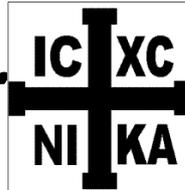


Orthodox Parish of St Helen of Colchester

Antiochian Orthodox Deanery

NEWSLETTER 152

MARCH 2009



Please be here to welcome Our new Archbishop on his first official visit - Sunday 15 March



His Eminence Metropolitan JOHN makes his first official visit here on Sunday 15 March. I hope you will do your best to be here to welcome him. Mattins will be at 9.45 am and Hierarchical Liturgy will follow about 10.30 am.

This is not in fact his first visit, for he came here some seven years ago when assistant bishop to the Patriarch.

But this will be the first-ever visit of an Archbishop of this Diocese to his people in Colchester. I hope it will be the first of many such occasions.

I hope you will take this opportunity to welcome him and to ask his blessing.

Father Alexander

When His Eminence comes

There are numbers of things we need to prepare for the visit: A 'Hierarchical Liturgy' - a Holy Liturgy served by a Bishop - is different from an ordinary Holy Liturgy.

For example:

- He has an official **Welcome** at the door.
- The **Trisagion** is fuller and longer.
- The Bishop gives some **Blessings** with the triple and double candlesticks.
- There are **Greetings** to the Bishop: 'Eis polieta, Despota!'

So there will be:

- A short **Servers rehearsal** on Sunday 8 March after the Liturgy.
- Possibly a **Choir rehearsal** - Singers ask for information.

For the Lunch in Castlegate Centre:

- Sign the **List for numbers attending** - or phone or email - for catering purposes.
- **Help with food:** please make offers to the Catering Committee - Christodouli (01-206-263-565) or Carol (365-065) or Alexia (525-638).

Meeting Archbishop JOHN

The Bishop is a very kindly and loving man, as you will see. He is a Syrian, born in Lattakia. He has written on liturgical subjects, was Dean of Theology at Balamand University, and Bishop and Abbot of St George's Monastery in Syria. His English is improving—he is now spending several weeks at an English school in Cambridge.

Treat him with the respect due to his office. Address him as 'Your Eminence' but after the first time, as 'Master' or 'Father' - or some people call him 'Sayedna', the Arabic term. If you meet him before or after the service, say, 'Your blessing, Master,' and kiss his hand.

At Lunch allow him time to eat, but there will be opportunity for you to go to him, and introduce yourself and your family to him.

He may preach a short sermon at the Liturgy, but will probably speak more freely at the Lunch.

I hope to present him a copy of the new St Helen.

MARCH WEEKDAYS

WEDNESDAYS AT 6.00 PM

4, 11, 18 March

VESPERS & PRESANCTIFIED LITURGY

25 March Annunciation of the Mother of God

VESPERS & LITURGY OF ST JOHN

FRIDAYS AT 7.00 PM

6, 13, 20, 27 March

AKATHIST OF THE MOTHER OF GOD

SERVICE OF THANKSGIVING

Wednesday 18 March 1.10 pm - welcoming members of other churches in central Colchester

Holy Liturgy

ST FURSEY'S
Sat 7 Mar 10.30 am

CLACTON
Sat 21 Mar 10.00 am



This fine icon of ST HELEN OF COLCHESTER has arrived safely from Athens where it was painted by the iconographer ELENI STELLAKI - our earlier icon was her work some ten years ago. St Helen is shown very similarly to that icon, holding the Holy Cross and this very Chapel (according to ancient western tradition, built by her). But the city wall and Balmerne Gate of Colchester are now shown, and buildings within. At the top is shown her son St Constantine, the first Christian Emperor of Rome. He also, according to the same tradition, was born here and is therefore referred to in the old archives of our town as 'Flower of Britain, Citizen of Colchester'. We are very grateful indeed to the generous donors ANDREAS IOANNOU and his family. Andreas moved into the district only in 2008, and lives in Stanway. Copies of the new icon will be prepared for sale. The old icon will of course continue to be honoured here.

HOLY PASCHA is on 19 April, a week after western Easter.

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 Balmerne Hill), to Northgate; go straight along St Peter Street to Castle Park; continue round, up into Maidenburgh Street. Nuns Road NCP is the nearest car park.

