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## The Orthodox Parish of St Martin & St Helen

Charity Number 1192469

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### Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of the British Isles & Ireland

HE Metropolitan Silouan Oner

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#### **Having passed through the Great Feast of Holy Pentecost**, we

encounter another period of fasting known as the Apostles Fast. This fast is unknown in Western Christianity and comes as something of a surprise to many converts to Orthodoxy who have, it seems to them, endured only quite recently the long weeks of Great Lent and Holy Week! Having rejoiced for fifty days following Pascha and the Resurrection of Jesus, the Apostles began to think about and prepare for their mission to spread the Gospel abroad. According to Holy Tradition, as part of their preparation, they commenced a fast with a prayer asking God for endurance and resolve and to be with them on their often dangerous travels to

spread the Good News. The scriptural basis for the fast is found in the Synoptic Gospels. The Pharisees criticised the Apostles for not fasting and obeying the Law of Moses. Jesus said to them, "*Can the children of the bride-chamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast.*" (Matthew 9:15, Mark 2:19-20, Luke 5:34-35). Christ is referring both to His crucifixion here and to the building of the church by spreading the Gospel, which can only be accomplished with prayer and fasting.

The fast has its origins in antiquity and is thought to have been instituted in thanksgiving to God for the witness of the Holy Apostles. With this fast, faithful Christians express their thanks for the Apostles' endurance of persecution, hardship and privations during their wonderful mission. The Apostles Fast begins on the second Monday after Pentecost and concludes on the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul on June 29. Because the date of Pascha determines the date of Holy Pentecost, this fast can vary greatly in length. Saints Peter and Paul are traditionally regarded as the co-founders of our God blessed Patriarchate of Antioch, with Peter considered its first bishop. The fast is less strict than Great Lent (please see the fasting guidelines below). May you all seek deeper prayer and faith in the come weeks. The fast starts this year of Monday 8<sup>th</sup> June.

**Good strength! Fr Mark**

**Baptism News** We were greatly blessed on May 16 to baptise little George Nikolai, newborn son of our dear friend Maria Hollie Ichin and her husband Tiberiu. It was a very happy occasion and there was a chance for the many guests to have some food and drink afterwards. Many years to the newly illumined George Nikolai, and to his Godparents Octavian and Anca.

**~As Many as have been baptised into Christ have put on Christ, alleluia!~**

**Catechesis** The new catechesis class is underway and I am ably assisted by Reader Andreas Moran who brings his many years of faith, knowledge and experience to the process. We have five catechumens in the current group. All are welcome to these sessions. Scheduling will be somewhat patchy over the summer as various people go on holiday etcetera. The next face to face session will be after the Divine Liturgy on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> June.

**Roof Repairs** Several people have asked me about progress with the roof repairs. Unfortunately the planning application for the work is again frustratingly stuck with the city council planners, who have further questions about our proposed schedule of works. We have engaged a new local architect, Duncan, Clark and Beckett Ltd who we hope will be able to guide and advise us through this tricky situation. Please keep the project, the city council and the project committee in your prayers! The funding is standing by awaiting our permission to go ahead.

**Thanksgiving Sunday**  
*Many thanks to all of you made pledges on Thanksgiving Sunday. Later on in June we will let you know what the positive impact has been on our regular income. I hope that the information provided about the church budget has been interesting and that there is a better understanding that we all stand or fall by our own commitment to keep the parish going and with God's help to fulfil all things by His providence. May God bless your gifts, your generosity and your love.*



*Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal. **John 6:27***

**Suitable Dress in Church**  
**PLEASE DRESS MODESTLY**

I understand that in this hot weather it can be tempting to focus on staying cool when thinking about clothes! However there are a few things to bear in mind when attending church. Both men and women should avoid tight fitting or revealing clothes. A reasonably smart pair of trousers and a lightweight long sleeved shirt are ideal for men. Women should consider a light shawl or scarf to cover their shoulders if needed. Shorts on men and women and short skirts on women are not appropriate in the temple. This is not some prudish prohibition but a recognition that we are in church to worship God, also we should not carelessly put temptation to judgement, envy, lust or anger in front of others.

*I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship*

**Romans 12:1**

**Holidays** Father Mark and Khouria Paula will be on holiday in Greece from June 1 until June 11. Father Archimandrite Paulinus will come from Norwich to serve the Divine Liturgy on Sunday 7 June. There will be no Vespers the evening before and instead of Orthros the Third and Sixth Hours will be served. Hours from 10:10am, Divine Liturgy at 10:30am. I know you will look after dear Fr Paulinus and make him welcome, as you did last year.

**Archdiocesan Retreat**

The Antiochian Archdiocese retreat was held at the Othona Community in Bradwell on Sea, Essex over the bank Holiday Weekend 22-25 May. Many Services including a Hierarchical Divine Liturgy were held in the nearby ancient Saxon chapel of St Peter's on the Wall. This timeless and beautiful church was built by St Cedd in the 7<sup>th</sup> Century as an Anglo-Celtic church for the East Saxons. The retreat was attended by folk from all over our archdiocese, with many talks, social activities and much fun, especially for the many children!

Fr Mark gave a talk on Saturday afternoon and then served Vespers in the presence of Sayedna. It was a very well organised event and it would be great to see more people and families from our wonderful parish at future retreats!



