

Orthodox Parish of St Helen of Colchester

Antiochian Orthodox Deanery of the UK & Ireland
NEWSLETTER 184



MARCH 2012

WEEKDAY SERVICES AT ST HELEN'S
GREAT CANON OF ST ANDREW OF CRETE
Thursday 1 March - 7.00 pm
LITURGY OF THE PRESANCTIFIED
Wednesdays 7, 14, 21, 28 March - 6.00 pm
AKATHIST OF THE MOTHER OF GOD
Fridays 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 March - 7.00 pm



Jesus Christ has done so much for you: Lent is the time for you to stretch yourself for him!

Yes he has, he has done so much for you: 'Count your blessings, name them one by one, and it will surprise you what the Lord hath done.'

The characteristic of the Christian is meant to be that we do not spend our time grumbling, resenting our lot. Rather we must, St Paul instructs us, 'In all things give thanks.' We should 'at all times and in all places' give thanks unto the Lord.

Lent is the time when we try to get our lives back into that mode, that way of thinking, into a positive way of thinking about life. We do a bit of 'gym work' on our souls. We tighten up our response to the Gospel. We discipline ourselves in Christ's name.

Of course, we are not alone as we do this. The good thing is that we have the company of our fellow Orthodox Christians, in the Parish and throughout the world. Just so, we have the unseen company of the Saints, encouraging us. And of the Holy Angels, assisting us, particularly our own Guardian Angel.

Take advantage of this great company all around you, some seen, some unseen but still real and powerful. All cheering you, encouraging you in your pilgrimage.

Reach Holy Pascha through spending a good Lent. God will bless and reward you in doing so.

Father Alexander

Me and my past

I have a past,
I need to be free.
Things I did last week.
Things I did years ago.
They all can worry me.
I need freedom, *the liberty of the sons of God.*
That is what confession does for me.
It sets me free from my disfigured past.
That is why I should make my confession during this Lent.
Then I shall be free indeed.

Archbishop to visit Colchester

His Eminence our Father-in-God ARCHBISHOP JOHN will visit this Parish in Bright Week, immediately after Holy Pascha. This will be his first visit since March 2009.

I am asking him to serve the Holy Hierarchical Liturgy on **WEDNESDAY 18 APRIL** at 10.00 am.

and to tonsure as Reader both Paul Brighton-Cross and Alex Haig. Details next month.

Yes, it is difficult on a weekday. Book it in your diary now, and *if you are at work, please try to arrange a day off.*



HOLY LITURGY
BASILDON
Sat 3 March
11.00 am
CLACTON
Sat 17 March
10.00 am

The Antiochian Deanery Conference

The Conference will be at Swanwick, an excellent conference centre in Derbyshire, 30 April-2 May. It is always a good time, and the Archbishop will be present. Our Parish should be well represented. If you would like to attend on behalf of the Parish please let us know.

Sundays of the Great Fast (Lent)

The Sundays of Lent encourage us to give a little more of ourselves to Christ and be faithful through until Holy Pascha.

First Sunday, the Sunday of Orthodox, 4 March

On this day we remember the success of the Holy Orthodox Faith over heresy, and especially the victory on icons. There is a special ceremony after the Liturgy, of thanksgiving for the restoration of the icons.

Second Sunday, St Gregory Palamas, 11 March

In the 14th century St Gregory was a great leader and man of prayer and asceticism.

Third Sunday, Veneration of the Cross, 18 March

On this day we have a service of the Holy Cross, not as elaborate as on the Feast of the Holy Cross (14 Sept), but - appropriately for us in mid-Lent - contemplating the fact that the Lord gloriously suffered for us.

This is also Mothering Sunday and we shall pray for the mother of each of us, whether they are living or departed.

Fourth Sunday, St John Climacus, also The Annunciation to the Theotokos, 25 March

St John encourages us to make effort in our following of Christ, to climb the Ladder to Heaven. This year the Annunciation falls on the same day, recalling the Angel coming to blessed Mary, a Great Feast.

Fifth Sunday, St Mary of Egypt, 1 April

The story of the wonderful conversion and penitence of St Mary and of her steadfastness in following Christ for 40 years in the desert encourages us.

Some time in this season of Lent we should make our confession to prepare for our Holy Communion at Easter.

