

+ Holy Orthodoxy: Faith in a God-Man, who rose from the dead +

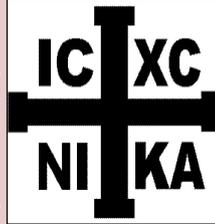
**Orthodox Parish of
St Helen of Colchester**

*Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese
of the British Isles and Ireland*

Metropolitan: His Eminence Archbishop Silouan

NEWSLETTER 248

DECEMBER 2017



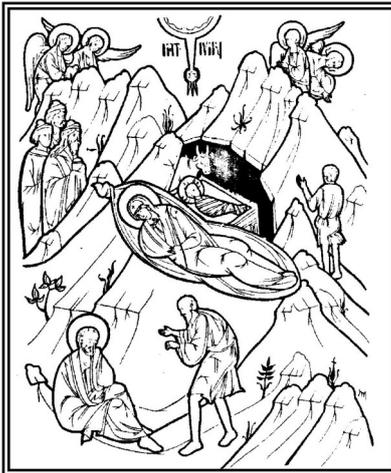
**Christ's birth - security in
the midst of uncertainty**

How fearful it must have been for Blessed Mary and Joseph that night in Bethlehem town!

They had travelled a long way. The inn was full. The Baby was immediately due. They were poor, and as always the poor got the worst of it.

Anyway, somebody seems to have taken pity on them and to have allowed them into the stable-cave round the back.

And there it all happened, the



most amazing and beautiful birth. The birth of God in human flesh. Our God becoming one of us.

Unbelievable. Incredible. "Beyond understanding".

Fear was transformed into ultimate joy.

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Still today you can feel this joy, streaming down the

centuries.

A joy that transcends all fears, turns any sorrow into joy.

That is to say, we are able to "smile through the tears", knowing that sorrow and suffering are not the end, that we can live through them, triumph over them, and pass into a better and a holier place.

Try to let that joy pierce your deepest heart this Christmas to find hope and love and contentment beyond the troubles. "In Christ shall all be made alive,"

says St Paul.

Yes, let the Child in the Manger transform your life and all upsets in it, to give you peace.

Thus, whatever the uncertainty of life, you find yourself secure in the love of God.

God bless you.

Father Alexander

*A Happy
Christmas
to you all!
May you and
yours all be
blessed by the
Birth in
the flesh of
Christ our God*

SPECIAL DAYS AT ST HELEN'S

Wednesday 6 Dec	ST NICHOLAS THE WONDERWORKER
9.30 am	Holy Liturgy
Tuesday 12 Dec	ST SPYRIDON, BISHOP OF TRIMYTHOUS
9.30 am	Holy Liturgy
Wednesday 20 Dec	ST IGNATIUS THE GOD-BEARER, BISHOP OF ANTIOCH
9.30 am	Holy Liturgy
Saturday 23 Dec	FOREFEAST OF NATIVITY
4.30 pm	Great Vespers
Sunday 24 Dec	EVE OF NATIVITY
9.45 am	Mattins
10.30 am	Holy Liturgy of St John
4.30 pm	Vigil of Nativity (Compline & Mattins)
Monday 25 Dec	NATIVITY OF CHRIST ACCORDING TO THE FLESH
10.15 am	Hours
10.30 am	Holy Liturgy of St Basil & Carols
Friday 29 Dec	HOLY INNOCENTS
9.30 am	Holy Liturgy
Saturday 30 Dec	SATURDAY BEFORE THEOPHANY
4.30 pm	Great Vespers
Sunday 31 Dec	SUNDAY BEFORE THEOPHANY
9.45 am	Mattins
10.30 am	Holy Liturgy
Monday 1 Jan	CIRCUMCISION OF CHRIST, ST BASIL THE GREAT
10.30 am	Holy Liturgy

Reader Andreas

Reader Andreas Moran started serving here as a Reader in 2011. He had moved from Yorkshire down to Essex after his first wife Katherine died, to be near the Monastery, and has always been somewhat 'on loan' from there.

