

**Orthodox Parish of
St Helen of Colchester**
Antiochian Archdiocese of the BI & Ireland
NEWSLETTER 215 DECEMBER 2014



WEEKDAYS AT ST HELEN'S
9.30 am DIVINE LITURGY

SATURDAY 6 DECEMBER
ST NICHOLAS THE WONDERWORKER

FRIDAY 12 DECEMBER
ST SPYRIDON THE WONDERWORKER

THURSDAY 1 JANUARY
CIRCUMCISION OF CHRIST,
ST BASIL THE GREAT

The Christmas Icon tells a story....

The Nativity Icon is, I suppose, a “narrative” icon - it is not a portrait, but an icon which “tells a story”. Yet, “a story” *moves on*, where there is a definite *stillness* about the Icon of Christ's Birth.

It is not like the Icon of the Resurrection, for example, which is full of dynamism, full of vitality, full of vigour. No, the “narrative” Icon of the Nativity has a sense of *stillness*. It is “full of *silence*”, full of *quiet awe*, full of mind-blowing *glory*.

Look at it with me now:

The most important figure is the humblest of human kind, the Virgin Mother!

Then there are the angels, the shepherd with his instrument, the Magi with their gifts, the ox, the ass.

And, of course, the most important in the picture is the very littlest, the new-born Babe — God made Man, God taken flesh, the impossible made real!

It is all set in a cave, the cave of the Nativity in Bethlehem, where I was privileged to fall on my knees just a couple of months or so ago, to kiss the rock where the Child of Mary, the Son of God, was born two thousand years since.

This sense of quiet stillness fills the hymns of the Church at Christmas, and while the Cave in Bethlehem today is indeed packed with crowds trying to get in to worship, there does remain there a sense of stillness in spite of everything.

I encourage you to try to be *still* for a little while this Christmas. It can be difficult, especially if you have young children. But it is worth in the midst of all the fun and games to put aside a few moments to be quiet like the Icon, quiet like the scene before you.

In other words, just to worship, to obey God's command, “*Be still, and know that I am God.*”

God bless you this Holy Season.

Father Alexander



*Silent night, holy night!
All is calm, all is bright.
Round you Virgin,
Mother and Child,
Holy infant,
so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace,
Sleep in heavenly peace.*

MATTINS is a very beautiful service. I hope we shall shortly be able to celebrate it again on Sundays. It will be at 9.45 am, and it lasts (in the shortened form we do it) about 50 minutes. It is rich in teaching—plan to come so that you enrich your own soul.

CHRISTMAS SERVICES IN ST HELEN'S

The Nativity in the Flesh of Christ our God

Wednesday 24 December, Nativity Eve

8.30 am Royal Hours
9.30 am Vespers & Divine Liturgy
4.30 pm Vigil (Great Compline & Mattins)

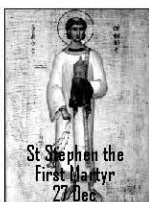
Thursday 25 December, Nativity of Christ

10.15 am Hours
10.30 am Divine Liturgy

Confessions before Christmas: Saturday 21 Dec 5.00 pm, or at any time by appointment

THE HOLY CHALICE (COMMUNION) must always be approached with devotion and preparation. *Always:* a fast from midnight (at evening Communion: 5 hours). *Always:* prayer—found in the standard prayer books. *As often as necessary:* Confession (at very least before Pascha). *Frequency for some:* weekly; *for most:* monthly.

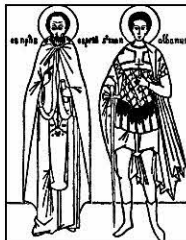
A very happy Christmas to all our readers. May you have a blessed and happy time with family and friends, or on your own.



HOLY LITURGY
CLACTON
Saturday
20 December
10.00 am

Fellowship of St Alban & St Sergius

Tuesday 2 December 7.30 pm
St Cedd's RC Hall, Frinton
PROFESSOR ANGELA LIVINGSTONE
Pasternak: the
'Zhivago' poems



Meeting open to all. Details in the leaflet on the Porch table. Ask for a lift.

St Helen's Chapel, Maidenburgh St, High St

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 Balkeme Hill), to Northgate; go straight along St Peter Street to Castle Park; continue round, up into Maidenburgh Street. Nunns Road NCP is the nearest car park.

