

+A STUPENDOUS CLAIM: GOD WAS BORN A MAN AT BETHLEHEM!+

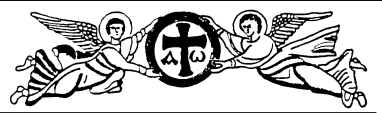
**Orthodox Parish of
St Helen of Colchester**
Antiochian Archdiocese of the UK & Ireland
NEWSLETTER 204 DECEMBER 2013



DECEMBER WEEKDAYS AT ST HELEN'S
Friday 6 December St Nicholas the Wonderworker
9.30 am Holy Liturgy
CHRISTMAS
Tuesday 24 December EVE OF NATIVITY
9.00 am Royal Hours
4.30 pm Vigil Service (Gt Compline & Mattins)
Wednesday 25 December NATIVITY OF CHRIST
10.15 am Hours, 10.30 am Holy Liturgy & Carols
CONFESSIONS BEFORE CHRISTMAS: By appointment or
Saturday 21 Dec 5.00 pm, Sunday 22 Dec 12.20 pm, Tuesday 24 Dec 6.00 pm

Christmas Happiness in Christ

Happy Christmas! We Haigs are planning a splendid family party on the Saturday after Holy Nativity. It is lovely that Caroline and Chris and their boys are hoping to get here from Newcastle, Margaret from London, Alex and Ela and their boy from Portsmouth.



We shall no doubt have a good lunch—though we are having a room at the Methodist Church and it will therefore have to be “dry”! But it will be *being in each other's company* that we shall find the real joy of being a human family.

It is very natural that at Christmas time so many of us find happiness in our family and friends. Many of us will be joining a party here or there just to *enjoy the company of those we love* - though remember in your prayers also those who will be on their own.



by something deeper, by something that it is impossible to break, by something that is “stronger than death”, then the hazards of all life, including the hazards of family life, cannot destroy your equilibrium, cannot take away your ultimate stability.

So a life that is set firm in Christ, in the strength of the Rock which is God himself, does indeed bring a salvation which actually destroys Death itself - and every calamity smaller than that. A life centred in Christ, in God, is itself strong - indestructible indeed - and continues for ever.

Lastly, how can we enter into this life, this indestructible life, in Christ?

The answer to this, in the Orthodox Church, is certain and clear: if you want to come to Christ, to receive the Holy Spirit in all his fullness, you do it in the life of the Church.

It is in and through the life of the Church that I come to Christ, receive Christ, am made strong by Christ, and go to heaven in Christ. To know Christ is not just a personal, private experience that I have all on my own. It is not a personal love-affair with him in the privacy of my own heart.

To find Christ, and to serve him, is to find a community, to discover a family love-affair. Finding Christ, I find the Christian community, the Holy Orthodox Church.

Don't forget to find Christ in the midst of your Christmas family celebrations! God bless you! Have a great time!

Father Alexander

But I just want to remind you also, in the midst of your family joy and excitement (and this applies just as much to those of you who may be on your own) that **our truest and deepest joy can really be found only in Christ.**

Can we discover this deep truth in our own experience, and learn to live by it, rather than by the lesser truth of right and proper joy in our human family?

I do not want to be a spoilsport, to denigrate what (I do sincerely hope) will be your experience this year within the bosom of your respective families, but I want to push you gently just a little further on, in your Christian experience.

Where our experience is only on the human level, it is liable to be limited - for example, we are told that marriages can be put under strain, or siblings can fall out desperately, in the middle of a family Christmas.

Yet, if you have an undergirding of your life

HOLY LITURGY
CLACTON
Saturday
21 December
10.00 am

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
Rdr Alexander Haig Jnr, detached service in Winchester parish
Churchwardens: David Davies 01-473-745-167 **Dusan Radunovic** 01-206-710-073
The Parish of St Helen is Registered Charity No. 1134418
Parish Website: <http://www.orthodoxcolchester.org.uk>
At St James Anglican Church, Beatrice Rd, Clacton-on-sea CO15 1LE
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

GEORGE HARRISON & THEODORA FORD were married in November at All Saints' Church in Basildon, formerly in our parish. It was a great privilege for me to marry them. The following day they received the Holy Gifts at St Helen's in confirmation of their union in Christ. We congratulate them and wish them, Many Years!

THEODORE KANAAR was received into the Church by Holy Chrismation towards the end of the month. He is **JONATHAN (JON)** from Clacton, husband of **ELENA** from Belorus who sings in the Choir. It was Elena who pointed out to me that Jonathan is Hebrew for **Gift of God** and Theodore is the same in Greek. So before and after he is the same, but changed by the gift of the Holy Spirit in Chrismation. I place him under the patronage of St Theodore of Tarsus, the Greek who became a great Archbishop of Canterbury in England in the seventh century. Congratulations, and God bless you, Theodore!

DAVID LUCA DOBRATA of Ipswich was baptised here on 3 November. We wish him and his parents, **ADRIAN** and **NICOLETA**, the blessing of Almighty God!

