

# THE ORTHODOX COMMUNITY OF ST HELEN

## COLCHESTER, ESSEX

News of the Church community under

His Holiness the Greek Orthodox Patriarch Ignatius IV of Antioch and All the East

NEWSLETTER No. 8 - FEAST OF THE MEETING OF OUR LORD, 2 FEBRUARY 1996

### OFF WE GO !

Yes, at long last we are ready to start! The first meeting to form an Orthodox Church in Colchester is announced, and a date set to begin regular Orthodox worship.

These services will take place at St Paul's Church, Belle Vue Road, Colchester, by kind and generous permission of the Rector, Fr PETER WALKER (who also has St James Church).

St Paul's is quite prominent, just beside the old by-pass near the roundabout leading one way to the town centre and the other way to North Station, which is close by. Carparking at the church hall opposite. Restrictions on the church side of the road are lifted at 6.00 pm - which is why I am suggesting the regular time for Vespers should be 6.30.

So now we are here. At times it did seem that it would never happen, that it was all a dream. But it was not, and it is now actually coming to fulfilment.

I want to thank all those who have come along with me over the past three years. In some ways it has not been easy, but by the grace of God we have come through.

Praise God the Holy Trinity. Praise his holy Name. Praise the Ever-virgin Mother of God, Praise St Helen of Colchester. Praise All the Holy Ones of God.

You should receive with this Newsletter a leaflet with the details of the meeting. It is for you, but if you have any opportunity of displaying it somewhere - perhaps in a church, by the kindness of a sympathetic parish priest, or elsewhere - please do: you never know who may see it and be consciously or unconsciously waiting to respond. They may be Orthodox or not - even of no apparent religion.

I am sending this Newsletter to a wider circle than usual, because we want even those who are definitely not intending to join us - for whatever reason - (a) to know about it, (b) to pass on the information to their friends. The better known we can be the more likely we are to meet people's spiritual needs.

Please do try to come to the meeting if you can. If you think you may wish to worship with us on a regular basis or even wish to be a member with us, but cannot attend this first meeting, please send me your name, address, and telephone number, so that I can keep you in touch with developments.

The arrangements are temporary, until we find something permanent - and regular readers of this Newsletter will know that we hope to secure use of a particular church - nothing to report on that as yet, though. For St Paul's we have to find £10 per week as a contribution to heating and lighting.

From all our friends we ask moral support, and prayers, for this venture. And of course we shall be pleased to see any of you any time.

ALEXANDER HAIG

### WHAT'S IN A NAME?

- Quite a lot, actually, according to the Holy Scriptures. At my Chrismation I took the name ALEXANDER. But I emphasise that this is but a different form of the same name, ALISTAIR, and I am happy to be called by either form. It shows that I-have-changed-but-am-still-the-same. Or, that I-am-the-same-but-changed. A true Anglican become completely Orthodox! The name means "Defender of men". My Patron Saint has long been St Alexander of Constantinople, the Bishop of that city, and a stout Defender of the Faith at the First Ecumenical Council in Nicaea in AD 325.

AN ENGLISH ORTHODOX  
CONGREGATION  
IN COLCHESTER  
with  
REGULAR WORSHIP  
in  
St Paul's Church  
Belle Vue Road

by kind permission of Fr Peter  
Walker and the Churchwardens

+

Saturday 24 February 1996  
at 3.00 pm

Inaugural Planning Meeting  
Tea  
Vespers

+

Saturdays from 2 March  
probably at 6.30 pm  
Vespers

+

Sundays from 3 March  
probably at 9.00 am  
Hours and Typica

We hope to carry this on in the future, but if you wish to join us only occasionally, it would be wise to check beforehand.

### ENQUIRERS MEETINGS

The former "Pilgrimage to Orthodoxy" group will, I hope, continue under this new name. It is intended for non-Orthodox people who are interested in thinking about the Orthodox Faith.

They will be warmly welcome at all services, of course.

But I think it would be good to have a regular meeting especially for them - probably linked with Saturday evening Vespers, and about once a month.

I shall therefore be happy to see friends of Orthodoxy who are considering their response to it.

I plan to have the first on Saturday 30 March. There will be an address and discussion, very much open to all.

Please book this date in your diary if you are interested. If you can't make that, or want to see me at any other time, do of course drop me a line or give me a ring.



