WEEKLY BULLETIN

July 26, 2026, Vol. 43, No. 29

8th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

St. Jacob, Enlightener of the Peoples of Alaska

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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www.saintelia.com

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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: Deacon 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: Deacon Aaron Gray, Veronica Bilas

Scheduled Readers 2026

Sunday, July 26 – Bud Graham
Sunday, August 2 – Hours: Subdeacon Terrence Bilas
Epistle: Anastasia Bohush
Sunday, August 9 – Sue Ellen Turscak

SCHEDULE OF DIVINE SERVICES

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST – Tone 7
Repose of St. Jacob, Enlightener of the Alaskan Peoples
Saturday, July 25
5:00 pm Great Vespers and Confessions
Matins Gospel: John 20:11-18
Sunday, July 26
9:10 am 3rd and 6th Hours: Mary Beth Gray
9:30 am Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom
Epistle Reader: Mary Beth Gray
Epistle: 1 Cor. 1:10-18 Gospel: Matthew 14:14-22

THE DORMITION FAST: August 1-14

PROCESSION OF THE HONORABLE WOOD OF THE LIFE-GIVING CROSS OF OUR LORD
Friday, July 31
6:00 pm Great Vespers
The Precious Cross will be processed to the Center of the Temple for Veneration

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST – Tone 8
Translation of the Relics of the Protomartyr and Archdeacon Stephen from Jerusalem to Constantinople
Saturday, August 1
5:00 pm Great Vespers and Confessions
Matins Gospel: John 20:19-31
Sunday, August 2
9:10 am 3rd and 6th Hours: Subd. Terrence Bilas
9:30 am Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom
Epistle Reader: Anastasia Bohush
Epistle: 1 Cor. 3:9-17 Gospel: Matthew 14:22-34

SUNDAY SCRIPTURE READINGS

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 1:10-18
Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's household, that there are contentions among you. Now I say this, that each of you says, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos," or "I am of Cephas," or "I am of Christ." Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized by the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, lest anyone should say that I had baptized in my own name. Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas. Besides, I do not know whether I baptized any other.

For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect. For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

Gospel: Matthew 14:14-22

Feeding the Five Thousand
And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick.

When it was evening, His disciples came to Him, saying, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is already late. Send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves food."

But Jesus said to them, ***"They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat."***

And they said to Him, "We have here only five loaves and two fish."

He said, ***"Bring them here to Me."***
Then He commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass.

And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke and gave the loaves to the disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitudes. So, they all ate and were filled, and they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments that remained. Now those who had eaten were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away.

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The Church Fathers see in this miracle the image of the Eucharist. In John 6:35, Jesus says: "I am the Bread of life. He who comes to Me will never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst."

Repose of Saint Jacob Netsvetov, Enlightener of the Peoples of Alaska Commemorated, July 26

Father Jacob (Netsvetov) of Alaska was born of pious parents
in 1802 on Atka Island, Alaska. His father, Yegor Vasil'evich Netsvetov was a Russian from Tobolsk. His mother, Maria Alekseevna, was an Aleut from Atka Island. Yegor and Maria had four children who survived infancy; Jacob was the first born, followed by Osip (Joseph), Elena, and Antony. Yegor and Maria were devoted to their children and, though of meager means, did all they could to provide them with the education which would help them in this life as well as in the life to come. Osip and Antony were eventually able to study at the Saint Petersburg Naval Academy in Russia, becoming a naval officer and a shipbuilder, respectively. Their sister, Elena, married a successful and respected clerk for the Russian-American Company. But Jacob yearned for a different kind of success, a success that the world might consider failure for "the righteous live forever, their reward is with the Lord" (Wis. Sol. 5:15). And so, when the family moved to Irkutsk in 1823, Jacob enrolled in the Irkutsk Theological Seminary and placed all his hope in Christ by seeking first the Kingdom of God (Mt. 6:33).

