



ST. ELIA'S NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2023

**СЛАВА ІСУСУ ХРИСТУ!
СЛАВА НАВІКІ!**

**GLORY BE TO JESUS CHRIST!
GLORY FOREVER!**

SUNDAY WORSHIP HOURS:

9:30 am Confessions
10:00 am Divine Liturgy

UPCOMING EVENTS

• COUNCIL MEETING

Sunday, Feb 19th, 2023
after Divine Liturgy

*** Free Store for Ukrainian Newcomers**

The store provides clothing and essentials at no charge to Ukrainian newcomers to Canada displaced by the war in Ukraine. Check their website and facebook for helping Ukrainian newcomers in Edmonton.

<https://www.freestoreyeg.com>

<https://www.facebook.com/freestoreedmonton>

Many rich and powerful men would pay dearly to see the Lord or His Most Pure Mother, but God does not appear in riches, but in the humble heart. Every one of the poorest men can be humble and come to know God. We need neither money nor reputation to come to know God, but only humility. St. Silouan the Athonite.

CONTACTS

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• WEBSITES

St. Elia: www.uocc-stelia.ca
Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada: www.uocc.ca
Western Eparchy: www.uocc-we.ca

• CLERGY

PRIEST: Very Rev. Mitred Archpriest Fr. Georg Podtepa
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Rev. Fr. Vasyl Maskal Cell: 306-229-7743

• COUNCIL

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• Sunday Bulletin and Newsletter Contacts:

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THE SUNDAYS OF FEBRUARY

FEBRUARY 5: SUNDAY OF THE PUBLICAN & PHARISEE



The name for this Sunday is taken from the parable of our Lord Jesus Christ found in Luke 18:10-14. This is the story of two men, one a Pharisee, a member of a Jewish sect known for its diligent observance of the Law, and the other a Publican, a government official charged with the responsibility of collecting taxes.

Both men enter the temple, and the Pharisee stands openly and prays, thanking God that he is not like other men, specifically extortioners, the unjust, adulterers, “or even this tax collector” (v. 11). He then begins to list his religious accomplishments by stating, “I fast twice a week, and I give tithes of all that I possess” (v. 12).

In direct contrast to the pride of the Pharisee, the Publican goes to a place where he will not be noticed by others and beats his breast saying, “God, be merciful to me a sinner!” (v. 13).

Having told this story, Jesus affirms that it was the Publican who returned home justified and forgiven rather than the Pharisee. He states, “Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted” (v. 14).

The theme of this parable is repentance. Repentance is the door through which we enter Lent, the starting-point of the journey to Pascha. To repent signifies far more than self-pity or futile regret over things done in the past. The Greek term *metanoia* means “change of mind.” To repent is to be renewed, to be transformed in our inward viewpoint, to attain a fresh way of looking at our relationship with God and with others. The fault of the Pharisee is that he has no desire to change his outlook; he is complacent, self-satisfied, and so he allows no place for God to act within him. The Gospel depicts him as a man that is pleased only with himself who thinks that he has complied with all of the requirements of religion. But in his pride, he has falsified the meaning of true religion and faith. He has reduced these to external observations, measuring his piety by the amount of money he gives.

The Publican, on the other hand, truly longs for a “change of mind.” He humbles himself, and his humility justifies him before God. He becomes, in the words of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:3), “poor in spirit.” He acknowledges that he is a sinner, and he knows that salvation is only found in the mercy of God. Here we find an example of true humility, an essential aspect of repentance. A “change of mind” and the transformation of our lives can only happen when we humble ourselves before God, acknowledge our willingness to turn from sin, and receive His grace into our lives.

Our preparation for Lent thus begins with a prayer for humility, the beginning of true repentance. Through repentance, we can find and return to the true order of things, a restoration of our spiritual vision that will guide us in a very difficult and challenging world. By entering Great Lent in humility and repentance, we can attain deeper communion with God as we receive His forgiveness and He blesses by guiding us to greater spiritual heights.

FEBRUARY 12: SUNDAY OF THE PRODIGAL SON



The parable of the Prodigal Son forms an exact icon of repentance at its different stages. Sin is exile, enslavement to strangers, hunger. Repentance is the return from exile to our true home; it is to receive back our inheritance and freedom in the Father's house. But repentance implies action: "I will rise up and go..." (v. 18).

