

The Orthodox Parish of St Martin and St Helen

Charity number: 1192469

Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of the British Isles & Ireland

HE Metropolitan Silouan Oner



It was with profound sorrow, but with the sure hope of the resurrection unto life eternal that we learned in the early morning of Friday 26 June, that Priest Alexander Haig Jr had reposed in The Lord the night before. His illness had been short, starting with what turned out to be a stroke at the end of May while serving as archdiocesan retreat chaplain, and culminating in a highly aggressive brain tumour, which finally resulted in further seizures and death. As was typical of Fr Alexander, he bore his suffering with Christian patience and acceptance to the last. The loss of such a young and gifted priest, a dear son, brother, father, friend and concelebrant is a terrible blow, and the pain we feel in bereavement is a testament to the reality of our love; a reminder that we live in real communion with our dear ones: their loss, as does the communion which precedes it, changes us permanently. The outpouring of love and praise across the Orthodox community in these islands, for this good and faithful servant of Christ, speaks to

his many qualities as a presbyter and a man, his fatherly love, diligence, intelligence, common sense, and good humour. He was faithful, obedient and loyal to our bishop, self-giving, conscientious and scrupulous in his priestly duties and always managed to see the positives in difficulties. He was very kind and helpful to me when I was first ordained deacon and subsequently priest, giving me much helpful advice and encouragement. His simple and direct teaching of the Gospel, that Christ has by his death, burial and resurrection, defeated death, our ancient enemy, and opened thereby a path for all humanity, in thanksgiving and repentance, to follow Him into eternal life: 'that life of blessedness, which is with Thee O thou Who lovest mankind', is a timely corrective in this era of distraction, of often bad tempered, uncharitable apologetics and culture war. Our prayer is for his blessed repose and for his widow Khouria Mihaela and young son Alexander, for his parents, our own dear Archpriest Alexander and Khouria Hilary and for his sisters Caroline, her family, and for Margaret. We pray also for the mission parish of Twelve Apostles in Eastleigh which he founded and shepherded with such energy and devotion. O our ever memorable brother, who art worthy of blessedness, may thy memory be eternal! Dear Father, we will miss you! **-Fr Mark**

Paraklesis

It is my intention to serve a regular Service of the Small Paraklesis (Supplicatory Canon to the Most Holy Theotokos), if possible every month. The first will be on Wednesday 1 July at 6pm, at the Chapel of St Helen. Please bring the names of the living, whom you would like to be prayed for at the service. If you are going to bring names to the service, try to come at the start. Feel free also to give me names if you cannot attend. Traditionally, the slightly different versions (Great and Small) of the Paraklesis service are served on alternate evenings during the whole Dormition Fast (starting on 1 August and ending on the eve of the Feast), but we are

not yet in a position to do this as a parish. We nonetheless pray that Panagia will honour our modest efforts and present our supplications to her Son.

Thanksgiving Sunday



I wish to thank all of you who prayerfully committed to regular giving at our Thanksgiving Sunday in May. We have increased the number of regular donors from 32 to 46 and have grown our total annual income by just over 30% - the annual total includes Sunday collections, the income generated by our POC terminal and other occasional gifts. This will make a real difference to what we are able to financially plan for in the coming months and will give us added resilience in the event of

emergencies or unexpected bills. Please be assured we will put as much prayer and thought into using this new income as you did towards your commitment.

The Dormition as the ‘Pascha of Summer’

The Dormition (falling asleep, repose) of the Mother of God is not a time for sadness but rather recognition of a passage into eternal life. The Orthodox tradition tells us that Mary did indeed die, as all human beings do, but that her body knew no corruption. The third day following her death, the Apostles gathered, miraculously brought from all parts of the world, and found her tomb empty and full of flowers. Her soul was received by Christ Himself at the moment of her death, the holy icon of the Dormition shows Christ holding the soul of Mary in His arms in the form of a swaddled newborn, surrounded by all the Apostles.

This great mystery is sometimes called the “Pascha of Summer” because it echoes the structure of Pascha: a real death, an empty tomb, a glorious resurrection, but as experienced by the very Mother of the Risen One. The Dormition says that the Resurrection of Christ does not stand in isolation as a ‘one off’ historical event but that it opens a path that all who confess and belong to him (John: 3:16) can walk. Mary is the first after her Son to enter the Glory of the Risen Kingdom and the greatest Marian feast of the year is the one that celebrates not her birth or her role in the Incarnation, but her death and her passage into eternal life.

