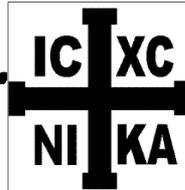


+Holy Orthodoxy: Teaching the Truth since AD 33+

Orthodox Parish of St Helen of Colchester

Antiochian Orthodox Deanery of the UK & Ireland
NEWSLETTER 161

JANUARY 2010



In water we were born, by water we live!

It is a fact of course that in the womb of our mother we were surrounded by water. This helped us in some biological way, protecting us at least from harm and injury.

Then water too is vital to us throughout our life. Indeed it gives us life: without it we would die. So water is essential to the life of humanity, and indeed of all life.

Presumably that is why Christ and his Holy Church chose water as the symbol to us in Holy Baptism of the *new* life that God gives us. He who first gives us *natural* life in water, gives us *heavenly* life in the water of Baptism.

And Christ and Mary are both described in the Church hymnody as the overflowing fountain of life, the well-spring of eternity.

On Theophany (6 January) we commemorate the Baptism of Christ - the first revelation that God is Holy Trinity: the Voice of the Father, the Son himself in his humanity, the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove.

This belief of ours was foreshadowed in the Old Testament, but only in the New was it spelt out directly, as it were. Thus it is a specifically Christian doctrine, the fundamental teaching of our Faith. Christians believe in *One God in Three Persons*.



Theophany therefore becomes one of the most important days of the Church year.

Do join with us if you can for the service on the Sunday after Holy Theophany, when we again go to the River Colne, and bless this source of our human life, and pray for the whole of our community in Colchester and district, and the life of our, God's, world, and pray that it and we may be transformed into the Kingdom of Christ.

God bless you throughout 2010.

Father Alexander

Weekday Holy Liturgy St Helen's

Fri 1 Jan	10.30 am	Circumcision & St Basil
Wed 6 Jan	9.30 am	HOLY THEOPHANY
Wed 13 Jan	9.30 am	St Hilary of Poitiers
Wed 20 Jan	9.30 am	St Euthymius the Great
Wed 27 Jan	9.30 am	St John Chrysostom

Join us for the

THEOPHANY PROCESSION TO THE RIVER

The traditional blessing of the water that sustains us and all life. As we remember the Baptism of Christ, we ask his blessing on every aspect of our existence.

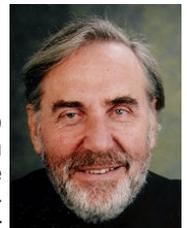
Sunday 10 January

after the Holy Liturgy at 10.30 am

**Book a Theophany Blessing of your home:
I will arrange a time suitable to you.**

Dean retires: Bishop appoints new Dean

Archpriest Michael Harper has given in his resignation to the Archbishop, having been Dean, the senior Priest, since the very beginning of the Deanery in 1995. He is Parish Priest of St Botolph's Parish in the City of London, living in Cambridge. Sadly, he has been very poorly for a while: we wish him better health, and hope he and Khouria Jeanne will now be able to enjoy more of each other's company.



In his place His Eminence has appointed **Father Gregory Hallam**, Parish Priest of St Aidan's, Manchester, with St Theodore's in Macclesfield. He and Khouria Helen have a grown-up daughter.



Immediately he was appointed he went into action. Within 36 hours the clergy had had four emails, and within another day or two he had asked many of the clergy to take on special responsibilities throughout the Deanery. We shall see whether we shall be able to keep up with him!

ST HELEN'S PARISH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**Sunday 31 January
after Holy Liturgy**

• Will all you who look on St Helen's as your place of worship please put your name on the new **CHURCH ROLL** being introduced.

• Also try to be present and take part in this short but necessary **ANNUAL MEETING**.

Church Council meeting
Sunday 24 January 1.00 pm

New Reader at St Helen's

Last month I told you about ANTONY BARDSLEY. He has now been accepted as a Reader in this Parish, and is our second, along with STEPHEN WESTON at St Fursey's. Antony will be interviewed in Manchester by the oddly-named *Deanery Axios Committee* early this month with a view to ordination to the Priesthood.

St Theodore Icon £11.99 Calendar for 2010

- ◆ An icon a month by Aidan Hart, many icons of British Orthodox Saints.
- ◆ British Saints prominent in daily entries.
- ◆ Probably the first wall Calendar for the Orthodox community in Britain
- ◆ Published by the Antiochian Deanery, produced here in Colchester.
- ◆ Have a copy in your home. Treat a friend.
- ◆ Collect it at church - or 75 p by post in UK

HOLY LITURGY

ST FURSEY'S
Saturday 16 January
Feast of St Fursey
9.30 am

CLACTON
Saturday 23 January
10.00 am
NOTE BOTH DATES

St Helen's Chapel, Maidenburgh St, High St

St Helen's is 200m. down the George Hotel in the High Street, but accessible from there only on foot. By car: leave Middleborough Roundabout (between dual carriageways Westway and Balcerne 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 Sreet, Colchester CO1 1UB

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

Readers:

Stephen Weston, 111 Neville Rd, Sutton, Stalham NR12 9RR Tel: 01-692-580-552
Antony Bardsley, 22 Upper Olland St, Bungay NR35 1BH Tel: 01-986-895-760

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

Here and There

ST BENEDICT'S COLLEGE visit us every year and this involves six sessions, at which I am glad to tell the children about St Helen and her Chapel and the Orthodox Faith. They always very kindly send a gift, and we recently received a generous £100 cheque for Parish funds.

