



Orthodox Parish of St Martin & St Helen Colchester

SERIES 2 NO 4 | APRIL 2023

Holy Week and Holy Pascha!

After the ascetic struggle of the Great Fast we at last approach Holy Week with its spiritually profound, beautiful and moving services. Holy Pascha, the Feast of Feasts, beckons us and we will yet again joyfully proclaim: Christ is risen! The whole of our Orthodox Christian confession is encapsulated in this phrase, which we will say so many times in our services and to each other from Pascha until the Feast of Ascension. St. Paul, referring to this fact, writes simply: "If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain." (1 Corinthians 15:14).

The Holy Week Services lead us to the wonder of Christ's resurrection starting with Lazarus Saturday; we are all in a sense as Lazarus, dead in sin but called forth to the True Life by Christ. As death is revealed to be the enemy, so it is on Palm Sunday that the victory of the Kingdom of God is announced, all prophecies and expectations are fulfilled as we glorify Christ as Messiah and King and affirm our own commitment to making His Kingdom the measure of our own hearts and lives. The services of Bridegroom Matins served on the evenings before Holy Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday remind us that the End is near at hand; that we must watch and repent while we yet have time.

Services April 2023 - St Martin's Church

Confessions: after any service or by appointment
Decorating the Epitaphion: Women & girls are invited to help on Holy Friday at 9:30am. Gifts of money needed to buy the flowers.

Lazarus Saturday 8 April	9:30am Liturgy of St John 4:30pm Great Vespers
Palm Sunday 9 April	9:45am Mattins & Palm Blessing 10:30am Liturgy of St John & Palm Procession
Holy Monday 10 April & Holy Tuesday 11 April	6pm Bridegroom Mattins
Holy Wednesday 12 April	6pm Holy Anointing
Holy Thursday 13 April	6pm Twelve Gospels
Holy Friday 14 April	12 noon Vespers & Deposition 6pm Mattins & Procession
Holy Saturday 15 April	9:30am Liturgy of St Basil 10:30am Acts of the Apostles 11:30pm Midnight Office
Holy Pascha 16 April	12 midnight Procession & Mattins 1am Liturgy of St John 3pm Agape Vespers

Other Weekday Services in April:

Wed 5 April: 9.30am St Helen's Presanctified Liturgy
Fri 7 April: 6pm St Martin's Vespers
Fri 21 April: 9.30am St Helen's Holy Theotokos, Life-giving Spring Holy Liturgy
Tue 25 April: 9.30am St Martin's Holy Apostle & Evangelist Mark Holy Liturgy



On Wednesday evening, in the service of Holy Anointing of the Sick we recall the sinful woman who anointed Jesus' feet and all are anointed in recognition that we surely have spiritual if not physical illnesses in need of healing. Through Thursday and Friday, we are brought to the crucifixion and the tomb through the reading of the Passion accounts in the Twelve Gospels and the placing of the Cross and Epitaphion in the centre of the church.

Over the next twenty four hours we remember the mystery of the descent of Christ into Hell and on Saturday night gather in the darkened temple once again to hear the Book of Acts read and to serve the Midnight Office. As candle light spreads miraculously through the temple on the morning of Holy Pascha and the joyous news of Christ's Holy Resurrection is at last again proclaimed, let us cry from hearts and minds changed by the healing of repentance through the long weeks of the Great Fast, Christ is Risen, Χριστός ἀνέστη! Христос воскрес! Христос воскрес! Hristos a înviat! Christ is risen!

Father Mark

News and updates of the month:

The Sunday of Orthodoxy (First Sunday of Lent) was very well attended, with many bringing precious icons

to church from their homes. The weather stayed fine and we made our procession around the outside of the temple. With many of our new people and catechumens joining us for the first time. Glory to God!



Special thanks to **Cristina Marginean** for the beautiful flowers that she planted outside St Martin's Church.



We are asking for **gifts of money to buy flowers** to decorate the Epitaphion during Holy Week. Please give your gifts to Khouria Hilary or Khouria Paula. Women and girls are also invited to help to **decorate the Epitaphion** on Holy Friday at 9:30 am.

In March we celebrated **Fr. Alexander's birthday**, we wish him health and happiness from our Lord Jesus Christ.

Father Mark & Ligia Iftime

A word from the Fathers: Christ is the author of resurrection and Life (Reading from a paschal homily of an ancient author):

“Paul rejoices that we are restored to spiritual health and cries out: ‘As through Adam death came into the world, so through Christ salvation was restored to the world’, and again: ‘The first man was from the earth, earthly, the second man is from heaven, heavenly.’

(...)Thus the passions of the Saviour is salvation for mankind. This was why he willed to die for us, that we should believe in him, and live for ever. He willed to become for a time what we are, so that we should receive the promise of his eternity and live with him for ever.

This is the feast of the year for which we long, the beginnings of life-giving realities. Here is given us the grace of the heavenly mysteries, the gift of the Pasch.”

St James the Apostle (30 April) Brother of St John the Theologian

The Holy Apostle James, the son of Zebedee, was the brother of Saint John the Theologian, and one of the Twelve Apostles. He and his brother, Saint John, were called to be Apostles by our Lord Jesus Christ, Who called them the “Sons of Thunder” (Mark 3:17). It was this James, with John and Peter, who witnessed the Raising of the Daughter of Jairus, the Lord's Transfiguration on Mount Tabor, and His agony in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Saint James, after the Descent of the Holy Spirit, preached in Spain and in other lands, and then he returned to Jerusalem. He openly and boldly preached Jesus Christ as the Saviour of the world, and he denounced the Pharisees and the Scribes with the words of the Holy Scripture, reproaching them for their malice of heart and unbelief.

The Jews could not prevail against Saint James, so they hired the sorcerer Hermogenes to dispute with the apostle and refute his arguments that Christ was the promised Messiah Who had come into the world. The sorcerer sent to the apostle his pupil Philip, who was converted to belief in Christ. Then Hermogenes himself became persuaded of the power of God, he burned his books of magic, accepted holy Baptism and became a true follower of Christ.

Saint James was the first of the Apostles to die as a martyr in the year 44 at Jerusalem.

May St James pray for us all!



Also in April: Saint Ethelburga (5 Apr), first abbess of a monastery in Lyninge.

St Martin's Church, West Stockwell Street, CO1 1HN
St Helen's Chapel, Maidenburgh Street, CO1 1UB

Both temples are off the High Street, but accessible from there only on foot. Nearest car park NCP Nunn's Road, CO1 1EJ.

Confessions: Saturdays 5pm, after Vespers or by arrangement.

Holy Marriage, Holy Baptism, Funerals, Memorials etc: by arrangement.

Father Alexander Haig, 17 Maidenburgh Street, CO1 1UB.
Phone: 01206 530 530 \ Mobile: 07947 047 201
Email: parishpriest@orthodoxcolchester.org.uk

Father Mark Shillaker
24 Orchard Gardens, Ipswich Rd, CO4 0BX
Mobile: 07917 161 295 | Email: markshillaker@gmail.com

Editor: Ligia Iftime
Email: ligia.iftime@gmail.com

We are grateful to those continuing to support our church by regular or occasional gifts: God bless you.

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