

Christ's Baptism was a Revelation

Come with us to bless the River, on Sunday 9 January immediately after the service in church. It is a five-minute walk for a short service, a beautiful occasion, not celebrated last year because of Covid.

The Holy Cross is thrown into the River Colne, to bless the whole life of the city of Colchester. It is the consecration of the waters of all life, and in particular of the waters of Colchester, and shows how Christ blesses our whole human life.

The ceremony derives of course from the historic moment at the river, when Christ went into the waters of Jordan, the One who alone was sinless taking upon himself the fullness of the sin of mankind. There he was in the centre of the action, and with him the Voice of his Father and the appearance of the dove, the Holy Spirit. So there was a revealing there (to those who have the eye of faith) of the Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

This was then much more than a simple baptism of a



good Man who did not really need baptism or cleansing, who had no sin to bear.

Rather, it was the beginning of the showing to the whole world of what God is really like, of who he really is.

And it is the beginning of the story of how we can be saved from our sin, and can ourselves be transformed to our true nature as sons and daughters of God.

Holy Theophany—what a wonderful revelation, manifestation, of the Gospel of hope, joy, and peace!

**Father Alexander
Alexander**

St Martin's—a slow business

We will all be amazed if we keep an account of the time we have been awaiting the fulfilment of our dreams about taking over the lovely church as a centre for Orthodox worship.

It is unbelievable that they should have agreed it all so long ago, yet we are still not masters in our temple because we cannot hand over the cash. They were last anticipating it would be completed on 10 or 17 December. Pray God it will be done shortly.

FOR YOUR DIARY IN JANUARY

SATURDAYS 4.30 pm Great Vespers in St Martin's
Except 1 Jan

SUNDAYS 10.30 am Holy Liturgy in St Martin's

THURSDAY 9.30 am Holy Liturgy in St Martin's
6 JAN & GREAT BLESSING OF THE WATER

SUNDAY SUNDAY AFTER HOLY THEOPHANY
9 JAN 10.30 am Holy Liturgy in St Martin's
Followed by BLESSING OF RIVER

WEDNESDAY 11.30 am Funeral of JOHN ROBERTS
12 JAN at Sudbury Cemetery Chapel

THURSDAY ST HILARY, BISHOP OF POITIERS,
13 JAN SPIRITUAL FATHER OF ST MARTIN
9.30 am Holy Liturgy in St Helen's

FRIDAY ST MAXIMOS THE CONFESSOR
21 JAN 9.30 am Holy Liturgy in St Helen's

TUESDAY NEW MARTYRS OF RUSSIA,
25 JAN ST GREGORY THE THEOLOGIAN
9.30 am Holy Liturgy in St Helen's

APPEAL FOR ST MARTIN'S REMAINS OPEN

We are grateful to those continuing to support the Appeal by regular or occasional gifts: God bless you.

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. St Martin's is 100m down behind the Town Hall. St Helen's is 200m down behind the George Hotel. Nearest car-park NCP Nunns Rd, behind Fenwicks department store, and very close to St Martin's. Little street parking available.

SERVICES IN ST MARTIN'S CHURCH

Saturday: usually Great Vespers 4.30 pm Sunday: Divine Liturgy 10.30 am

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

Parish Priest: Father Alexander (Alistair) Haig

17 Maidenburgh Street, Colchester CO1 1UB

01-206-530-530 Mob: 07-947-047-201 Eml: parishpriest@orthodoxcolchester.org.uk

Deacon: Father Mark Shillaker 07-917-161-295 Eml: markshillaker@gmail.com

Readers: George Harrison 07-869-488-842, **Catalin Fliscu** 07-815-682-820

Churchwardens: Dusan Radunovic 07-880-778-385, **Jon Kanaar** 07-596-221-079

Orthodox Parish of St Martin & 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>

Here and There

JOHN ROBERTS came to Britain from Romania with his wife **FLORENCE** many years ago, in the days of the Communist regime, and had their son **MICHAEL**. They adopted English names and John was an altogether English businessman, but they kept faithful to their Orthodox faith. John and Florence made their retirement home in Sudbury, and have worshipped with us since Florence's mother died nearly twenty years ago, and I buried her in Chelmsford cemetery. We pray for Florence and for Michael. We shall miss John very much, and commend him into the hands of God. I will take his funeral in Sudbury Cemetery Chapel at 11.30 am on Wednesday 12 January. Memory eternal!

