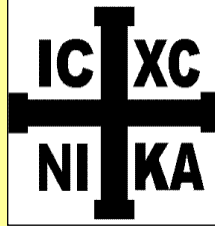


Orthodox Parish of St Helen of Colchester

Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of the British Isles and Ireland
Metropolitan: His Eminence Archbishop Silouan

NEWSLETTER 273

APRIL 2020



HOLY & GREAT WEEK
IT IS ALMOST CERTAIN THAT THERE WILL BE NO SERVICES FOR GREAT AND HOLY WEEK AND PASCHA

Because the Parish Priest is on light duties for the moment (following surgery), even in the unlikely event of permission being received to resume public worship, there would be ONLY THE FOLLOWING SERVICES:

Holy Wednesday, 15 April
6.00 pm Holy Anointing
Holy Friday, 17 April
6.00 pm Vespers & Deposition
HOLY PASCHA, 19 April
10.30 am Holy Liturgy
St George, Bright Thursday, 23 April
9.30 am Holy Liturgy

If services are permitted later on, the Holy Synod of Antioch has said that we should celebrate the **Leave-taking of Pascha on Wednesday 27 May** particularly well.

Christ is risen from the dead, the first-fruits of them that slept

What a world we live in: trials and tribulations for us all in one way or another! Now something which is having an impact on, it seems, every human-being in the whole of this sad world: **coronavirus**.

It is bringing sickness and even death to every community from north to south and east to west, possibly bringing financial ruin to very many of those left in its wake! O God, have mercy on us! How long, O Lord, how long?

It is to this very situation that the Orthodox Christian faith brings to you



and me a message of hope and salvation.

Our faith teaches us that the world is always a black hole, unable to save us, unable to give us lasting satisfaction. Christ comes to his death and passion (suffering).

He enters it voluntarily on our behalf: he did not have to go that way, he is divine, the perfection of love. Entering hell itself, he passes through and comes out the other side. His Resurrection is from hell, from the depths of darkness.

And his experience leads us to believe that it can be ours too. If we can go through the depths of darkness and hell *with him and in him and through him*, we shall also share the love the joy, the peace of eternity which is his.

I say this to remind both you and me myself of

this wonderful Resurrection truth of Christ, that he truly suffered and died, but that was the way he came through to his glorious Resurrection.

Let us hold on to that truth through all the miseries and sicknesses of this world, and find calm and peace, a glorious rising again, through our faith in him.

Deprived of our church, our worship, our liberty, sharing the tragedy of sickness or even of death—let us see Christ as the pattern for our whole life.

Then we shall find that Christ is the power of life, the hope of glory, the example of the saints, the joy of all the faithful. We shall see him as going through what will be our experience—He is indeed the first-fruits: we ourselves shall be part of the harvest. Reflect on that in the bleak hours of this desperate period. **Christ is risen!**

Father Alexander



St George the Trophy-bearer, pray to God for us.

St Helen's Chapel, Maidenburgh St, High St co1 1UB

St Helen's is 200m down behind the George Hotel in the High Street, but accessible from there only on foot. By car: leave Middleborough Roundabout (between dual carriageways Westway and Balkeine Hill), to Northgate; go straight along St Peter's Street to Castle Park; continue round the bend, up into Maidenburgh Street. Nearest car-park NCP Nunns Rd. Very little street parking available.

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 5 pm, after Vespers, or by arrangement
Holy Marriage, Holy Baptism, Funerals, Memorials etc: by arrangement
Children of St Helen (Pre-school & Primary): normally first Saturday 3.15 pm

Parish Priest: Father Alexander (Alistair) Haig

17 Maidenburgh Street, Colchester CO1 1UB

Tel: 01-206-530-530 Mob: 07-947-047-201 Eml: parishpriest@orthodoxcolchester.org.uk

Reader: George Harrison 07-869-488-842

Churchwardens: Dusan Radunovic 01-206-762-553, **Jon Kanaar** 01-255-431-975
Children of St Helen: Sanja Radunovic 01-206-762-553, **Silvia Lefley** 01-206-835-715

Orthodox Parish of St Helen: Registered Charity No: 1134418

IBAN: GB05BUKB20226780219819 Bank Account Sort Code: 20-22-67

Bank Account No: 50349364 Appeal Account No: 80219819

Parish Website: <http://www.orthodoxcolchester.org.uk>

Appeal Website: <http://orthodoxcolchesterappeal.org.uk>

Here and There

BARKING PILGRIMAGE: Cancelled.

ST JOHN YOUNG ADULTS FESTIVAL:

Cancelled.

CHILDREN OF ST HELEN: Cancelled.

ALL SERVICES: Cancelled: God bless you as you pray at home! I am praying for you

all and for Colchester, and for all the world.

