

Lent: the time for new beginnings

Lent, the Great Fast as we know it - begins on Monday (it's always a Monday) 7 March. If we like, we can make it a day of mourning and of a gloomy giving up what we like in terms of foods.

But, if we like, it can conversely be a day of getting to terms with what we really feel is the point of life, planning to getting spiritually fit again, planning to get fit in time for Great and Holy Week, for the Glorious Death and Resurrection of Our Lord and God Jesus Christ, for Pascha.

Annunciation - beautifully and traditionally known in English as "Lady Day" - falls in Lent, on 25 March.

Both days are days for *new beginnings*. Lent *begins* the preparation for Pascha: it was originally when catechumens (those learning the teaching and practice of the Christian faith) started the last preparations to be received into the Holy Orthodox Faith.

Lady Day *begins* the conception and gestation of the humanity of Christ, being exactly nine months before the Birth of Christ.

So the Akathist of the Mother of God is appropriately celebrated in its four sections on the first four Friday evenings of Lent—until the full hymn is sung on the fifth. It is a lovely, beautiful hymn, describing her loveliness, obedience, and humility of her who alone was found worthy to bear our God in human flesh.

It displays how the intensity and devotion of Lent can be a very joyful and happy experience of salvation, a happy, new beginning for our souls.

Have a good, holy, and joyful Lent!

*Father Alexander
Alexander*

FOR YOUR DIARY IN MARCH

Monday 7 March: First day of The Great Fast (known as Lent)

SATURDAYS	4.30 pm Great Vespers in <u>St Martin's</u>
SUNDAYS in Lent	10.30 am Holy Liturgy of St Basil in <u>St Martin's</u>
TUESDAY 1 March	ST DAVID, PATRON OF WALES 9.30 am Holy Liturgy in <u>St Helen's</u>
SUNDAY 6 March	FORGIVENESS SUNDAY, CHEESEFARE <i>After Liturgy: Forgiveness Prayers from Vespers</i>
SUNDAY 13 March	LENT 1, SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY <i>After Liturgy: Procession—bring an icon to hold</i>
SUNDAY 20 March	LENT 2, ST GREGORY PALAMAS
SUNDAY 27 March	LENT 3, VENERATION OF THE HOLY CROSS
WEDNESDAYS in Lent	9.30 am Vespers & Liturgy of the Presanctified in <u>St Martin's</u>
FRIDAYS in Lent	6.00 pm Akathist of the Theotokos in <u>St Helen's</u>
FRIDAY 25 March	ANNUNCIATION OF THE MOTHER OF GOD 9.30 am Holy Liturgy in <u>St Martin's</u> 6.00 pm Akathist of the Theotokos in <u>St Helen's</u>



The regular services of the Great Fast (Lent)

Saturdays: Great Vespers 4.30 pm

Sundays: Mattins 9.45 am, Liturgy of St Basil 10.30 am

Wednesdays: Vespers & Liturgy of the Pre-sanctified 9.30 am

Fridays: Akathist of the Mother of God 6.00 pm (in St Helen's)

Confessions Saturdays after Vespers about 5.00 pm, or by arrangement

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

IBAN: GB05BUKB20226780219819 Bank Account Sort Code: 20-22-67

Bank Account No: 50349364

Appeal Account No: 80219819

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

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



New Project Manager Catalin Fliscu

Progress on our new parish church

New Project Manager appointed

We are very grateful for the interest that has been aroused in our new building. The first thing to announce is that I have released FATHER MARK from his responsibilities as Project Manager. This because, now ordained he is bound to have more spiritual duties, and these must take precedence. He is still working on his theological studies, which are to be completed before he can be ordained Priest—though he hopes to complete his course in just a few months' time. I am sure you are united to me in our gratitude for all he has done over a period of several years now, and the way he has steered things through to this point.

In his place as Project Manager I have appointed CATALIN FLISCU, who has much experience in the business world and is well-fitted to this new position. He has already begun work, and will not be doing all the jobs himself—so watch out if he approaches you for a particular job in the future: it will be an indication that God has work for you to do in setting up the new temple of God in this place.

