

The Orthodox Church—where sinners become Saints to this day

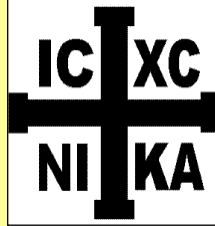
Orthodox Parish of St Helen of Colchester

Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese
of the British Isles and Ireland

Metropolitan: His Eminence Archbishop Silouan

NEWSLETTER 270

JANUARY 2020



January Days

9.30 am Holy Liturgy

Wednesday 1 Jan *Circumcision, St Basil the Gt*

Friday 10 Jan *St Gregory of Nyssa*

Thu 16 Jan *Veneration of Chains of St Peter*

Wednesday 22 Jan *Apostle Timothy of the Seventy*

Thursday 30 Jan *Three Hierarchs & Teachers*

Theophany Procession to River Colne Sunday 5 January

Water is a sign of life. With it we can live. Without it we die. With it we can last longer than with food.

So the feast of Theophany, properly on 6 January, is the feast of the Baptism of Christ. But the Great Blessing of Water reminds us not only of his *Baptism*, but also of the *life* of our cities, towns and villages.

Ever year we go to the River Colne at the bottom of our hill and bless the water that gives our community life. We bless the flowing river and pray for our community.

This year we are celebrating Holy Theophany on **Sunday 5 January**, going down to the River at the end of the Holy Liturgy and Great Blessing.

Do stay after the Liturgy and join us at the River. The ceremony does not take long and is very beautiful.

Bring a bottle to church if you would like to take newly-blessed holy water home.

A blessing to you and yours at home and in church and in all the world.

Father Alexander

Metropolitan Silouan's Christmas visit to the Parish

His Eminence arrived here the day before Christmas Eve, and after we had prayed the Ninth Hour he talked with members of the Church Council about St Martin's and what we planned to do.

He was enthusiastic for us to get on with what we can do, but pointing out that we cannot compete the transformation in a short time. We discussed how certain items, e.g. the iconostasis, would be well done as early as possible to give the right effect for visitors, and certain items must be done as early as possible, e.g. renewal of the electrics. One important change he blessed was that the Parish should be re-titled *The Orthodox Parish of St Martin and St Helen*.

On Christmas Eve morning Sayedna served the Holy Liturgy with the two Fathers Alexander, and then visited St Martin's with some of the faithful, examining and advising in more detail.



It was a pity more of our people could not attend but it was a source of joy and encouragement to have our Chief Pastor taking an exact interest in some of the details of the project, presented to him by Project Manager Mark Shillaker and members of the Committee and Council.

We hope that perhaps Sayedna's next visit will be to offer worship in St Martin's.

ST HELEN'S APPEAL FOR ST MARTIN'S

17 Maidenburgh Street, Colchester CO1 1UB, UK

Raised so far: some **£156,017** (towards the £200,000)

The Appeal remains open, but is somewhat on hold, until various costings are agreed. Please consult:

APPEAL WEBSITE: orthodoxcolchesterappeal.org.uk

FACEBOOK: *St Martin's Appeal*



Sunday 5 January

HOLY THEOPHANY (TRANSFERRED)

10.15 am Hours

10.30 am Holy Liturgy, Great Blessing of Water,
Procession to River

Join us at the River to pray for our city

Monday 6 January - No services

Thank you to all for CHRISTMAS GREETINGS AND GIFTS. Hilary and I are most grateful for them all. We are also grateful for the wonderfully powerful help of our family members, Fr Alexander Jnr and Margaret.

St Helen's Chapel, Maidenburgh St, High St CO1 1UB

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 Balkerne Hill), to Northgate; go straight along St Peter's Street to Castle Park; continue round the bend, up into Maidenburgh Street.

Nearest car-park NCP Nunns Rd. Very little street parking available.

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 5 pm, after Vespers, or by arrangement

Holy Marriage, Holy Baptism, Funerals, Memorials etc: by arrangement
Children of St Helen (Pre-school & Primary): normally first Saturday 3.15 pm

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

Reader: George Harrison 07-869-488-842

Churchwardens: Dusan Radunovic 01-206-762-553, Jon Kanaar 01-255-431-975

Children of St Helen: Sanja Radunovic 01-206-762-553, Silvia Lefley 01-206-835-715

Orthodox Parish of St Helen: Registered Charity No: 1134418

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Bank Account No: 50349364 Appeal Account No: 80219819

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

Appeal Website: <http://orthodoxcolchesterappeal.org.uk>

The Three Holy Hierarchs and Ecumenical Teachers....

...form a group of three of the most celebrated Fathers of the Church. Each has also his own feast in the month of January—**St Basil the Great** (1st), **St Gregory the Theologian** (25th), **St John Chrysostom** (27th).

