

+ Orthodoxy—the faith that began with Christ and his Apostles, and continues to the end of time +

# Orthodox Parish of St Helen of Colchester

Antiochian Archdiocese of the BI & Ireland  
NEWSLETTER 216 JANUARY 2015



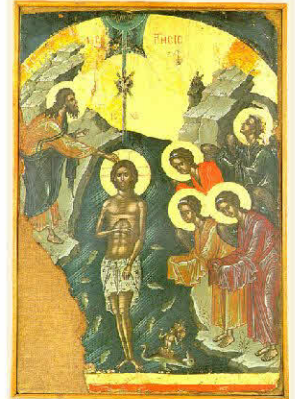
WEEKDAYS AT ST HELEN'S 9.30 am Divine Liturgy  
THURSDAY 1 JANUARY  
CIRCUMCISION OF CHRIST & ST BASIL THE GREAT  
TUESDAY 6 JANUARY  
HOLY THEOPHANY  
WEDNESDAY 21 JANUARY  
ST MAXIMUS THE CONFESSOR & VIRGIN-MARTYR AGNES OF ROME  
FRIDAY 30 JANUARY  
THREE HIERARCHS & ECUMENICAL TEACHERS

## Blessing of the River Sunday 18 January 11.30 am Procession from Church after 10.30 am Holy Liturgy



Blessing the River 2014

THE THEOPHANY ICON shows Christ being baptised by John, the Forerunner and Baptist, at the River Jordan. Above Christ is shown the coming forth of the Father's Word *This is my beloved Son*, and the Holy Spirit in the form of the Dove. Thus the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity are revealed for the first time. The Holy Angels gather in adoration of the Triune God. The faithful collect some Holy Water after the Great Blessing in Church, and request the Priest to bless their home.



**HOLY THEOPHANY**  
Tuesday 6 January  
9.30 am Holy Liturgy and  
Great Blessing of the Water  
Bring a bottle for Holy Water

## Who is God? What is God like? - Theophany helps answer our questions

Many people argue today over the existence of God, whether there is a god or not. The problem is that they treat the matter as a philosophical problem.

It must not be denied that there is a definite place for philosophy—for thinking, creative thinking, discussion, about the meaning of life.

But the feast of Theophany, 6 January, shows that belief in God is really a matter not of philosophical thought or discussion, so much as of *revelation*.

For *Theophany* means *Revelation of God*. And revelation is received by faith not by thought.

This is what makes it so hard for *non-believers* to *believe*. They are trying to *understand*. They are often trying - totally sincerely and nobly - to *understand, to grasp the truth*.

They are genuinely, honestly, grappling with the problems of philosophy.

Yet what happened at the River Jordan, teaches that human beings can really only deal with the

deepest problems of their life by faith, by revelation of God himself - *not by understanding but by acceptance*.

Jesus of Nazareth goes down to the River to be baptised by his cousin John. John knows that he is not worthy to baptise Jesus. Jesus is without sin and has no need of baptism.

But Jesus insists, and for his obedience John has this revelation: the Voice of the Father from heaven, the Dove, the sign of the Spirit from the Father, the Son standing meek and holy in the River standing for humanity which (oh, so sinful) needs what Jesus is receiving on humanity's behalf.

Here then is the first revealing of the Holy Trinity. The truth of the life of God had been forecast in the Old Testament.

But now, at the River, the New Testament, i.e. the life of Christ, shows to those who have *faith not philosophical understanding* that the exis-

tence of God is to be found in *Three Persons in One God*.

Belief in this revelation of the Three-fold God is our salvation. And belief means not so much the intellectual, philosophical, understanding of the mind as this spiritual humility of the soul.

It is the accepting by the

humble soul of the *revelation* of God.

The humble soul *accepts*, as children *accept* - the touch-salvation, *accepting*, innocence of children that Christ taught us was indispensable for salvation, for entrance into his Divine Kingdom.

Father Alexander

HOLY LITURGY  
CLACTON  
Saturday  
17 January  
St Antony  
the Great  
10.00 am

### 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 Jr., 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

**OANA CHIRELLA**, aided by her fiancé **COLIN STAFFORD**, very kindly cleaned the church carpets before Christmas. We are planning to receive Colin into the Church, shortly before they are married here at the end of April.

**MARIA STEFANUT**, who *used* to clean the carpets and to sing in our Choir, but returned to Romania about a year ago, has emailed to say she is happy to be back with her own family, and has built herself a house. She continues to take an interest in our parish, and we are glad to hear her news.

**HAIGS** turned up at St Helen's in force on or after Christmas Day. In their enforced absences, **ALEX**, accompanied by **ELA** and **ALEXANDER III**, supported us in place of Reader **ANDREAS**, and **MARGARET** in place of Choir Director **HELEN**. We are very grateful, and in any case it was good to have them with us.

## Here and There

**YMCA** is a Christian organisation working for young people in all sorts of ways throughout the world. And of course they work in Colchester too: they even have a hostel here in Barrack Street for youngsters needing a start in life. Before Christmas I sent a gift of £50.00 from the Parish.