He has already started a register of people with particular skills that are useful here. If you have practical skills of one sort or another (e.g. electrical work, or plastering, or sewing, or gardening) do give Catalin a ring on 07-815-682-820. This will mean that when the time comes he will be able to call on individuals to see if they are free to help at that time—and some skills may be needed very soon.

MANY YEARS to Father DAVID GILCHRIST, ordained Priest by His Eminence Archbishop NIKITAS of Thyateira in February, to serve mainly in Margate Greek parish. When he was in Brentwood as an Anglican priest he occasionally joined us for worship. On resigning he moved to Dover and became Orthodox. We were delighted to hear of his ordination, and wish him a long and fulfilling ministry.

READER: We are pleased that NICK TAYLOR, who became our parish treasurer at the beginning of this year, has agreed to train for a ministry as a Reader in the parish. The position of Reader is very important in the Orthodox church: large parts of the regular services apart from the Holy Liturgy, are read

Here and there

by the Readers. They also have a ministry as spiritual leaders in a parish. He joins GEORGE HARRISON and CATALIN FLISCU, together with ANDREAS MORAN who was a Reader in the parish though he is able to do less these days. Our thanks to all our Readers for their work and devotion to the preparation and conducting of our worship.

FASTING: Fasting is a vital aspect of the life of an Orthodox Christian who has any serious intent in his or her devotion to Jesus Christ.

Christ talks about fasting as an integral activity along with prayer and almsgiving. It is possible to "overdo" the discipline, and we who live "in

the world" should remember that we cannot live like monks and nuns. The rules in the Orthodox way of life were set up by monastics, and must be modified in the world.—But that does not mean that we are just to sit back and take it easy. The rules are included in our Diocesan calendar, and should be studied. Also remember that your parish priest or spiritual father can help in a lot of ways with advice as to interpretation of the rules. Do not hesitate to ask for help. Many people have been led astray without need, when they could have asked for simple advice.

THE APPEAL REMAINS OPEN

We are grateful to those continuing to support the Appeal. God bless you.

A Word from the Fathers: St Ignatius of Antioch

From Ignatius, whose other name is Theophorus [the God-bearer], to the church of God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ at Philadelphia in Asia [Minor], mercifully settled in all godly concord; steadfastly rejoicing in the passion and resurrection of our Lord, and in the fullness of his mercy, holding sure and certain conviction of the same. I send you my greetings in the blood of wherein is joy eternal and un-failing; all the more so when men are at one with their

bishop— and with their clergy and deacons too, whose appointment with him is approved by Jesus Christ, and confirmed and ratified, according to his will, by his Holy Spirit. Your bishop's office, which exists for the good of the whole community, was never obtained by his own efforts, as I know very well, nor by any other mere human agency, still less in any spirit of self-glorification, but it was conferred upon him by the love of God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

MARCH DAYS

Tue	1	St David of Wales
Wed	2	St Chad of Lichfield, S Nicolas Planas of Athens
Fri	4	S Gerasimos of the Jordan
Sat	5	Saturday of Cheesefare Commemoration of all Monks & Nuns
Sun	6	Sunday of Cheesefare, Forgiveness Sunday, Discovery of the Precious Cross & Nails by S Helen
Mon	7	First Day of the Great Fast (Lent)
Tue	8	S Felix, Apostle of the East Angles
Wed	9	Forty Martyrs of Sebaste
Sat	12	Commemoration of S Theodore the Recruit
Sun	13	Lent 1, Sunday of Orthodoxy
Mon	14	S Benedict of Nursia
Thu	17	S Patrick, Apostle of Ireland
Fri	18	Martyr Edward, King of England
Sun	20	Lent 2, S Gregory Palamas, S Cuthbert, Bishop of Lindisfarne
Fri	25	ANNUNCIATION OF THEOTOKOS
Sat	26	Synaxis of Archangel Gabriel
Sun	27	Lent 3, Veneration of the Cross
Thu	31	New Martyr Nun Maria (Skobtsova) of Paris