PARISH GIFTS: We have sent gifts of £100 each from this Parish to the following local charities:

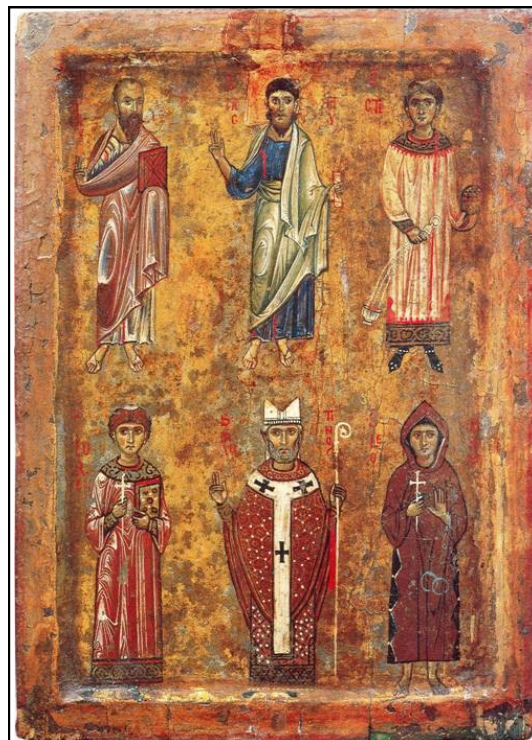
- St Helena Hospice;
- Open Door;
- Beacon House;
- Bernard Brett House.

Thank you....

March - one of the trickiest months of my life:

Thank you indeed to numbers of people for all sorts of things:

1. **St Martin's:** Frustration continued, though it must be said that the application for Listed Building Consent seems to be progressing well now - the process should be completed by the end of April, and the actual purchase could therefore be completed in May, though that remains to be seen. But **thank you** to all our Benefactors without whose aid none of this could have happened, and to our Project Manager and Committee, who are taking responsibility for it all.
2. **House kitchen:** Hilary and I decided to have a new kitchen, and it just happened at this particular time; we moved out of our house for nearly three weeks to clear their way: **thank you** to the various contractors who put themselves out to help in what proved to be difficult times: TLC Building, Colchester Carpets and Flooring, Schofields Removals, Anne Minns at Baye House, Mary and Nigel Morris, and not least to our daughter Caroline and her husband Chris, who magnificently lent their expertise; and to Margaret.
3. **Robin Gardam:** A family friend and connexion from Hadleigh, died after long illness: **thank you** to dear Robin himself for all his charm and friendship for fifty years, to his partner Sheila for caring for him, and to all who attended and thereby lightened the grief.
4. **Operation:** All of a sudden, at very short notice, I was given a pace-maker at the end of March in Colchester Hospital; **thank you** to Dr Krasen Anastasov who operated on me with his skilled and kindly team - it was good to have an Orthodox believer working on me, who has worshipped in St Helen's - and to all who have prayed for me, looked after me, or sent cards or emails and good wishes, including several former students who have been in touch—I have really appreciated them all.
5. **Coronavirus:** Lastly, in these anxious and troubled days, **thank you** to all have helped us personally in one way or another, and indeed to the Lord himself, who will spare us all and grant us his forgiveness, give us strength to bear what must be borne, carry us through to the end, and heal us. May his mercy be upon us all!



All being well, our Parish will soon be **THE ORTHODOX PARISH OF ST MARTIN AND ST HELEN**. The 13th century icon above, which is in St Catherine's Monastery in Sinai, shows our new patron saint in the centre at the bottom with other Saints. It indicates that St Martin was known and loved in the East in the Middle Ages.

St Martin's Appeal

I was most grateful to Fr BARTHOLOMEW from the Monastery, who came in March to serve in my place, so that I could have a Sunday away.

We stayed the weekend with Margaret in Barking, and attended St Paul's Romanian church which uses the Greek church of St Lazarus, Rutland Road, Upton Park. This thrilled me because I was connected with the building when it and I were Anglican 50 years ago.

We had a splendid welcome from Fr SORIN PAUL GRECU, who has already contributed to our Appeal, and all his people.

We were showered with gifts—including one of £400 from the parish with a further £140 from individuals. It all was so spontaneous and from the heart. May God reward their generosity!

A Word from the Fathers: An ancient sermon for Holy Saturday

Today there is a great silence over the earth, a great silence and stillness, a great silence because the King sleeps; the earth was in terror and was still, because God slept in the flesh and raised up those who were sleeping from the ages. God has died in the flesh, and the underworld has trembled. Truly he goes to seek out our first parent like a lost sheep; he wishes to visit those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death. He goes to free the prisoner Adam and his fellow-prisoner Eve from their pains, he who is God, and Adam's son. The Lord goes in to them holding his victorious weapon, his cross. When Adam, the first created man, sees him, he strikes his breast in terror... And grasping his hand, Christ raises him up, saying, Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead...

APRIL DAYS

Wed	1	S Agilbert, Bishop of Dorchester & Paris
Sat	4	Saturday of the Akathist
Sun	5	Lent 5, S Mary of Egypt
Sat	11	Lazarus Saturday
Sun	12	Entry of our Lord into Jerusalem (Palm Sun)
	13-18	Great & Holy Week
Sun	19	HOLY PASCHA
	20-25	Bright Week
Tue	21	Martyrs Raphael, Nicholas & Irene
Thu	23	Great Martyr George, Patron of England
Fri	24	Life-giving Spring of the Holy Theotokos
Sat	25	Holy Apostle & Evangelist Mark
Sun	26	Pascha 2, S Thomas Sunday
Tue	28	Joyful Commemoration of the Departed
Thu	30	Holy Apostle James the son of Zebedee