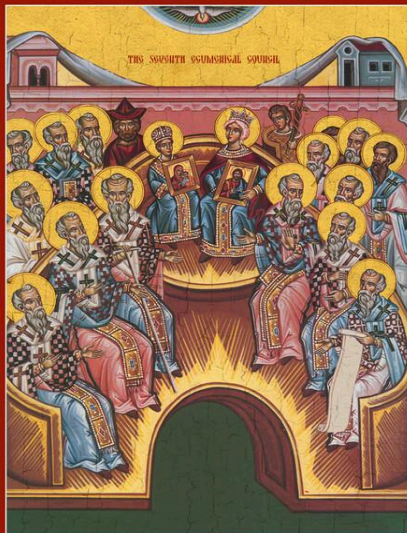


THE ORTHODOX PARISH OF ST MARTIN & ST HELEN

Newsletter: October 2024 | Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of the British Isles & Ireland | HE Metropolitan Silouan Oner



Icon of the 7th Ecumenical Council

News & Views

BAPTISM: On Sunday September 22, after the Holy Liturgy, baby David Iarovoi, son of Veaceslav and Ija Iarovoi was baptised in St Martin's Church.

Children's Corner. Thanks to Melena for tidying up and sorting out the books and puzzles for the children. We ask that parents continue to keep this area tidy and that only Christian books and activities are donated, if desired.

CHURCH WINE - Gifts of wine are particularly welcome for use in preparing Holy Communion. We use Mavrodaphne of Patras, a sweet red Greek wine, which is available locally in the larger Colchester branches of Tesco, Sainsbury's and Waitrose.

CATECHESIS STARTS AGAIN

Fr Mark will be starting a new catechism class in late October, for newcomers, inquirers or Orthodox folk wishing to learn more about and deepen their Faith. The sessions will be on Sundays in St Martin's Church, immediately after the Liturgy and will be held fortnightly unless a feast or special event means that a change in schedule is required. Please speak to Father Mark for details and check the parish website for schedules and session details. www.orthodoxcolchester.org.uk

On Sunday 13 October, the 16th Sunday after Holy Pentecost, the Orthodox Church commemorates the Holy Fathers of the Seventh Ecumenical Council.

This council dealt with a controversy which had arisen in the empire around the use of icons in Christian life and worship. One side in the conflict argued, heretically, that the veneration of icons was tantamount to idol worship; the defenders of icons held the Orthodox position that the use of icons is necessary and essential because they protect the full and proper doctrine of the Incarnation. While God cannot be represented in His eternal nature ("**...no man has seen God**", **John 1:18**), He can be depicted simply because He "**became human and took flesh.**" **Of Him who took a material body, material images can be made.** In so taking a material body, God proved that matter can be redeemed. He deified matter, making it spirit-bearing, and so if flesh can be a medium for the Spirit, so can wood or paint, although in a different fashion. *St John of Damascus, whose work on the theology of icons was so decisive in ensuring the victory of the Orthodox side in the dispute wrote: "Concerning the charge of idolatry: Icons are not idols but symbols, therefore when an Orthodox venerates an icon, he is not guilty of idolatry. He is not worshipping the symbol, but merely venerating it. Such veneration is not directed toward wood, or paint or stone, but towards the person depicted. Therefore relative honor is shown to material objects, but worship is due to God alone."* **Father Mark**

National Heritage Open Days: Update

Both churches received a total of 220 visitors over the weekend of the 14th and 15th of September. Many thanks to all who helped welcome our guests and clean the church beforehand. We feel strongly that this annual event is an opportunity to witness our Orthodox Faith and show love and hospitality to our neighbours and strangers. **We look forward to next year's National Heritage Open Days!**

The Doors, The Doors!

It was with great joy that during September the beautiful icons for the Holy Doors of our iconostasis were installed. This now completes the lower tiers, as it were, leaving the upper row of feasts and the large icons of the Mystical Supper to be finished in due course. We plan to install all of the 12 feasts in one go, when they are ready, so that we do not disrupt the overall harmony of the piece. **Icons of St Martin & St John the Baptist** have been removed temporarily by Sophronia for repairs to their bottom left hand corners, where the varnish did not properly cure, leading to slight damage to the underlying pigment and gold leaf. Sophronia informs us that the restoration work is going very well. Please pray for the continued success of this project!



