

Make 2007 a year for getting to know Christ better - you won't regret it !

# Orthodox Parish of St Helen of Colchester

Antiochian Orthodox Deanery

NEWSLETTER 128

JANUARY 2007



## Weekday Holy Liturgy 9.30 am

THURSDAY 11 JANUARY

ST THEODOSIUS THE GREAT THE CENOBIARCH

WEDNESDAY 24 JANUARY

ST XENIA THE FOOL-FOR-CHRIST OF ST PETERSBURG

FRIDAY 2 FEBRUARY

MEETING OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST  
IN THE TEMPLE

## River Colne to be blessed...

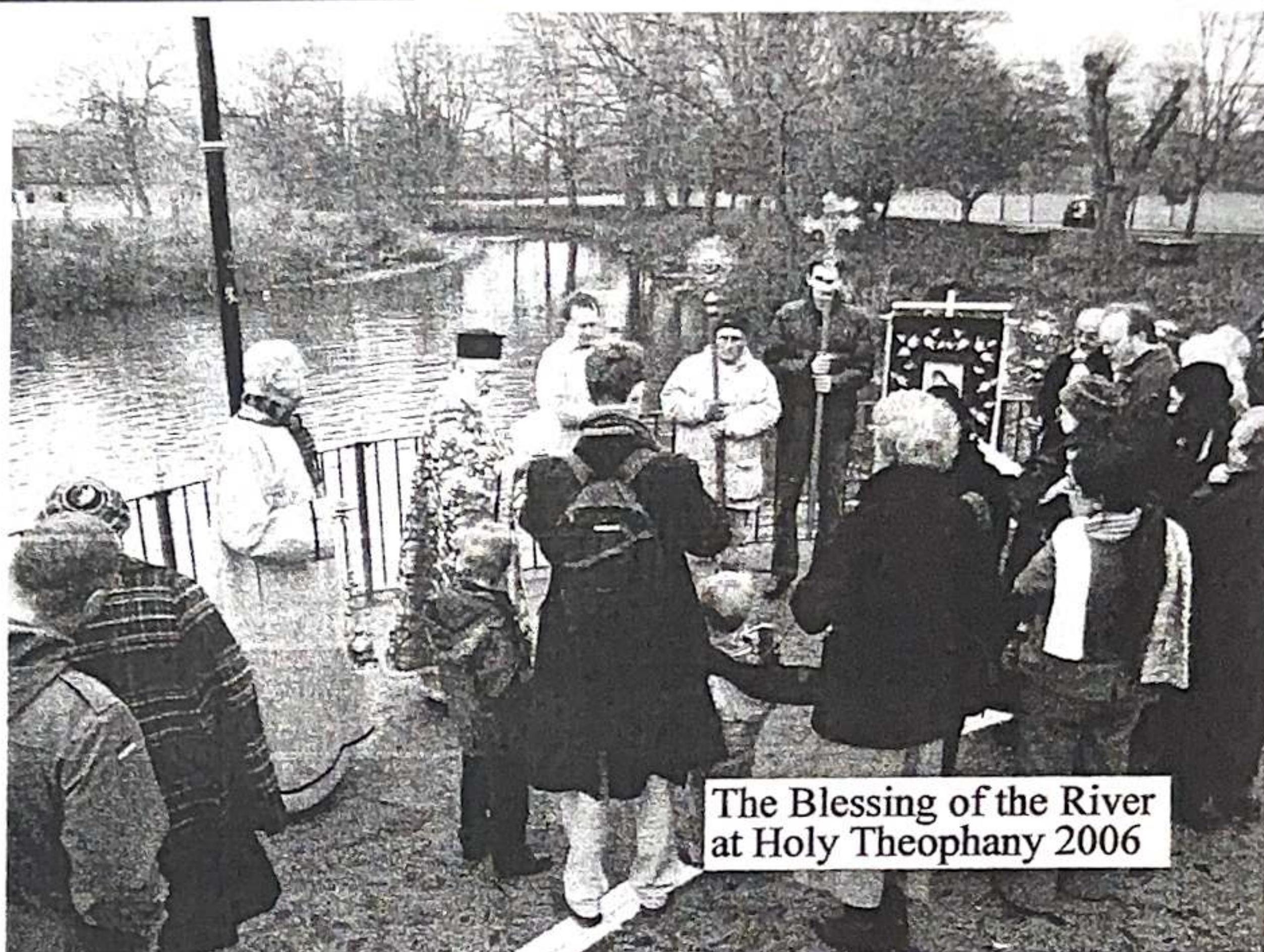
**H**oly Theophany will be celebrated here on Sunday 7 January. After Divine Liturgy in church, we shall have the usual Blessing of the Water in church. Then we shall proceed down Maidenburgh Street to the nearby River Colne.