It is said that people later argued which was the greatest of the three; so in the twelfth century it was decided to keep a joint festival to all three as great teachers of the Faith, complementing, not rivalling, each other. They called them *an earthly trinity*.

Basil and Gregory were great friends. Gregory is also referred to as Nazianzen (he is easily confused with Basil's brother, Gregory of Nyssa. John was of almost a generation later.

Dear God, send us more teachers of our holy Faith, to guide us and all believers into the Way of Truth.



St Sophrony of Essex

We await the texts for the newly-glorified Saint from 'our own' Holy Monastery at Tolleshunt Knights, and even definitive icons.

We are so blessed to have this power-house of prayer, devotion and witness so close to us.

It is now sixty years since Father Sophrony came here with a very small band of disciples in 1959. The influence of the Monastery is now widespread throughout the Orthodox world.

Say you come from Essex anywhere in the Orthodox world, and they will ask you about the Monastery.

I am therefore a little sad to hear that St Sophrony is now to be known as *of Athos* rather than *of Essex*. Myself, I think I shall continue to refer to him as *of Essex*, which enriches - even ennobles - our own county, and is how he has always been referred to in the past.

Here and There

CHILDREN OF ST HELEN: Our children (primary and pre-school) meet on Saturday 4 January at 3.15 pm. All are welcome.

CHURCH COUNCIL: Meeting on Sunday 26 January at 12.30 pm.

DIOCESAN CONFERENCE: 25-27 May at Yarnfield Park, near the M6 north of Birmingham. Subject: *Practical Orthodoxy: Living as Orthodox Christians in Secular Britain*. This is a great time to learn more of our Faith and to meet more Orthodox Christians. Metropolitan Silouan hosts. Those of our Parish who have attended it in the past have found it stimulating and worthwhile. Discounted cost is £130 per head. Small children come free, over 16s special discount. Book with Fr Alexander.

BACK AMONG US: It was good to see MICHAEL KAMPOURIDIS recently when he briefly looked in at St Helen's. He was a main-stay of the Parish some years ago when he and NICOLLE were doing their degrees here; several of us were able to attend their marriage in Athens at that time. Now they are expecting to move back, with their little one, to Colchester in the spring on his appointment to the University. It will be lovely to have them among us again!

SCHOOL VISITS: We do not seem to get so many groups of children being brought to St Helen's as previously, but recently we had a nice, well-behaved Religious Studies group from Stanway School. It was a pleasure to tell them a little about Holy Orthodoxy.

Receiving the Holy Gifts

We should always approach the Holy Gifts with devotion and humility. Some may approach the Holy Chalice every week; others may feel they should not come so often. Make up your mind, if necessary speaking with me first to get matters clear.

Here are few practical tips as to how to *draw near, with fear of God and with faith and love*.

1. Cross yourself *before* you come to the Priest.
2. Make sure your mouth is at a *lower level* than the Priest's hand.
3. Probably slightly bend your knees to reduce your height.
4. Cross your arms on your chest, to keep them from knocking the chalice, but if necessary steady yourself with your hands on the fore-arms of the Priest's attendants.
5. Keep your body straight up; lean your head slightly *backwards*.
6. Close your mouth round the spoon (note that at the Monastery they discourage this), to ensure you take what is on the spoon without spillage.
7. *Children in arms:* it is best not to hold the child upright, but rather to lay the child right back in your *right* arm, especially if the child is fractious.

A Word from the Fathers: St Gregory Nazianzen (+ 390)

Christ is illumined, let us shine forth with him. Christ is baptised, let us also descend with him, that we may also ascend with him. As John baptises 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 all creation.

He that leapt in the womb speaks 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.....

JANUARY DAYS

Wed	1	Circumcision of Christ, S Basil the Great
Thu	2	Repose of S Seraphim
Sun	5	HOLY THEOPHANY (Parish observance)
Mon	6	[Holy Theophany]
Tue	7	Synaxis of S John the Forerunner
Fri	10	S Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa
Sat	11	S Theodosius the Great, Cenobiarch
Sun	12	Sunday after Theophany
Mon	13	S Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers
Tue	14	S Sava I, 1st Archbishop of the Serbs
Thu	16	Veneration of the Chains of S Peter
Fri	17	S Antony the Great of Egypt
Sat	18	SS Athanasius the Great & Cyril
Sun	19	Sunday of the Ten Lepers
Mon	20	S Euthymius the Great
Tue	21	S Maximos the Confessor
Wed	22	Apostle Timothy, of the Seventy
Fri	24	S Xenia the Fool-for-Christ
Sat	25	S Gregory the Theologian
Sun	26	Sunday of Zacchaeus
Mon	27	Translation of Relics of S John Chrysostom
Tue	28	S Ephraim the Syrian
Thu	30	The Three Great Hierarchs
Fri	31	Wonderworkers & Unmercenarys Cyrus & John