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

Confessions: Saturday 5 pm, after Vespers, or by arrangement
Holy Marriage, Baptism, Funerals, Memorials etc: by arrangement

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
Rdr Andreas Moran, 6 Woodlands, Welshwood Park CO4 3JA Tel: 01-206-865-697

Rdr Alexander Haig Jnr, detached service in Winchester parish

Churchwardens: David Davies 01-473-745-167 Dusan Radunovic 01-206-710-073

The Parish of St Helen is Registered Charity No. 1134418

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

(At St James Anglican Church, Beatrice Rd, Clacton-on-sea CO15 1LE
Divine Liturgy: usually third Saturday 10.00 am

The People Column

TOM CARTER was Choir Director here for a number of years. He transferred, with his sons, to Basildon, to help with the building up of All Saints' Church (though he is still Children's Officer at Colchester). We now congratulate him on his appointment as Headmaster of the prestigious King Edward's Grammar School in Chelmsford, where he has been a deputy head for some years, and where DANIEL and ALEX are both students. KEGS is an ancient and fine school with an excellent reputation, and we wish him many happy years in his new post.

DIMITRIOS & ELENI TKOLTSALIS, recently arrived in Colchester from Greece, are looking for work. Eleni, a Greek Australian, offers child-care, and Dimitrios, who is starting English lessons, is a practical man looking for decorating, carpentry, building, or gardening work. They are presently living in Greenstead, and can be contacted on 07-827-216-888.

Here and There

THE MOSAIC CHOIR is a group of enthusiastic young adult singers under the auspices of the Orthodox Fellowship of St John the Baptist. It gave a concert in St Sophia's Greek Cathedral on a recent Sunday, and another in St Martin's Church, Ludgate Hill, just below St Paul's Cathedral, appropriately on St Martin's day, 11 November, Armistice Day. With them was the **Chorale Saint Martin**, a similar body from Paris. The two choirs sang beautifully - separately and together - in a lovely programme of ancient and modern pieces. Three of us from St Helen's went up to support them and it was splendid to hear these mature yet still young voices singing the praises of God in familiar and new pieces.

ARCHIMANDRITE CHRYSOSTOM (Gregory Tympas), the son of a Priest, is a monk of the Holy Mountain and a qualified doctor. He came to Colchester to study for a PhD. His research has now been published as a book, *Carl Jung and Maximus the Confessor on Psychic Development*, and this was launched in November at a reception at the Hellenic Centre in London, when I was glad to be among the good crowd which attended. When I have read it (and attempted to understand it!) I will place it on the Lending Library shelves in church for anyone else to borrow. Fr Chrysostom is now Parish Priest at SS Cosmas & Damian Church, the Greek church in Gospel Oak, Hampstead, in London.

HAIG FAMILY news includes that **CAROLINE** has become Matron of a temporary department in Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Gateshead; **MARGARET** (in Government service) has recently been engaged in setting the rules governing certain use of copyright; and **ALEX** will be ordained Deacon sometime in the spring.

ST BARBARA'S, SOUTHEND (a Greek parish) celebrate their patronal feast on 4 December, and I expect to be there to share their joy.

CHRISTMAS EVE: Note that this year Royal Hours will be celebrated on Christmas Eve at 8.30 am, and Holy Liturgy at 9.30 am. **We hope this will help some families to be present for worship at Christmas.** In the afternoon at 4.30 pm there is the Christmas Vigil, which is composed of Great Compline and Mattins, and makes a good preparation for the holy day.

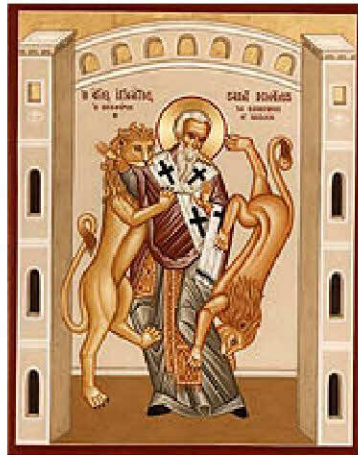
CHRISTMAS DAY: The Holy Liturgy will be at 10.30 am. Afterwards we sing a few carols at the Nativity Icon. People always enjoy this.



