WEEKLY BULLETIN

December 7, 2025, Vol. 42, No. 49

26th Sunday After Pentecost

THE VOICE

SAINT ELIA ORTHODOX CHURCH

A Parish of the Orthodox Church in America
64 W. Wilbeth Rd., Akron, Ohio 44301
Church Hall: 330-724-7129
Office: 330-724-7009

www.saintelia.com

www.facebook.com/sainteliakron

Alexander, Archbishop of Toledo, Bulgarian Diocese, OCA
V. Rev. Mitred Archpriest Father Don Anthony Freude, Rector
Rev. Protodeacon James 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, Deaconisa Heidi Gresh

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, December 7 - Mary Beth Gray
Sunday, December 14 - Deaconisa Heidi Gresh
Sunday, December 21 - Hours – Subdeacon Terrence Bilas
Epistle – Anastasia Bohush
Sunday, December 28 - Sue Ellen Turscak

SCHEDULE OF DIVINSERVICES

THE NATIVITY FAST

"The sayings of the prophets are now fulfilled"

26th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST - Tone 1
St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan
Saturday December 6
5:00 pm Great Vespers and Confessions
Matins Gospel: Luke 24:`-1-12
Sunday, December 7
9:10 am 3rd and 6th Hours: Mary Beth Gray
9:30 am Divine Liturgy of Saint Chrysostom
Epistle Reader: Mary Beth Gray
Epistle: Ephesians 5:9-19 Gospel: Luke 17:12-19
Lighting of the Fourth Candle on the Advent Wreath

Holyday
REPOSE OF SAINT HERMAN OF ALASKA, WONDERWORKER. OF ALL AMERICA
Friday, December 12
6:00 pm Vesperal Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom

27th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST – Tone 2
SUNDAY OF THE FOREFATHERS
Saturday, December 13
5:00 pm Great Vespers and Confessions
Matins Gospel: Luke 24:12-35
Sunday, December 14
9:10 am 3rd and 6th Hours: Deaconisa Heidi Gresh
9:30 am Baptismal Divine Liturgy of St John Chrysostom
Baptism of Denise Do Nascimento Brito
Epistle Reader: Deaconisa Heidi Gresh
Epistles: Colossians 3:4-11, Romans 6:3-11
Gospel: Luke 14:16-24, Matthew 28:16-20
Lighting of the Fifth Candle on the Advent Wreath

SUNDAY SCRIPTURE READINGS

Epistle: Ephesians 5:9-19

9 (for the fruit of the [a]Spirit *is* in all goodness,
righteousness, and truth), **10** finding out what is
acceptable to the Lord. **11** And have no fellowship with
the unfruitful works of darkness, but
rather [b]expose *them.* **12** For it is shameful even to
speak of those things which are done by them in
secret. **13** But all things that are [c]exposed are made
manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is
light. **14** Therefore He says:

"Awake, you who sleep,
Arise from the dead,
And Christ will give you light."

Walk in Wisdom

15 See then that you walk [d]circumspectly, not as fools
but as wise, **16** redeeming the time, because the days
are evil.

17 Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the
will of the Lord *is.* **18** And do not be drunk with wine,
in which is dissipation; but be filled with the
Spirit, **19** speaking to one another in psalms and hymns
and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in
your heart to the Lord,

Gospel: Luke 17:12-19

[12] Then as He entered a certain village, there met Him ten men who were lepers, who stood afar off. [13] And they lifted up *their* voices and said, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!"

[14] So when He saw *them,* He said to them, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed.

[15] And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, [16] and fell down on *his* face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan.

[17] So Jesus answered and said, "Were there not ten cleansed? But where *are* the nine? [18] Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?" [19] And He said to him, "Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well."

+*+

Whoever Wishes to be Great

Blessed is he, whom the mighty Spirit has shown to be poor in passions, whoever leads a life of repentance whoever can never get his fill of celestial food; who by kindness, becomes inheritor of great things, who, by bowels of mercy, draws down God's great compassion, being a friend of peace and pure in heart, who, for the sake of the renowned Christ, has endured many sufferings, and will find great honor. Keep the way of these people, whichever you prefer.

