperor to persecute the Church was Leo the Isaurian, and the last was Theophilos, the spouse of Saint Theodora (February 11), who reigned after her husband's death and re-established Orthodoxy in the time of Patriarch Methodios (June 14). Empress Theodora proclaimed publicly that we do not kiss the Icons as a sign of worship, nor do we honor them as "gods," but as images of their prototypes.

In the year 843, on the first Sunday of the Fast, Saint Theodora and her son, Emperor Michael, venerated the Holy Icons together with the clergy and the people. Since that time this event has been commemorated every year, because it was definitively determined that we do not worship the Icons, but we honor and glorify all the Saints who are depicted in them. We worship only the Triune God: The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and no one else, neither a Saint, nor an Angel.

FORTY HOLY MARTYRS OF SEBASTE

Commemorated this Sunday, March 9

In the year 313 Saint Constantine the Great issued an edict granting Christians religious freedom and officially recognizing Christianity as equal with paganism under the law. But his co-ruler Licinius was a pagan, and he decided to stamp out Christianity in his part of the Empire. As Licinius prepared his army to fight Constantine, he decided to remove Christians from his army, fearing mutiny.

One of the military commanders of that time in the Armenian city of Sebaste was Agricola, a zealous champion of idolatry. Under his command was a company of forty Cappadocians, brave soldiers who had distinguished themselves in many battles. When these Christian soldiers refused to offer sacrifice to the pagan gods, Agricola locked them up in prison.

The soldiers occupied themselves with prayer and psalmody, and during the night they heard a voice saying, “Persevere until the end, then you shall be saved.”

On the following morning, the soldiers were again taken to Agricola. This time the pagan tried flattery. He began to praise their valor, their

youth and strength, and once more he urged them to renounce Christ and thereby win themselves the respect and favor of their emperor.

Seven days later, the renowned judge Licius arrived at Sebaste and put the soldiers on trial. The saints steadfastly answered, “Take not only our military insignia, but also our lives, since nothing is more precious to us than Christ God.” Licius then ordered his servants to stone the holy martyrs. But the stones missed the saints and returned to strike those who had thrown them. One stone thrown by Licius hit Agricola in the face, smashing his teeth. The torturers realized that the saints were guarded by some invisible power. In prison, the soldiers spent the night in prayer and again they heard the voice of the Lord comforting them: “He who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live (John 11:25). Be brave and fear not, for you shall obtain imperishable crowns.”

On the following day the judge repeated the interrogation in front of the torturer, but the soldiers remained unyielding.

It was winter, and there was severe frost. They lined up the holy soldiers, threw them into a lake near the city, and set a guard to prevent them from coming out of the water. In order to break the will of the martyrs, a warm bathhouse was set up on the shore. During the first hour of the night, when the cold had become unbearable, one

of the soldiers made a dash for the bath-house, but no sooner had he stepped over the threshold, then he fell down dead.

During the third hour of the night, the Lord sent consolation to the martyrs. Suddenly there was light, the ice melted away, and the water in the lake became warm. All the guards were asleep, except for Aglaius, who kept watch. Looking at the lake he saw that a radiant crown had appeared over the head of each martyr. Aglaius counted thirty-nine crowns and realized that the soldier who fled had lost his crown.
Aglaius then woke up the other guards, took off his uniform and said to them, “I too am a Christian,” and he joined the martyrs. Standing in the water he prayed, “Lord God, I believe in You, in Whom these soldiers believe. Add me to their number and make me worthy to suffer with Your servants.” Then a fortieth crown appeared over his head.

In the morning, the torturers saw with surprise that the martyrs were still alive, and their guard Aglaius was glorifying Christ together with them. They led the soldiers out of the water and broke their legs. During this horrible execution the mother of the youngest of the soldiers, Meliton, pleaded with her son to persevere until death.

They put the bodies of the martyrs on a cart and committed them to fire. Young Meliton was still breathing, and they left him on the ground. His

mother then picked up her son, and on her own shoulders she carried him behind the cart. When Meliton drew his last breath, his mother put him on the cart with the bodies of his fellow sufferers. The bodies of the saints were tossed in the fire, and their charred bones were thrown into the water, so that Christians would not gather them up. Three days later the martyrs appeared in a dream to Saint Peter, Bishop of Sebaste, and commanded him to bury their remains. The bishop together with several clergy gathered up the relics of the glorious martyrs by night and buried them with honor.

There is a pious custom of baking “skylarks” (pastries shaped like skylarks) on this day, because people believed that birds sing at this time to announce the arrival of spring. Forty “skylarks” are prepared in honor of the Forty Martyrs.

> The names of the forty martyrs are: Cyrion (or Quirio), Candidus, Domnus, Hesychius, Heraclius, Smaragdus, Eunocius (Or Eunicus), Valens, Vivianus, Claudius, Priscus, Theodulus, Eutychius, John, Xanthius, Helianus, Sisinius, Aglaius, Aetius, Flavius, Acacius, Ecdicius, Lysimachus, Alexander, Elias, Gorgonius, Theophilus, Dometian, Gaius, Leontius, Athanasius, Cyril, Sacerdon, Nicholas, Valerius, Philoctimon, Severian, Chudion, Aglaius, and Meliton.

