

# Orthodox Parish of St Helen of Colchester

Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch, Vicariate for Europe  
British Antiochian Orthodox Deanery

NEWSLETTER 61

DECEMBER 2000

## All our prayers answered!

FOR YEARS I have "found my being", I fear, in grumbling and whining - about the "dreadful" authorities who time and again seemed to have foiled our excellent plans to secure a temple for our own use, about how things have not worked out as well as we thought they should. Such, I confess, is my poor nature.

But now, in December 2000, I suddenly find that our prayers are answered, and all has developed as we had hoped. God forgive me for my lack of trust and unworthy thoughts.

To God be the glory! "To him all praise is due!" He has so wonderfully answered our petitions. We now have a church of our own (albeit for a limited period). It is a church full of history. It is one that, as we would argue, was originally an Orthodox church. It is, to top it all, a church intimately linked in tradition with our local Patron Saint, one of the greatest Saints, known and loved for 1700 years throughout East and West, one who really brings the two parts of Christendom together. We have the mission of encouraging devotion to the town's holy Patroness. What more could anyone ask!

Yes, but....

YET THERE is indeed something more that I do ask of God, and always will ask - I ask that YOU may freely and with enthusiasm give your devotion to him, give your heart, your life, for God and his Holy Church. This devotion of yours must include not only your personal devotions, and your good, upright living, but also your presence in church, at the Holy Liturgy.

The Orthodox Faithful in North Essex now have the opportunity they have never had before, of finding, within a few miles of their home, their own parish church, with a parish Priest to serve them.

May God help you to take full advantage of this new development!

Father Alexander

### SERVICE TIMES IN DECEMBER - SEE OVERLEAF

Please note that, as an experiment,

**GREAT VESPERS ON SATURDAY WILL BE AT 4.30**

### DIVINE LITURGY

ST FURSEY, SUTTON Saturday 3 December 10.00 am

ST JAMES, CLACTON Saturday 16 December 10.00 am

My apologies that I had to cancel the November Liturgy at Clacton, due to the opening of St Helen's that weekend



Christ is  
born:  
glorify him!

This Newsletter comes with sincere Christmas greetings from Father Alexander, Khouria Hilary and all the Haig Family. God bless you at this time, each one, whether with family, friends, or on your own.

## A great and moving day

The weekend of 18/19 November was historic in the story of Holy Orthodoxy in Colchester and North Essex.

We inaugurated the life and worship of the first Orthodox parish church in these parts for one thousand years - or thereabouts.

Until the time of the Great Schism between East and West (commonly dated to 1054, just before the Norman Conquest of England in 1066), Christendom was united in One Holy Faith, the Orthodox Faith. As Orthodox faithful we have to question the Orthodoxy of Britain and the rest of the West after that time, though even then western Christianity must not be dismissed as simply false: it's a much more complicated question.

In the 20th century the ground-breaking Holy Monastery at Tolleshunt Knights has been established by Father SOPHRONY, of blessed memory, and the Holy Liturgy has been served from time to time, by various Priests, in Colchester and Clacton, and no doubt elsewhere too. But there has been no parish church as such.

However on 12 November, after the Holy Liturgy at the Co-op Chapel, we prayed outside St Helen's, and then "marched" in, all bearing holy icons, singing the troparion to St Helen - and were glad to discover that the building has fine acoustics. It was tremendous. On the following days, just a tiny number prayed daily there, and then worked on preparations. By Saturday the iconostasis was up, in an incomplete form. On Saturday 18 November, we assembled at 4 pm, with great joy, and aware of the historic significance, we served

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### NEW TELEPHONE NUMBER

Our postal address remains the same, but on 15 December:

- ◆ our telephone number changes to:  
01206 - 530530
- ◆ our fax number changes to:  
01206 - 530531

The Parish email and website addresses will change shortly

### Usual Services in the Parish

**At St Helen's Chapel, Maidenburgh St, Colchester**

Saturday: Great Vespers usually 4.30 pm (check before coming)

