

**Orthodox Parish of
St Helen of Colchester**
Antiochian Orthodox Deanery of the UK & Ireland
NEWSLETTER 193 DECEMBER 2012



WEEKDAY SERVICES AT ST HELEN'S

THURSDAY 6 DECEMBER
ST NICHOLAS THE WONDERWORKER
9.30 AM HOLY LITURGY

WEDNESDAY 12 DECEMBER
ST SPYRIDON THE WONDERWORKER
9.30 AM HOLY LITURGY

THURSDAY 20 DECEMBER
HIEROMARTYR IGNATIUS THE GOD-BEARER
9.30 AM HOLY LITURGY



How great a marvel - God comes to share our human frame!



How miserable human life can be, how soul-destroying!

Yet we see great feats, of human beings rising up over their troubles. The Paralympics is an example. Another is people in war zones, retaining their dignity in the face of appalling conditions. Another is children from terrible homes, rising over their background to become strong, loving adults.

Yet we also deeply sympathise with those who are unable for one reason or another to get up out of the slough that life can be.

Perhaps they are at the mercy of others, and that mercy is sadly lacking. Or, they have lost their dignity through their own fault, and we say from the bottom of our hearts, *There but for the grace of God go I!*

It is into this sad world - this vale of tears - that we believe God himself entered, in the person of Jesus Christ.

He did not come in great state, as we might have expected. He came in poverty and humility. He did not come with power and strength. He came in weakness and littleness.

When God entered this world that he himself had created, he came as a Child. He came as One who himself needed to be cared for - suckled by his Blessed

Mother, cared for by his foster-father.

The God we adore is a strange God! He shares the life of the little ones and the little things. The life of the poor and disadvantaged. The heart-ache of those who suffer at the hands of others, though they know they are innocent. The sadness of those who suffer through their own fault.

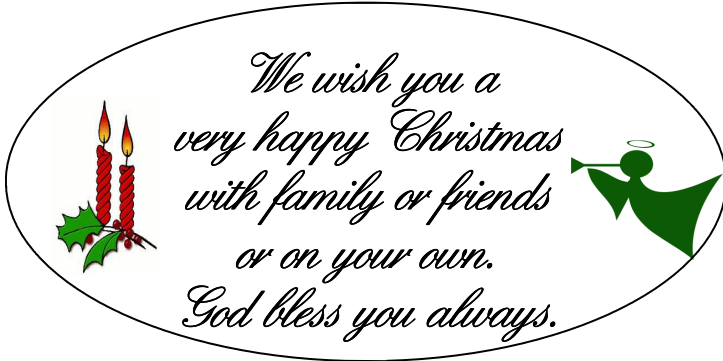
We find it hard to understand, but, then, Joseph did too (see the *Nativity icon*, left).

But then, we begin, just begin, to see the greatness of this God who himself came to suffer and die.

Our God enters our sorrows, our griefs, our pains, our death itself. He bears them with and for us. And he rises again to conquer them all.

A strange God, a great God! *Father Alexander*

★ **CHRISTMAS AT ST HELEN'S** ★
★ SUNDAY 23 DECEMBER ★
★ SUNDAY BEFORE NATIVITY (PENTECOST 29) ★
★ 10.30 AM HOLY LITURGY ★
★ MONDAY 24 DECEMBER ★
★ EVE OF NATIVITY ★
★ 4.30 PM VIGIL (GREAT COMPLINE & MATTINS) ★
★ TUESDAY 25 DECEMBER ★
★ NATIVITY ACCORDING TO THE FLESH OF OUR LORD ★
★ 10.30 AM HOLY LITURGY AND CAROLS ★
★ SUNDAY 30 DECEMBER ★
★ SUNDAY AFTER NATIVITY ★
★ 10.30 AM HOLY LITURGY ★
★ CONFESSIONS ★
★ Sat 22 Dec 5.00 PM, Sun 23 Dec 12.15 PM ★
★ Mon 24 Dec 11.00 AM & 5.30 PM ★
★*****



CALLING FOR GIFTS COLCHESTER FOODBANK (for families and individuals in need) asks for food, including long-life milk, cereal, fruit juice, and sugar (ideally 1 kg bags).

