

Orthodoxy: The Faith of the Past; The Faith for the Future

Orthodox Parish of St Helen of Colchester

Antiochian Orthodox Deanery

NEWSLETTER 117

JANUARY 2006



Weekday Liturgies at St Helen's

Friday 6 January 9.30 am
Holy Theophany (no Blessing of Waters)
Friday 13 January 9.30 am
St Hilary of Poitiers
Wednesday 25 January 9.30 am
St Gregory the Theologian
Those able to attend a weekday Liturgy enjoy a great advantage and receive God's blessing

2006: our 10th birthday ...!

Double figures! It doesn't seem possible, does it! Reaching the age of ten is important in the life of a child - and of a Parish. At last the child, the Parish, seems to have a certain maturity - by no means grown up, not yet fully mature, but definitely on the way.

And 'double figures' is what we shall achieve this year of grace, thanks be to God!

Perhaps we should have a whole year of celebration - various 'occasions' through the year when we celebrate what God has done and what he wants to do with us in the future.

There are various dates to choose from for something special:

- On 24 February we had the first service, Vespers.
- On 2/3 March we started regular Saturday/Sunday services.
- On 10 March Fr Michael Harper served our first Holy Liturgy.
- On 18 May I was ordained Deacon in Paris.
- On 4 August we had our first Chrismations, not counting the Haig family the previous December.
- On 7/8 September we had our first services at the Co-op Funeral Chapel in Bourne Court, remaining there for four happy years.
- On 28 September I was ordained Priest in Paris, and for the first time St Helen's was officially referred to as a Parish.
- On 5 October I served the Holy Liturgy here for the first time.
- On 12 October we celebrated the foundation of the Parish by a Great Vespers: the many guests included the Mayor of Colchester (attendance: 83).

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The first part of our celebration is already in hand. In commemoration of the tenth anniversary of our very first service, we are to have a *Parish Life Conference*, on Saturday 25 February. I

pray that many of you will want to gather that day to work out plans for the future of our Parish.

My, it does not seem ten years really! But that is sign of growing old, no doubt. I thank God for the progress we have made in that time, and ask God to bless you, to give you real devotion to be faithful to the Holy Orthodox Faith and to live it out in closest communion with his Church.

It is the Church that gives us the means to salvation in Christ. Indeed it is Holy Church that IS our salvation.

Blessed be God that he gives us this means of knowing and serving him.

Father Alexander

Holy Theophany: Join us to bless our River



Theophany (6 January) is a feast of the Baptism of Christ, understood as a revelation of the Holy Trinity. It is one of the very greatest feasts of the Church. Come if you can on the day itself, and to the Great Blessing of the Waters on the Sunday.

The Parish Email List allows information to get round quickly, as occasionally is needed. *Do we have your email address?*

Last year we celebrated Holy Theophany by going down to the River Colne to bless it.

This was our first celebration of a typical Orthodox practice. We asked God to bless the source both of our material life, and through Holy Baptism of our spiritual life.

When we were at Bourne Court we used to go out and bless the spring and pond and water there. At St Helen's we had not been outside. But in 2005 we did. It proved a happy experience.

So we are going to do it again this year - unless the weather is absolutely frightful.

We shall have the usual Great Blessing of Water after the Liturgy in church and then go down in informal procession. Last year the ceremony concluded at 12.30 pm. This we achieved by starting Liturgy on time!

This year it is on the Sunday, 8 January. Do come and support this, and make it a real event.

Most of our Orthodox students will be on Holiday: unfortunately that is usually true at Theophany. No doubt many attend at home. Any in Colchester are warmly invited to come.

St Helen's Chapel, Maidenburgh St, High St

St Helen's is 200m. down behind the George Hotel in the High Street. It is accessible from there only on foot. By car: leave Middleborough Roundabout (between dual carriageways Westway and Balmerne Hill), to Northgate, go straight along St Peter Street to Castle Park; continue round, up into Maidenburgh Street. Car Park, out of office hours: Oyster Court, close by in St Helen's Lane.