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 after Vespers, or by arrangement
Holy Marriage, Baptism, Funerals, Memorials etc: by arrangement

Parish Priest: *Father Alexander (Alistair) Haig*

17 Maidenburgh St, Colchester CO1 1UB

Tel: 01-206-530-530 Mob: 07-947-047-201 Eml: orthodox.colchester@ntlworld.com

Reader: *Stephen Weston*

St Fursey's House, 111 Neville Rd, Sutton, Stalham NR12 9RR Tel: 01-692-580-552

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

St Fursey's Chapel, 111 Neville Rd,
Sutton, near Stalham, Norfolk

Divine Liturgy: usually first Saturday 9.30 am

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

Divine Liturgy: usually third Saturday 10.00 am

At University of Essex Chaplaincy Centre: Divine Liturgy: one Saturday per term 10.00 am

The People Column

SICK: DENNIS HINDLE very bravely continues his fight against his illness. He has been in and out of hospital, but after each spell looks remarkably well again. He always takes a keen interest in the affairs of our church and parish.

SUMMER WEDDING: ALEX HAIG and MIHAELA COCEA plan their wedding for 25 July in St Andrew's Greek Cathedral, Kentish Town, where Mihaela worships on Sundays. The service is due to be taken by HE Metropolitan KALLISTOS. I have asked for a small Parish celebration in St Helen's on the Sunday (9 August) after their honeymoon in Greece. They expect to live in Colchester, Alex continuing teaching at Colbayn's School, Clacton, and Mihaela her PhD studies at Birkbeck College in London.

GROWING UP: I called on COSTA and UTÈ OLYMBIOS of St Cyrus Avenue the other day, and the subject of a family with a special place in our hearts came up. GEORGE KATSANIS, an officer in the Greek Army, studied for an MA at the University in the very early days of our Parish. He brought his wife MACHI and family to church. I always remember the four children coming up, in order, for the Holy Gifts, each giving a name for me to give Holy Communion. Each time, the oldest (only about 5, and taught by MARY MORRIS at Friars Grove Infant School) came first, looked directly at me with his beautiful dark Greek eyes, and said, "Agamemnon!" How, each time, classical and Christian Greece came before me in a flash! Well, Costa and Utè are still in touch with that family and recently received a photograph - and there they all were, looking splendid and ten years older. It was lovely to see the whole family again. The family gave us our lovely icon of St Kyranna of Ossa, near Salonika.

BYZANTIUM EXHIBITION: The ancient Roman Empire was almost refounded by St Constantine the Great, and this time on Christian principles. In the Latin West it died only 100 years or so later. But in the Greek East it lasted an extraordinary thousand years. Though tottering several times it did not finally fall until 1453. That Eastern Roman Empire we call the Byzantine Empire, and a remarkable celebration of it is in the exhibition in the Royal Academy in Piccadilly. It has gathered treasures - icons, mosaics, metal-ware, books, even cloths - from Greece, St Catherine's Monastery (Sinai), America and Europe. Khouria HILARY, MARGARET and I visited it recently. It is well worth visiting if you can get there before the end of March - but book a place: it is deservedly popular.

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA, or at least its out-back, has of course been suffering to a terrible extent recently with the fires. I emailed Father GEOFFREY HARVEY and Khouria JANET with our sympathy and prayers. Early in the life of our Parish they came here, while still on their way to Orthodoxy (but they soon made the leap). They reply that they have tragically lost a



THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE MOST HOLY THEOTOKOS

Holy Gabriel comes to Blessed Mary, a young woman in Nazareth, announcing the will of God that she should bear the Son of God in her womb and give him human life. She humbly accepts God's will. We celebrate this extraordinary event with a Holy Liturgy in St Helen's on Wednesday 25 March at 9.30 am.

PARISH COUNCIL: There will be a meeting on Sunday 22 March at 1.00 pm: members, please bring a picnic lunch. The Secretary is PAUL LANSLEY.

Spend a good Lent!

The Great Fast, Lent, begins on Monday 2 March. The day before, at the end of the Sunday Liturgy, we have a shortened form of Forgiveness Vespers - and at the end ask each other for forgiveness for our sins.

You will spend a good Lent if you do it with your Mother, Holy Church herself:

- Come to the **Sunday Liturgy of St Basil** faithfully.
- Come to your **Confession** before the Priest at some time before Holy Pascha (Easter).
- Come to **Vespers and Presanctified Liturgy** (Holy Communion consecrated the previous Sunday), on Wednesday evenings, 6.00 pm: it lasts 1½ hours.
- Come to the **Akathist to the Mother of God** on Friday evenings, 7.00 pm - it is a beautiful hymn of praise. We follow the Greek tradition, singing part of it on each of the first four weeks, all of it on the fifth Friday.

You will also gain from the wonderful **Pan-Orthodox Vespers** in London on the Sunday of Orthodoxy, 8 March, when Bishops, clergy and laity from all the Orthodox churches in the London join together. This year it is at the Antiochian St George's Cathedral at 6.30 pm, and our Archbishop will preside.