FELLOWSHIP OF ST ALBAN & ST SERGIUS Tuesday 6 March 7.30 pm, St Helen's Chapel

Rev Fr Michael Rear: *More on Mary*

Fr Michael, a retired Catholic Priest at Manningtree, revisits us, to talk on the subject of the Mother of God, which in some ways unites Catholics and Orthodox, in other ways divides.

The meeting is open to all: non-members welcome.

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 Balkerne Hill), to Northgate; go straight along St Peter Street to Castle Park; continue round, up into Maidenburgh Street. Nunns 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 Street, Colchester CO1 1UB

Tel: 01-206-530-530 Mob: 07-947-047-201 Eml: parishpriest@orthodoxcolchester.org.uk
Rdr Andreas Moran, 6 Woodlands, Welshwood Park CO4 3JA Tel: 01-206-865-697

The Parish of St Helen is Registered Charity No. 1134418

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

Churchwardens: David Davies 01-473-745-167 Dusan Radunovic 01-206-710-073

At St James Anglican Church, Beatrice Rd, Clacton-on-sea CC15 1LE
Divine Liturgy: usually third Saturday 10.00 am (Clacton Community)

At St Agnes Chapel, 18 St Agnes Road, Noak Hill, Billericay, CM12 9UR
Divine Liturgy: usually first Saturday 10.30 am (Basildon Community)
Contact: Paul Brighton-Cross 01-702-305-527 orthodox.basildon@hotmail.co.uk

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

St Martin's - our last bid



Most of you will know of our many attempts over the years to be allowed use of St Martin's Church, West Stockwell Street. It lies down behind the Town Hall, and is only some 200 yards from St Helen's Chapel. It has not been used for worship for nearly sixty years - and we have been asking for it for seventeen!

Now owned by the Churches Conservation Trust in London, the archaeologists tell us it almost certainly goes back to Roman-British times. It certainly contains not only mediaeval building work but also some Saxon.

It would suit us very well, with some adaptation for Orthodox use. It would give us plenty of room (unlike St Helen's!). It has water and toilets, and room for us to do other things - for a meeting room, for an office, etc.

Six years ago we did have it for just one week - Great and Holy Week and Holy Pascha. We felt 'just right' there; 'it fitted us like a glove,' we said.

We have now been offered, for the first time, more definite terms, and though they are not yet entirely acceptable to us, it may prove possible for them to be made mutually acceptable.

IAIN GOLDSMITH has kindly agreed to take up our cause again. He is a member of our Parish, but may not be known to numbers of you, since for several years he has worked full-time in Russia and Ukraine. He has negotiated with the Trust on our behalf in the past.

A chartered surveyor, he has much experience dealing with ecclesiastical authorities, working for both the Catholic Diocese of Brentwood and the Anglican Diocese of London.

Please pray for him in this labour of love, that God may be glorified. What a wonderful thing it will be for that beautiful building itself, as well as for our Parish and its mission, if it can come to a successful conclusion!

However, it remains 'a big if', make no mistake. We have almost obtained St Martin's several times in the past.

All strength to his spiritual arm. We shall not try again: enough is enough. Please God, perhaps this time, by his mercy...

We prepared a six-page Final Presentation to give to the Conservation Trust when we met them recently. Available from church.

Women's World Day of Prayer
Friday 3 March 10.15 am
Service at
St Peter's, North Hill

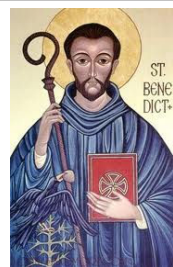
Here and There

ANNUAL MEETING: The meeting had to be postponed due to overnight snow, and was held on 19 February. We thanked all Councillors and officers of the Parish, a number of whom have worked consistently and loyally for the good of the Parish for many years, some since the beginning in 1995/6. PAUL and ALEXIA LANSLEY, and KALISTHENE ARISTODIMOU have now retired from the Council, at the end of their current three-year spell. As there would otherwise not have been enough members, DAVID DAVIES, MARY MORRIS, and Khouria HILARY were re-elected by a special provision, and MICHAEL KAMPOURIDIS was newly elected. Others currently serving are DUSAN RADUNOVIC, THEODORA FORD, and TEODOR PETICA. To them all, especially those retiring, we express our thanks for being willing to take responsibility for our Parish in this way.