Saturday: Great Vespers usually 4.30 pm (check before coming)
Sunday: Mattins 9.45 am (or Hours 10.15 am), Divine Liturgy 10.30 am

Confessions: Saturday after Vespers, or by arrangement
Holy Marriage, Baptism, Funerals, Memorials etc: by arrangement

St Fursey's Chapel, 111 Neville Rd, Sutton, near Stalham, Norfolk

Divine Liturgy: usually first Saturday of month 9.30 am

At St James Anglican Church, Clacton-on-sea

Divine Liturgy: usually third Saturday of month 10.00 am

At the Chaplaincy Centre, University of Essex

Divine Liturgy: one Saturday per term 10.00 am

Parish Priest: Father Alexander Haig

17 Maidenburgh St, Colchester CO1 1UB

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Reader: Stephen Weston

St Fursey's House, 111 Neville Rd, Sutton, Stalham NR12 9RR

Tel: 01-692-580-552

Parish Website:

<http://homepage.ntlworld.com/orthodox.colchester>

Holy Liturgy

ST FURSEY'S

Mon 16 Jan

St Fursey's Day

11.00 am

Preacher:

Fr Athanasius

CLACTON

Sat 21 Jan

10.00 am

OUR PEOPLE IN

CLACTON

are specially invited

to the

Holy Theophany

Blessing of the

River in Colchester

Sunday 8 January:

Holy Liturgy

10.30 am

Here and there

HEATING: Our thanks for the gift of two electric radiators for the church, to warm us in the cold months.

THE NUNS from St Elisabeth's Monastery in Minsk, Belorussia, came in December, and I bought the following items for the church - somebody might like to make a gift of one, perhaps in someone's memory:

- **Holy Water Blessing Bowl:** This is a decent receptacle for blessing it, with three candleholders and a lid. (You will be able to help yourself to Holy Water if you bring a bottle to church. It is a good and pious practice to keep Holy Water at home so you can sprinkle places and people, including yourself.) **Cost: £140.**
- **Portable Lectern** for books or icons. Our existing ones were made by our members in our very early days, but are now a little 'wonky' and need replacing. **Cost £55.**
- **Cloth for table or icon stand.** A rather nice pale blue cloth. **Cost: £35.**

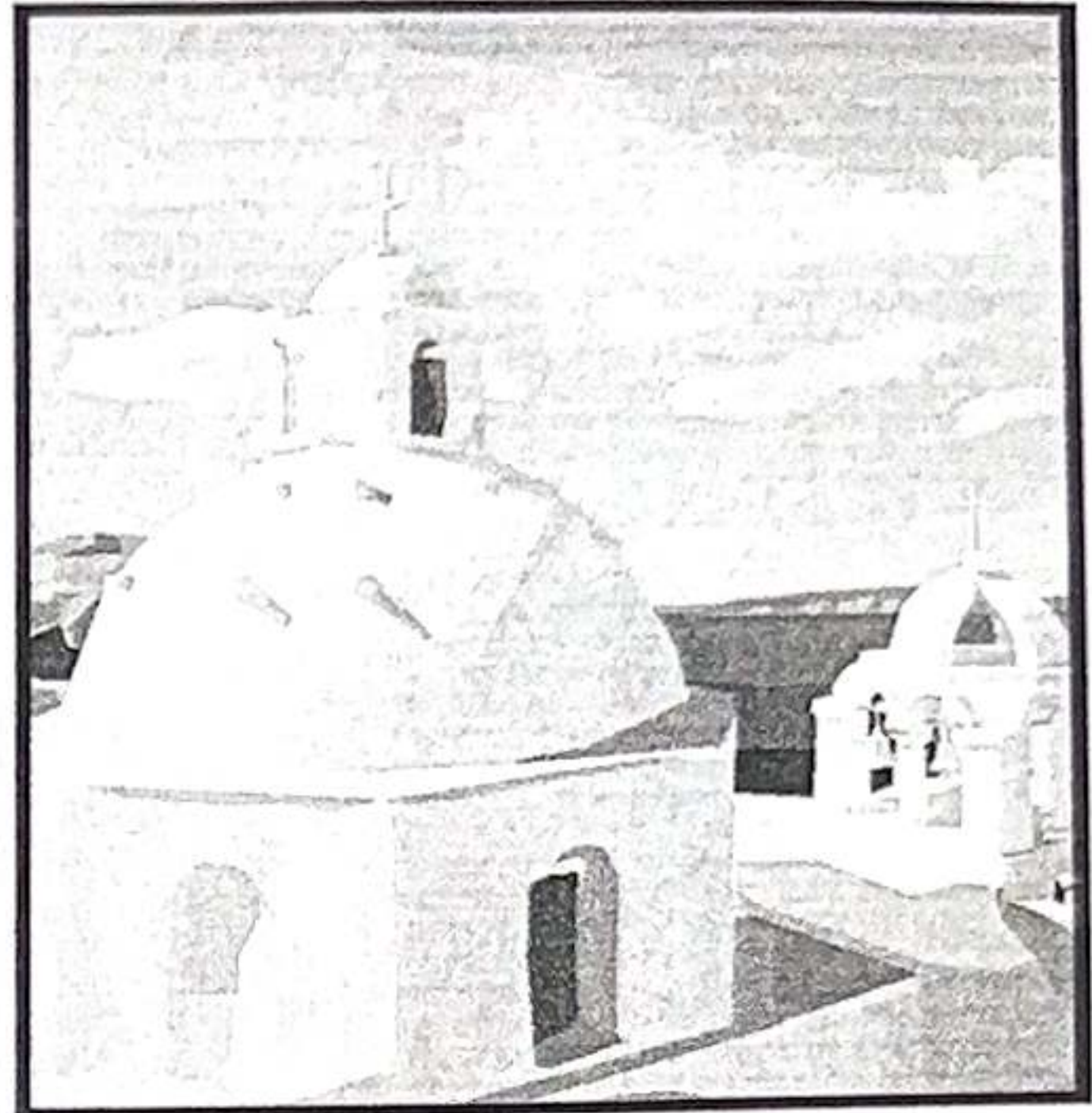
DEANERY CLERGY: The Clergy meet in London on Saturday 7 January.