There is also the **Lent Service** here on Wednesday 18 March, 1.10-1.40 pm, when we shall welcome people from other central Colchester churches. It would be good to have a number of Orthodox people present to give the service some 'integrity'.

For home use is the **Prayer of St Ephrem**, available from church if you do not already have it.

Of course there is also the **Fasting**. Details on a leaflet in church, with the rules for the day on the monthly list of Feasts and Fasts.

**Spend a good Lent ...
... and you will really appreciate Holy Pascha.**

student and a lecturer, their mission in Mirboo North has had 'a close call', and a friend kept alive by dousing himself in water but could not be contacted because his mobile had melted. They say they themselves are safe and their other people, but the smoke over the city is bad.

ORTHODOX HOLIDAYS: Live freely as an Orthodox believer while enjoying yourself in the company of fellow-believers. These look good:

- The **Orthodox Family Camp** in Newtown, Powys 21-24 August for families with primary age children. Adults £110, children reduced. Details in Porch.
- The **Orthodox Youth Camp** for 9-18s (older young people as leaders) in Shropshire at the end July/early August, is always great fun for the youngsters. Book your youngsters in now. Details from ALEX HAIG.

Our Parish Meeting went well!

PAUL LANSLEY reports on the recent meeting.

On Sunday 18 January twenty-three members of St Helen's Parish met at the Castlegate Centre for lunch together and, at Fr Alexander's request, to discuss 'the challenge of our future needs and responsibilities'. This is particularly in view of the arrival in the Town of another Orthodox Parish with spacious buildings and facilities.

Some important decisions were made:

1. **A Parish Council and Constitution are legally necessary for us** to have Charitable Status, enabling us to claim back tax and other advantages. A council was duly elected: *Father Alexander (ex officio), Khouria Hilary, Carol Aristodimou, Paul & Suzanne Brighton-Cross, Tom Carter, Christodouli Cobbold, Alex Haig, David Davies (Treasurer), Paul & Alexia Lansley, Mary Morris.*

Because of the distance some members have to travel, meetings need not be very frequent.

2. **We decided not to move to St Martin's for Easter this year.** The amount of effort involved was too heavy, and the Church has continued meanwhile to be used for unsuitable purposes, while the possibility of our taking it over has become more remote.

3. **We all agreed that St Helen's is now too small for us;** we are quite cramped on most Sundays. Ideas for more space were aired, but all depends on whether or not we can buy the Chapel, or obtain permission to extend westwards. Or should we perhaps look for another building, or land to build a Church?

4. **Volunteers were found for these tasks:** Stewards: *Suzanne Brighton-Cross & Mary Morris;* Maintenance: *Paul Brighton-Cross;* Catering: *Christodouli Cobbold & Carol Aristodimou;* Sacristy washing: *Suzanne & Paul Brighton-Cross;* Sacristy sewing: *Hazel Lawrence.*

[Subsequently, *Alexia Lansley* has been added to the Catering Committee. Other volunteers for these or other jobs, please volunteer! - Ed]

MARCH DAYS

Sun	1	Cheesefare Sunday, S David of Wales
Mon	2	FIRST DAY OF LENT
Fri	6	Discovery of the Cross and Nails by S Helen
Sat	7	Memoriation of S Theodore the Recruit
Sun	8	Lent 1, Sunday of Orthodoxy, S Felix
Mon	9	Forty Martyrs of Sebaste
Thu	12	S Gregory the Gt, the Dialogist, Pope of Rome
Sat	14	S Benedict, Father of Monks in the West
Sun	15	Lent 2, S Gregory Palmas, Apostle Aristobulus, first Bishop of Britain
Mon	16	S Christodoulos of Patmos
Tue	17	S Patrick, Apostle of Ireland, S Withberga of Holkham & East Dereham
Wed	18	S Edward the Martyr King of England
Sat	21	Memorial Saturday
Sun	22	Lent 3, Veneration of the Cross
Wed	25	ANNUNCIATION OF THE THEOTOKOS
Thu	26	Synaxis of Archangel Gabriel
Sat	28	Memorial Saturday
Sun	29	Lent 4, S John Climacus

[A full list of the month's Feasts and Fasts available on request]

The Attraction of Holy Orthodoxy

"I liked the union in Orthodox tradition of the sense of mystery and the sense of liberty, the absence of moralising, the simple but profound understanding of salvation as the victory of life, man in the image of the Trinity, the importance given to the Holy Spirit and to beauty and the cosmos, the prayer for universal salvation - and so much more."

Olivier Clément 1921-2009 - Eternal memory!