Sunday: Mattins or Hours 9.45 am; Divine Liturgy 10.30 am

Car Parking (Sundays only): Oyster Court, close by in St Helen's Lane

Confessions: Saturday after Vespers, or by arrangement

Holy Marriage, Baptism, Funerals, Memorials etc: by arrangement

**At St Fursey's Chapel, 111 Neville Rd, Sutton, Norfolk**

Divine Liturgy: First or second Saturday of month 10.00 am

**At St James Anglican Church, Clacton-on-sea**

Divine Liturgy: Usually third Saturday of month at 10.00 am

**At the University of Essex, Colchester**

Divine Liturgy: One Saturday per term at 10.00 am

Parish Priest: Father Alexander Haig

66 Wimpole Rd, Colchester CO1 2DN Tel: 01206-795275

Email: orthodox.colchester@aspects.net

Reader: Stephen Weston, St Fursey's House, 111 Neville Rd, Sutton NR12 9RR

Parish Web Site: www.aspects.net/~orthodox/



## Messages received as we take over St Helen's Chapel

We have received a number of messages, all of which have brought us joy, and some were able to be read out at the first services.

► **HIS EMINENCE METROPOLITAN GABRIEL:** I am pleased to hear that our St Helen's parish has now obtained a suitable place, where they can worship together as an Orthodox community. I wish you all well for the future, and give you my blessing.

► **FR MICHAEL HARPER (Dean):** I waited patiently for the Lord, He inclined to me and heard my cry (Ps 40:1) I thank God that your long and patient wait is over, and I wish you well in your new Orthodox home. I pray like the Psalmist that God will put a new song in your mouths, and that many will see and fear, and put their trust in the Lord. God bless you all richly!

► **FR PHILIP HALL (Antiochian Parish, Lincolnshire):**...I am so pleased by your news! I've been grinning like a Ch. cat all day and praying for you all. I wish we could have been there this weekend but in our hearts I will be and will be remembering you all this week end...With love to you all.

► **FR ANTHONY CLEMENTS (St Felix British Orthodox Church (Coptic), Norfolk)** I am delighted to hear that your prayers have at last been answered, and that St. Helen's Chapel is now yours. You will find

it a huge blessing to have your own church, your own spiritual home and base, free of the restraints of sharing someone else's premises. You can order the building as you wish, leave everything in place, and use it exactly when you want to. We experienced this same feeling of freedom last May when we moved into St. Felix' Chapel, Babingley, and it is a constant joy to us all. At the moment we are well into our restoration programme...Your Orthodox cousins here on the Sandringham Estate rejoice with you and your community in the wonderful news about St. Helen's. ...May St. Felix add his prayers to those of St. Helen, that the Colchester Orthodox Community may grow spiritually and numerically, to the glory of God and the salvation of the souls of the Faithful.

■ **Generous gifts and/or touching messages of friendship and goodwill** were received from several others, including:

- **ST JAMES ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH, PRIORY STREET**
- **BATH ORTHODOX PARISH**
- **ALAN-ANDREW COLVIN (Coventry)**
- **RICHARD ALBAN LAW (Framlingham)**
- my sister **JEAN ASHFORD (Sidmouth).**

### DECEMBER SERVICES

**Most weekdays (but not Mondays)**

9.30 am Mattins 4.30 pm Vespers

**Wednesday 6 December, St Nicholas**

9.30 am Divine Liturgy

**Tuesday 12 December, St Spyridon**

9.30 am Divine Liturgy

**Wednesday 20 December, St Ignatius of Antioch**

9.30 am Divine Liturgy

**Friday 22 December, Forefeast of Nativity**

9.30 am Royal Hours and Typica

**23 December, Saturday before Nativity**

4.30 pm Great Vespers

**Sunday 24 December, Eve of the Nativity**

10.30 am Divine Liturgy

4.30 pm Vigil - Vespers and Mattins

**Monday 25 December, Nativity of Christ**

10.30 am Divine Liturgy

Confessions before or after any service: please ask

### GIFTS FOR ST HELEN'S

Would you help set up St Helen's as an Orthodox church, a thanksgiving to God for our first parish church in North Essex for nearly 1000 years?

#### A Gift List

The List is available which includes icons (from £10), expensive items like carpeting for the Holy Altar (£350), and cheaper items like the Curtain for the Holy Doors (£10). It also contains less glamorous - but still most necessary - items like paint for the walls (£50).