In giving birth, you preserved your virginity, and in falling asleep you did not forsake the world, O Theotokos. You passed into life as the Mother of Life, and by your prayers, you deliver our souls from death. - Troparion of the Dormition

From the Fathers

“For he has shown her (Mary) to be his cherubic throne on earth, an earthly heaven, the hope and refuge and confidence of our race, so that if we celebrate, with the sacred mysteries, the festival of her holy Dormition, we might find mercy and grace in the present age and in the age to come, by the grace and kindness of our Lord Jesus Christ: to whom be glory and power, with his unbegotten Father and with the all-holy and life-giving Spirit, now and always and for the ages of ages. Amen.” (*John of Thessalonika, 8th Century Bishop*)

Orthodox Parish of St Martin & St Helen
+ July-August 2026 Services +

Wednesday 1 July	Service of the Small Paraklesis Supplicatory Canon to the Most Holy Theotokos 6pm St Helen's Chapel
Saturday 4 July	Great Vespers 4:30pm St Martin's Church
Sunday 5 July	Matins & Divine Liturgy: 5th Sunday after Pentecost 9:30 St Martin's Church
Tuesday 7 July	Hours and Divine Liturgy: Great Martyr Kyriaki 8:15am St Helen's Chapel
Saturday 11 July	Great Vespers 4:30pm St Martin's Church
Sunday 12 July	Matins & Divine Liturgy: 6th Sunday after Pentecost 9:30 St Martin's Church
Friday 17 July	Hours and Divine Liturgy: Great Martyr Marina (Margaret) of Antioch 8:15am St Helen's Chapel
Saturday 18 July	Great Vespers 4:30pm St Martin's Church
Sunday 19 July	Matins & Divine Liturgy: 7th Sunday after Pentecost 9:30 St Martin's Church
Wednesday 22 July	Hours and Divine Liturgy: Holy Myrrh Bearer & Equal to the Apostles, Mary Magdelene 8:15am St Helen's Chapel
Saturday 25 July	Great Vespers 4:30pm St Martin's Church
Sunday 26 July	Matins & Divine Liturgy: 8th Sunday after Pentecost 9:30 St Martin's Church
Saturday 1 August	+DORMITION FAST BEGINS+ Great Vespers 4:30pm St Martin's Church
Sunday 2 August	Matins & Divine Liturgy: 9th Sunday after Pentecost 9:30 St Martin's Church
Thursday 6 August	Hours and Divine Liturgy: Holy Transfiguration of Our Lord & Saviour Jesus Christ 8:15am St Helen's Chapel + Blessing of Grapes/Fruit
Friday 7 August	Service of the Small Paraklesis Supplicatory Canon to the Most Holy Theotokos 6pm St Helen's Chapel
Saturday 8 August	Great Vespers 4:30pm St Martin's Church

Sunday 9 August	Matins & Divine Liturgy: 10th Sunday after Pentecost 9:30 St Martin's Church
Saturday 15 August	Hours & Divine Liturgy: The Dormition of Our Most Holy Lady the Theotokos & Ever-Virgin Mary 9:30 St Martin's Church Great Vespers 4:30pm St Martin's Church
Sunday 16 August	Matins & Divine Liturgy: 11th Sunday after Pentecost 9:30 St Martin's Church
Saturday 22 August	Great Vespers 4:30pm St Martin's Church
Sunday 23 August	Matins & Divine Liturgy: 12th Sunday after Pentecost 9:30 St Martin's Church
Saturday 29 August	NOTE: <u>NO VESPERS</u> (Fr Mark at OYP conference)
Sunday 30 August	Matins & Divine Liturgy: 13th Sunday after Pentecost 9:30 St Martin's Church (with Father Paulinus)
Tuesday 1 September	Hours and Divine Liturgy: Indiction - Church New Year 8:15am St Helen's Chapel
+Confessions on Saturday evenings after Great Vespers or by appointment.+	

2026 Fasting Calendar

LEGEND:
Abstain from meat, dairy, eggs, fish, olive oil, wine
Abstain from meat, dairy, eggs, fish, olive oil
Abstain from meat, dairy, eggs, fish
Abstain from meat, dairy, eggs
Abstain from meat

Note: On the day of a parish's patronal feast, fish, wine and oil are allowed if it falls on a fasting day.

January						
			1	2	3	
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

February						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

March						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

April						
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19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

May						
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17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

June						
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21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

July						
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26	27	28	29	30	31	

August						
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16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

September						
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27	28	29	30			

October						
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18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

November						
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8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

December						
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

When fasting, please consult your spiritual father for guidance.

STANDING ORDER FORM



To My Bank Manager:

Bank Name	
Bank Address	
Bank Account Number	
Bank Sort Code	

Please Pay:

Payee Bank Name	BARCLAYS BANK
Payee Account Name	The Orthodox Parish of St Helen of Colchester
Payee Sort Code	20-22-67
Payee Account Number	50349364
Payment Amount	
Payment Frequency	
First Payment Date	
Please Quote Ref:	XP-Giving

My Details:

Name	
Address	
Signature	

The Orthodox Parish of St Martin and St Helen, Colchester

(registered charity number: 1192469)

Gift Aid Declaration

Please treat as Gift Aid donations all qualifying gifts of money made (tick ALL relevant boxes)

☐

today

☐

in the past 4 years

☐

in the future

Boost your donation by 25p of Gift Aid for every £1 you donate

Gift Aid is reclaimed by The Church from the tax you pay for the current tax year. Your address is needed to identify you as a current UK taxpayer.

By completing this form you confirm:

"I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference."

Title	Forename or initials*	Middle name or initials	Surname*
Address*			
Signature:			
Date:			

***Please note that the details marked with * are mandatory.**

Please notify the Parish Treasurer if you:

- Want to cancel this declaration
- Change your name or home address
- No longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains.

If you pay Income Tax at a higher rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self Assessment tax return or ask HMRC to adjust your tax code.

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