

+ At the Jordan we learn that Jesus of Nazareth is God ! +

**Orthodox Parish of
St Helen of Colchester**
Antiochian Archdiocese of the UK & Ireland
NEWSLETTER 205 JANUARY 2014



Revelation at the River...

The feast of Holy Theophany on 6 January tells us of God's (*Theo-*) revealing (*-phania*) of himself at the River Jordan in the Holy Land. The Voice showed the Father, the Son stood in the water to be baptised, the Dove revealed the Holy Spirit.



Here was the first real revelation of the Holy Trinity. God showed his three-fold Nature to those who had faith, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

This fundamental belief of the Church is what makes us Christians. We acknowledge it so often—in the Creed in some detail, but often and again we acknowledge those three Persons together in our prayers.

It means that God is in his heaven, yes, but that he has also descended to us in Jesus Christ, and that he is still with us in his Spirit.

The Cross and Resurrection is the primary historical fact of the Christian Faith. But the belief in the Holy Trinity is the primary basis of all our thinking and practice of the Faith.

This revelation—John baptising him and seeing the Dove and hearing the Voice—showed John the truth of who Jesus is. It continues to show to each successive generation who Jesus is.

That truth revealed then was authenticated by all the deeds and teaching of Christ, and eventually by his passion, death and Resurrection. We know that Jesus Christ certainly is God himself - incarnate, made flesh - because we see God at work in all his life.

Therefore, we know that we can trust him, put our faith in him, find joy in him, find hope in him even in the darkest moments.

"We have seen the true light!"

Father Alexander

Blessing of homes

Theophany is the traditional time for blessing of homes. I shall be glad to come to your house and bless it in a short, ten-minute, ceremony.

Have ready:

- an icon on the table
- a lamp or candle
- a bowl half-filled with water
- a piece of greenery from the garden to sprinkle the water
- your family gathered.

After some prayers, the head of the family leads the Priest round the house, sprinkling. As we go we sing the troparion (song) of the Theophany, *When in Jordan, thou wast baptised, O Lord... And we finish before the icon.*

Please ask if you would like me to come.

Holy Water is available in church at the front table, but you may have to ask for it. Since the last vat was stolen, it is kept on the Altar. Just bring a bottle and ask.

HOLY LITURGY
CLACTON
Saturday
18 January
10.00 am

FELLOWSHIP OF ST ALBAN AND ST SERGIUS

Tuesday 28 January 7.30 pm
St Helen's Chapel

Fr Alexander & Khouria Hilary
Sight and Sound: Windows into Heaven
A brief introduction to the Icons and music of the Church: all welcome

The meeting following will be at Frinton on Tue 25 Feb, when Archdeacon Michael Fox will speak on
Anglicans and Orthodox and Others

JANUARY AT ST HELEN'S

WEDNESDAY 1 JANUARY
CIRCUMCISION OF CHRIST, St Basil the Great
9.30 am Holy Liturgy of St Basil

THEOPHANY OF CHRIST
SUNDAY 5 JANUARY
Eve of Theophany, Sunday before Theophany
10.15 am
Hours & Holy Liturgy and Lesser Blessing of Waters,
Procession to Bless the River Colne

MONDAY 6 JANUARY Theophany
9.30 am

WEDNESDAY 22 JANUARY
Apostle Timothy of the Seventy, Bishop of Crete
Monk Martyr Anastasius the Persian
9.30 am Holy Liturgy

THURSDAY 30 JANUARY
Synaxis of the Ecumenical Teachers and Great Hierarchs
Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian
& John the Golden-Mouthed
9.30 am Holy Liturgy

As the year came to an end we sent Gifts from the Parish...

Just before Christmas we made out cheques to the following good causes:

- **Cambridge Orthodox Institute** £50.00: *it teaches the Orthodox Faith to many in a wide area; several from this parish have benefitted.*
- **St Helena Hospice** £100.00: *it has helped many to die in a loving and caring atmosphere, both at its premises in Highwoods and at home.*
- **Beacon House** £100.00: *from its premises in East Hill it aids people on the streets and in dire conditions.*
- **St Seraphim's Trust, Walsingham** £100.00: *it is building up the old railway station/monastery as an Orthodox pilgrimage centre.*

All these are excellent causes and we are very grateful to them for the work they do.

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: Mattins 9.45 am (or Hours 10.15 am), Divine Liturgy 10.30 am

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

Parish Priest: Father Alexander (Alistair) Haig

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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

At University of Essex Chaplaincy Centre: Divine Liturgy: one Saturday per term 10.00 am

Here and There

DATES FOR YOUR 2014 DIARY:

- The **Great Fast** (Lent) begins this year on Monday 3 March.
- **Holy Pascha** falls on 20 April, the same day as Western Easter.
- The **Barking Pilgrimage** in honour of the Saints of that ancient Monastery, largely destroyed at the 16th century Reformation will be on Saturday 10 May.
- **SS Constantine & Helen** falls on Wednesday 21 May.
- The **Repose of St Helen** falls on Monday 18 August.

Watch out for:

- The **Consecration** of our new Archbishop, probably in Lebanon or Syria in the summer.
- The **Enthronement** of our new Archbishop, presumably in London soon after the above.
- The **first visit to Colchester** of our new Archbishop, not long after, we hope.