OUR CARPETS naturally get rather dirty. I am most grateful to MARIA TOMOROGA for cleaning the Church carpets all on her own for a second time. She lives at Lawford with her husband DUMITRU. Thank you very much!

OUTREACH TO SOUTH ESSEX: There is only one Orthodox church in the whole of south Essex - St Barbara's at Southend. Yet it is a densely populated area, from Southend right along the Thames estuary to London, and inland to Basildon and Brentwood. I have always had a desire to develop something for the many Orthodox believers who must live there. Now at last it may be possible to start a new community in Basildon, led by PAUL BRIGHTON-CROSS, from Southend, with help from TOM CARTER, from Brentwood, and me as their Priest. We are looking for a suitable meeting place. If you know Orthodox people in that area, let them know we are planning something, and let us have their name and address. We already have contact with several Orthodox people there. Watch this space!

The People Column

COSTAS AND MARION GEORGIADIS, with the four children were an important part of the Church family at the end of our time at Bourne Court and in the early days in St Helen's Chapel. Then they moved away to Rutland and the years have passed. TONY has completed his degree in computers and works in London, ALEX is married with a baby son, is in the RAF, and currently in Afghanistan (remember him in your prayers), STEPHANIE is working for Dorothy Perkins, and JONATHAN will soon do his GCSEs. Costas, Marion and Jonathan came back to see us recently and worshipped with us at the Sunday Liturgy. It was good to see them and catch up on news.

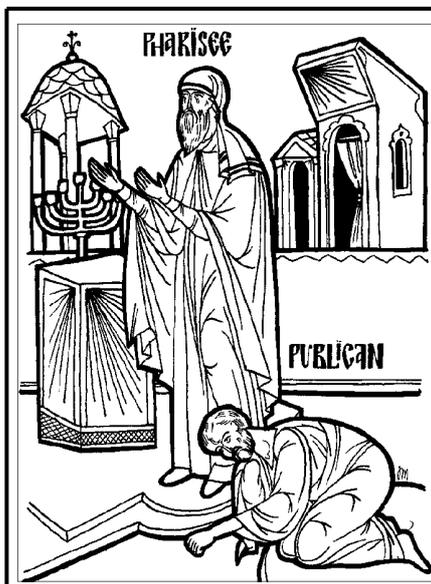
ROSEMARY MORRIS, mother-in-law to MARY, has recently died in Cheltenham after years of suffering. She has been on our list a long time; so we too have felt close to her. We assure NIGEL her son, Mary's husband, of our prayers. Memory eternal!

ALEX HAIG has started the certificate course at the Cambridge Orthodox Institute. He has received generous bursaries from the Institute itself and from our Church Council.

FR DEACON CHRISTOPHER NEILL has been ordained in Paris to serve in the Lancaster parish. You can read his own lovely account of the service, and see some photos, on the Deanery website at <http://www.antiiochian-orthodox.co.uk/news/news.htm>

ANNEMARIE COX, a Catholic in her Swiss childhood, was a long-standing friend of the late JOAN CHRISTIAN of Clacton, to whom I ministered until she died in 2005. Annemarie has now decided, at the grand age of all but 85, that she too belongs in the Orthodox Church! Living in Holland-on-sea, she attends at Clacton and St Helen's, and was received into the Church and chrismated on the Sunday before Christmas. In spite of the snowy conditions she turned up, and everything went very well. A friend from London got here too. She is the oldest person I have received into the Church, and seems to have found great delight in renewing her early faith in Jesus Christ and becoming Orthodox. Many Years to her! She writes:

Please accept my heartfelt thanks and appreciation for your kind help during the recent months. Taking part in the Sunday Liturgies has given me peace and a sense of belonging. For short, I have found what I have been looking for. At long last.



Meet your local Saints

A series on the Orthodox Saints of the Colchester area

4. The Holy Nuns of Barking Martyred by the Danes

Barking Abbey—in its early days a 'double' monastery for men and women, later for women only—was an important place in mediaeval England. It is in historic Essex, on the way into London, some eight miles from the end of the journey, on the left before you get to Stratford.

It had been founded by St Erkenwald (later Bishop of London) in the seventh century for his sister St Ethelburga. Both of them actually died there. They were royal or closely related to royalty. Certainly the Monastery was favoured by subsequent Kings and Queens, even into the late mediaeval period, after the Great Schism. The ruins of the later Abbey may still be visited.