Sayedna Silouan and clergy in St Peter's on the Wall

**St. Seraphim of Sarov on Fasting On Fasting.**

“Prayer, fasting, vigils, and all other Christian practices, however good they are in themselves, do not constitute the goal of our Christian life, although they serve as a necessary means to its attainment. The true goal of our Christian life consists in the acquisition of the Holy Spirit of God. Fasting, vigils, prayers, alms-giving and all good deeds done for the sake of Christ are but means for the acquisition of the Holy Spirit of God. But note, my son, that only a good deed done for the sake of Christ brings us the fruits of the Holy Spirit. All that is done, if it is not for Christ's sake, although it may be good, brings us no reward in the life to come, nor does it give us God's grace in the present life.”

**What is it?**

The *epitrachelion* (literally: 'on the neck') is the liturgical vestment worn by priests and bishops of the Orthodox Church and Eastern Catholic Churches as the symbol of their priesthood, corresponding to the Western stole. It is always put on with the following prayer: *Blessed is God who*



*poureth out His Grace upon His priests, as oil of myrrh which runneth down the beard, upon the beard of Aaron, which runneth down to the fringe of his raiment, always now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.*

**Orthodox Parish of St Martin & St Helen  
+ June 2026 Services +**

<b>Saturday 6 June</b>	NO VESPERS
<b>Sunday 7 June</b>	Hours & Divine Liturgy: Sunday of All Saints from 10:00am St Martin's Church.
<b>Monday 8 June</b>	<b>APOSTLES FAST BEGINS</b>
<b>Saturday 13 June</b>	Great Vespers   4:30pm St Martin's Church
<b>Sunday 14 June</b>	Matins & Divine Liturgy: All Saints of Britain  9:30 St Martin's Church.
<b>Friday 19 June</b>	Hours and Divine Liturgy: Holy Apostle Jude Brother of Our Lord   8:15am St Helen's Chapel.
<b>Saturday 20 June</b>	Great Vespers   4:30pm St Martin's Church.
<b>Sunday 21 June</b>	Matins & Divine Liturgy   9:30 St Martin's Church.
<b>Wednesday 24 June</b>	Hours and Divine Liturgy: Nativity of the Holy and Glorious Forerunner John the Baptist   8:15am St Helen's Chapel.
<b>Saturday 27 June</b>	Great Vespers   4:30pm St Martin's Church.
<b>Sunday 28 June</b>	Matins & Divine Liturgy:  9:30 St Martin's Church
<b>Monday 29 June</b>	Hours and Divine Liturgy: Holy Glorious and All Praised Leaders of the Apostles Peter and Paul   8:15am St Helen's Chapel. (APOSTLES FAST ENDS)

+Confessions on Saturday evenings after Great Vespers or by appointment.+

# 2026 Fasting Calendar

LEGEND:
Abstain from meat, dairy, eggs, fish, olive oil, wine
Abstain from meat, dairy, eggs, fish, olive oil
Abstain from meat, dairy, eggs, fish
Abstain from meat, dairy, eggs
Abstain from meat

*Note: On the day of a parish's patronal feast, fish, wine and oil are allowed if it falls on a fasting day.*

January									
				1	2	3			
4	5	6	7	8	9	10			
11	12	13	14	15	16	17			
18	19	20	21	22	23	24			
25	26	27	28	29	30	31			

February						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

March						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

April									
			1	2	3	4			
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12	13	14	15	16	17	18			
19	20	21	22	23	24	25			
26	27	28	29	30					

May									
						1	2		
3	4	5	6	7	8	9			
10	11	12	13	14	15	16			
17	18	19	20	21	22	23			
24	25	26	27	28	29	30			
31									

June						
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14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

July									
			1	2	3	4			
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19	20	21	22	23	24	25			
26	27	28	29	30	31				

August									
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9	10	11	12	13	14	15			
16	17	18	19	20	21	22			
23	24	25	26	27	28	29			
30	31								

September						
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13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

October									
			1	2	3				
4	5	6	7	8	9	10			
11	12	13	14	15	16	17			
18	19	20	21	22	23	24			
25	26	27	28	29	30	31			

November									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7			
8	9	10	11	12	13	14			
15	16	17	18	19	20	21			
22	23	24	25	26	27	28			
29	30								

December						
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

***When fasting, please consult your spiritual father for guidance.***

## STANDING ORDER FORM



To My Bank Manager:

Bank Name	
Bank Address	
Bank Account Number	
Bank Sort Code	

Please Pay:

Payee Bank Name	BARCLAYS BANK
Payee Account Name	The Orthodox Parish of St Helen of Colchester
Payee Sort Code	20-22-67
Payee Account Number	50349364
Payment Amount	
Payment Frequency	
First Payment Date	
Please Quote Ref:	XP-Giving

My Details:

Name	
Address	
Signature	

# The Orthodox Parish of St Martin and St Helen, Colchester

(registered charity number: 1192469)

## Gift Aid Declaration

Please treat as Gift Aid donations all qualifying gifts of money made (tick ALL relevant boxes)

today       in the past 4 years       in the future

### Boost your donation by 25p of Gift Aid for every £1 you donate

Gift Aid is reclaimed by The Church from the tax you pay for the current tax year. Your address is needed to identify you as a current UK taxpayer.

### By completing this form you confirm:

"I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference."

Title	Forename or initials*	Middle name or initials	Surname*
<b>Address*</b>			
<b>Signature:</b>			
<b>Date:</b>			

**\*Please note that the details marked with \* are mandatory.**

Please notify the Parish Treasurer if you:

- Want to cancel this declaration
- Change your name or home address
- No longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains.

If you pay Income Tax at a higher rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self Assessment tax return or ask HMRC to adjust your tax code.

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