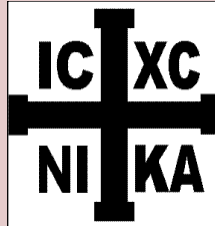


Holy Orthodoxy: Faith in Christ for the modern world

Orthodox Parish of St Helen of Colchester

Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of the British Isles and Ireland
Metropolitan: His Eminence Archbishop Silouan

NEWSLETTER 249 JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2018



Who is Jesus of Nazareth?

"If only I could see God I would believe. If only you could prove religion to me I would believe."

We have often heard such from well-disposed people who just long for "scientific proof" of "scientific truth".

Of course, they are very misguided to take that line. - There is no such proof and "scientific truth" appears a rather dubious concept anyway - better talk of "scientific facts".

For of deeper truths, we can only be sure by acceptance. Only really by faith.

At the riverside, beside the Jordan River, John the Baptist was probably the only one who could say he saw and heard the truth, though it is possible others standing by could also see and hear (the texts are not clear).

Everybody around could see the Man from Nazareth in the water, but it was probably only John who heard the Voice of the

Father, who saw the likeness of the Dove, the Holy Spirit, hovering over him.

So everybody since that moment has always had to reply on the experience of St John. Each Christian generation since then has relied on others.

So it is with all religion, we rely upon others - St John, the Apostles, etc. My faith gets its strength from your faith. Your faith is built up by my faith.

So we live in a community of faith, and must all stick close



Holy Trinity Church

No answer yet! We expected a decision in December, but have now been called to an evening meeting on Friday 12 January, when the Council will be inquiring again into our plans. The process seems unending.....!

Down to the River - Sunday 7 Jan

After the Holy Liturgy at 10.30 am, we go to the River to bless it - do come down with us for the short but significant ceremony - bring the children.

to our brothers and sisters in faith, for we rely on each other, we need each other.

When we do this we become strong. We learn from each other, especially the Saints and Fathers. We become beacons of light, not of ourselves but in Christ and his faithful ones.

We learn from this occasion that Christ is not only a good Man but also God's only-begotten Son, sharing the Divine nature.

Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, says St Paul.

God bless you all in 2018.

Father Alexander

SPECIAL DAYS AT ST HELEN'S

- Monday 1 Jan - Circumcision & St Basil the Great
10.30 am Holy Liturgy (note the time)
- Sunday 7 Jan - Holy Theophany (instead of Sat 6)
10.30 am Holy Liturgy, Blessing of the Waters & Procession to the River
- Thursday 11 Jan - St Theodosius the Gt, the Cenobiarch
9.30 am Holy Liturgy
- Wednesday 24 Jan - St Xenia, Fool for Christ
9.30 am Holy Liturgy
- Friday 2 Feb - Meeting of Christ in the Temple
9.30 am Holy Liturgy
- Thursday 8 Feb - Great Martyr Theodore Stratelates
9.30 am Holy Liturgy
- Sunday 18 Feb - Sunday of Cheesefare, Forgiveness Sun
10.30 am Holy Liturgy & Forgiveness Prayers
- Wednesday 21 Feb - 1st Week of Lent
9.30 am Holy Presanctified Liturgy (& every Wed)
- Friday 23 Feb - 1st Week of Lent
6.00 pm Akathist of the Mother of God (& every Fri)
- Sunday 25 Feb - 1st Sun of Lent, Sunday of Orthodoxy
10.30 am Holy Liturgy of St Basil & Ceremony of Orthodoxy

PLEASE TAKE NOTE

*** Next Newsletter ***

This issue covers January and February. The next will be for March: we hope to make it a special edition, as it will be number 250!

*** Holy Pascha & the Great Fast (Lent) ***

Orthodox Easter is early this year - 8 April. So the Great Fast starts early - 18 February.

*** Children of St Helen ***

Sat 13 Jan 3.00 pm - Sat 3 Feb 3.00 pm
for pre-school & primary children
3.00 pm is a permanent change of time



CHRISTMAS: Our thanks to those who sent greeting cards or presents. They were all much appreciated.

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 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): see announcement on this page

Parish Priest: Father Alexander (Alistair) Haig

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Churchwardens: David Davies 01-473-745-167 Dusan Radunovic 01-206-762-553

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

Bank Account: Sort Code 20-22-67 Account No. 50349364

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

At St James Anglican Church, Beatrice Rd, Clacton-on-sea CO15 1LE

Divine Liturgy: usually third Saturday of month 10.00 am

CLACTON
HOLY
LITURGY
Sat 20 Jan
&
Sat 24 Feb
10.00 am
Note date

Get to understand the coming weeks

The Great Fast (often called Lent) leads up to the central feast of Holy Pascha, which is the heart of all Christian teaching. It is forty days long, but rather more complicated than that.