**Come and join us.**

This will be the third time we have done this, and we want to build it up into a major event in our Parish diary. Perhaps in time it will get into the diary of the town itself!

The University term doesn't open by then, so unfortunately most of our students are still away. But I hope that any students who are available will attend.

In any case the Blessing of the River is a popular event in all Orthodox nations, so all Orthodox people can get involved.



The Blessing of the River  
at Holy Theophany 2006

## Why the Orthodox bless waters

Why do Orthodox perform this ceremony every year at Theophany?

I suppose it is for three immediate reasons:

- ◆ It obviously reminds us of the Baptism of Christ in the Jordan.
- ◆ It also has some sort of primeval meaning: in the Genesis account of Creation water is the first element noted; physical water is the source of physical life; body, soul and spirit are - in the Christian faith - one integrated entity. Water is the source of our very being; we are surrounded by water in the womb of our mother; it is the means of our entering the Kingdom of God in our own Baptism, making us Christians. And so on...
- ◆ A third reason, I suppose, is that water, while it is so basic to life, is also a frightening source of death. We rightly teach our children not only to love water but also to fear it. So we bless it that it may bring life, not death. Water, then, and its blessing is a basic ingredient of our faith. Baptism is

the very beginning of life in the Holy Orthodox Church.

And Holy Water is sprinkled often, both ceremonially in church by the Priest and also privately by individual members of the faithful. It is used to bless the people of God and the many objects used by them in their devotion (such as icons and crosses) and in their ordinary life (such as their homes or places of work).

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## House-blessing reminder

This is meant also as a reminder to each of you to ask for the blessing of the Priest and Church on your home.

This is traditionally done at the time of Theophany, and I shall be pleased to come to your home to bless it in a short, ten-minute, ceremony.

Please just ask me to come, and tell me when it would be convenient. I will gladly come at a time that is mutually agreeable.

God bless you, dear Orthodox Christian people, in this New Year and always.

**Father Alexander**

**Holy Theophany**  
**Sunday 7 January 10.30 am**  
**Holy Liturgy and**  
**Blessing of the Water**  
**followed by**  
**Blessing of the River Colne**  
*Please come if you can*

## 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 Balkerne 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 (Alistair) Haig

17 Maidenburgh St, Colchester CO1 1UB

Tel: 01-206-530-530 Mob: 07-947-047-201

Fax: 01-206-530-531 Email: orthodox.colchester@ntlworld.com

## 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**  
Tuesday  
16 Jan 9.30 am  
St Fursey's Day

**CLACTON**  
Saturday  
20 Jan 10.00 am





## Here and There

**SCHOOL AND COLLEGE VISITS:** It has been good to have a visit recently by nearly sixty children from **Stanway Primary School**: all of them sent lovely letters in thanks. **Haverling College** near Romford sent a considerable group of history-studying adults. And of course **St Benedict's RC College** as usual sent all their second year students. In this way knowledge of St Helen's Chapel and its history and traditions are passed to ever-widening circles, and an awareness of Orthodoxy today is passed on also. We have a great opportunity in this Parish of spreading this to many around us. I regard it as a privilege, and I am sure you do too.

**ICONOGRAPHER DIES:** In September I reported that **CHRYSOULA PSOMAS** was in a serious car crash near Old Corinth in Greece. In the accident her sister and a close cousin died immediately. It is very sad to have to report that she also has now died. Chrysoula, whom, alas! I never met, was a talented iconographer, and painted our lovely icon of St Martin cutting his cloak. She was aunt to **LAMBROS**, an MA student here a couple of years ago. I have sent our deepest condolences to him and the family. We are glad to have this lovely icon to remember her by. Memory eternal!

**CHURCH HEATING:** Six new storage heaters will be installed in St Helen's at the beginning of January. Each one will cost about £400n. Would anyone wishing to contribute to the cost please let me or our Treasurer **DAVID DAVIES** have a cheque or otherwise.

**KHOURIA'S CALL:** Khouria **HILARY** gave her talk *Out of the frying pan...*? on the differences between being an Anglican clergy wife and an Orthodox one to our local Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius recently. It was well received, and she has been asked to repeat it to the Lexden Anglican Mothers Union on 9 January.

**ORTHODOX-ANGLICAN DIALOGUE:** I am honoured to represent the Patriarchate of Antioch at the final meeting of the international discussions 29 January-1 February in London. It will be largely a ceremonial and tying-of-ends session: His All-Holiness Patriarch **BARTHOLOMEW** of Constantinople and His Grace Archbishop **ROWAN** of Canterbury will receive the Report of the Dialogue. The meetings started some 15 years ago, so participants have come and gone: I was privileged to take part in the discussions in Ethiopia in 2003 and in Cyprus in 2005.