St. Gregory the Theologian

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 17 AT 6:30 PM

FOR THE ALASKAN OCA SEMINARY

"So let each one give as he purposes in his heart…God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Cor. 9:6).

During Advent – from November 15 -December 14, we are making our charitable offerings in support of the Seminarians and Catechists enrolled at Saint Herman's Seminary in Kodiak, Alaska.

CHRISTMAS FLOWERS DONATIONS

With the celebration of Christmas just weeks away, please consider making a donation for poinsettias and decorations. **Christmas Flower Offering Envelopes** are available on the candle desk. Thank you for your generosity. The envelope has a space, if you wish, to make your offering "in memory."

2026 CHURCH CALENDARS

Through the kindness and generosity of Anthony Funeral home, our Parish Family has been provided with 2026 Church Calendars, available on the front pew to be picked up.

SAINT ELIA CHRISTMAS ORNAMENT

A St. Elia Christmas Ornament, designed by our Deacon Aaron, is available in our Bookstore for $10.00.

THE FEAST DAY OF SAINT NICHOLAS

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 5TH

6:00 PM VESPERAL DIVINE LITURGY

for the Feast

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7TH

9:30 AM DIVINE LITURGY

Followed by a Lenten Luncheon

Please bring a covered meatless dish and/or dessert

AND

A VISIT FROM SAINT NICHOLAS

OUR STEWARDSHIP – November 30, 2025

Candles:	**$ 85.00**
Sunday Tray Offerings:	**1,527.74**
St. Herman's Seminary:	**200 .00**
Christmas Flowers:	**60.00**
PayPal Donations:	**4.85**
Tithely Donations:	**386.12**
TOTAL:	**$2,263.71**

ADVENT WREATH

The Advent Wreath, made of evergreens, has six candles on it: one for each Sunday in Advent. After the homily, the children will come up to light the candles on the wreath each Sunday. ***This Sunday, December 7, we will light the fourth candle on the wreath.***

Winter/Spring BIBLE STUDY: The Epistle to the Hebrews

Join us as we study and discuss this rich and meaningful book of the New Testament that is read in the Orthodox Church throughout the year. All sessions will be from **6:30 to 7:30 p.m.**, with locations split between the St. Elia parish hall and Artisan Coffee at 662 Canton Road in Ellet, which has a private room available for us to reserve (and excellent food and coffee!). **Please see Deacon Aaron with any questions. We look forward to learning together!**

Session 1: Hebrews Introduction — Hebrews 1:1 to 1:4
• Thursday, Jan. 22, at Artisan Coffee

Session 2: A Name Superior To Angels — Hebrews 1:5 to 4:13
• Thursday, Feb. 5, at St. Elia

Session 3: A Merciful And Faithful High Priest — Hebrews 4:14 to 6:20
• Thursday, Feb. 19, at Artisan Coffee

Session 4: High Priest Of A New And Better Covenant — Hebrews 7:1 to 10:39
• Monday, March 9, at St. Elia

Session 5: A Good Testimony Through Faith — Hebrews 11:1 to 12:13
• Thursday, April 23, at Artisan Coffee

Session 6: Let Brotherly Love Continue — Hebrews 12:14 to 13:25
• Thursday, May 14, location TBD

C0ME LORD JESUS

Come Lord Jesus! On Christmas Day, we celebratethe coming of the Son of God in flesh at His Birth in Bethlehem.

Come Lord Jesus! As Christians we are always standing in the Hope of His awesome and second glorious coming when He will reign as King of kings and Lord of lords over His own creation.

Come Lord Jesus! In this Holy Season of Advent - a time of prayer, fasting, reflection and silence - we prepare for His coming to us in grace.

What does this mean? Advent is about deepening our relationship with God in *"the grace of our lord Jesus Christ"* (cf. Romans 16:20; 2 Corinthians 13:14). That relationship is one of friendship and intimacy. We are invited to intimate, mutual, loving fellowship with our Lord.