Jacob was tonsured as a Subdeacon on October 1, 1825. He married a Russian woman (perhaps also a Creole) named Anna Simeonovna, and in 1826 graduated from the Seminary with certificates in history and theology. On October 31, 1826, he was ordained to the Holy Diaconate and assigned to serve the altar of the Holy

Trinity-Saint Peter Church in Irkutsk. Two years later, on March 4, 1828, Archbishop Michael, who had earlier ordained Father John Veniaminov (Saint Innocent), elevated the godly deacon Jacob to the Holy Priesthood. This, however, was no ordinary ordination. As if he were a new Patrick, hearing the mystical call of his distant flock, Father Jacob yearned to return to his native Alaska. And the all-good God, who "satisfies the longing soul and fills the hungry soul with goodness" (Ps.107:9) heard the prayer of his servant.

Archbishop Michael provided Father Jacob with two antimensia: one for the new Church which would be dedicated to the glory of God in honor of Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker in Atka, and one to be used for missionary activity. On May 1, 1828, a molieben for travelers was served, and Father Jacob, his father, Yegor, (now tonsured as reader for the Atka Church), and his Matushka, Anna, set out for Alaska.

Who can tell of the perils and trials associated with such a journey? Travel in those days was never easy, either overland or over the waves of the sea. Nevertheless, aided by prayer and confidence in God's providence, the Netsvetov family arrived safely in Atka over a year later, on June 15, 1829. The new assignment for the newly ordained Father Jacob would also prove to be quite a challenge. The Atka "parish" comprised a territory stretching for nearly 2,000 miles and included Amchitka, Attu, Copper, Bering and Kurile Islands. But this did not deter the godly young priest, for when he was clothed in the garments of the Priesthood, he was found to be "clad with zeal as a cloak' (Is. 59:17), and so he threw himself wholly into his sacred ministry. His deep love for God and for his flock was evident in everything that he did.

Both in Atka and in the distant villages and settlements which he visited, Father Jacob offered himself as a "living sacrifice" (Rom 12:1). Having "no worry about his life" (Mt. 6:25 ff), the holy one endured manifold torture of cold, wet, wind, illness, hunger and exhaustion, for to him life was Christ (Phil 1:21). Showing himself as a "rule of faith," his example brought his people to a deep commitment to their own salvation. Being fully bilingual and bicultural, Father Jacob was uniquely blessed by God to care for the souls of his fellow Alaskans.

When he arrived in Atka, the Church of Saint Nicholas had not yet been built. So, with his own hands Father Jacob constructed a large tent (Acts 18:3) in which he conducted the services. For Father Jacob the services of the Church were life: life for his people and life for himself. It was in the worship of God that he found both strength and joy. Later he would transport this tent with him on his missionary journeys, and like Moses in the wilderness, the grace of God was found wherever this tent was taken (Num 4:1 ff; 10:17 ff).

When his first six months had ended (end of 1829), Father Jacob recorded that he had baptized 16, chrismated 442, married 53 couples, and buried 8.

Once the church was constructed, Father Jacob turned his attention to the building of a school in which the children would learn to read and write both Russian and Unangan Aleut. The Russian American Company provided some of the support initially, with the students providing the remainder. This continued until 1841, when it was reorganized as a parish school and ties with the company ceased. Father Jacob proved to be a talented educator and

translator whose students became distinguished Aleut leaders in the next generation.

Father Netsvetov led an active physical and intellectual life, hunting and gathering for his own subsistence needs, preparing specimens of fish and marine animals for the natural history museums of Moscow and Saint Petersburg, corresponding with Saint Innocent (Veniaminov) on matters of linguistics and translations. He labored over the creation of an adequate alphabet for the Unangan-Aleut language, and the translation of the Holy Scriptures and other appropriate literature into that language. Saint Innocent praised the young pastor for his holiness of life, his teaching, and for continuing this work of translating which he, himself, had begun earlier among the native peoples. After fifteen years of service, Father Jacob was awarded the Nabedrennik, Kamilavka, and Gold Cross. Later, he would be made Archpriest and receive the Order of Saint Anna.

