WEEKLY BULLETIN

February 8, 2026, Vol. 43, No. 6
Sunday of the Prodigal Son
Afterfeast 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 8 - Reader Joshua Wherley
Sunday, February 15 - Bud Graham
Sunday, February 22 – Mary Beth Gray

SCHEDULE OF DIVINE SERVICES

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

MEMORIAL SATURDAY - Meatfare Saturday
Friday, February 13
6:00 pm Vespers of Memorial Saturday
Universal Panakhida for all the Faithful Departed
[If you have not already done so, please give Father Don all the Names of the Departed you wish to be remembered.]

3rd Pre-Lenten Sunday
SUNDAY OF MEATFARE
Sunday of the Last Judgment
Saturday, February 14
5:00 pm Great Vespers and Confession
Matins Gospel: Mark 16:9=20
Sunday, February 15
9:10 am 3rd and 6th Hours: Bud Graham
9:30 am Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom
Epistle Reader: Bud Graham
Epistle: 1 Corinthians 8:8-9

SUNDAY SCRIPTURE READINGS

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 6:12-20

Glorify God in Body and Spirit

12 All things are lawful for me, but all things are not [a]helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of [b]any. **13** Foods for the stomach and the stomach for foods, but God will destroy both it and them. Now the body *is* not for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. **14** And God both raised up the Lord and will also raise us up by His power.
15 Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make *them* members of a harlot? Certainly not! **16** Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body *with her?* For "the two," He says, "shall become one flesh." **17** But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit *with Him.*
18 Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. **19** Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit *who is* in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? **20** For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body [c]and in your spirit, which are God's.

Gospel: Luke 15:11-32

The Parable of the Prodigal Son

11 Then He said: "A certain man had two sons. 12 And the younger of them said to *his* father, 'Father, give me the portion of goods that falls *to me.*' So, he divided to them *his* livelihood. 13 And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with [a]prodigal living. 14 But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want. 15 Then he went and joined himself to be a citizen of that country, and he sent him into

his fields to feed swine. 16 And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the [b]pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him *anything.*

17 "But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! 18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, 19 and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants."
20 "And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. 21 And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight and am no longer worthy to be called your son.'

22 "But the father said to his servants, [c]'Bring out the best robe and put *it* on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on *his* feet. 23 And bring the fatted calf here and kill *it and* let us eat and be merry; 24 for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' And they began to be merry.
25 "Now his older son was in the field. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. 26 So he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. 27 And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and because he has received him safe and sound, your father has killed the fatted calf.'
28 "But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore, his father came out and pleaded with him. 29 So he answered and said to *his* father, 'Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends. 30 But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted calf for him.'

31 "And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. 32 It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found.

LET US BEGIN LENT WITH JOY

Joy is at the heart of everything in the Christian life and Great Lent is no exception. The hymns call us to begin Lent this year on February 23 with rejoicing.

Let us begin the Fast with joy.
Let us give ourselves spiritual efforts.
Let us cleanse our souls. Let us cleanse our flesh.
Let us fast from passions as we fast from foods,
Taking pleasure in the good works of the Spirit
And accomplishing them in love That we all may be made worthy to see the passion of Christ our God and His Holy Pascha, rejoicing with spiritual joy

Forgiveness Sunday Vespers

Our Greater Akron Orthodox Community will come together for VESPERS each Sunday evening:

March 1 - Sunday of Orthodoxy
5:00 pm -St. Thomas Church

March 8 - St. Gregory Palamas
5:00 pm – Presentation of Our Lord Church
March 15 – Veneration of the Cross
5:00 pm - St. Elia Church
March 22 – St. John Climacus
5:00 pm – St. George Church
March 29 – St. Mary of Egypt
5:00 pm - Sacrament of Holy Unction
St. Nicholas Church

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING,
TODAY, SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2026
Following 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
Vice President: Daniel Ralich
Secretary: Deacon Aaron Gray
Treasurer: Reader Daniel Slife
Members: Anastasia Bohush, Anthony Dodovich, Bud Graham, Jefferson Hodge

There will be a **covered dish dinner.** The main dish of chicken will be provided. Please bring your choice of side dish or dessert.

OUR STEWARDSHIP, February 1, 2026

Candles:	**$ 108.00**
Special Donations:	**200.00**
Improvement Fund:	**10.00**
Tithely Offerings:	**440.25**
Sunday Tray Offerings:	**1,120.00**
TOTAL:	**$1,878.25**

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 TB

"*OUR HEART IS RESTLESS UNTIL IT RESTS IN THE LORD"*

As we continue to prepare for the beginning of Great Lent, our Holy Church places before us today the Parable of the ***PRODIGAL SON*** **often called the Parable of the *LOVING FATHER*.** It is a story that graphically points out the impetuousness of a young son, who impatiently demanded his inheritance and consequently lost everything. It is a tale of unconditional mercy, as the father in the parable – symbolizing God Himself – lovingly welcomed home his humbled, repentant offspring.

More importantly, however, the Parable of the Prodigal Son can be likened to each of us looking in the mirror. In effect, this is a story about all of us. At one time or another, every one of us has given in to the same temptations that clouded the thinking of the Prodigal Son. We have abandoned our Father's house and have strayed from the path that has been set for us. We have all foolishly felt that we can make through life doing things "our way",

Inevitably we must all realize that seeking a life of pleasure cannot bring us true joy, for this can only be found when we are in communion with God. As St. Augustine tells us***: "Our heart is restless until it rests in the Lord."***

It is never to late to ***"rise and go to our Father."*** He wants all of us to return to Him. When we repent – He promises us a place in His Heavenly Kingdom..

MEATFARE - MEMORIAL SATURDAY

The Saturday before Meatfare Sunday is a day of remembering all those who have passed from this life in the hope of the Resurrection.

On Friday evening, February 13, the Vespers of the deceased, followed by a Panakhida for all the faithful departed this life, will be served at 6:00 pm.

Father Don has the names of the deceased that were given to him before. However, if you have new names to add, or if you have never given him the names, please do so before Divine Services.

Forms for the listing of the names are available on the counter in the vestibule. Please list your family name on the top of the form.

HYMN OF ST. JOHN DAMASCENE
Contemplating Death

What earthy delight endures unmingled with grief?
What earthly glory remains immutable?
All things are less than a shadow, more deluding than a dream.
In a single moment all these are effaced by death, but in the light of Thy Countenance, O Christ,
and in the

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
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.

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 SERVING IN THE ARMED FORCES

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
Gary Thompson
Phyllis Dodovich