BEACON HOUSE (for the homeless) invites gifts of Christmas Shoeboxes filled with small useful items - suggested list on the noticeboard. We will pass on things left in the Church Porch.

HOLY LITURGY
BASILDON
Saturday
1 December
10.30 am
CLACTON
Saturday
15 December
10.00 am

STOP PRESS: A new Haig baby

Congratulations to Mihaela and Alex Haig on the birth of their son Alexander Michael in the Royal Hampshire County Hospital in Winchester. He weighed 7lb 11oz. It took place as we prepared this Newsletter, on Thursday evening, 22 November. As we go to press in the morning, we hear it was a difficult birth, but that both mother and son are now doing well. We give thanks to God.

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. Nunn's 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

Rdr Alexander Haig Jnr, detached service in Winchester parish

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 CV15 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)

Rdr 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

The People Column

STEPHEN RODGERS and **MARGARITA TYCHOWSKI** of Haverhill, were married here on the feast of Archangel Michael and All the Bodiless Powers, 8 Nov. Many years! **MILA DEAN** was baptised here on 4 Nov, and we welcome her into Holy Church, the community of Christ's People. Her parents **ROSS** and **TANJA** live in Ipswich, Tanja being of Serbian origin. Congratulations! **PETROS SERGHIU** is now recovering, we are glad to hear, from a heart attack in Cyprus. We hope he will be fully recovered shortly and that he and Georgina will soon be able to return to their home in Clacton.

Day courses at Cambridge

The Cambridge Orthodox Institute is the main provider of Orthodox education in the country, and several of our people have benefitted or are benefitting from its work.

Early in 2013 there will be a monthly series there on Saturdays 16 Feb - 18 May **Meeting the Fathers**. Each costs £30, but there are some reductions. The lecturers are:

Metropolitan Kallistos on *St Gregory of Nyssa*
Dr Sebastian Brock on *St Ephrem of Syria*
Fr Melchisedec on *St Maximus the Confessor*
Fr Andrew Louth on *St John of Damascus*
Dr Marcus Plested on *St Gregory Palamas*

There are leaflets available in the Church Porch with further information. The series looks good, and people who are able to attend them all will gain a good broad view of a wide sweep of some of the Fathers of the Church, those teachers whose contribution to understanding our Faith is foundational.



The God-bearer

St Ignatius of Antioch called himself *the God-bearer - Theophoros* (not *Theotokos*, the Mother of God). This may be partly because he is said to be the child borne in his arms by Christ our God, who said, *He who receives one such little child in my name receives me*. As a Christian, Ignatius for his part had also to 'carry God' within his own heart.

A devoted servant of Christ, taught by the Apostle John, he became second Bishop of Antioch in Syria. He taught his people the Faith, and organised the Church: *Where the Bishop is, he taught, there is Jesus Christ, there is the Catholic Church*.

Eventually, as a very old man, he was taken to Rome and delivered to the lions. This is the reason he is often shown in icons with lions. He died in about 108 AD, leaving several letters to Churches which are still inspiring reading.

Naturally he is a prominent Saint of the Church of Antioch, of which St Helen's is a parish. His feast day is 20 December: Holy Liturgy 9.30 am.

Macmillan Cancer Support seeks your help

People living with cancer sometimes have to turn off their heating to save on their heating bills, why not raise some money for Macmillan to help people to stay warm this winter.

Macmillan Cancer Support give financial support to people when they need it most. The average Macmillan grant is £330 and this can make a real difference to the lives of people living with cancer.

So why not organise a firework display, Christmas party, or make a donation to help Macmillan raise more money.

Every day in the UK another 822 people are diagnosed with cancer. We want to be there to reach every one of them and we need your help to do this. For more information please call the Macmillan Fundraising Support Centre on 0300 1000 200.

Macmillan have sent this item and we are glad to reproduce it. If anyone decides to take up a small project, let us know and we will publicise it.



Here and There

ORDINATION: We still have no date for Reader Paul Brighton-Cross's ordination as a Deacon, but are led to believe it may be early in the New Year.