These ecclesiastical awards do not tell of the personal sufferings of this warrior for Christ. In March of 1836, his precious wife, Anna, died of cancer; his home burned to the ground in July of 1836; and his dear father, Yegor, died of an undetermined illness in 1837. Who can utter the depth of sorrow felt by this God-pleaser? Yet he lifted his voice with that ancient sufferer and cried, “shall we indeed accept good from God and shall we not accept adversity? In all this he did not sin with his lips” (Job 2:10). In his journal Father Jacob attributed all to “the Will of Him whose Providence and Will are inscrutable and whose actions toward men are incomprehensible.” He patiently endured hardships and sufferings like the Holy Apostle Paul. He saw in these misfortunes not a Victory by the hater of men’s souls (i.e. the devil) but a

call from God to even greater spiritual struggles. With this in mind, Father Jacob petitioned his ruling bishop to return to Irkutsk in order to enter the monastic life. A year later, word reached him that permission was granted contingent upon the arrival of a replacement. None ever came.

Instead, Bishop Innocent soon came to Atka and asked Father Jacob to accompany him on a voyage by ship to Kamchatka. Who can know the heavenly discourse enjoyed by these two lovers of Christ as they traveled over the waves? This, however, is clear, the holy Archpastor was able to accomplish three things in Father Netsvetov. Firstly, he applied the healing salve of the Spirit with words of comfort; secondly, he dissuaded Father Jacob from entering the monastery; and thirdly, he revealed to the godly priest the true plan of the Savior for his life, that he 'might preach (Christ) among the Gentiles" (Gal. 1: 16) deep in the Alaskan interior. Father Jacob continued to serve his far-flung flock of the Atka parish until December 30, 1844. A new zeal had taken hold of him, and it was then that Saint Innocent appointed him to head the new Kvikhpak Mission to bring the light of Christ to the people of the Yukon. Here, aided by two young Creole assistants, Innokentii Shayashnikov and Konstantin Lukin, together with his young nephew, Vasilii Netsvetov, Father Jacob "settled' in the wilderness of Alaska.

He learned new languages, embraced new peoples and cultures, devised another alphabet, built another church and Orthodox community, and for the next twenty years, until his health and eyesight failed, continued to be an evangelical beacon of the grace of God in southwestern Alaska.

Establishing his headquarters in the Yup'ik Eskimo village of Ikogmiute (today's 'Russian Mission') he traveled to native settlements hundreds of miles up and down Alaska's longest river (the Yukon) as well as the Kuskokwim River region. At the insistence of Indian leaders, he traveled as far as the middle of the Innoko River baptizing hundreds of Indians from various, and often formerly hostile, tribes. "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity" (Ps 133:1). He built the first Christian temple in this region and dedicated it to the feast of the Elevation of the Holy Cross. Here Father Jacob, despite failing health, joyfully celebrated the Church's cycle of services, including all the services prescribed for Holy Week and Pascha.

Finally, in 1863, the evil One, who "walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour" (I Pet 5:8), sought one last time to get the better of the righteous one. So, the devil, the father of lies, (John 8:44), inspired an assistant of Father Jacob to level spurious and slanderous charges against his master. This resulted in a summons to Sitka, issued by Bishop Peter. The godly pastor was quickly cleared of all charges, but due to his ever-worsening health, he remained in Sitka for his final year serving a Tlingit chapel. He died on July 26, 1864, at the age of 60 and was buried on the third day at the entry of the chapel. During his final missionary travels in the Kuskokwim/Yukon delta region, he had baptized 1,320 people—distinguishing himself as the evangelizer of the Yup'ik Eskimo and Athabascan Indian peoples.

This brief history has recounted the basic chronology of the saint's life and labors, but we must not neglect to relate his other deeds, that the light be not "hidden under

a bushel" (Mt.5:15). In 1841, Father Jacob encountered a group of women from his flock in Amlia who had fallen victim to certain demonic influences and teachings. Blaming himself for the seduction and fall of his spiritual children by the evil one, he informed the leader among them that he was going to pay them a visit.

Upon arriving, he found one of the women paralyzed, semi-conscious and unable to speak. He ordered that she be removed to another house apart, and on the next day when this was accomplished, he lit the lampada before the icons of the beautiful corner, vested himself in his priestly epitrachilion (stole), sprinkled holy water throughout the room, and began the first prayers of exorcism. He then left.

During the night he was notified that the woman had begun to speak but incoherently. He came immediately to her and performed a second exorcism. This time, she sprang out of her bed and stood next to the saint, joined her prayer to him, and accompanied them with prostrations. When the prayers were finished, Father Jacob again sprinkled her with holy water and gave her the precious cross to kiss. She regained full consciousness, a state of health and true reason—that is, even the false teachings of the evil spirits had no more part in her.