AKRON ORTHODOX COMMUNITY LENTEN SERVICES

Great Lent began this year, 2025, on Monday, March 3.

The first Sunday of Great Lent is called the **Sunday of Orthodoxy**, celebrating the ***"Triumph of Orthodoxy"*** over Iconoclasm and the restoration of the veneration of Icons.

On the **Sunday of Orthodoxy, March 9,** the Akron Orthodox Churches this year will gather to celebrate Vespers at **Presentation of Our Lord Orthodox Church at 5:00 pm.**

The **Combined Lenten Vespers** will be served each **Sunday** evening during Great Lent at **5:00 pm**:

March 9 – Presentation of our Lord Church
March 16 – St. Thomas Church
March 23 – St. Elia Church
March 30 – St. George Church
April 6 – Holy Unction at St. Nicholas Church

Mon. March 24 - Vespers at **5:30 pm** at Annunciation Church for the Feast of the Annunciation

PREMEMBERING THOSE SERVING IN **THE ARMED FORCES**

Subdeacon Anthony Freude, son of Fr Don and Popadia Donna
Egor Cravcenco, son of Serghei and Ludmila
Khristopher Barnhart, son of Diego and Chanelle]

REMEMBERING OUR SICK AND SHUTINS

Archbishop Onuphry of the Ukraine
Archbishop Benjamin
Archbishop Nathaniel
Archpriest Anderew Moulton
Archpriest Emil Huntyan
Priest Gabriel Bilas
Mitered Archpriest Daniel Kovalak
Matushka Myra Kovalak
Matushka Christine Zebren
Matushka Laryssa Huntyan
Matushka Valerie Zahersky
Subdeacon Martin Paluch
Reader John Paluch
Florence Lambo
Mary Magensky
Sarah Niglio
Melissa Trace
Martin Vronick
Louis Hakim
Joey Gresh
Halina Woroncow
Joseph Taylor
Brian Gable
Hilda Ralich
Ellen Rees

Journey to Pascha with the Psalms!

The Goal

This year, we will continue an annual tradition at St. Elia since 2008 of praying the Psalms together as a parish community during Lent. It's an opportunity for us to draw nearer to Christ and one another during the fast, as we journey toward Holy Pascha.

How It Works

The Orthodox Church has traditionally divided the book of Psalms into 20 sections. In our St. Elia prayer group, we will all pray a new section each day throughout the 40 days of Lent, beginning on March 3, so that we will pray through the entire book of Psalms twice during the course of the fast.

Bonus

As we all join in praying the Psalms, we can use this opportunity to pray for one another, for our parish, and for any special intentions that any of us may have by sharing prayer requests with one another via email. Additionally, you will receive Lenten reflections throughout the fast via email with quotes from the saints and other edifying material

What Do You Need?

To participate, all you need is a Bible and a little bit of time to set aside each day.

How Do I Join?

You can join by going to http://saintelia.com/news/lenten-prayergroup/ and filling in the online form. Shortly before Great Lent begins, you will receive an email with a schedule of which Psalms to pray each day and the names of everyone else who is participating in the prayer group, so that we can remember one another in our daily prayers.

One Last Thing!

May the Lord bless us as we pray the Psalms together, and may He draw us nearer to Himself and to one another during this Lent. Have a blessed 40 days!

Praise the Lord!
For it is good to sing praises to our God!
For it is pleasant, and praise is beautiful!
Psalm 47:1

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OUR STEWARDSHIP
Sunday, March 2, 2025

Candles:	**$ 83.00**
Sun. Tray Offerings:	**1,500.00**
PayPal Offerings:	**29.80**
Tithely Offerings:	**333.62**
TOTAL:	**$1,946.42**

THE MYSTERY OF HOLY CONFESSION

Confession is a sacred rite that Orthodox Christians are encouraged to participate in as often as they are called upon to do. It is a time in which we confess our sins to God and seek His forgiveness.

The Orthodox Church practices confession in accordance with the biblical teachings. It teaches that only God can forgive us our sins through Jesus Christ, and only if we are truly repentant. Confession is an open admission of sin before God, in the presence of our Spiritual Father.

Before going to confession, we should first prepare ourselves by reviewing our life by an examination of conscience. Confession is not a punishment but a spiritual exercise to help you grow in the Lord.

Confessions are heard every Saturday following the celebration of Great Vespers. However, if you are unable to come to confession at this time, please contact Father to request a time when you are able to come for confession.

On the counter in the Church vestibule is a booklet that includes an examination of conscience aid and prayers before and after confession. Please take a copy.

NATIONAL ORTHODOX BABY SHOWER

Our community outreach group, ***The Workers of Saint Elizabeth,*** is joining with Orthodox parishes across the country to hold a "baby shower" to support mothers who choose life for their unborn children. Join us in collecting the listed items below to benefit ***Zoe for Life*** located in Cleveland.

Bring your items to church **from March 9th to April 13TH** and place them in the Pack and Play located in the Church Hall.
Questions? Please contact Veronica Bilas or Deacon Aarron Gray.

Diapers sizes Newborn to 6
Pullups (any size)
Baby Wipes
Baby Clothes (new up to 2T)
Blankets
Toys (new)
Cribs (new)
Target/Walmart gift cards
Pacifiers (new)
Baby Socks
Bottles (new)
Diaper Bags
Car Seats (new)