

+ He shares our joys and sorrows + Christ is born : Glorify Him! +

Orthodox Parish of St Helen of Colchester

Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese
of the British Isles and Ireland
Metropolitan: His Eminence Archbishop Silouan
NEWSLETTER 280 DECEMBER 2020



Services in St Martin's in December

Saturdays Vespers 4.30 pm
Sundays Holy Liturgy 10.30 am

CHRISTMAS EVE

Thursday 24 December
Holy Liturgy 9.30 am

CHRISTMAS DAY

Friday 25 December
Holy Liturgy 10.30 am
followed by some carols

CONFESSIONS

Saturdays after Vespers, Christmas Eve
10.30 am, or by appointment

All arrangements subject to alteration
if new rules apply

Now it's over to the lawyers

It was good to learn that no member of the public objected to our taking on St Martin's, and that one person actually wrote to the Church Commissioners to support us. We are very grateful for that confidence of the local community, and look forward to being of service to the Borough of Colchester and wider society in the future—even if mainly by our prayers to God and inner life, and by our being a force for cohesion in the town and district.

Now we have appointed a solicitor to negotiate with the lawyers of the (Anglican) Church Commissioners. I am delighted to say that Kim Kennedy of John Fowlers has agreed to act for us. Their office is behind the Town Hall, and close to St Martin's.

Kim has been a good friend of the Parish for a long time already. My hope is that all the legal side of things can be dealt with quickly, since completion will allow us to proceed with our plans.

Thanks be to God for his mercy and strength, and may he continue to bless the work we do in his holy name.

And so we turn to the immediate future, to our celebration of the holy feast of the Nativity or Birth of Christ, which, with the lockdown lifted at least slightly, should now be a little easier.

I had been hoping that we might be able to have some sort of a carol service to which we could invite non-Orthodox friends, but that has not proved possible in the present circumstances.

I plan to serve a Holy Liturgy on Christmas Eve at 9.30 am, and one on Christmas Day at 10.30 am with a few carols afterwards. This should allow people to come freely, observing social distancing and wearing facemasks. To make sure I do not overdo it there will not be the usual afternoon Vigil service

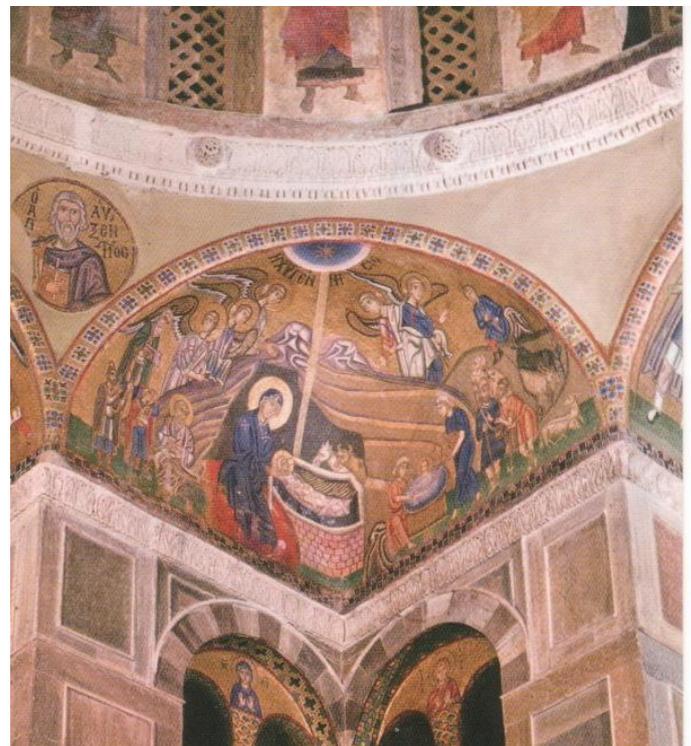
I do pray you will have a happy feast, even if it is perhaps rather restrained, and you may be without your full family around you. God bless us all and give us peace in his holy Birth.

Father Alexander

25 Give thanks to God with the Haig family, who this month celebrate twenty-five years as members of the Holy Orthodox Church. We were received all together in St George's Cathedral in London by our dear FATHER SAMIR GHOLAM on 10 December 1995. The family, with a few other faithful, was the foundation stone of this parish. Services in Colchester were first served in February and March 1996. Perhaps we can celebrate that in the New Year.

St Helen's Appeal for St Martin's THE APPEAL REMAINS OPEN

We are grateful to those continuing to support our restoring
St Martin's as a Temple suitable for Orthodox worship
Latest Total: £164,539 Thank you, God bless you!



St Martin's Church, West Stockwell Street CO1 1HN

St Helen's Chapel, Maldenburgh Street CO1 1UB

Both temples are off the High Street, but accessible from there only on foot. St Martin's is 100m down behind the Town Hall. St Helen's is 200m down behind the George Hotel. Nearest car-park NCP Nunns Rd, behind Fenwicks, and close to St Martin's. 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): normally first Saturday 3.15 pm

Parish Priest: Father Alexander (Alistair) Haig

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Tel: 01-206-530-530 Mob: 07-947-047-201 Eml: parishpriest@orthodoxcolchester.org.uk

Reader: George Harrison 07-869-488-842

Churchwardens: Dusan Radunovic 01-206-762-553, **Jon Kanaar** 01-255-431-975

Orthodox Parish of St Helen: Registered Charity No: 1134418
IBAN: GB05BUKB20226780219819 Bank Account Sort Code: 20-22-67
Bank Account No: 50349364 Appeal Account No: 80219819
Parish Website: <http://www.orthodoxcolchester.org.uk>
Appeal Website: <http://orthodoxcolchesterappeal.org.uk>