THANK YOU to all those who sent Christmas gifts, cards and greetings. They are very much appreciated. We hope that all our people had a refreshing time at Christmas. Though we have not been able to get all our HAIG family members together at one time, we have been delighted to have almost all family members to see us. **MARGARET** as always came and led the music, and Father **ALEXANDER JUNIOR** came and served the Holy Liturgy on the feast of the Holy Innocents, the Infants slaughtered by Herod around Bethlehem, whose relics are preserved at the Holy Nativity church and which I was privileged to venerate a few years ago. The relics in our antimention or antimins (the cloth upon which the Holy Gifts are consecrated) at St Martin's, by the way, are relics of the Holy Innocents.

SATURDAY AND SUNDAY SERVICES continue in the space of St Martin's Church, while **weekday services** continue in the warmth of St Helen's Chapel - unless too many worshippers are expected for it, as on Holy Theophany 6 Jan, when we shall be in St Martin's.

WE ARE GRATEFUL for gifts of **incense** for use in church, and of **wine**, which must be red and sweet—either Mavro Daphni (Patras) or Commanderia (Cyprus) is suitable.

We would also welcome more Church **bread-makers**, so that the burden of making the Church Breads may be shared - though makers do indeed regard it as an honour and privilege to make and present the Bread that Makes Us One in Christ, the Eucharistic Holy Gift that becomes the Body of Christ. We can supply the seals, and give some tuition if required.

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

Christ is illumined, let us shine forth with him.

Christ is baptized, 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 baptized by you', says the lamp to the Sun, the voice to the word, the friend to the bridegroom... 'I have need to be baptised by you' add to this 'and for you'; for he knew that he would be baptised by martyrdom...

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.

S CEDD IS THE APOSTLE OF ESSEX, which means that he brought the faith in Christ to the East Saxons in the mid-seventh century. In those days Essex was a separate kingdom. Others had tried to plant the faith here



before him, but without lasting success. He had more effect. You can see a Chapel he built in AD654 on the sea-wall at Bradwell, beyond Maldon. He is venerated by the Orthodox, and also by Catholics and Anglicans. *Feast: 7 Jan and another on 26 Sep.*

JANUARY DAYS

Sat	1	CIRCUMCISION OF CHRIST, S Basil the Great
Sun	2	Sunday before Theophany, S Sylvester, Pope of Rome
Thu	6	HOLY THEOPHANY OF CHRIST
Fri	7	Synaxis of H Forerunner John the Baptist S Cedd, Apostle of Essex
Sun	9	Sunday after Theophany
Mon	10	S Gregory of Nyssa
Tue	11	S Theodosius the Great, the Cenobiarch
Wed	12	S Benedict Biscop, Abbot of Wearmouth
Thu	13	S Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers, S Kentigern (Mungo), first Bishop of Glasgow
Fri	14	S Sava, first Archbishop of Serbia
Sun	16	Sunday of the Ten Lepers, Veneration of Chains of S Peter
Mon	17	S Antony the Great, of Egypt
Tue	18	SS Athanasius the Great & Cyril, Archbishops of Alexandria
Wed	19	S Makarios the Great of Egypt
Fri	21	S Maximos the Confessor
Sat	22	H Apostle Timothy of the Seventy
Sun	23	Pentecost 31, Sunday of the Blind Man
Mon	24	S Xenia the Fool for Christ, of S Petersburg
Tue	25	S Gregory the Theologian, Archbishop of Constantinople
Wed	26	S Xenophon, of Constantinople
Thu	27	Translation of relics of S John Chrysostom
Fri	28	S Ephraim the Syrian, S Isaac the Syrian
Sat	29	Translation of relics of Hieromartyr Ignatius the God-bearer, S Gildas the Wise, of Wales & Brittany
Sun	30	Pentecost 32, Sunday of Zacchaeus, Synaxis of the Three Hierarchs & Ecumenical Teachers
Mon	31	Wonderworkers & Unmercenarys Cyrus & John