WEEKLY BULLETIN

February 1, 2026, Vol. 43, No. 5
Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee
Forefeast of the Meeting of our Lord

THE VOICE

SAINT 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,
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: Subdeacon Aaron Gray
Treasurer: Reader 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 - 2026

Sunday, February 1 - Reader Nicholas Morelli
Sunday, February 8 - Reader Joshua Wherley
Sunday, February 15 - Bud Graham

SCHEDULE OF DIVINE SERVICES

1st Pre-Lenten Sunday – Fast Free Week
SUNDAY OF THE PUBLICAN AND PHARISEE
Tone 1 – ***Beginning of the Lenten Triodion***
FOREFEAST OF THE MEETING OF OUR LORD IN THE TEMPLE
Saturday, January 31

5:00 pm Great Vespers and Confession
Matins Gospel: Matthew 28:16-20

Sunday, February 1

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: 2 Timothy 3:10-15 Gospel: Luke 18:10-14

Panakhida for the repose of the soul of Samir Hakim as requested by his wife Frances and family

2nd Pre-Lenten Sunday
SUNDAY OF THE PRODIGAL SON - Tone 2
AFTERFEAST OF THE MEETING OF OUR LORD IN THE TEMPLE
Saturday, February 7

5:00 pm Great Vespers and Confession
Matins Gospel: Mark 16:1-8

Sunday, February 8

9:10 am 3rd and 6th Hours: Reader Joshua Wherley
9:30 am Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom
Epistle Reader: Reader Joshua Wherley
Epistle: 1 Corinthians 6:12-20
Gospel: Luke 15:11-32

SUNDAY SCRIPTURE READINGS

Epistle: 2 Timothy 3:10-15

The Man of God and the Word of God

10 But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love,
perseverance, **11** persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra—what persecutions I endured. And out of *them* all the Lord delivered me. **12** Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. **13** But evil men and impostors will grow worse, deceiving and being deceived. **14** But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned *them,* **15** and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Gospel: Luke 18:10-14

10 "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. **11** The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. **12** I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.' **13** And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise *his* eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' **14** I tell you, this man went down to his house justified *rather* than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be [a]humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

THE MEETING OF OUR LORD IN THE TEMPLE

Gospel: Luke 2:22-40

Jesus Presented in the Temple

22 Now when the days of her purification according to the
law of Moses were completed, they brought Him to
Jerusalem to present *Him* to the Lord 23 (as it is written in
the law of the Lord, "Every male who opens the womb
shall be called holy to the Lord"), 24 and to offer a sacrifice
according to what is said in the law of the Lord, "A pair of
turtledoves or two young pigeons."

Simeon Sees God's Salvation

25 And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose
name *was* Simeon, and this man *was* just and
devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and
the Holy Spirit was upon him. 26 And it had been
revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would
not see death before he had seen the Lord's
Christ. 27 So he came by the Spirit into the temple.
And when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, to
do for Him according to the custom of the law, 28 he
took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said:

***29 "Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in
peace,
According to Your word;
30 For my eyes have seen Your salvation***

31 Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples,
32 A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles,
And the glory of Your people Israel."

33 [a]And Joseph and His mother marveled at those things which were spoken of Him. 34 Then Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, "Behold, this *Child* is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against 35 (yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."

Anna Bears Witness to the Redeemer

36 Now there was one, Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, and had lived with a husband seven years from her virginity; 37 and this woman *was* a widow [b]of about eighty-four years, who did not depart from the temple, but served *God* with fastings and prayers night and day. 38 And coming in that instant she gave thanks to [c]the Lord, and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

The Family Returns to Nazareth

39 So when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their *own* city, Nazareth. 40 And the Child grew and became strong [d]in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.

SAMIR HAKIM FOUR YEAR PANAKHIDA
February 1, 2026,

The family of Samir Hakim could like to invite everyone for a catered brunch, immediately after services. Your presence, to honor Samir's memory will be greatly appreciated by his family.