To repent is not just to feel dissatisfied, but to make a decision and to act upon it.

In the words of our Lord, we also learn of three things through this parable: the condition of the sinner, the rule of repentance, and the greatness of God's compassion.

The reading of this parable follows the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee so that, seeing in the person of the Prodigal Son our own sinful condition, we might come to our senses and return to God through repentance. For those who have fallen into great despair over their sins thinking that there is no forgiveness, this parable offers hope. The Heavenly Father is patiently and lovingly waiting for our return. There is no sin that can overcome His love for us.

Finally, this parable offers us insight into the world in which we live. It is a world where the activities of people are disconnected and not ordered toward the fulfillment of God's divine purpose for life. It is a world of incoherent pursuits, of illusory strivings, of craving for foods and drinks that do not satisfy, a world where nothing ultimately makes sense, and a world engulfed in untruth, deceit and sin. It is the exact opposite of the world as created by God and potentially recreated by his Son and Spirit. There is no cure for the evils of our age unless we return to God. The world in which we live is not a normal world, but a wasteland. This is why in the Slavic tradition of the Orthodox Church the reading of Psalm 137 is added to the Matins service for this and the following two Sundays. This nostalgic lament of the Hebrew exiles states: "By the streams of Babylon we sat and wept as we remembered Zion. On the willows we hung our harps, for how could we sing the Lord's song in a strange land" (Psalm 137).

Here we can see the challenge of life in this world and the alienation from God that can happen when sin reigns in our lives. As a result of sin in our lives, we lose the joy of communion with God, we defile and lose our spiritual beauty, and we find ourselves far away from our real home, our real life. In true repentance, we realize this, and we express a deep desire to return, to recover what has been lost. On this day the Church reminds us of what we have abandoned and lost, and beckons us to find the desire and power to return. Our Heavenly Father is waiting and ready to receive us with His loving forgiveness and His saving embrace.

FEBRUARY 19: SUNDAY OF THE LAST JUDGEMENT



The commemoration for this Sunday is taken from the parable of our Lord Jesus Christ concerning his Second Coming and the Last Judgment of all, both the living and the dead. In Matthew 25:31-46, Christ speaks about what will happen at this specific point in time when He will "come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him" (v. 31).

At His coming, "He will sit on the throne of His glory," and all of the nations will be gathered before Him.

He will separate them “as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats” (v. 32). The sheep will be placed on His right hand, and the goats on the left.

To the sheep, He will say “Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (vv. 33-34)

This kingdom is offered to the sheep because of their compassion and service to those in need. Jesus says, “...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; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.”

The sheep, who are the righteous chosen for the kingdom, will ask how this could be so. They will ask Jesus when was He hungry or thirsty, a stranger, naked, and in prison. He will answer them by saying, “Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to the least of these My brethren, you did it to me” (vv. 35-40).

Christ the King, seated on His throne of judgment, will then turn to the goats on His left and say, “Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels” (v. 41). He will condemn them because they did not feed Him when He was hungry, give Him drink when He was thirsty, take Him in when He was a stranger, clothe Him when He was naked, visit Him when He was sick or in prison.

The goats will ask the 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?” 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” (vv. 42-45).

Jesus concludes His words on the Last Judgment by stating that those on the left “will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life” (v. 46).

On the past two Sundays of this pre-Lenten period, the focus was placed on God’s patience and limitless compassion, of His readiness to accept every sinner who returns to Him. On this third Sunday, we are powerfully reminded of a complementary truth: no one is so patient and so merciful as God, but even He does not forgive those who do not repent. The God of love is also a God of righteousness, and when Christ comes again in glory, He will come as our Judge. Such is the message of Lent to each of us: turn back while there is still time, repent before the End comes.