The most popular Saint? I suppose that St Nicholas must be a candidate for the world's most popular Saint, in both the Orthodox Church and the West. Parts of his story are well-known everywhere, particularly the one about his three times throwing a bag of money through a poor man's window to keep his children from penury. He was a Bishop in fourth-century Myra in Lycia (Turkey), well-loved and respected. At the First Ecumenical Council at Nicaea he rebuked the heretic Arius and boxed his ears,

and his fellow-bishops were very annoyed, but Christ appeared in a vision in the night to show his support for Nicholas. He also guarded a boat and its crew. He is particularly venerated in Greece and Russia. Many ancient churches are dedicated to him in Britain, especially ones near the sea. His feast is of course 6 December, a traditional day for family gifts in some countries. Later his holy relics were taken to Bari in Italy: there he is enshrined. St Nicholas the Wonderworker, pray to God for us.

Opening our holy places for you to pray quietly in difficult times

St Helen's: In the new rules the Chapel can be open for private prayer: it will be open most days whenever possible, from about 10.00 am to dusk. But when St Martin's is open St Helen's may well be closed.

St Martin's: We will hope to open the Church for private prayer whenever it can be manned for an hour or two. The churchyard should normally be open.

THE ARCHDIOCESE: His Eminence has divided the Diocese into three Deaneries, each headed by a Dean. We are to be in the South Deanery, with **Father Chrysostom Macdonnell** (Poole, Dorset) as our Dean. **Father Michael Alexander** (York) will have the East. **Father Gregory Hallam** (Stockport) will have the West. The Deans will form an advisory body for the Bishop. They take office on 1 January. The system will be an experiment for one year. We congratulate our new Dean and welcome him to his post.

2021 DIOCESAN CALENDAR: The attractive wall calendar is available at £6.00 per copy. It gives some of the saints' days and the fasting rules, and is illustrated with lovely photos of the Diocesan Monastery in Shropshire.

ASSISTANT SACRISTAN: In an attempt to 'spread the load' of parish work, I have appointed **Catalin Fliscu** to assist **Mark Shillaker** in the job of maintaining the two churches, especially the holy altars, and sacred vestments, vessels and candles etc. I am

Here and There

grateful to them both for their work in this and in other fields also.

HELEN & PETER LAWRENCE were members of our Parish at one time, where they and their family provided an important strength in the parish. Latterly they worshipped elsewhere, but have now moved all the way to Wallasey in Cheshire. It has not been easy, due to the lockdown, Helen says in a welcome letter, but adds,

Many thanks for your loving care and guidance over the years we were with you. Please remember us to all at Saint Helen's—you all remain in our prayers.

They have been able to join **Father Paul Elliot** and his Russian parish, which thankfully is in their town.

JANET FULFORD was Mayor of Colchester back in the 1980s and remained in public life for the rest of her life, widely respected and loved. She was always interested in our parish and in St Martin's, and encour-

aged us in one way or another. She made a generous donation to our Appeal, and we mourn her as a Benefactor, as well as for her friendliness and charm. Memory eternal!

CARPETTING: If anyone has any large rugs to spare, we would welcome donations. Obviously it will help to have as many as possible for people to stand on in the cold weather and make the whole church feel warmer.

HEATING: We are grateful to **Alexander** for his gift of two heaters. But please be aware that they are industrial size and should not be fully turned on as that is likely to melt sockets.

EYE OPERATIONS: My two operations have been concluded (a third this year was to fit a pacemaker), and all the work seems to have been very successful, for which I am of course most grateful to **Mr Chrysostomos Dimitriou** and his staff. I am still getting used to the new scheme of things, having worn glasses since my early childhood. God be praised for all his goodness!

A Word from the Fathers: St Athanasius (+373)

The Word 'took to himself descent from Abraham' as the Apostle says, and therefore it was essential that he should in this way become completely like his brothers', and take a body similar to us.

That is why Mary is really part of his plan, so that he may take this body from her and offer it up for us as something that is his own.

Accordingly, scripture mentions his birth, and says, 'She wrapped him in swaddling clothes'; the breasts that suckled him were called blessed; sacrifice was offered because he was the first-born....

The Word took this course of action so that he could take on him

self what was ours, offer it in sacrifice, and do away with it altogether, and then clothe us in what was his, as he inspired the Apostle to say, 'This perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal nature must put on immortality.'

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, nor is it salvation of the body only: the salvation of the whole man, body and soul, was really brought about in the Word himself.

DECEMBER DAYS

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| Fri | 4 | Gt Martyr Barbara, S John of Damascus |
| Sat | 5 | S Saba the Sanctified |
| Sun | 6 | Pentecost 26, S Nicholas the Wonderworker |
| Mon | 7 | S Ambrose, Bishop of Milan |
| Wed | 9 | Conception of the Mother of God |
| Sat | 12 | S Spyridon the Wonderworker |
| Sun | 13 | Sunday of the Holy Forefathers |
| Mon | 14 | S Venantius Fortunatus, Bishop of Poitiers |
| Tue | 15 | Hieromartyr Eleutherios, Bishop of Illyria |
| Thu | 17 | Prophet Daniel & the Three Children |
| Sun | 20 | Sunday before Nativity Hieromartyr Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch |
| Thu | 24 | Eve of the Nativity |
| Fri | 25 | NATIVITY ACCORDING TO THE FLESH OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST |
| Sat | 26 | SECOND DAY OF THE NATIVITY, SYNAXIS OF THE MOTHER OF GOD |
| Sun | 27 | THIRD DAY OF THE NATIVITY Protomartyr & Archdeacon Stephen |
| Tue | 29 | Holy Innocents, the Infants slain by Herod |