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ANNUAL PARISH MEETING,
NEXT SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2026
Following the Divine Liturgy

Father Don will give his Rector's report. The 2025 Financial Report and the 2026 Budget will be given. **THE 2026 PARISH COUNCIL** will be installed
President: Veronica Bilas V. President: Daniel Ralich
Sec.: Deacon Aaron Gray Treas.: Reader Daniel Slife
Members: Anastasia Bohush, Anthony Dodovich, Bud Graham, Jefferson Hodge

There will be a **covered dish dinner.** The main dish will be provided. Please sign the list in the hall listing what side dish you will be bringing

OUR STEWARDSHIP, January 25, 2026

Candles:	**$ 41.00**
Special Donation:	**100.00**
Tithely Offerings:	**720.25**
PayPal Offering:	**28.64**
Sunday Tray Offerings:	**431.00**
TOTAL:	**$1,319.89**

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 note that no outside food or beverages are permitted for the sessions at Artisan**. 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

Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee
Beginning of the Lenten Triodion
Commemorated on February 1

After the Sunday of Zacchaeus, the first Pe-Lenten Sunday is devoted to the Publican and the Pharisee. At Vespers the night before, the Triodion (the liturgical book used in the services of Great Lent) begins.

Two men went to the Temple to pray. One was a Pharisee who scrupulously observed the requirements of religion: he prayed, fasted, and contributed money to the Temple. These are very good things and should be imitated by anyone who loves God. We who may not fulfill these requirements as well as the Pharisee did should not feel entitled to criticize him for being faithful. His sin was in looking down on the Publican and feeling justified because of his external religious observances.

The second man was a Publican, a tax-collector who was despised by the people. He, however, displayed humility, and this humility justified him before God (Luke 18:14).

The lesson to be learned is that we possess neither the Pharisee's religious piety, nor the Publican's repentance, through which we can be saved. We are called to see ourselves as we really are in the light of Christ's teaching, asking Him to be merciful to us, deliver us from sin, and to lead us on the path of salvation.

Two weeks before the beginning of the Fast, as part of our preparation for Great Lent, Holy Week, and Pascha, the Church prescribes the reading of Saint Mark's Gospel. From Monday to Friday the focus is on the end times, and the Savior's death and burial.

Publican and Pharisee Vesper Verses

"The Pharisee went up to the temple with a proud and empty heart. The Publican bowed himself in repentance. They both stood before You, O Master: the one, through boasting, lost his reward, but the other, with tears and sighs, won Your blessing: Strengthen me, O Christ our God, as I weep in Your presence, since You are the Lover of man."

"The weight of my transgressions burdens my eyes: I cannot lift my gaze to the heights of heaven O Lord. Accept me in repentance, as You accepted the Publican; have mercy on me, O Savior! The Prayer of the Publican - God be merciful to me, sinner."

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"Virtues are formed by prayer.
Prayer preserves temperance.
Prayers suppress anger.
Prayer prevents emotions of pride and envy.
Prayer draws into the soul the Holy Spirit,
and raises man to heaven."

St. Ephrem the Syrian
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Journey to Pascha with the Psalms!

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.

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 February 23, so that we will pray through the entire book of Psalms twice during the fast.

As we all join together 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.

To participate, all you need is a Bible and a little bit of time to set aside each day. You can join in by going to **http://saintelia.com/news/lenten-prayer-group/** and filling in the online form.

Shortly before **Great Lent begins on February 23,** 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.

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!

REMEMBERING THOSE IN THE <u>ARMED FORCES</u>

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

REMEMBER OUR SICK AND SHUT-INS

Metropolitan Onuphry of the Ukraine
Metropolitan Theodosy of the Ukraine
Metropolitan Arseny of the Ukraine
Archbishop Benjamin
Archbishop Nathaniel
Archpriest Emil Huntyan
Matushka Laryssa Hnntyan
Mitred Archpriest Daniel Kovalak
Matushka Myra Kovalak
Priest Gabriel Bilas
Matushka Christine Zebren
Matushka Valerie Zahersky
Florence Lambo
Michele Lambo
Mary Magensky
Sarah Nigilo
Melissa Trace
Frances Hakim
Louis Hakim
Joey Gresh
Halina Woroncow
Joseph Tasylor
Ellen Rees
David Elioff
Sofia Wsevolodov