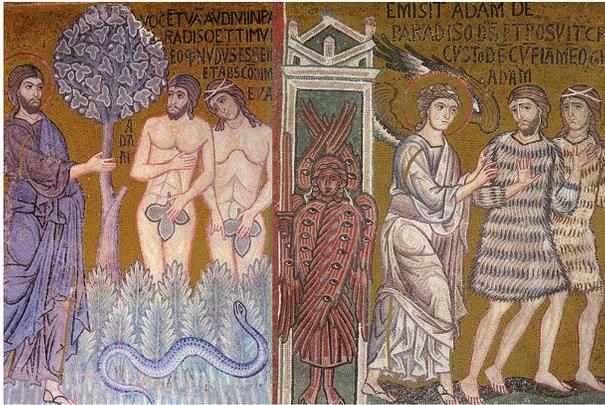
This Sunday sets before us the eschatological dimension of Lent: the Great Fast is a preparation for the Second Coming of the Savior, for the eternal Passover in the Age to Come, a theme that is also the focus of the first three days of Holy Week. But the judgment is not only in the future. Here and now, each day and each hour, in hardening our hearts toward others and in failing to respond to the opportunities we are given of helping them, we are already passing judgment on ourselves.

Another theme of this Sunday is that of love. When Christ comes to judge us, what will be the criterion of His judgment? The parable of the Last Judgment answers: love—not a mere humanitarian concern for abstract justice and the anonymous “poor,” but concrete and personal love for the human person—the specific persons that we encounter each day in our lives.

Christian love is the “possible impossibility” to see Christ in another person, whoever he or she is, and whom God, in His eternal and mysterious plan, has decided to introduce into my life, be it only for a few moments, not as an occasion for a “good deed” or an exercise in philanthropy, but as the beginning of an eternal companionship in God Himself.

The parable of the Last Judgment is about Christian love. Not all of us are called to work for “humanity,” yet each one of us has received the gift and the grace of Christ’s love. We know that all persons ultimately need this personal love—the recognition in them of their unique soul in which the beauty of the whole creation is reflected in a unique way. We also know that people are in prison and are sick and thirsty and hungry because that personal love has been denied them. And, finally, we know that however narrow and limited the framework of our personal existence, each one of us has been made responsible for a tiny part of the Kingdom of God, made responsible by that very gift of Christ’s love. Thus, on whether or not we have accepted this responsibility, on whether we have loved or refused to love, shall we be judged.

FEBRUARY 26: SUNDAY OF THE FORGIVENESS (CHEESEFARE SUNDAY)



The Sunday of Forgiveness, the last of the preparatory Sundays before Great Lent, has two themes: it commemorates Adam’s expulsion from Paradise, and it accentuates our need for forgiveness. There are obvious reasons why these two things should be brought to our attention as we stand on the threshold of Great Lent. One of the primary images in the Triodion is that of the return to Paradise. Lent is a time when we weep with Adam and Eve before the closed gate of Eden, repenting with them for the sins that have deprived us of our free communion with God. But Lent is also a time when we are preparing to celebrate the saving event of Christ’s death and rising,

which has reopened Paradise to us once more (Luke 23:43). So sorrow for our exile in sin is tempered by hope of our re-entry into Paradise.

The second theme, that of forgiveness, is emphasized in the Gospel reading for this Sunday (Matthew 6:14-21) and in the special ceremony of mutual forgiveness at the end of the Vespers on Sunday evening. Before we enter the Lenten fast, we are reminded that there can be no true fast, no genuine repentance, no reconciliation with God, unless we are at the same time reconciled with one another. A fast without mutual love is the fast of demons. We do not travel the road of Lent as isolated individuals but as members of a family. Our asceticism and fasting should not separate us from others, but should link us to them with ever-stronger bonds.

The Sunday of Forgiveness also directs us to see that Great Lent is a journey of liberation from our enslavement to sin. The Gospel lesson sets the conditions for this liberation. The first one is fasting—the refusal to accept the desires and urges of our fallen nature as normal, the effort to free ourselves from the dictatorship of the flesh and matter over the spirit. To be effective, however, our fast must not be hypocritical, a “showing off.” We must “appear not unto men to fast but to our Father who is in secret” (vv. 16-18).

The second condition is forgiveness—“If you forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you” (vv. 14-15). The triumph of sin, the main sign of its rule over the world, is division, opposition, separation, hatred. Therefore, the first break through this fortress of sin is forgiveness—the return to unity, solidarity, love. To forgive is to put between me and my “enemy” the radiant forgiveness of God Himself. To forgive is to reject the hopeless “dead-ends” of human relations and to refer them to Christ. Forgiveness is truly a “breakthrough” of the Kingdom into this sinful and fallen world.

