WEEKLY BULLETIN

December 14, 2025, Vol. 42, No. 50

27th 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

Alexander, Archbishop of Toledo, Bulgaria Diocese OCA

V. Rev. Mitered Archpriest Father Don Anthony Freude,

Rev. Protodeacon James Gresh, and 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 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"

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 Olga 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

CHRISTMAS HOLY WEEK

Friday, December 19 – 6:00 pm
Vespers of the Forefeast of the Nativity of Christ

28th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST - Tone 3
SUNDAY BEFORE THE NATIVITY
FOREFEAST OF THE NATIVITYOF CHRIST
Saturday December 20
5:00 pm Great Vespers and Confessions
Matins Gospel: Luke 24:36-53
Sunday, December 21
9:10 am 3rd and 6th Hours: Subdeacon Terrence Bilas
9:30 am Divine Liturgy of Saint Chrysostom
Epistle Reader: Anastasia Bohush
Epistle: Hebrews 11:9-10, 17-23, 32-40
Gospel: Matthew 1:1-25
Lighting of the Sixth Candle on the Advent Wreath

5:00 pm Vespers of the Forefeast of the Nativity of Christ

Monday, December 22 – 6:00 pm
Vespers of the Forefeast of the of the Nativity of Christ

Tuesday, December 23 – 6:00 pm
Royal Hours of Christmas

FEAST OF CHRISTMAS

Wednesday, December 24
5:00 pm Vigil of Christmas
Thursday, December 25
9:30 am Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom
Epistle: Galatians 4:4-7
Gospel: Matthew 2:1-12
Lighting of the Christ Candle on the Advent Wreath

SUNDAY SCRIPTURE READINGS

Epistle: Colossians 3:4-11

4 When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

5 Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

6 Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience,

7 in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them.

8 But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth.

9 Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds,

10 and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,

11 where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.

Gospel: Luke 14:16-24

16 Then He said to him, "A certain man gave a great supper and invited many, 17 and sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, 'Come, for all things are now ready.'

18 But they all, with one *accord* began to make

excuses. The first said to him, ‘I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excused.’

19 And another said, ‘I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them. I ask you to have me excused.’

20 Still another said, ‘I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.’

21 So that servant came and reported these things to his master.

Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, ‘Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here *the* poor and *the* [a]maimed and *the* lame and *the* blind.’

22 And the servant said, ‘Master, it is done as you commanded, and still there is room.’

23 Then the master said to the servant, ‘Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel *them* to come in, that my house may be filled.

24 For I say to you that none of those men who were invited shall taste my supper.’ ”

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 14, we will light the fifth candle on the wreath.***

WAITING IN SILENCE

Rejoice, O Isaiah! "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His Name Emmanuel," which is translated "God with us." (Luke 1:23; Isaiah 7:14)

With these words, the Old Testament Prophet's prophecy embodies the longings, the hopes and desires of God's people as they prepared to receive the One Who comes to grant them new life.

The ***JOY*** we experience on the Feast of Christ's Nativity depends on how well we have prepared to receive Him. We spend a great deal of time getting ready for Christmas. Countless hours can be devoted to shopping, decorating and menu planning. Important as these matters are to us, our ***spiritual preparation is critical*** if we are to catch the true Christmas spirit.

Let the longing and the silence of this season of Advent transmute into proper preparation in prayer and fasting for welcoming the world's Greatest Love. God walks into our soul with silent steps. God comes to us more than we go to Him.

Never will His Coming be what we expect, and yet never will it disappoint. The more we respond to His gentle pressure, the greater will be our freedom.

BAPTISMAL CONGRATULATIONS

As a Parish Family, we extend our prayerful congratulations and welcoming to **Denise Olga Do Nascimento Brito** on her Baptism and Chrismation, and to her sponsors, Bud and Sandy Graham. **Many Years!**

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 donating 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."

SAINT ELIA CHRISTMAS ORNAMENT

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

Winter/Spring BIBLE STUDY: 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

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

Metropolitan Onuphry of the Ukraine
Metropolitan Theodosy of Cherkasy and Kaniv, Ukraine
Metropolitan Areseny of the 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

OUR STEWARDSHIP – December 7, 2025

Candles:	**$ 143.00**
Sunday Tray Offerings:	**980.00**
St. Herman's Seminary:	**60 .00**
Christmas Flowers:	**40.00**
Improvement Fund:	**5.00**
Bookstore:	**30.00**
Tithely Donations:	**502.62**
TOTAL:	**$1,760.62**

THE HIDDEN WAY

"It is hard for me to imagine that God would reveal His Divine Presence to us in the self-empty, humble was of the man from Nazareth. So much in me seeks influence, power, success, and popularity. But the way of Jesus is hiddenness, powerlessness, and littleness. It does not seem a very appealing way. Yet, when I enter true deep communion with Jesus, I will find that it is the small way that leads to real peace and joy."

Henri Nouwen

CHURCH SCHOOL PROGRAM

Church School classes are held on Sunday mornings following Divine Liturgy.

Preschool: Mrs. Natalie Slife, Mrs. Eve. Tavenier

School Age: Reader Nicholas Morelli, Mrs. Frances Hakim

High School: Subdeacon David Trace

Coordinator: Popadia Donna Freud