



The Meeting of Our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ

This feast, celebrated on February 2, is also known in the Orthodox Church as The Presentation of Christ in the Temple. Another name for the feast is The Meeting of our Lord. Roman Catholic and Protestant Christians call the feast, The Purification of the Holy Virgin. About 450 AD in Jerusalem, people began the custom of holding lighted candles during the Divine Liturgy of this feast day. Therefore, some churches in the West refer to this holy day as Candlemas. The Feast of the Presentation concludes the observances related to the Nativity of Christ, a period that opened on November 15 with the beginning of the Nativity fast. The hymns of the feast emphasize the incarnate God, the Lord Jesus Christ, meeting with His people, Israel, in the persons of the Prophet Simeon and the Prophetess Anna. In the Gospel of Luke 2:22-35, Mary and Joseph took the infant Christ to the Temple in Jerusalem. He was received in the arms of the elder Simeon, who then prayed, "Now let Thy servant depart in peace... for I have seen Thy salvation." This was one of the things that Mary "pondered in her heart": the fact that others recognized that her Son was the Messiah. All of us, like Simeon must 'take Christ in our arms' and depart in peace; not from the trials and tribulations of this life, which we must continue to live through and face with faith, love, courage and humility but instead to depart from the hold that *sin, the passions and the world* has on us. Brothers and sisters, we have surely 'seen Thy salvation'; let us therefore stay close to Christ through every day of our lives and turn to Him alone for help and strength! God bless you all and Happy Feast!

~ *Father Mark* ~

NEWS AND VIEWS + NEWS AND VIEWS + NEWS AND VIEWS



ICONOSTASIS Our iconostasis is finally nearing completion and several of the main icons are finished and will be ready to fit as soon as the structure of the iconostasis itself is installed. The response to our call for people to pledge funding for the icons has been wonderful, with all but a handful of the smaller icons either paid for or with funding pledged. We ask for your prayers that this work can be completed soon.

Repairs and other works ~ The Project Committee met recently, following the successful installation of the heating and lighting in St Martin's. It was agreed that a programme of repairs to the fabric of the building, (the roof and gutters in particular) opening a door into the vestry area behind the altar and working on a solution to restore the floor are the next, most urgent priorities. Watch this space!

Church Council Meeting: The Church Council will meet on Sunday the 18th of February after the Holy Liturgy. There are several important issues to discuss, including the future of St Helen's Chapel, now that there is renewed interest from the Anglican Diocese of Chelmsford in discussing future leasing arrangements.

No blessing of the River Colne this year ~ the parish was unable to bless the River Colne this year, as we have for many years, due to the closure of the bridge over the weir at Middle Mill; our regular spot. Flooding has washed away a large section of brickwork rendering the bridge unsafe. The recent rains had also produced a lot of slippery mud on the only accessible section of bank, and so we took the decision not to go this year.

+ St Polycarp Bishop of Smyrna 23rd Feb +

"If you think I will swear by the genius of Caesar, then you don't know who I am.

Hear me clearly:
I am a Christian."

-Saint Polycarp

to the Roman Proconsul Statius Quadratus on the occasion of his martyrdom, AD 167



Theophany procession outside St Martin's on Sunday January 7 2024, followed in church by the Great Blessing of the Waters. Next year we hope Middle Mill bridge will be open again!

From the Fathers ~ Pray for all the saints. Pray also for kings and magistrates and rulers, and for those who persecute and hate you, and for the enemies of the cross, so that your fruit may be evident among all people, so that you may be perfect in him. **St Polycarp of Smyrna**

We are grateful to those continuing to support our church by regular or occasional gifts; may God bless you. Bank details: Orthodox Parish of St Martin & St Helen: Registered Charity No: 1192469 IBAN: GB05BUKB20226780219819 Sort Code: 20-22-67 Account No: 50349364 Appeal Account No: 80219819

Regular Service Times:

Saturdays: Great Vespers 4:30pm

Sundays: Matins & Holy Liturgy from 9:45am

Weekend services ALL at St Martins. Additional (weekday) services usually at St Helen's Chapel unless otherwise stated.

St Helen's Chapel is open daily for prayer and pilgrimage.

Additional Services: January 2024

Friday 2 Feb: The Meeting of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in the Temple - Hours & Holy Liturgy, 9:30 St Helen's Chapel.

Thursday 8 Feb: St Theodore the General - Hours & Holy Liturgy, 9:30 St Helen's Chapel.

Friday 23 Feb: Hieromartyr Polycarp of Smyrna - Hours & Holy Liturgy, 9:30 St Helen's Chapel.

Thursday 29 Feb: St John Cassian the Roman - Hours & Holy Liturgy, 9:30 St Helen's Chapel.



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: Nunns Road, CO1 1EJ. **Confessions:** Saturdays 5pm, after Vespers or by arrangement. **Holy Marriage, Holy Baptism, Funerals, Memorials etc: by arrangement.**

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