### A Word from the Fathers

**T**each us, Holy Father...to hope in your name, from whom everything that exists has come. Open our inward eyes to recognise you, although you are the highest in high heaven, and the holy one among all the ranks of the holy...

If we are in danger, you come to our aid. If we are feeling desperate, you save us from our own sense of failure. If events in the world overshadow us, we remember that you are the Creator and overseer of every living being.

*St Clement of Rome (30-100 AD)*

### Summer vestments

When the Sisters from St Elizabeth's Monastery in Minsk, Belarus were last here, I spotted a set of light vestments and bought it for use when the hot weather comes - thinking ahead is a good idea!

Would anyone care to buy the set for the Parish? The price was £285, including the sticharion (the alb or first garment the Priest puts on over his cassock).

Please speak with me if you would like to help. I can bless the vestments in memory of one of your departed if you would like that.



The Three Ecumenical Teacher and Hierarchs  
St Basil the Great, St John Chrysostom,  
St Gregory the Theologian. Feast 30 January

### Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius - Local Meeting

TUESDAY 23 JANUARY 7.30 PM IN ST HELEN'S CHAPEL

**SISTER MAGDALEN (Tolleshunt Knights)**  
"TEACHING OUR CHILDREN"

Sister Magdalen is known to many of us in the Parish. She runs the children's work at the Monastery, and is involved in the Orthodox Children's Camp. She has written engagingly on the subject of children's work. Come and hear her. All are welcome. Following meeting: Tuesday 27 February - Archpriest Michael Harper

**CLERGY MEETING:** The Clergy of the Antiochian Deanery meet at St George's Cathedral in London on Wednesday 10 January.

## Second Pan-Orthodox Congress

Three years ago the Orthodox Fellowship of St John the Baptist organised a Congress for all Orthodox in Britain.

It was a great success. It brought together several hundred faithful, clergy and laity, from all jurisdictions. Now a second one is being arranged at Swanwick, the excellent conference centre in beautiful Derbyshire.

Speakers will be:

- ◆ Metropolitan Job (Albania)
- ◆ Father Thomas Hopko (USA)
- ◆ Dr David Frost (Orthodox Institute)

Please plan to come. Pick up a leaflet in the porch. Full cost is £195, but the unwaged pay £135, and students £95. Dates are:

**Friday 6 July - Sunday 8 July**

Going on the last one (which several of our members attended), it will be a wonderful and stimulating occasion!

## New Year's Day radio programme on Holy Orthodoxy

On Monday 1 January Antiochian Priest Fr **GREGORY HALLAM** will speak on Orthodoxy in the BBC Radio 4 programme *Beyond Belief*. It is scheduled for 4.30 pm.

I am not aware whether Fr Gregory is the sole or main speaker. Or he may have only a small part, but no doubt the programme will be well worth listening to.

Fr Gregory is the Parish Priest of our Parish in Stockport, on the edge of Manchester.

If you miss the programme and have internet access, you can hear it later on the BBC site.

## Holy Water always available

You can ask for Holy Water at any time. I keep it in a sealed pot on the Altar, and it remains in good condition for a long time (just ask if you want some). There is also some in the covered standing bowl by St Helen.

**But do bring a bottle with you on the feast of the Holy Theophany to take Holy Water home that day.**

Orthodox faithful often like to keep some at home. They sprinkle themselves on getting up or going to bed or beginning their prayers and at needful times. They may drink it when needed or even drink some regularly. It should be used, of course, with prayer.

### JANUARY DAYS

Mon	1	Circumcision of Christ, S Basil the Great
Tue	2	S Seraphim of Sarov
Sat	6	[Holy Theophany]
Sun	7	Holy Theophany Parish celebration Synaxis of S John the Forerunner
Mon	8	S George of Choziba
Tue	9	S Adrian of Canterbury
Thu	11	S Theodosius the Great
Fri	12	S Benedict Biscop of Wearmouth
Sat	13	S Hilary of Poitiers, S Kentigern of Glasgow
Sun	14	Pentecost 31, Sunday after Theophany, S Nina of Georgia, S Sava I of Serbia, Hieromartyr Platon of Estonia
Tue	16	S Fursey, Enlightener of Norfolk, Chains of S Peter, S Sigebert of E Anglia
Wed	17	S Anthony the Great
Fri	19	S Mark of Ephesus
Sat	20	S Euthymius the Great
Sun	21	Pentecost 32, Sunday of Zacchaeus, S Maximus the Confessor
Mon	22	Holy Apostle Timothy of the Seventy
Wed	24	S Xenia the Fool for Christ S Neophytos the Anchorite of Cyprus
Thu	25	S Gregory the Theologian
Sat	27	Transl of Relics of S John Chrysostom
Sun	28	Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee
Mon	29	S Gildas the Wise
Tue	30	The Three Great Hierarchs
Wed	31	Holy Unmercenaries Cyrus & John

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