Every day we grow in Christ OR we weaken our relationship with Him because of our lack of purpose and commitment. This Advent season before Christmas is given to us by the Church as an opportunity once again to renew ourselves in Christ, to restore His Life in us, to prepare the good soil of our hearts to receive the seed of His Word for His Kingdom to come in us.
Our prayer during Advent can be summed up in the last words and prayer found in the book of Revelation:

Come Lord Jesus!

Conception of the Most Holy Theotokos by Saint Anna

Commemorated on December 9

The Holy Righteous Anna was the youngest daughter of the priest Matthan, who was from the tribe of Levi, of the family of Aaron. Her husband, the Holy Righteous Joachim was from the tribe of Judah, from the house and family of King David. According to the ancient promise, the Messiah was to come from the lineage of King David (Luke 2:4).

The couple lived in Nazareth of Galilee. Every year they gave two-thirds of their income to the Temple in Jerusalem, and to the poor. By God's Providence, the Holy couple had no children until their old age, They were greatly saddened by this, since the Jews considered childlessness a great misfortune and a punishment from God. They prayed fervently for the Lord to give them children.

On a certain feast, when the Israelites were bringing gifts to God in the Temple at Jerusalem, the High Priest, believing that the childless Joachim did not have God's blessing, refused to accept gifts from him, He consulted the genealogy of the twelve tribes of Israel and ascertained that all righteous men had offspring, including Abraham, when he was a hundred years old. Without returning home, Saint Joachim went into the wilderness and spent forty days there in strict fasting and prayer, entreating God's mercy for himself, and washing away his disgrace with bitter tears.

Saint Anna thought that she was to blame for their sorrow.

One day she saw a nest with barely fledged chicks in the branches of a laurel tree, she wept and prayed for the gift of a child, promising to bring the infant to God as an offering. As soon as Saint Anna spoke these words, an Angel of the Lord told her that her prayer had been answered, and revealed that she would have a daughter named Mary, through whom all the peoples of the world would be blessed. Rejoicing, Saint Anna hastened to the Temple in Jerusalem, in order to give thanks to God. She repeated her vow to dedicate the child to Him. An Angel came to Saint Joachim in the wilderness with the same news and commanded him to go to Jerusalem. There, the Righteous Anna conceived and gave birth to the Most Holy Theotokos.

The Orthodox Church does not accept the teaching that the Mother of God was exempted from the consequences of ancestral sin (death, corruption, sin, etc.) at the moment of her conception by virtue of the future merits of her Son. Only Christ was born perfectly holy and sinless, as Saint Ambrose of Milan teaches in Chapter Two of his Commentary on the Gospel of Saint Luke.

The Holy Virgin was like everyone else in her mortality, and in being subject to temptation, although she committed no personal sins. She was not a deified creature removed from the rest of humanity. If this were the case, She would not have been truly human, and the nature that Christ took from her would not have been truly human either. If Christ does not truly share our human nature, then the possibility of our salvation is in doubt

REMEMBERING THOSE IN THE ARMED FORCES

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

REMEMBERING OUR SICK & SHUTINS

Archbishop Onuphry of the Ukraine
Metropolitan Theodosy of Cherkasy and Kaniv, Ukraine
Archbishop Benjamin
Archbishop Nathaniel
Archpriest Andrew Moulton
Archpriest Emil Huntyan
Matushka Laryssa Huntyan
Mitred Archpriest Daniel Kovalak
Matushka Myra Kovalak
Priest Gabriel Bilas
Matushka Christine Zebren
Matushka Valerie Zahersky
Reader John Paluch
Florence Lambo
Michele Lambo
Mary Magensky
Sarah Niglio
Melissa Trace
Frances Hakim
Louis Hakim
Joey Gresh
Halina Woroncow
Joseph Taylor
Ellen Rees
David Elioff
Sofia Wsevolodov