- Pre-Lent:** This is the four Sundays before Lent, preparing us for the Fast. The **first Sunday** is the *Sunday of the Publican* ('Tax-collector') and *Pharisee*, teaching us that the only way forward for all of us is the way of sincere repentance (Greek *metanoia*), comparing ourselves only with Christ. The week following is with no fasting except before Communion. The **second** is the *Sunday of the Prodigal Son*, teaching that we must humbly return to God our Father and he will always forgive us. The **third** is the *Sunday of the Last Judgment*, warning us that all the world must eventually be judged. This also *Meatfare Sunday*, the last day we eat meat until Pascha. The **fourth** is Forgiveness Sunday, when, as we start the time of Lenten repentance before God, we ask forgiveness of our fellow believers. This is *Cheesefare Sunday*, the last occasion for dairy products before Pascha.
- Lent, the Great Fast**, begins the next day, always Monday, called *Clean Monday*. Orthodox try to keep the first week rigorously. Some fast almost entirely, but most of us have to be less strict. I will produce a hand-out by Metropolitan Kallistos to help our members. But remember that you are not a monk or nun and have to maintain your everyday life, and you may need a lot of the possible relaxations: it is a good idea to ask your spiritual father so make sure you do not over- or under-do it. Little ones the elderly or sick, and manual workers, should not do too much.
- The **services of Lent** vary from the normal pattern. On *Sunday morning* the service is the **Liturgy of St Basil**. On *Wednesday morning* (9.30 am) there is the **Pre-sanctified Liturgy**—Holy Communion being given from a Lamb specially consecrated the previous Sunday. On *Friday evening* (6 pm) part of the **Akathist** (a hymn to the Mother of God) is sung.
- The **Sundays of Lent** have their dedications: 1. *Sunday of Orthodoxy*; 2. *St Gregory Palamas*; 3. *Veneration of the Cross*; 4. *St John Climacus*; 5. *St Mary of Egypt*—but this year the great feast of the *Annunciation* falls on that day and will largely supplant St Mary.
- The **Holy Week** fast begins with *Lazarus Saturday* and *Palm Sunday*. More of that later.

It all sounds intimidating, but don't let it overwhelm you. Ask advice if you need it. Criticise no-one else in their fasting or non-fasting. Concentrate on your own faithfulness to Christ. Confess your sins before Pascha. Many of you will closely affect and be closely affected by non-Orthodox family members, friends or colleagues. Make light of your efforts. Do it all in the spirit of thanksgiving and generosity.

Lent is not meant to be miserable, with contrasting Pascha joyfulness following: it is all a joyful activity of following Christ.

A Word from the Fathers: St Jerome on the Prophet Joel

Return to me with all your heart' and prove that your repentance is genuine by fasting and weeping and lamentation.

Fast now and you will feast hereafter. Weep now and you will laugh hereafter. Present mourning brings future joy.

I know it is one of your customs to rend your garments as a mark of distress and anger. The high priest did this to underline the charges against the Lord our Saviour, and even Paul and Barnabas did it,

though only because of the blasphemy they had heard.

Well, I say it is not your garments you must rend but your sinful hearts which like the wineskins will burst unless you tear them.

When you have done this you can return to the Lord your God from whom you have been estranged by your former sins.

Do not let the greatness of your sin make you despair of pardon.

The greater the sins, the more striking is the power of God's mercy.

The Meeting of the Lord

On 2 Feb, 40 days after the Birth, Mary brings her Child to the Temple. Just so, Orthodox Women bring their child 40 days after birth. God bless all our dear Orthodox children. Parents, bring up your child in the faith of Christ's Holy Church. Bring them often to the Holy Chalice.



Here and There

PARISH GIFTS: I have sent serving with me, and Margaret at her usual spot at the Parish to the following local charities:

- St Helena Hospice Beacon House** (needy & homeless)
- Bernard Brett House** (vulnerable young adults)
- Open Door** (Eld Lane)

If you would like us to support a particular charity let me know.

HAIGS TOGETHER: We had all our family together immediately after Christmas which was lovely. It was also good to have **Deacon Alexander**

ret at her usual spot at the choir desk. Thanks to them.

BAPTISED:

- Saphira Stewart**, daughter of Wesley and Kaliope of Holland-on-sea, baptised here in November.
- Olivia Sotiriou**, daughter of John and Amy of Abbey Field, baptised here unexpectedly in December (snow having prevented their getting to the arranged service in London!). Many years to them all!

JANUARY-FEBRUARY DAYS

Mon	1	Circumcision, St Basil the Great
Tue	2	S Seraphim of Sarov
Sat	6	HOLY THEOPHANY OF CHRIST
Sun	7	Sunday after Theophany, S John the Forerunner
Wed	10	S Gregory of Nyssa
Thu	11	S Theodosius the Great, the Cenobiarch
Fri	12	S Benedict Biscop, Abbot of Wearmouth
Sat	13	S Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers
Sun	14	Pentecost 32
Tue	16	Veneration of the Precious Chains of S Peter
Wed	27	S Antony the Great
Thu	18	SS Athanasius the Great & Cyril of Alexandria
Fri	19	S Macarius the Great, S Mark of Ephesus
Sat	20	S Euthymius the Great
Sun	21	Sun of Zacchaeus, S Maximos the Confessor
Mon	22	Apostle Timothy of the Seventy
Wed	24	S Xenia the Fool-for-Christ, of S Petersburg
Thu	25	S Gregory the Theologian
Sat	27	Translation of Relics of S John Chrysostom
Sun	28	Sunday of the Publican & Pharisee
Tue	30	Three Ecumenical Teachers & Great Hierarchs
Wed	31	Wonderworkers & Unmercenaries Cyrus & John
		Feb
Fri	2	MEETING OF CHRIST IN THE TEMPLE
Sat	3	Righteous Symeon the God-receiver & Anna
Sun	4	Sunday of the Prodigal Son
Tue	6	S Photios of Constantinople
Thu	8	Great Martyr Theodore Stratelates, the General
Sat	10	Saturday of Souls, Hieromartyr Charalambos
Sun	11	Sunday of Meatfare, of the Last Judgment
Sat	17	Commemoration of Monks & Nuns
Sun	18	Sunday of Cheesefare, Forgiveness Sunday
Mon	19	FIRST DAY OF THE GREAT FAST (LENT)
Fri	23	Hieromartyr Polycarp of Smyrna
Sat	24	Great Martyr Theodore the Recruit
		1st & 2nd Findings of Head of S John the Baptist
Sun	25	Lent 1, Sunday of Orthodoxy