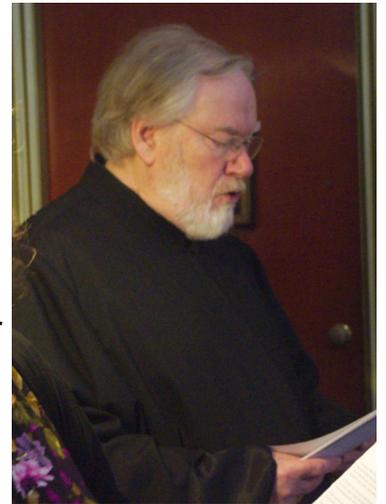
Now he feels that it is time to move back there, with his second wife Lydia.

He has been a great help at St Helen's, and we are most grateful for his constant reading of the services for us, and shall miss him very much.

Andreas is not cutting himself from this parish entirely, he says: he will be here from time to time.

Thank you for all you have done, Andreas. Many thanks!

We have lost our two Readers, Andreas and Martin, in a very short period. My hope is that George Harrison will be ordained Reader when Metropolitan Silouan next visits us. But I cannot expect George to take on all the jobs that the two Readers have performed in the past, and regret having to cut back on certain services as a result.



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's Street to Castle Park; continue round the bend, up into Maidenburgh Street.

Nearest car-park NCP Nunns Rd. Very little street parking available.

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 5 pm, after Vespers, or by arrangement
Holy Marriage, Holy Baptism, Funerals, Memorials etc: by arrangement
Children of St Helen (Pre-school & Primary): first Saturday of month 11.00 am

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
Churchwardens: David Davies 01-473-745-167 Dusan Radunovic 01-206-762-553
Children of St Helen: Sanja Radunovic 01-206-762-553 Silvia Lefley: 01-206-835-715

Orthodox Parish of St Helen Registered Charity No. 1134418
Bank Account: Sort Code 20-22-67 Account No. 50349364
Parish Website: <http://www.orthodoxcolchester.org.uk>

At St James Anglican Church, Beatrice Rd, Clacton-on-sea C015 1LE
Divine Liturgy: usually third Saturday of month 10.00 am

**CLACTON
HOLY
LITURGY
Sat 16 Dec
10.00 am**

**CHILDREN OF ST HELEN
Saturday 2 December
11 am
for pre-school
& primary children**

**CONFESSIONS
BEFORE CHRISTMAS
Saturdays 5.00 pm
or by appointment**

St John of Damascus

St John is often thought of as a Greek, but, while indeed Greek-speaking, he was actually a Syrian from the city of Damascus (where our Patriarchal cathedral is), a member of the Antiochian Church. In earlier life a high-ranking civil servant of the Arab Muslims who had in 635 conquered the country, he later renounced the world and became a monk at the celebrated Monastery of Mar Saba, near Jerusalem. He was a theologian of authority, and a composer of hymns, many of which we sing in the Church today. So he remains an enormous influence in the Orthodox Church of the 21st century. I had the privilege many years ago of praying briefly in his cave-cell, where he died on 4 December about AD 750. Unfortunately he does not get a lot of liturgical observation since that is also St Barbara's feast. You can recognise him in icons from his distinctive head-covering.



Five years Patriarch: His Beatitude John X of Antioch and All the East

In 2008 he became Archbishop for the Antiochian parishes throughout Europe, and during that time served the Holy Liturgy for us twice - in St Helen's and in St Martin's.

His Beatitude has been Patriarch of Antioch, to which this Parish belongs, since 17 December 2012.

Earlier he had been Bishop of Pyrgou - acting as assistant to the then Patriarch Ignatius IV - and during that period visited Colchester, serving the Holy Liturgy here in St Helen's.

His brother is the kidnapped, still-missing, Archbishop Paul of Aleppo, who also has served in St Helen's.

We send our greetings to His Beatitude on his completing five years as Chief Shepherd of the ancient Church of Antioch, founded by the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, and ask his prayers for our Parish.

Here and There

BAPTISED: Congratulations to the following, who have been baptised recently:

ERIK-ANDREI RACOVITA, son of BOGDAN and CATALINA of Brightlingsea;

JESSICA-IOANA JULINSCHI, daughter of MIHAI and MIHELA of Latchingdon.