CLERGY MEETING in London on Saturday 11 January, to discuss what we are to do with our new Archbishop, i.e. how we are to pay and house him and fund his expenses of office. *No Vespers here on 11 January.*

THE MOSAIC CHOIR is formed of Orthodox young adults, meets in London, and has performed in various places around the country and abroad, to the pleasure of many. It is affiliated to the Orthodox Fellowship of St John the Baptist, and MARGARET HAIG is a leading member. On St Andrew's day, 30 November we went up to hear them sing Christmas music in St Andrew's church, Holborn, which is where my great-grandparents were married, and is now used as an Orthodox church. It was beautifully sung, with Slavonic, Romanian, Greek, and English songs and carols. They raised £624, dividing it equally between the Fellowship and the Syrian appeal.



After the Holy Liturgy at Clacton: One of the good things about our monthly service at St James, Beatrice Road—on the third Saturday of the month—is that we are able to adjourn to the kitchen afterwards, to enjoy refreshment together. People bring food to share and it gives a time to socialise. This photo was taken in September last. Many of our worshippers (but not all) are Greek, so normally we use more Greek in the Liturgy at Clacton than in Colchester.

Standing, left to right: Maria Kokkonas, Stelios Nicolaou, Fr Alexander, Costa Sergiou, Jon Kanaar (more recently received into Orthodoxy as Theodore), a visitor from Belarus. *Sitting:* Antoinetta Siaperas (Tony), Paul Lansley, Annemarie Cox. This is just a few of our worshippers. There are normally over a dozen people present.

Please tell your friends that this celebration of the Holy Liturgy takes place in St James' Church, Clacton every month—normally on the third Saturday of the month. Invite them, whether or not Orthodox: all are welcome.

Parish administration

Like all administration, running the Parish can be a bore, but it is absolutely necessary, and we should be very grateful to those who sit on our Parish Council and 'do their bit' for the life of our congregation. I have no doubt that they count it not only as a duty but also as a privilege.

The next meeting of the **Council** will be on **Sunday 2 February** at 1.00 pm. It will have to pore over the accounts for 2013 on your behalf, to make sure they are in order.

The **Annual Meeting**, for all members of the congregation, will be on **Sunday 16 February**, immediately after the Holy Liturgy.

A Word from the Fathers

Abba John said,

I am like a man sitting under a great tree, who see wild beasts and snakes coming against him in great numbers. When he cannot withstand them any longer, he runs to climb the tree and is saved.

It is just the same with me: I sit in my cell and I am aware of evil thoughts coming against me.

And when I have no more strength against them, I take refuge in God by prayer, and I am saved from the enemy.

There are many such stories of the simplicity and straightforwardness of the Desert Fathers, monks who lived in the deserts of Egypt and Palestine and there 'fought with wild beasts' - their sinfulness. Read them in the book *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers*.

Elder Sophrony

Fr Sophrony died in 1993, having founded the Monastery of St John the Baptist in 1959. We are blessed to have it so near us at Tolleshunt Knights.

We now gather - from an internet report - that it is likely to be not long before Fr Sophrony is canonised or 'glorified' as a Saint, and we look forward to that event. This is only a rumour at the moment, but his holiness was indeed apparent to very many. The report was prompted, it seems, by the glorification of Elder Porphyrios as recently as November.

Many pilgrims visit the Monastery already, and one does fear that the canonisation may vastly increase the numbers coming there to pray at his tomb.

However, to have such a place of beauty and holiness only ten miles away is a great blessing to us, and it is indeed a glorious privilege for all of us to be able to worship there so easily.

All should visit at least from time to time, in order to absorb some of the spirit of the Monastery, of Elder Sophrony, and of his Teacher St Silouan. It is a very 'open' Holy Monastery, that welcomes visitors warmly.

You can visit the main church of St Silouan, the original chapel of St John the Baptist, the All Saints chapel over the crypt containing Fr Sophrony's tomb, and the mediaeval church down the road. There are two refectories. Everywhere there are frescoes by the Elder himself and his disciples. There is a book room for the sale of Orthodox books and icons etc.



JANUARY DAYS

Wed 1	CIRCUMCISION OF CHRIST, S Basil the Great
Thu 2	Repose of S Seraphim of Sarov
Sun 5	Eve of Theophany
Mon 6	THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST
Tue 7	Synaxis of H Prophet John the Baptist S Cedd, Bishop & Apostle of Essex
Sat 11	S Theodosius the Great, the Cenobiarch
Sun 12	Sunday after Theophany S Benedict Biscop, Abbot Wearmouth
Mon 13	S Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers S Kentigern, Bishop of Glasgow & Strathclyde
Tue 14	Fathers slain at Sinai, S Nino, Enlightener of Georgia Hieromartyr Platon, Bishop of Tallinn
Wed 15	S Paul of Thebes
Thu 16	Veneration of Chains of H Apostle Peter S Fursey, Enlightener of the East Angles
Fri 17	Venerable & God-bearing Father Antony the Great
Sat 18	SS Athanasius the Great & Cyril
Sun 19	Pentecost 30, Sunday of the Ten Lepers S Mark of Ephesus
Mon 20	S Euthymius the Great
Tue 21	S Maximus the Confessor
Wed 22	Apostle Timothy of the Seventy, Bishop of Crete Monk Martyr Anastasius the Persian
Fri 24	S Xenia the Fool-for-Christ of St Petersburg S Neophytos the Anchorite of Cyprus
Sat 25	S Gregory the Theologian, Abp of Constantinople
Sun 26	Pentecost 31, Sunday of Zacchaeus
Mon 27	Translation of Relics of S John Chrysostom
Tue 28	S Ephraim the Syrian, S Isaac the Syrian
Wed 29	Translation of Relics of S Ignatius the God-bearer S Gildas the Wise, Abbot in Wales & Brittany
Thu 30	Synaxis of Ecumenical Teachers & Gt Hierarchs Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian & John the Golden-mouthed
Fri 31	Wonderworkers & Unmercenarys Cyrus & John

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