ST FURSEY'S continues its sterling missionary work - attending markets in Norwich, Great Yarmouth and elsewhere, selling icons and literature, talking with passers-by, and in many other small ways. Above all, our small community in the Norfolk Broads offers worship faithfully. St Fursey's feast is on **Monday 16 January**, and there will be a Holy Liturgy at 11.00 am there. **FATHER ATHANASIUS** has kindly agreed to preach. Afterwards there will be a festive lunch.

NEWSLETTER: With a combination of the passing of my years and my busier schedule, you may have noticed that more often now this Newsletter is sent out by post. This means our postage bill is much higher. I am always grateful therefore for gifts towards postage by those who are not regular worshippers here and do not give regularly otherwise. It means I miss seeing some of you as often as I did. *It does not mean that I do not think of you or pray for you, which I do.*

DORSET: The work of the Antiochian Deanery expands in various places, and St Edward's Parish in Athelhampton now has a new Priest. Deacon **DAVID HARRIS** has been raised to the Priesthood, and has taken over the work there. This has freed **FATHER CHRYSOSTOM MAC-DONNELL** to take on a new work. The Anglican St Osmund's Church in Parkestone, between Bournemouth and Poole, well-sited on a main road, and a fine building - appropriately strongly Byzantine in feeling - has been bought by a wealthy American Antiochian layman, and Father Chrysostom has started the work there. He lives comparatively close, and this will be very convenient for him. That conurbation is large, and the hope is that this will become a strong parish. Please remember both these Priests in their work. A small point of interest is that I nearly became Vicar of that church many years ago!

HOSPITAL: **PAUL LANSLEY** was, as an Anglican priest, an assistant chaplain at the Colchester Hospital. He has now been invited to be Orthodox lay assistant there, along with others of other denominations. He will be able to keep an eye out for any Orthodox patients, and I am grateful.



Above: a picture of Greece to warm you in the cold season, a spiritual radiator like the physical ones we have just been given!

Churches Together in Central Colchester
Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
Sunday 22 January 6.30 pm
Unity Week Service
St Peter's Church, North Hill

St Helen's Parish is an Observer Member of CTC

FELLOWSHIP OF ST ALBAN AND ST SERGIUS
North Essex Branch

Tuesday 17 January 7.30 pm
in St Helen's Chapel

"Eastern Light for English Christians"
Dr Grant White

Director of the Cambridge Orthodox Institute talks of the work of his Institute in making Orthodox Faith and Teaching available - to Orthodox and non-Orthodox Christians

