WEEKLY BULLETIN

February 15, 2026, Vol. 43,
No.7 Sunday of Meatfare
Sunday of the Last Judgment

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

2026 Parish Council

President: Veronica Bilas
V. President: Daniel Ralich
Secretary: Subdeacon Aaron Gray
Treasurer: Reader Daniel Slife
Members: Anastasia Bohush, Anthony Dodovich, Bud Graham, Jefferson Hodge,

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 15 - Bud Graham
Sunday, February 22 – Mary Beth Gray
Sunday, March 1 - Deaconisa Heidi Gresh

SCHEDULE OF DIVINE SERVICES

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 Cor. 8:8-9:2 Gospel: Matthew 25:31-46

4th Pre-Lenten Sunday
SUNDAY OF CHEESEFARE - FORGIVENESS SUNDAY ***The Expulsion of Adam from Paradise***
Saturday, February 21
5:00 pm Great Vespers and Confession
Matins Gospel: Luke 24:1-12
Sunday, February 22
9:10 am 3rd. and 6th Hours: Bud Graham
9:30 am Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom
Epistle Reader: Bud Graham
Epistle: Romans 13:11-14:4 Gospel: Matthew 6:14-21

5:00 pm VESPERS AND MUTUAL FORGIVENESS - SERVICE – *Great Lent Begins -Strict Fast*

FIRST WEEK OF GREAT LENT

Monday, February 23 – 6:00 pm
Great Canon of Repentance of St. Andrew of Crete – 1sr Section
Tuesday, February 24 – 6:00 pm
Great Canon of Repentance of St. Andrew of Crete – 2nd Section
Wednesday, February 25 – 6:00 pm
Great Canon of Repentance of St. Andrew of Crete – 3rd Section
Thursday, February 26 – 6:00 pm
Great Canon of Repentance of St. Andrew of Crete – 4th Section
Friday, February 27 – 6:00 pm
Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts
Blessing of Boiled Wheat – Commemoration of the Great Martyr Theodore. Lenten Covered Dish

SUNDAY SCRIPTURE READINGS

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 8:8-9:2

8 But food does not commend us to God; for neither if
we eat are we the better, nor if we do not eat are we the
worse.
9 But beware lest somehow this liberty of yours
become a [a]stumbling block to those who are weak. **10** For
if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an
idol's temple, will not the conscience of him who is weak
be emboldened to eat those things offered to
idols? **11** And because of your knowledge shall the weak
brother perish, for whom Christ died? **12** But when you
thus sin against the brethren, and wound their weak
conscience, you sin against Christ. **13** Therefore, if food
makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat,
lest I make my brother stumble.

A Pattern of Self-Denial

9 Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen
Jesus Christ our Lord? Are you not my work in the
Lord? **2** If I am not an apostle to others, yet doubtless I
am to you. For you are the [b]seal of my apostleship in the
Lord.

Gospel: Matthew 25:31-46

The Son of Man Will Judge the Nations

31 "When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all
the [a]holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne
of His glory. **32** All the nations will be gathered before
Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a
shepherd divides *his* sheep from the goats. **33** And He will

set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left.
34 Then the King will say to those on His right hand,
‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the
kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the
world: **35** for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was
thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you
took Me in; **36** I *was* naked and you clothed Me; I was
sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to
Me.’

37 “Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord,
when did we see You hungry and feed *You,* or thirsty and
give *You* drink? **38** When did we see You a stranger and
take *You* in, or naked and clothe *You?* **39** Or when did we
see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’ **40** And the
King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to
you, inasmuch as you did *it* to one of the least of these
My brethren, you did *it* to Me.’

41 “Then He will also say to those on the left
hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting
fire prepared for the devil and his angels: **42** for I was
hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you
gave Me no drink; **43** I was a stranger and you did not take
Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in
prison and you did not visit Me.’ **44** “Then they also will
answer [b]Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You
hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in
prison, and did not minister to You?’ **45** Then He will
answer them, saying, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch
as you did not do *it* to one of the least of these, you did
not do *it* to Me.’ **46** And these will go away into
everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal
life.”