Once in November of 1845, Father Jacob was preaching in the village of Kalskag, where the local chief was also the head shaman. He spoke for all the villagers and resisted the Word of God forcefully. But the saint, calm and full of the Holy Spirit, continued to sow the seeds of right belief and piety. After many hours, the chief fell silent and finally came to believe. The villagers, in

solidarity with their leader, also joyously expressed their belief in the Triune God and sought Holy Baptism.
Father Jacob was a physician of bodies as well as souls. He often cared for the sick among his flock even to his own detriment. During the winter of 1850-1851 the saint was himself ravaged with illness. Yet he cared for the sick and dispensed medicine to them every day. Father Jacob's preaching often brought together in the Holy Faith tribes who were traditional enemies. One example from his journal reads:
"Beginning in the morning, upon my invitation, all the Kol'chane and Ingalit from the Yukon and the local ones gathered at my place and I preached the word of God, concluding at noon. Everyone listened to the preaching with attention and without discussion or dissent, and in the end they all expressed faith and their wish to accept Holy Baptism, both the Kol'chane and the Ingatit (formerly traditional enemies). I made a count by families and in groups, and then in the afternoon the baptismal service began. First, I baptized 50 Kol'chane and Ingalit men, the latter from the Yukon and Innoko. It was already evening when I completed the service. March 21, 1853."
So it was that this apostolic man, this new Job, conducted himself during his earthly course. There are many other deeds and wonders which he performed, many known and many more known only to God. Few missionaries in history have had to endure the hardships which Father Jacob faced, yet he did so with patience and humility. His life of faith and piety are the legacy which he leaves to us, his spiritual children in America, and indeed to all Christians throughout the world.

BLESSED DORMITION FAST

The Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary is celebrated on August 15 and is preceded by a two week fast from August 1 through August 14.

This Feast commemorates the death, resurrection and glorification of the Mother of God. It proclaims that Mary has been taken by God into the heavenly kingdom of Christ in the fulness of her spiritual; and bodily existence.

The Tradition of the Church is that the Mother of God died as all people die, since she bore the same mortal body that every person has who comes into the world, and that having truly died, she was raised by her Son as he Mother of Life.

"When the translation of your immaculate body was being prepared, the Apostles surrounded your deathbed and looked on you with trembling. They gazed at your body and were seized with awe, while Peter cried out to you with tears: 'O Virgin, I see you, who are the life of all, lying here outstretched, and I am struck with wonder, for the Delight of the life to come made His dwelling in you. But fervently implore your Son and God, O Immaculate Lady, that your people may be kept from harm.'"

THE PROCESSION OF THE HONORABLE WOOD OF THE LIFE-GIVING CROSS.

The Dormition Fast begins on August 1st with the **Feast of the Procession of the Honorable Wood of the Life-giving Cross of the Lord.**

The origin of this Feast is explained in the Greek Horologion of 1897: "Because of the illnesses which occur during the month of August, it was customary during the month of August to carry the Precious Wood of the Cross in procession throughout the city for its sanctification and to deliver it from illness,"

On the eve of the Feast, **Friday, July 31, Vespers will be celebrated** and the Percious Cross will be processed to the center of the Temple for our sanctification, well-being, and veneration.

As we sing at Vespers:

Today the divine assembly of faithful rejoices, for the Cross appears throughout the world.

It illumines the heavens with ineffable light. It brightens the air adorning the face of the earth.

The Church of Christ exults with divine singing, venerating and serving the holy and wondrous Cross, which preserves her from above.

As we are strengthened by its power, let us approach the Master saying: "Grant peace to the world and enlighten our souls."

IN APPRECIATION

Our Parish celebration of our Temple Feast of Saint Elia was held last weekend, July 18 and 19. Our Parish Family is grateful for the visit of His Eminence of our Father and Archbishop. His Eminence was greeted with the Bread of Hospitality on behalf of our Parish Family by Natalie Slife and with Flowers by Eliza Slife. We thank Natalie for preparing and baking the Bread.

Before the Divine Liturgy, His Eminence **ordained Reader Daniel Joseph Slife** a Subdeacon of Saint Elia Church. Prayerful congratulation Subdeacon Daniel.