Many years to them both!

IN THE OCTOBER ISSUE we recorded the Baptism of THEODORE in Colchester Hospital at just two days old, son to PETER and ANYA WILSON. Well, he has recovered enough to be taken home to Tolleshunt Knights, near the Monastery, and to be brought in to church for the completion of the ceremonies, which is splendid—though of course he will need a great deal of care over the next months and years. When he came to St Helen's, he got a second godparent, in addition to VALENTINA SAURA, who had been present at the hospital - no less than Archpriest MAXIM NIKOLSKY, an old friend from the Dormition Russian cathedral in Ennismore Gardens.

HENRY IBRAHIM was Egyptian by birth and a Copt, but brought up in Britain - indeed here in Colchester. He had had poor health for a long time. Sadly he died alone in his flat. His father is Reader MAGDY IBRAHIM of the Antiochian parish in Louth, Lincolnshire, and it was good to

have him able to say the Trisagion Prayers at the funeral here in St Helen's, even though it was for such a sad reason. A large number of family and friends attended. Memory eternal!

ST BARBARA'S, SOUTHEND has a special day for its Patronal feast this year, 4 December. His Eminence Archbishop GREGORIOS will consecrate the temple, which is a lovely little building. Unfortunately I will not be able to attend as they are transferring the event to the Sunday, but that is obviously a good thing for their own people. We wish all our friends there the very best for the occasion and for the future of their parish: at the moment they are without a parish priest.

CASTLEGATE CENTRE serves disabled people in need at their premises just above St Helen's, which we have borrowed in the past for various celebrations. We have recently sent them a donation of £100 towards their excellent work.

METTINGHAM: Two of us from St Helen's visited the College of Our Lady of Mettingham in Suffolk but almost into Norfolk - for their Founder's Day recently, Holy Liturgy with prayers at the grave of the late MARY BOND. All worshippers here have an attachment to that church, because our votive candles are bought from them: so I thought you would like to know!

DECEMBER DAYS

Sun	3	Pentecost 26 , S Birinus Apostle of Wessex
Mon	4	Great Martyr Barbara, S John of Damascus
Tue	5	S Savva the Sanctified
Wed	6	S Nicolas the Wonderworker of Myra
Thu	7	S Ambrose, Bishop of Milan
Sat	9	Conception of the Theotokos by Righteous Anna
Sun	10	Pentecost 27
Tue	12	S Spyridon the Wonderworker, Bp of Trimythous
Wed	13	S Herman of Alaska, Wonderworker of All America
Thu	14	S Venantius Fortunatus, Bishop of Poitiers
Fri	15	Hieromartyr Eleutherius, Bishop of Illyria
Sun	17	Sunday of the Holy Forefathers
Wed	20	Hieromartyr Ignatius the Godbearer, Bp of Antioch
Sat	23	Saturday before Nativity
Sun	24	EVE OF NATIVITY
Mon	25	NATIVITY OF CHRIST
Tue	26	SECOND DAY OF THE FEAST: SYNAXIS OF THE HOLY THEOTOKOS
Wed	27	THIRD DAY OF THE FEAST: PROTOMARTYR & ARCHDEACON STEPHEN
Fri	29	Holy Innocents, the Infants slain by Herod
Sun	31	Leavetaking of Nativity, Sunday before Theophany

A Word from the Fathers: St Athanasius the Great

This was no mere fiction, as some have thought. Far from it! Our Saviour really did become man, and this brought about the salvation of the whole man.

Our salvation is no illusion, not is it salvation of the body only: the salvation of the whole man, body and soul, was really brought about in the Word himself.

What was born of Mary, according to Scripture, was by nature human; the Lord's body was a real one—real because it

was the same as ours.

This was so because Mary was our sister, since we are all descended from Adam....

This is the meaning of John's words, 'The Word became flesh'....

Though the Word took a body from Mary, the Trinity remains a Trinity, and admits neither addition nor diminution. It is always perfect.

In the Trinity one Godhead is acknowledged, and so in the Church one God is proclaimed, the Father of the Word.