Sunday of Meatfare
Sunday of the Last Judgment

Commemorated February 15

Today's Gospel reading is Matthew 25:31-46, the parable of the Last Judgment. It reminds us that while trusting in Christ's love and mercy, we must not forget His righteous judgment when He comes again in glory. If our hearts remain hardened and unrepentant, we should not expect the Lord to overlook our transgressions simply because He is a good and loving God. Although He does not desire the death of a sinner, He also expects us to turn from our wickedness and live (Ezek. 33:11).

This same idea is expressed in the prayer read by the priest after the penitent has confessed his or her sins:

"O Lord, God of Thy servant's salvation, merciful, gracious and patient, who relent in punishing our wicked deeds and desire not the death of a sinner but rather he/she turn to Thee and live. Come now and deal mercifully with Thy servant (N) and grant him/her a disposition of repentance, forgiveness of sins and pardon, absolving him/her of every fault deliberate or indeliberate. Reconcile and unite him/her to Thy holy Church through Jesus Christ our Lord, with whom power and majesty belong to Thee: now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen"

The time for repentance and forgiveness is now, in the present life. At the Second Coming, Christ will appear as

the righteous Judge***, "Who will render to every man according to his deeds"*** (Rom. 2:6). Then the time for entreating God's mercy and forgiveness will have passed.

As Father Alexander Schmemann reminds us in his book GREAT LENT (Ch. 1:4***), sin is the absence of love, it is separation and isolation.***

When Christ comes to judge the world, His criterion for judgment will be love. Christian love entails seeing Christ in other people, our family, our friends, and everyone else we may encounter in our lives. We shall be judged on whether we have loved or not loved our neighbor.

We show Christian love when we feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, visit those who are sick or in prison, have a heart of compassion and a willing ear to listen to others

If we did such things for the least of Christ's brethren, then we also did them for Christ (Mt.25:40). If we did not do such things for the least of the brethren, neither did we do them for Christ (Mt.25:45).

Today is the last day for eating meat and meat products until Pascha, though eggs and dairy products are permitted every day during the coming week. This limited fast prepares us gradually for the strict fast of Great Lent.

AKRON LENTEN SERVICES

Great Lent begins this year, 2025, on Monday, February 23.

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 1,** the Akron Orthodox Churches this year will gather to celebrate Vespers at **St. Thomas Eastern Orthodox Church at 5:00 pm.**

A Sunday of Orthodoxy Program Booklet is being prepared, and your donations will support the work of the Orthodox Clergy Association, Christian Orthodox Council of Akron, and Orthodox Christian Women. Please give your donations **to Reader Joshua Wherley: Benefactor $100; Supporter $50; Patron $25; Sponsor $10. [Deadline: February 15]**

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

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OCW LENTEN RETREAT

Saturday, March 7, 2026

10:00 am – 3:00 pm

Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church

Speaker: Fr. Paul Abernathy

Neighborhood Resilience Project

St. Moses the Black Orthodox Church

Pittsburgh, Pa.

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2026 PARISH COUNCIL

On Sunday, February 8, following the Annual Parish Meeting, with the blessing of Archbishop Alexander, the 2026 Parish Council was installed. May God grant the Officers and Members **Many Years!**

President: Veronica Bilas
Vice President: Daniel Ralich
Secretary: Deacon Aaron Gray
Treasurer: Reader Daniel Slife
Members: Anastasia Bohush, Anthony Dodovich, Bud Graham, Jefferson Hodge

OUR STEWARDSHIP - February 8, 2026

Candles:	**$ 122.00**
Tithely Offerings:	**1,726.00**
Sunday Tray Offerings:	**660.00**
TOTAL:	**$2,508.00**

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 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

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 Dodovic