## OUR OWN "PILGRIMAGE TO ORTHODOXY"

After a pilgrimage of not just three years, but in fact of some forty years, it was my privilege to be chrismated into the Holy Orthodox Church on 10 December 1995 in St George's Antiochian Cathedral near Regents Park in London.

It was also a privilege to bring my wife and children with me into the bosom of the Church. Their loyal support these past three years has been highly important to me.

It is moving beyond words - and almost unbelievable - that we have reached this point.

Now another development.

I have known the world-famous and impressive Monastery at Tolleshunt Knights for very many years, from, I think, about 1970.

Hilary has known it since before we married, and our children have known it all their lives.

One of our most prized wedding gifts was an icon of the Vladimir Mother of God, given to us by the Monastery. It still of course graces our home, and brings constant blessings.

We feel it extremely important - from many points of view, objective as well as personal and sentimental - that we have the confidence of the Monastery, and the blessing of the Fathers and Sisters for the work in Colchester.

**You will understand therefore that our joy is now over-flowing: we have been welcomed to Holy Communion there.**

May this augur a continuing good relationship to come, and a blessing on our new work for God in Colchester.

## AN ENGLISH ORTHODOX PARISH

We shall, as you know, be welcoming all Orthodox Christians to our worship - and indeed hope to see a number we know are in the area, at least sometimes.

Many of them are of course Greeks from Greece or Cyprus, and we hope we may be able to manage a little Greek perhaps from time to time.

Others may be Syrians, Lebanese, Serbs, Russians, Bulgarians, Roumanians, or any of the other nationalities where Christians are likely to be Orthodox.

All of these Orthodox - as all non-Orthodox - will obviously be more than welcome, in the name of the Lord.

But we do of course intend to be an *English* Orthodox group, so that we are able to minister more obviously to the generality of those around us, and to give pastoral care.

Of course there are today children of immigrants who prefer to worship in English.

So do please pass on our welcome to the English Orthodox Church to any Orthodox people you know who may be interested.

## ANTIOCHIAN DEANERY NEWSLETTER

Two editions have now appeared and are available. Edited by FATHER MICHAEL HARPER, they give news of our doings on a national level. It will, I think, appear monthly, and is free. I was asked to write about "my story" in the second edition, and this is either sent to you with this Newsletter, or is available on application.

## ORTHODOX EASTER

**This year Orthodox Easter is on Sunday 14 April**, a week after western Easter. You probably know that it seldom falls on the same day as western Easter - which has advantages and disadvantages. It can be as much as six weeks later - but never earlier.

I think it likely we will not have Holy Week and Easter services here this year, but encourage people to go to the Monastery at Tolleshunt Knights.

It is a great opportunity to take part in these wonderful and inspiring services there - and a great experience, since of course, the Fathers and Sisters do them very impressively. Many people will come from a distance.

## ORDINATIONS

FR SAMUEL CARTER has been ordained deacon, and from our group the HAIGS and SERGE ARMSTONE attended the ceremony in St George's in London. BISHOP GABRIEL ordained him Priest the following week in Paris, on 27 January. FR SAMUEL serves the community of St Michael in Stoke-on-Trent.

That makes seven Priests in the Deanery, which does not include FR SAMIR GHOLAM, Priest at St George's itself.

The next to be ordained will be Fr KURT WITTWER of St Cedd's Community in Coseley, on the western side of Birmingham.

Then, if God please, it should be my turn, though that obviously depends to some extent on the success of our Colchester venture.

"It might be by the late summer," said FR MICHAEL HARPER, our Dean, recently. But I suspect his guess is not much better than mine!

In any case, Orthodox custom is that very little notice is given to the ordinand: the Bishop just says, "I will ordain you next week," or something like that.

Until then we shall probably have to depend for the Sacraments on FR MICHAEL'S occasional visits.

I hope he will be able to come to serve the Holy Liturgy early in our programme of regular services.

On other Sundays we shall celebrate the service called "Typica", which can be led by a layman.

My ignorance in Orthodox worship will be openly displayed, I am afraid, and I shall have to ask your indulgence - and help. Already SERGE ARMSTONE has been helping generously in supplying texts and music.

NB: Regarding the suggestion made in the last Newsletter, apparently BISHOP GABRIEL will not ordain any lay pastors as Readers.

## ORTHODOX COMMUNITY OF ST HELEN OF COLCHESTER

Lay Pastor:

ALISTAIR/ALEXANDER HAIG

18 Hamilton Road

Colchester

CO3 3DZ

Colchester (01206) 576075