



**SAINT ELIAS ORTHODOX
CHRISTIAN CHURCH
OF SYLVANIA, OHIO**
4940 HARROUN RD., SYLVANIA, OH 43560
V. Rev. Fr. Paul Albert, Proto presbyter

SAINT ELIZABETH HOUSE MISSION TEAM

Rt. Rev. Bishop MARK,
Diocese of Toledo and the Midwest,
Antiochian Archdiocese

V. Rev. Fr. Paul Albert
Archpriest/St. Elias Church

Rev. Fr. Daniel Hackney
St. Elias Church
Pastoral Assistant

Dr. Samih Bitar
Medical University of Ohio

David Borgman, MBA
Promedica

Dr. Amira Gohara
Medical University of Ohio

Kh. Joan Heifner, PhD
Antiochian archdiocese

Drs. Daniel & Jane Hinshaw
St. Elizabeth House advisory board

Cindy Hopper, R.N.

Richard Kerbawy, Esq.

Keith Walker
Walker Funeral Home

Dr. Medhat Ashamalla

Hospice Volunteer Training Program

This program will help us provide visitation and companionship for our elderly in community nursing homes and shut-ins in our Toledo area parishes.

Training is offered in conjunction with
Hospice of Northwest Ohio Volunteer Training Program
& local Orthodox clergy & medical professionals

First Session: September 14-October 17

Hospice of North West Ohio component:

Two sessions per week: Mondays & Wednesdays, 6-9 PM
Held at Hospice Toledo facility (Detroit Ave.)

Orthodox Christian component: **Saturday, October 17** Training
in providing spiritual care within the Orthodox Christian Ethos
Held at St. Elias (Sylvania, OH) Sat. 12-4 PM

Register via email: fr.paul@bex.net

Deadline: September 10

(Also e-mail same address for further information)

These initial training efforts, and a short-term pilot program of ministry will be critical to providing volunteers with the necessary background and skills to help each individual discern the particular ministry for which they have a vocation. This program is a step in the ongoing development and establishment of an Orthodox Christian Home for our loved ones at the end of their earthly life.



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Further Development of St Elizabeth's Ministry at St Elias Orthodox Church Next Steps ...

The following steps are proposed to help identify and train a core group of committed Orthodox Christian volunteers from St Elias Orthodox Church and other Toledo area Orthodox parishes for a two-fold ministry of mercy and compassion inspired by the example of St Elizabeth the New Martyr of Russia. The ministry would be focused in two major areas:

- 1) Providing visitation and companionship for the elderly in community nursing homes and shut-ins of area parishes; and
- 2) Care and support of the dying in collaboration with community hospice.

To lay the foundation for these programs, initial educational efforts and a pilot program hosted by St Elias parish will be critical to providing volunteers with the necessary background and skills to then self-select to the ministry for which they have a vocation.

The initial phase of training would be collaborative participation in hospice volunteer training provided by Hospice of NW Ohio. This would be coupled with training in the spiritual care of those with advanced illnesses from an Orthodox Christian perspective that would also respect diverse spiritual and religious backgrounds, since the ministry will be to all those in need from the Toledo area. Another, and perhaps most important, component of the training will be ongoing training/practice in developing a rule of prayer (corporate and private) that will be an integral component of the ministry, supporting and enervating its activities. Depending on timing and availability, the hospice volunteer training could be coordinated with the training in spiritual care (e.g., in proximity to a Lenten retreat covering the latter). The development and incorporation of the rule of prayer in the ministry would be ongoing under the leadership of Bishop Mark, Fr. Paul Albert and other Orthodox clergy in the Toledo area.



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The next phase of training would be the 'hands on' phase. After completion of the initial phase of training, individual volunteers would participate in volunteer activities under the auspices of Hospice of NW Ohio (e.g., patient visitation, keeping vigil at the bedside of the dying, providing family support for respite, etc.). These activities could be done in the home setting as well as at the hospice residence which will provide experience immediately relevant to the operation and care provided in the proposed St Elizabeth Home. It will also validate individual vocations to care for the dying, since not all interested individuals will have a vocation for this work. Visitation to shut-ins and the elderly in nursing homes with initial direct supervision by Orthodox clergy will provide an opportunity for ministry for those who may not have a vocation to provide direct care for the dying but who still have a vocation to serve.

Another aspect of the ministry that could be developed in direct collaboration with community hospice organizations (e.g., Hospice of NW Ohio) and would further prepare volunteers and the parish for the opening of St Elizabeth's Home would be the development of Palliative Day Care using the parish hall. Such programs are very common components of palliative care in the United Kingdom but haven't developed in the U.S. because there are no current means of financing them through Medicare. It is highly likely that Hospice of NW Ohio or other community hospice partners would be quite interested in collaborating in the development of such an innovative program for their home hospice patients. Our trained volunteers could provide a once or twice a week day-time respite experience for patients enrolled in community hospice from the local area near the parish. This effort would provide invaluable experience for the volunteers, an opportunity to develop the necessary collaborative experience with community hospice, and would also provide a social venue for Orthodox elderly and shut-ins who may also be in need of respite services but are not yet hospice appropriate. This model of collaboration between faith-based organizations and community hospice organizations could be implemented at numerous Orthodox parishes with or without the later development of a physical home for the dying. Because of its very innovative nature, it would likely be an attractive target for grant and philanthropic support. Having such a program successfully in place, would also go a long way toward convincing any donor that the parish has the depth of skills and commitment to make a St Elizabeth's Home a real success.