NEW ANGLICAN UNIVERSITY CHAPLAIN: Welcome to the Rev Julia Murphy, new chaplain. She comes to us from Stratford, where she has been attached to St Matthew's and chaplain to the Westfield shopping centre. The Anglican chaplain is the only full-time post and therefore must enjoy a position of leadership in the team, which is composed of representatives of the various denominations and faiths. She begins at the end of November.

Gifts from the Parish

This Christmas I am sending gifts in our name to

- St Helena Hospice
- Beacon House (to help the homeless), and
- YMCA (residential centre in Magdalen St)

A Word from the Fathers

The humility which God displayed in being born of a woman and in being sent so ignominiously by mortal men to his death, is the sovereign medicine for healing our swollen pride.

St Augustine, Bishop of Hippo (+ 430)

St Martin's

We announced in last month's Newsletter that the Church Council had decided once and for all to give up any hope of getting St Martin's Church - suitable as it was from so many points of view. I have been touched that the news brought forth some very kind and strengthening responses.

- **Christodouli Cobbold** phoned within a few minutes of receiving the news with 'condolences'.
- **Ian McMeekan**, who lives between St Helen's and St Martin's and has been a good friend of the Parish, emailed, 'I was saddened...You have made the right decision, albeit a painful one...Although not a member of the church, I have long felt that the grossly under-used church of St Martin would have been an ideal place for your worship. Best wishes to you and your congregation for the future.'
- **Fr Jonathan Hemmings** in Lancaster emailed, 'I know how frustrating it is to be without a Church building and to be disappointed in negotiations. Do not lose heart, Father - nothing is lost in Christ, and He is the Alpha and the Omega.'
- **The Dean, Fr Gregory**, emailed, 'I am sorry, Father, that your long campaign has ended in dust. There will be another solution and I suspect it will be quicker coming! My humble prayers for your eventual success.'

Thank you to the above and to others who have sympathised and prayed for us. We certainly need a bigger and more suitable building. One Sunday recently - admittedly exceptionally - there were present, we think, something like 85 people!

Church Flowers

SANJA RADUNOVIC has been responsible for the flowers for several years and we are grateful to her. Now she has handed over to **SIMONA FILON** and we are grateful to her for taking it on. She will keep an eye on them, tidy them, and so on. We do not have a lot of flowers, (a) because they can detract from the icons etc, (b) because we do not have much room anyway!

DECEMBER DAYS

Sun 2	Pentecost 26
Mon 3	S Birinus, Bishop of Dorchester, Apostle of Wessex
Tue 4	Great Martyr Barbara, S John of Damascus
Wed 5	S Saba the Sanctified
Thu 6	S Nicholas the Wonderworker, Archbishop of Myra
Fri 7	S Ambrose, Bishop of Milan
Sun 9	Pentecost 27, Conception of H Theotokos by Anna
Wed 12	S Spyridon the Wonderworker, Bishop of Tremithus
Thu 13	S Herman of Alaska, Wonderworker of All America Virgin Martyr Lucy of Syracuse
Fri 14	S Venantius Fortunatus, Bishop of Poitiers
Sat 15	Hieromartyr Eleutherius, Bishop of Illyria
Sun 16	Pentecost 28, Sunday of the Forefathers
Mon 17	H Prophet Daniel and the Three Holy Children S Dionysius the Wonderworker, Bishop of Aegina
Tue 18	Martyr Sebastian at Rome
Wed 19	Martyr Boniface of Tarsus
Thu 20	Hieromartyr Ignatius the God-bearer of Antioch
Sun 23	Pentecost 29, Sunday before Nativity
Mon 24	Eve of Nativity
Tue 25	NATIVITY ACCORDING TO THE FLESH OF OUR LORD & SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST
Wed 26	SECOND DAY OF THE NATIVITY: SYNAXIS OF THE MOST HOLY THEOTOKOS
Thu 27	THIRD DAY OF THE NATIVITY, PROTOMARTYR & ARCHDEACON STEPHEN
Sat 29	Holy Innocents, the Infants slain by Herod
Sun 30	Pentecost 30, Sunday after Nativity

A fuller list of the month's Feasts and Fasts is available in church