News and Stories in St. Elia Parish Community



EVE OF THEOPHANY at St Elia (January 18, 2023)

After the Great Blessing of the water by Fr. Georg Podtepa and Fr. Vasyl-Makal, a tasty Jordon Dinner and Ukrainian Christmas Carol Sing-along were enjoyed by all.

ACUA Spring Workshops



Kilim Mosaic with Theo Harasymiw

Saturday, February 11, 2023 9:30 am – 3:00 pm

ACUA Gallery, 10554 – 110 Street NW Edmonton, AB T5H 3C5

Members: \$195 / Non-Members: \$215 (Register by: February 6, 2023)

In this 1-day workshop, you will be assembling your own mini kilims (carpets). You will learn about the tools used to cut glass, tile and ceramic, how to find your own materials, substrates, adhesives, and general information about creating mosaics from various materials. We will have templates to help guide the process of how to design the kilim or have the freedom to design your own. There will be an assortment of materials to choose from when designing your layout which will excite the inner magpie! No previous experience is necessary.



Nalysnyky Tutorial with Yulia Kamkina

Saturday, February 18, 2023 11:00 am – 2:00 pm

St. Elia Church, 11833 – 66 Street NW, Edmonton, AB T5B 1J2

Members: \$60 / Non-Members: \$70 (Register by: February 14, 2023)

Nalysnyky are also known as Ukrainian crepes, as they consist of various sweet or savoury fillings wrapped in a thin crepe-like cake layer. In this workshop, Yulia will teach participants how to create their own nalysnyky. Participants will make various fillings for their nalysnyky and will learn the techniques for wrapping them. Samples will be made in the class to take home!



Beginner Pysanka Writing with Lyrissa Sheptak

Saturday, February 25, 2023 11:00 am – 1:00 pm

ACUA Gallery, 10554 – 110 Street NW Edmonton, AB T5H 3C5

Members: \$25 / Non-Members: \$30 (Register by: February 20, 2023)

Learn the basic techniques of writing pysanky! In this beginner class, you will get an introduction to writing pysanky while you are writing your own pysanky to take home. You will learn the meanings behind the symbols and motifs used in the art of pysanky writing, as well as the basic techniques for writing, designing, and dying your eggs.

Vytynanky Paper Cutting with Myroslava Oksentiuk

Sunday, March 5, 2023 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm

ACUA Gallery, 10554 – 110 Street NW, Edmonton, AB T5H 3C5

Members: \$45 / Non-Members: \$50 (Register by: February 28, 2023)

Vytynanka, or paper cutting, is a folk art that was used to decorate homes during the holidays in the 19th century. Images of angels, birds, plants, and other animals are all traditional cutting ornaments and sometimes were used as amulets for home. In this workshop, you will learn the art of Vytynanka by making your own paper cutting. Once your Vytynanka is created you will apply it to a mat to decorate your home!

***Register Here:**

<https://alberta-council-for-the-ukrainian-arts.square.site/shop/workshops-events/25>

Call 780-488-8558 or email programs@acuarts.ca for more details!

UKRAINIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OF ST.ELIA.

ORDER OF SERVICES FOR FEBRUARY 2023.

- 5 - SUNDAY..... PUBLICAN AND PHARISEE 10:00 A.M.
12 - SUNDAY..... SUNDAY OF THE PRODIGAL SON 10:00 A.M.
19 - SUNDAY SUNDAY OF THE LAST JUDGEMENT 10:00 A.M.
(MEAT-FARE SUNDAY)
26 - SUNDAY..... SUNDAY OF FORGIVENESS (CHEESE-FARE) 10:00 A.M.

ORDER OF SERVICES FOR MARCH 2023.

- 5 - SUNDAY SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY 10:00 A.M.
12 - SUNDAY..... 2nd.SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT 10:00 A.M.
19 - SUNDAY 3rd.SUNDAY. HOLY CROSS VENERATION 10:00 A.M.
26 - SUNDAY..... 4th.SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT 10:00 A.M.

** If there are any other services during Great lent,
The schedule will be updated in the March newsletter.*