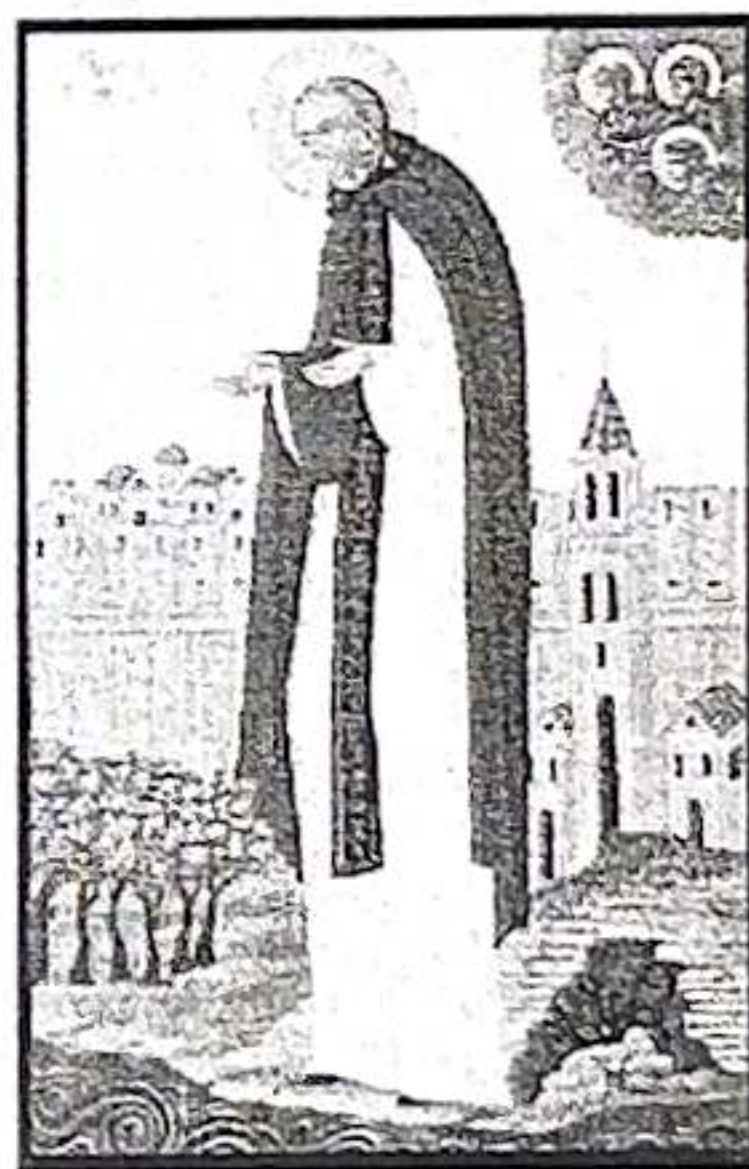
ALL WELCOME TO THIS MEETING

FEAST OF THE MEETING OF CHRIST
Thursday 2 February

In case you do not get your next Newsletter in time, there will indeed be a Holy Liturgy at 9.30 am

St Fursey

St Fursey's Icon shown here is from the original at our St Fursey's Chapel in Norfolk. He was an Irishman, the missionary who first brought the Orthodox Christian Faith to Norfolk in the 7th century. He is regarded as the Enlightener of Norfolk. After some years work here he moved to France, and his relics lie still in Péronne, in Picardy. *Feast: 16 January*



A Word from the Fathers: Holy Baptism

I shall now explain our method of dedicating ourselves to God after we have been created anew through Christ...

All who accept and believe as true the things taught and said by us, and who undertake to have the power to live accordingly, are taught to pray and entreat God, fasting, for the forgiveness of their former sins, while we join in their prayer and fasting.

Then we bring them to a place where there is water, where they are regenerated in the same way as we were: for they then make their ablution in the water in the name of God the Father and Lord of all, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ and of Holy Spirit.

St Justin Martyr (martyred in Rome c.165)

Our Life in Christ
The Great Ahead

A Parish Life Conference

to mark our **TEN YEARS TOGETHER**
as an Orthodox Parish

Saturday 25 February 2006
12 noon to 4.30 pm

Please book the date in your diary now

Your chance to help plan our way forward

Which way for the years to come?

What about children's work? - What about young immigrants? - What about our building?
 - What about our inner, spiritual life?
 - What about reaching non-believers?

How else should we develop
"Our Life in Christ?"

JANUARY DAYS

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|--------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Sun 1 | Circumcision, S Basil the Great |
| Mon 2 | S Seraphim the Wonderworker |
| Thu 5 | Eve of Theophany |
| Fri 6 | Holy Theophany |
| Sat 7 | S John the Forerunner & Baptist |
| Sun 8 | Sunday after Holy Theophany |
| Wed 11 | S Theodosius the Great |
| Fri 13 | S Hilary of Poitiers |
| Sat 14 | S Sava I, first Abp of Serbia |
| Sun 15 | Sunday of the Ten Lepers |
| Mon 16 | S Fursey, Enlightener of Norfolk |
| | Precious Chains of Holy Apostle Peter |
| Tue 16 | S Anthony the Great |
| Wed 18 | SS Athanasius the Great & Cyril of Alexandria |
| Fri 20 | S Euthymius the Great |
| Sat 21 | S Maximus the Confessor |
| Sun 22 | Sunday of the Blind Man, Holy Apostle Timothy |
| Tue 24 | S Xenia the Fool-for-Christ |
| Wed 25 | S Gregory the Theologian |
| Fri 27 | Translation of Relics of S John Chrysostom |
| Sun 29 | Sunday of Zacchaeus, Transl of Relics of S Ignatius the Godbearer |
| Mon 30 | Ecumenical Teachers Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, John Chrysostom |
| Tue 31 | Holy Unmercenaries Cyrus & John |

A full list of the month's Feasts and Fasts available on request