The future of our new Archdiocese & Bishop

As reported last month, the Holy Synod has created three new archdioceses in place of the one Archdiocese of Europe - in effect Germany, France, and Great Britain and Ireland - with a Bishop under the Patriarch to oversee the smaller work in Scandinavia.

The Metropolitans for Germany and France have already been installed - their Eminences Isaak and Ignatius.

We were told that we would not get ours until next year, but in the interim have a Patriarchal Vicar, until a new Metropolitan is elected, probably in June 2014.

For some reason unexplained, it now seems we may not have *any* bishop until the election of the Metropolitan.

The clergy have petitioned the Patriarch and Holy Synod that Father PHILIP HALL, Parish Priest in Lincoln parish, be elected Metropolitan.

If they do elect him, it will be a brave act on their part, for it will be the first Englishman, and in modern days the first non-Arab, appointed as a Metropolitan within the Church of Antioch. This could raise problems about administration of the whole Church, as he will be a member of the Synod.

In due course the Synod will decide, but our hope is that this may happen: it would surely be what we need here, for we are mostly non-Arabs in an Arab Church.

My personal feeling is that such an appointment would also do a great deal for the whole Orthodox Church in these islands.

It is in the hands of God.

A Word from the Fathers

Nurslings of purity and disciples of chastity, raise we our hymn to the Virgin-born God with lips full of purity.

Deemed worthy to partake of the flesh of the Spiritual Lamb, let us take the head together with the feet, the Deity being understood as the head and the Manhood taken as the feet.

Hearers of the Holy Gospels, let us listen to John the Divine. For he who said, In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God, went on to say, And the Word was made flesh.

For neither is it holy to worship the mere man, nor religious to say that he is God only, without the Manhood. For if Christ is God, as indeed he is, but took not human nature upon him, we are strangers to salvation.

Let us then worship him as God, but believe that he also was made Man.

For neither is there any profit in calling him man without Godhead, nor any salvation in refusing to confess the Manhood together with the Godhead.

Let us confess the presence of him who is both King and Physician.

For Jesus the King, when about to become our Physician, girded himself with the linen of humanity, and healed that which was sick.

The perfect Teacher of babes, became a babe among babes, that he might give wisdom to the foolish.

The Bread of heaven came down on earth that he might feed the hungry.

St Cyril of Jerusalem (+ 386)



In the icon of the Holy Nativity of Christ, above, we see the Infant Christ, tended by his Mother. We also see Joseph, trying to understand what has happened—that, from a Virgin Mother, God has taken human flesh. The Angels attend to glorify the God who has descended to become one of his own creatures—and in doing so has redeemed mankind. “Glory to God in the highest!”

Here and There

THE NATIVITY FAST: Throughout the fast we of course abstain from dairy and meat. But we may have fish, wine and oil on Saturdays and Sundays, except at the last weekend before the Feast: then no fish is allowed.

COMPUTER INK: I have four free black cartridges for a Brother computer printer: B-LC39/LC985BK, bought by mistake: please ask if interested.

HOLY SYNOD APPEAL FOR SYRIA: We have already sent £811.30. We have recently sent another £145.00. This means that we have sent **£956.30**. No doubt we shall be sending more in due course, but this has been very good. Thank you to all who gave, and congratulations.

CLACTON: Every year we make a gift to St James' Church for use of their lovely building, paid by the Church Council from Parish funds. Now an existing Orthodox fund has been used to make a donation to funds towards the cost for 2013. In future that fund is to pay each year's total amount. Our thanks to those responsible.

DECEMBER DAYS

Sun 1	Pentecost 23
Tue 3	S Birinus, Apostle of Wessex, Bishop of Dorchester
Wed 4	Great Martyr Barbara, S John of Damascus
Thu 5	S Sabas the Sanctified
Fri 6	S Nicolas the Wonderworker of Myra
Sat 7	S Ambrose, Bishop of Milan
Sun 8	Pentecost 24
Mon 9	Conception of the Theotokos by Righteous Anna
Thu 12	S Spyridon the Wonderworker
Fri 13	S Herman of Alaska, Wonderworker of All America Virgin Martyr Lucy of Syracuse
Sat 14	S Venantius Fortunatus, Bishop of Poitiers
Sun 15	Sunday of the Forefathers, Hieromartyr Eleutherius
Tue 17	S Dionysius the Wonderworker, Bishop of Aegina
Thu 19	Martyr Boniface at Tarsus
Fri 20	Hieromartyr Ignatius the God-bearer, Bp of Antioch
Sun 22	Sunday before Nativity
Tue 24	Eve of Nativity
Wed 25	NATIVITY ACCORDING TO THE FLESH OF OUR LORD & GOD JESUS CHRIST
Thu 26	Second Day of the Nativity, Synaxis of the Theotokos
Fri 27	Third Day of the Nativity, Protomartyr Stephen
Sun 29	Sunday after Nativity, Holy Innocents

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