**ST DEMETRIOS THE
MYRRH-FLOWING OF
THESSALONICA**

Don't be troubled if you don't feel the love of God in yourself, but think about the Lord, that He is merciful, and guard yourself from sins, and the grace of God will teach you. (St. Silouan the Athonite, Writings, IX.16)



Saint Demetrios suffered in Thessalonica during the reign of Galerius Maximian (c. 306).

He belonged to a very distinguished family of the province of Macedonia and was widely admired not only because of his noble ancestry and graceful bearing, but also for his virtue, wisdom and goodness of heart, surpassing that of his elders. He became a Christian but was nonetheless appointed to a high military rank and managed to practice his Christian faith and convert many pagans, who were drawn to his brotherly love and great zeal for Christ. He was denounced as a secret Christian to the Imperial authorities and imprisoned. After helping by his prayers a heroic young lad, Nestor, to defeat a mighty gladiator in the arena, St Demetrios was eventually run through with lances on the order of the furious emperor. God caused the grace which He imparted to the saint in life to remain active after his martyrdom in the form of a sweet smelling myrrh, which flowed from his relics. He is greatly loved in the city of Thessaloniki, which he protects by his holy intercessions.

The entire world has found you to be a great champion in times of peril; / for you put the heathen to flight, O victorious one. / As you brought to naught the boasts of Lyaeus, and gave courage to Nestor in the stadium, / in the same way, O Holy Great Martyr Demetrios, entreat Christ God, that He grant us great mercy. Troparion Tone 3.

St Helen's Chapel - the Future

Since last month several prayer requests have been left for Father Alexander and me, asking for our prayers for family members struggling with depression, cancer and career and family problems. Some of these requests are (judging by their names) from Orthodox people but not all by any means. This gives us, as priests, an opportunity to pray, not only for those who are part of the Orthodox Church, but also for those who are not (John 10:16). As St Silouan the Athonite taught in one of his great insights for this generation, every Christian has a responsibility to pray that *all* people will come to the knowledge and salvation of God. This attitude of humility and repentance is indispensable if we wish to truly receive the Grace of God, and preserves us from a cold hearted, pharisaical elitism. Let us ask for the prayers of the Holy and Right Believing Empress, Helen - Equal to the Apostles, to help us in our mission to the local community and beyond.

+Additional Services for October 2024+

Tuesday 1 October

The Protection of Our Most Holy Lady the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary | Hours & Holy Liturgy 9:30am St Helen's Chapel.

Friday 18 October

Holy Apostle and Evangelist Luke | Hours & Holy Liturgy 9:30am St Helen's Chapel.

Wednesday 23 October

Holy Apostle James, Brother of the Lord | Hours & Holy Liturgy 9:30am St Helen's Chapel.

NB: Parish observance of the Feast of St Demetrios will be on Sunday 27 October

We are grateful to those continuing to support our church by regular or occasional gifts; may God bless you. Bank details: Orthodox Parish of St Martin & St Helen: Registered Charity No: 1192469 IBAN: GB05BUKB20226780219819 Sort Code: 20-22-67 Account No: 50349364 Appeal Account No: 80219819



Regular Service Times:

Saturdays: Great Vespers 4:30pm

Sundays: Matins & Holy Liturgy from 9:45am

Weekend services ALL at St Martins. Additional (weekday) services usually at St Helen's Chapel unless otherwise stated.

St Helen's Chapel is open daily for prayer and pilgrimage.

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. Nearest car park NCP: Nunns Road, CO1 1EJ.

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

CLERGY: Father Alexander Haig, 17 Maidenburgh Street, CO1 1UB. Phone: 01206 530 530 \ Mobile: 07947 047 201 Email: parishpriest@orthodoxcolchester.org.uk

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