**CCTV** was installed in St Helen's just before Christmas. This is a comparatively big financial outlay, but the Church Council felt it important to do this to protect Church property. We have had several thefts in the past years, some rather distressing. The point of the CCTV is not so much to catch thieves as to put people off the idea of thieving from the church in the first place. We hope it will not prove a terrible burden on the 99% of those honest people who come into

the holy temple of God either as tourists to look around or as pilgrims and worshippers.

**THE BETHLEHEM LAMP**: I bought a hanging lamp in Bethlehem when there in September, and it has now been hung before an icon of the Nativity on the window-sill on the north side of the nave.

**EBOLA APPEAL**: I sent £25.00 from the Parish a few months ago to support the work of a unit run by Kings College London in Sierra Leone—and I think that a doctor from Colchester Hospital has recently joined them. This was in response to an appeal from them to me as an alumnus. Kings have recently sent a further appeal—the work as everybody realises is enormous—and I invited people to make a personal gift. **A sum of £75.00 was given over Christmas and is being forwarded.**

## St Basil the Great

A great thinker and theologian, a teacher and preacher, a man of deep spirituality yet also an administrator, a letter-writer in abundance, involved in church politics—St Basil would have been a man of stature in any society. He had an excellent education and was deeply learned. Yet he was a simple monk, and he wrote the Rule which is still the basis of Eastern monasticism. He founded the first recognisable hospital. He became Bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia in what we would call Turkey, and was widely respected by Christian and non-Christian. He was one of seven Saints in an amazing family. He died in 379, and his feast is on *1 January*. He is also commemorated on *30 January* with St John Chrysostom and St Gregory the Theologian as one of the **Three Hierarchs and Ecumenical Teachers**.



Icon of S Basil from St Sophia Cathedral in Kiev

### Colchester Town Centre Churches Week of Prayer for Christian Unity UNITED SERVICE

Sunday 18 January, 6.30 pm  
United Reform Church, Lion Walk  
We are invited to share in their worship

**MATTINS** is a very beautiful service. We are now again celebrating it on Sundays, at 9.45 am. It is *rich* in teaching. Come, strengthen the life of our Parish, and at the same time *enrich* your own soul.

### JANUARY DAYS

Thu 1	Circumcision of Christ, S Basil the Great
Fri 2	S Seraphim, Wonderworker of Sarov
Sun 4	Pentecost 30, Sunday before Theophany
Mon 5	Eve of Theophany
Tue 6	HOLY THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD
Wed 7	Synaxis of S John the Forerunner & Baptist S Cedd, Bishop of the East Saxons
Thu 8	S George of Choziba, Abbot
Sat 10	S Theophan the Recluse
Sun 11	Pentecost 31, S Theodosius the Great the Cenobiarich
Mon 12	S Benedict Biscop, Abbot of Wearmouth
Tue 13	S Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers
Fri 16	S Kentigern Mungo, first Bishop of Glasgow Precious Chains of H Apostle Peter, S Fursey, Enlightener of East Anglia
Sat 17	S Antony the Great
Sun 18	Pentecost 32, Sunday of the Ten Lepers SS Athanasius the Gt & Cyril of Alexandria
Mon 19	S Mark, Archbishop of Ephesus
Tue 20	S Euthymius the Great
Wed 21	S Maximus the Confessor, Virgin-Martyr Agnes of Rome
Thu 22	Apostle Timothy of the Seventy S Vincent the Deacon, Protomartyr of Spain Monk Martyr Anastasius the Persian
Sat 24	S Xenia the Fool-for-Christ of S Petersburg S Neophytes the Anchorite, of Cyprus
Sun 25	Pentecost 33, Sunday of Zacchaeus, S Gregory the Theologian
Tue 27	Translation of Relics of S John Chrysostom
Wed 28	S Ephraem the Syrian, S Isaac the Syrian
Thu 29	Translation of Relics of Hieromartyr Ignatius S Gildas the Wise, Abbot in Britain
Fri 30	Synaxis of the Three Hierarchs
Sat 31	Wonderworkers & Unmercenarys Cyrus & John

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

### A Word from the Fathers

*St Gregory Nazianzen (329-89) on the Baptism of Christ*

Christ is illumined, let us shine forth with him. Christ is baptised, let us descend with him, that we may also ascend with him.

John baptizes, Jesus comes to him - perhaps to sanctify the Baptist himself, but certainly to bury the whole of the old Adam in the water; and before this and for the sake of this, to sanctify Jordan. As he is Spirit and flesh, so he consecrates us by Spirit and water.

John will not receive him: Jesus contends. 'I have need to be baptised by you,' says the lamp to the Sun, the voice to the Word, the friend to the Bridegroom, he that is above all those who are born of women to him who is the First-born of every creature, he that leaped in the womb to him who was adored in the womb, he who was and is the Forerunner to him who was and is to be manifested.

'I have need to be baptised by you,' add to this 'and for you,' for he knew that he would be baptised by martyrdom, or, like Peter, that he would be cleansed not only as to his feet.

But further - Jesus goes up out of the water; for with himself he carries up the world and sees the heaven split open which Adam had shut against himself and all his posterity, as the gates of Paradise by the flaming sword.

And the Spirit bears witness to his Godhead, for he descends upon One that is like him, as does the Voice from heaven (for he to whom witness is borne comes from thence) and like a dove seen in bodily form it bestows honour on his body, since this is also God by being deified. And moreover, the dove has from distant ages been wont to proclaim the end of the Deluge.