BASILDON: PAUL BRIGHTON-CROSS submitted an encouraging report on the Basildon mission to the Annual Meeting. Copies are available from the Porch table. The community is worshipping in the private St Agnes' Chapel until it can find a suitable building for its work: the ancient Anglican church at Nevendon in east Basildon is being discussed as a possibility.

BARKING PILGRIMAGE: This will take place on Saturday 12 May. Book the date. **A SUMMER WITH ORTHODOXY:** There is plenty of scope for having a good time listening to excellent speakers and learning more about our Faith this summer. In the Porch are notes, for example, about Iona, Ditchingham near Bungay, and Cambridge. The

Orthodox Camp is for youngsters. **PURPLE VESTMENTS:** Thank you to all who contributed to the set of vestments in memory of DENNIS HINDLE, especially to his wife BERTHA and members of the family. All the cost has been found. Due to the snow, the vestments were blessed a week later than planned: family members and friends were present. Whenever they are worn (during Lent etc), we shall remember our dear friend, who did so much for our Parish. Eternal memory! **BARKINGSIDE:** Khouria HILARY and I made a brief visit to Holy Trinity Church, where her father JOHN NEWMAN was a much-loved Vicar in the 1950s, and where she grew up. We found the Rublev icon of the Old Testament Trinity that our MARGARET gave in memory of her grandfather.



St Benedict, 'Patriarch of Western Monks'

Benedict of Nursia was an early regulator of monasticism in the West, a great Saint, naturally more venerated in the West than the East. He was a hermit first at Subiaco but men flocked to live under his Rule. He then went to Monte Cassino. The Holy Rule is still followed by 'Benedictines' and others. Their spirituality has a definite feeling of affinity with eastern Orthodoxy.

His influence remains enormous. In Britain there have been many Benedictine monasteries - for men and for women. Taking inspiration from St Basil and St John Cassian, the Rule displays deep devotion but also moderation, with little of the (heroic) excessiveness of some of the Celtic monks. The Rule is a spiritual classic, well worth reading by an ordinary Orthodox Christian.

The Saint died in 543 AD; his life was written by Pope St Gregory. His feast is 14 March. As an Anglican I had the privilege of being a Benedictine Oblate for several years: it gave stability in Christian living by attachment to a real and holy monastery.



The Annunciation, 25 March, nine months before the Nativity, celebrates the human conception of Christ, when the Holy Spirit came upon Mary and she accepted to give birth to the Son of God. Falling on a Sunday this year, it takes precedence, because so important a feast, over the Sunday of Lent.

A Word from the Fathers

The incarnation of the Word was not only the work of the Father, Son, and Spirit - the first consenting, the second descending, the third overshadowing - but it was also the work of the will and the faith of the Virgin.

Without the three divine Persons this design could not have been set in motion. But likewise the plan could not have been carried into effect without the consent and faith of the all-pure Virgin.

Only after teaching and persuading her does God make her his Mother, and receive from her the flesh which she consciously wills to offer him. Just as he was conceived of his own free choice, so in the same way she became his Mother voluntarily and with her free consent.

St Nicholas Cabasilas c. 1322-97

MARCH DAYS

Thu 1	S David of Wales
Fri 2	S Chad of Lichfield, S Nicolas Planas of Athens
Sat 3	Commemoration of S Theodore the Recruit
Sun 4	Lent 1, Sunday of Orthodoxy
Tue 6	Discovery of the precious Cross & Nails by S Helen
Wed 7	S Paul the Simple, disciple of S Anthony the Great
Thu 8	S Felix, Bp of Dunwich, Enlightener of East Anglia
Fri 9	Forty Martyrs of Sebaste
Sat 10	Memorial Saturday
Sun 11	Lent 2, S Gregory Palamas
Mon 12	S Simeon the New Theologian
Wed 14	S Benedict of Nursia, Father of Monks in the West
Thu 15	Ap Aristobulus of the Seventy, Apostle of Britain
Fri 16	S Christodoulos of Evia and Patmos
Sat 17	Memorial Saturday, S Patrick of Ireland
Sun 18	Lent 3, Veneration of the Cross
Tue 20	S Cuthbert of Lindisfarne, Fathers slain at Mar Saba
Sat 24	Memorial Saturday
Sun 25	Lent 4, Annunciation of the Holy Theotokos
Mon 26	Synaxis of Archangel Gabriel
Sat 31	Saturday of the Akathist, S Innocent, Metropolitan of Moscow, Apostle of the Americas

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