St Ignatius, the God-bearer of Antioch

St Ignatius (feast 20 December) is a special saint for the Church of Antioch, of which this parish is a small part, for he was our Bishop—the *second* Bishop of Antioch back in the first century. Some say that he was the infant child held up by Christ as the example of the humility the Christian must have.

He was a disciple of St Polycarp, as Polycarp was a disciple of St John the Theologian. Later, Ignatius became Bishop of Antioch for nearly forty years.



At a great age he was arrested and taken over-land to Rome. He wrote letters to many Churches, in the way that St Paul had done. These are preserved, and from them we can learn a great deal about the life and teaching of the Church in the period after the Holy Apostles.

He looked forward to laying down his life for Christ, and this took place in the Coliseum in Rome about the year 107 AD, torn apart by lions. His gentle steadfastness, and his determination to be faithful to Christ are an inspiration to us today. He is called God-bearer because, as he was carried by Christ our God as a child, so he carried Christ in his life and even unto death.

*Holy Liturgy for St Ignatius on Saturday
20 December 10.30 am at Clacton*

DECEMBER DAYS

Wed 3	Prophet Zephaniah (Sophronias), S Birinus, Bishop of Dorchester
Thu 4	Great Martyr Barbara, S John of Damascus
Fri 5	S Saba the Sanctified
Sat 6	S Nicolas the Wonderworker, Abp of Myra
Sun 7	Pentecost 26, S Ambrose, Bishop of Milan
Tue 9	Conception of Theotokos by Righteous Anna
Fri 12	S Spyridon the Wonderworker of Tremithus
Sat 13	S Herman of Alaska, Wonderworker of America
Sun 14	Pentecost 27, Sunday of the Forefathers, S Venantius Fortunatus, Bishop of Poitiers
Mon 15	Hieromartyr Eleutherius, Bishop of Illyria
Tue 16	Prophet Haggai
Wed 17	Prophet Daniel & the Three Holy Children, S Dionysius, Bp of Aegina, the Wonderworker
Thu 18	Martyr Sebastian at Rome
Fri 19	Martyr Boniface at Tarsus in Cilicia
Sat 20	Hieromartyr Ignatius the God-bearer, Bishop of Antioch
Sun 21	Pentecost 28, Sunday before Nativity
Wed 24	Eve of Nativity of Christ
Thu 25	NATIVITY OF CHRIST
Fri 26	Second Day of Nativity, Synaxis of Theotokos
Sat 27	Third Day of Nativity, Protomartyr & Archdeacon Stephen
Sun 28	Pentecost 29, Sunday after Nativity
Mon 29	Infants Slain by Herod at Bethlehem (Holy Innocents)

A fuller list of the month's Feasts and Fasts is available in church

This is the day
our Saviour
was born: what a joy
for us, my beloved!

This is no season for sadness, this the
birthday of Life—the Life which
annihilates the fear of death, and engenders
joy, promising, as it does, immortality.

Nobody is an outsider to this
happiness. The same cause for joy is
common to all, for as our Lord found
nobody free from guilt when he came
to bring an end to death and sin, so he
came with redemption for all.

Let the saint rejoice, for he hastens
to his crown; let the sinner be filled
with joy, for pardon is offered him; let
the Gentile be emboldened, for he is
called to life.

When the designated time had come,
which God in his deep and impenetrable
plan had fixed upon, God's Son took
the nature of man upon himself in
order to reconcile man to his Creator.

Thus would the devil, the father of
death, be himself overcome by that

A Word from the Fathers

St Leo, Pope of Rome (+ 461)

self-same human nature
which he had overcome.

The angels therefore

exult at the birth of the Lord: they sing,
'Glory to God in high heaven;' they
announce, 'Peace on earth for men on
whom his favour rests.'

For they behold the heavenly
Jerusalem being constructed from out of
all the peoples on earth. How greatly
ought mere men rejoice at this mysterious
undertaking of divine love, when the
angels on high thrill so much at it!.....

Let us then be quit of the old self
and the habits that went with it.
Sharers now in the birth of Christ, let
us break with the deeds of the flesh.

O Christian, be aware of your
nobility - it is God's own nature that
you share: do not then, by an ignoble
life, fall back into your former baseness.

Think of the Head, think of the Body
of which you are a member. Recall that
you have been rescued from the power of
darkness, and have been transferred to
the light of God, the kingdom of God.