Everyone can give something - a smaller gift is just as acceptable, as a part-gift.

All gifts will be recorded in the Parish Gift Book, and if you wish, your particular gift can be in memory of your departed loved ones. Help us create a worthy Temple of God.

PLEASE SEND A GENERAL GIFT OR ASK FOR THE GIFT LIST



### A great and moving day [continued from page 1]

a Vigil of Vespers, with Artoclasia, and Mattins. This we followed with supper at Macdonalds in the High Street (having "fast food" in two senses!). Then some returned to assist in the Lesser Blessing of Waters, with sprinkling all round.

On Sunday came the great moment of celebration, the first Divine Liturgy in our new home, the first in the building for all those centuries. Cypriot, Greek, Russian, and British faithful joined in with devotion and almost with tears. We concluded by processing round the outside, singing and blessing the building again.

We then repaired to a Parish feast, held in the Lion Walk Church hall - for the use of which we were most grateful to the URC authorities. Later a few of us returned to church for a short Thanksgiving Molieben, which included the Te Deum (which with pleasure, and a certain amount of nostalgia, we sang to "Anglican" chant), joined by a Russian student and a long-standing Anglican friend of the parish.

Since then the church has been decorated. At the time of writing the porch is being repaired, and the iconostasis completed.

How blessed we are!

## HERE AND THERE

**IN THE FAR EAST:** MICHAEL AYLETT moved here soon after being received into the Church in Derby. Suddenly he got a job teaching English in Japan, and has moved off there. The Orthodox Church flourishes in Japan, and we hope he will be near enough to a church to be able to attend. We were sorry not to have seen him before he went, send our good wishes, and hope to hear news of him from time to time.

**THREE-BRANCH CANDLESTICK:** Our thanks to DUSAN GAVRILOVIC, who brought us back from Serbia a lovely candlestick, which will adorn our church. It is very heavy, but thankfully he travelled by car!

**"BACK IN TOWN"** at the beginning of December is NEKTARIOS STELLAKIS, a good friend of the Parish when he was studying here 1997-8, and ever since. It will be good to see him.

### OUR PARISH ICON OF ST HELEN

by ELENI STELLAKI (Athens)

Now in several formats

Mounted on wood (A4 size) £10.00

Unmounted prints (A4 size) £ 2.00

Card (postcard size) 20p

Available from the Church bookstall

NB An A4 size mounted in card to be published soon

### DECEMBER DAYS

Sun	3	Pentecost 24
Mon	4	Great Martyr Barbara, St John of Damascus
Tue	5	St Saba the Sanctified
Wed	6	St Nicholas the Wonderworker
Thu	7	St Ambrose of Milan
Sat	9	Conception by St Anna of Holy Theotokos
Sun	10	Pentecost 25
Tue	12	St Spyridon the Wonderworker
Wed	13	St Herman of Alaska
Fri	15	Hieromartyr Eleutherius & his Mother Anthia
Sun	17	Pentecost 26
Wed	20	Hieromartyr Ignatius of Antioch
Sun	24	Pentecost 27, Christmas Eve
Mon	25	NATIVITY OF JESUS CHRIST
Tue	26	Synaxis of Most Holy Theotokos
Wed	27	Holy Protomartyr Stephen
Fri	29	Holy Innocents
Sun	31	Pentecost 28, St Joseph, David the King, St James the Lord's Brother

A full list of the month's feasts and fasts is available on request.

### ST HELEN ORTHODOX

CALENDAR FOR

COMPUTERS

VERSION 4

£10.00 inc p&p

### A WORD FROM THE FATHERS

**T**his is the day our Saviour was born: what joy for us, my beloved! This is no season for sadness, this, the birthday of Life - the Life which annihilates the fear of death, and engenders joy, promising, as it does, immortality. Nobody is an outsider to this happiness. The same cause for joy is common to all...When the designated time had come, which God in his deep and impenetrable plan had fixed upon, God's Son took the nature of man upon himself in order to reconcile man to his Creator.... O Christian, be aware of your nobility - it is God's own nature that you share.

St Leo the Great (reposed 461)