Following the Divine Liturgy, in celebration of our Temple Feast of St, Elia, we processed outside for the **blessing of vehicles** – anything on wheels: cars, trucks, motorcycles, bicycles, skateboards, roller skates, etc.

Thank you to Protodeacon James, Deacon Aaron, Servers: Subdeacon David Trace, Anthony Dodovich, John Bohush, Otto Slife, John Bohush and Ronan Williamson for serving at the Pontifical Divine Liturgy.

Thank you to our Choir Directors, Subdeacon Terrence Bilas, Deaconisa Heidi Gresh and to all the Choir members

Following Vespers on Saturday: we met at Mi Casa Restaurant hosted by anonymous donor. **Thank you!**

Thank you to Kate Hodge, assisted by Denise Prado, for charring the Sunday Dinner; to the Sisterhood of St. Juliana for providing the main dish; and to all for bringing your covered dishes.

To everyone who came and helped in so many ways, **Thank you**.

REMEMBERING THOSE SERVING IN THE ARMED FORCES

Subdeacon Anthoy Freude, son of Fr. Don and Popadia Donna
Egor Cravcenso, son of Sergei and Ludmila
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 Zahirsky
Florence Lambo
Michele Lambo
Mary Magensky
Sara Niglio
Melissa Trace
Frances Hakim
Louis Hakim
Joey Gresh
Halina Woroncow
Joseph Taylor
Sofia Wsevolodov

FREE Parish Outing:
An Evening of Outdoor Classical Music

On **Sunday evening, Aug. 9**, the Akron Symphony Orchestra will once again perform a free outdoor concert less than a mile away from St. Elia at Firestone (City) Park. Included this year will be familiar classics from Aaron Copland, George Gershwin, Scott Joplin, and Charles Ives, as well as Akron's own Stephanie Childers-White as guest vocalist for a selection of soulful pops.

Anyone who would like to meet up for an informal parish get-together is welcome. Bring a blanket or lawn chair, and feel free to pack a picnic, and enjoy an evening of music in a relaxed, family-friendly setting.

Look for Deacon Aaron and other members of our parish so we can all sit together. No tickets are needed. See you there!

Date: Sunday, Aug. 9
Time: 7:30 to 9 p.m.
Location: Firestone Park Community Center,
1480 Girard Street, Akron

OUR STEWARDSHIP, JULY 19, 2026

Candles:	**83.00**
Tithely Offerings:	**483.25**
Sunday Tray Offerings:	**2,171.00**
TOTAL:	**$2,737.25**

MORE UP-COMING EVENTS

ST. HERMAN'S MEN'S HIKING CLUB

SATURDAY, AUGUST 8 – 9:00 AM
Meeting at WORDEN'S LEDGES
985 Ledge Road, Hinckley, OH 44223
For prayer, fellowship, hiking
Please contact Jefferson Hodge for details:
757-374-3491

PAN ORTHODOX GOLF OUTING

SATURDAY, AUGUST 22
Elsworth Meadows Golf Club
1101 Barlow Road, Hudson, Ohio 44236
Check-in: 12:00 pm
18 holes Tee Off: 1:03 PM - $125 per person
9 Holes Tee Off: 3:18 PM - $85 per person
Sponsored by COCA – INTER PARISH ASSOC.

PARISH PICNIC: COLUMBIA WOODS PARK

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 27
Please check for the covered dish sign-up sheet

5K MARATHON

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 17
IOCC -INTERNATIONAL ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHARITIES
St. Elia in conjunction with COCA

HOLY TRANSFUGURATION MONASTERY
Elwood City, Pa.

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PATRONAL FEAST
Annual Pilgrimage

Presiding Hierarch
His Eminence, **the Most Reverend Daniel**
Archbishop of Chicago and the Midwest
The Orthodox Church in America

Wednesday, August 5 – Eve of Transfiguration
6:00 pm Festal Vigil Service

Thursday, August 6 – Feast of the Transfiguration

9:00 am Akathist – Glory to God for All Things
9:30 am Procession and Hierarchical Liturgy
12:00 N Catered Lunch
2:00 pm Memorial Service in the Cemetery
2:30 pm Holy Unction with Paraclesis

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