In the ninth century the Danes harassed a great deal of England, but especially our own eastern side of the country, being near the North Sea. The River Thames of course provided a gateway for the marauding invaders right up to London.

On this occasion however, they started right up in the north, at York. It was the late 860s. They fiercely and pitilessly ravaged that city. They were pagans still and the Church with its images and chalices etc was an obvious magnet. They worked their way down England, martyring Monks and Nuns, and pillaging whatever they could find. In Peterborough they did their work. In Thetford in Norfolk they defeated the army of the East Angles, and killed their saintly king, Edmund.

They then proceeded towards London. Barking was there, just before the gates of London. They attacked and murdered the holy Nuns, who kept the Faith to the end. This was in December 870.

We venerate these women as Holy Martyrs, and ask their prayers, that we also may be faithful even unto death.

There are numbers of Saints of Barking. I would like for us to make a small Orthodox Pilgrimage to Barking, perhaps this coming springtime. Speak with me if you would be interested in joining us.

A Word from the Fathers

When you fall from a higher state, do not become panic-stricken. Instead, through remorse, grief, rigorous self-reproach and, above all, through many tears shed in a sorrowful spirit, correct yourself and return quickly to your former condition. Rising up again after your fall, you will enter the joyous valley of salvation, taking care so far as is possible, not to anger your Judge again, so as not to need atoning tears and sorrow in the future. But if you show no such repentance in this present life, you will certainly be punished in the age to come.

St Theognostos (date unknown: 8-14c)

The Sunday of the Pharisee and the Publican

(this year on 24 January) is the first day when we use the book called *The Lenten Triodion*.

So we have a preparation for the Great Fast (Lent), as the Great Fast is a preparation for Holy Pascha (Easter). The Parable gives essential teaching for us as we begin to prepare for the Feast of Feasts:

'I am the Pharisee; I must become the Publican: otherwise, no heaven for me!'

Read for yourself the story the Lord told (Luke 18.10-14). It means that I must repent of my sins - be sorry for them but also turn away from them.

From this Sunday everything in the life of the Church becomes centred on Holy Pascha.

But the week following this day is *fast-free* - which is a concession to us to help prepare for the days of the Great Fast itself, which will not hit us this year until 15 February.

The following week has the usual fasts. The Sunday following that is Meatfare (7 Feb), the last day we eat meat till Easter and then Cheesefare (14 Feb), the last day we eat dairy products.

Then into the discipline but also the joy of the Great Fast (15 Feb). Glory to God!

A FAVOURITE SAYING

Do you have a favourite saying from the Saints, which strengthens you in time of need? - send it in and I will print it to encourage others in the Way of Christ. ALEXIA LANSLEY has sent in this one:

WORDS FROM GOD

The words of the Saints are the words of God, and not from man. Put those words inside your heart and keep them always, because those words of God are words of life, and whoever has them within himself and keeps them has eternal life.

St Symeon the New Theologian

JANUARY DAYS

Fri 1	Circumcision of Christ, S Basil the Great
Sat 2	Repose of S Seraphim of Sarov
Sun 3	Pentecost 30, Sunday before Theophany
Wed 6	THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR
Thu 7	Synaxis of H Forerunner John the Baptist S Cedd, Apostle of Essex
Fri 8	S George of Chozoba
Sat 8	S Adrian, Archbishop of Canterbury
Sun 10	Pentecost 31, Sunday after Theophany
Mon 11	S Theodosius the Great, the Cenobiarch
Tue 12	S Benedict Biscop, Abbot of Wearmouth
Wed 13	S Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers S Kentigern (Mungo), first Bishop of Glasgow
Thu 14	S Nina, Enlightener of Georgia S Sava, first Archbishop of Serbia Hieromartyr Platon, Bishop of Tallinn
Sat 16	S Fursey, Enlightener of Norfolk Precious Chains of S Peter Martyr Sigebert, King of the East Angles
Sun 17	Pentecost 32, Sunday of Zacchaeus S Anthony the Great
Mon 18	SS Athanasius the Great & Cyril, of Alexandria
Tue 19	S Mark, Archbishop of Ephesus
Wed 20	S Euthymius the Great
Thu 21	S Maximus the Confessor, Virgin-Martyr Agnes of Rome
Fri 22	Apostle Timothy, of the Seventy S Vincent the Deacon, Protomartyr of Spain
Sun 24	Sunday of the Publican & Pharisee S Xenia of Rome, S Xenia of S Petersburg S Neophytes the Anchorite of Cyprus
Mon 25	S Gregory the Theologian
Wed 27	Translation of Relics of S John Chrysostom
Sat 20	Three Ecumenical Teachers & Great Hierarchs
Sun 31	Sunday of the Prodigal Son Wonderworkers Cyrus and John

A fuller list of the month's Feasts and Fasts is available on request