

25 years of Holy Orthodoxy in the heart of Colchester,
March 1996 - March 2021 — Praise to God !

Orthodox Parish of St Helen of Colchester

Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese
of the British Isles and Ireland
Metropolitan: His Eminence Archbishop Silouan
NEWSLETTER 282 FEBRUARY 2021



Services in February cancelled throughout the Archdiocese

If lockdown rules lighten, so may
Church rules. You need to keep in
touch.

Christ enters into his own: the Meeting in the Temple

The beautiful feast on 2 February, forty days after Christmas, commemorates the Holy Virgin and St Joseph obeying the law. God said through Moses that the Hebrews were to bring their first-born son into the Temple in Jerusalem and present him to the Lord, with a sacrifice. They would then receive the child back to nurture him and bring him up to love and fear God.

But with Christ it is all rather different. The Meeting does celebrate that, but also the greater truth that he is brought into the Temple, *which is in fact dedicated to him*.

It is Christ's own Temple: Christ is God as well as Man, and the Temple is his.

It will be a bit like that when we do eventually manage to get the Church Commissioners & Churches Conservation Trust to finish off the business of selling St Martin's to us.

We shall claim that the original building dated back before the Great Schism (or split) between western or Latin Christianity and eastern or Orthodox Christianity. Therefore we shall be allowing St Martin's to return to its original Orthodoxy. We shall be claiming it for "original Christianity", for Holy Orthodoxy.

On the other hand we should note that only a very small number of people recognised the truth about Christ coming into this own temple. Besides Mary and Joseph there seem to have been only old Symeon the God-receiver and Anna the Prophetess there to recognise who was coming in.

Similarly there will be only a comparatively small group to rejoice in St Martin's.

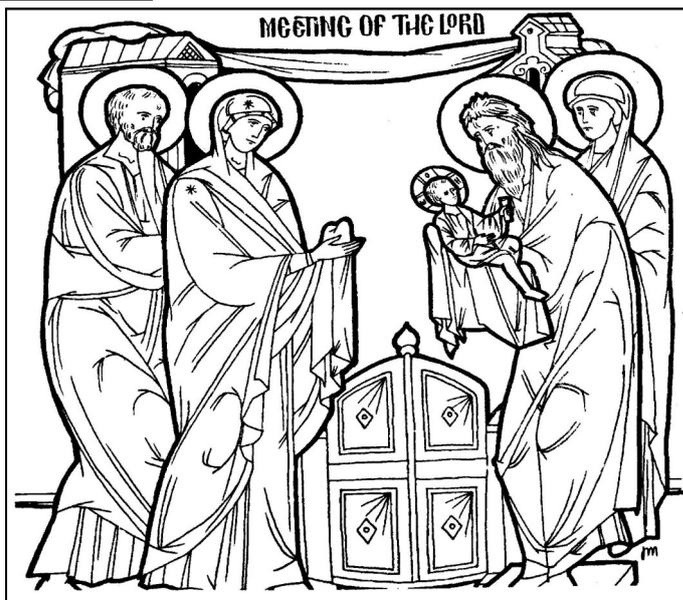
But it will be a group with a definite Truth stirring them on. Meeting with Christ in this new/old holy Temple, will bring Light not only to our own souls, but to people around us. The Elder Symeon will call us, "a light to lighten the gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel."

Father Alexander

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

Thank you, God bless you!



**Hail, Virgin Theotokos, full of grace!
From you shone the Sun of Righteousness,
Christ our God,
enlightening those who were in darkness!
Rejoice, O righteous Elder;
you received in your arms the Redeemer
of our souls,
Who grants us the Resurrection.**

Troparion of the Meeting of Christ in the Temple

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.

SERVICES IN ST MARTIN'S

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

Parish Priest: Father Alexander (Alistair) Haig

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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>

Receive this Newsletter by post?—See urgent message overleaf



Pre-Lent—a buffer between two parts of the Orthodox year

You may notice in the calendar a little note *The beginning of the Triodion*. It comes on the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee.

On this day we begin a new book for the services of the church. The book is called the Triodion. It is not the beginning of the Great Fast (known in English as Lent).

Rather, it is a period of three weeks' preparation for Lent, which itself is a preparation for Holy Pascha. Until now through the year we have been experiencing the life and teaching of Christ.

Now in Lent we get ready to experience the suffering (Passion), Death, and Resurrection of Christ, the central belief of Christianity.

"Pre-Lent" has four Sundays: the Publican and Pharisee; the Prodigal Son; the Last Judgment; Forgiveness.

It teaches that as followers of Christ we are to be

- like the publican, recognising our sinfulness;
- like the prodigal, returning from our sins to our Father;
- understanding there is no escaping the judgment of God;
- understanding our need to forgive our brothers and sisters in Christ if we ourselves are to be forgiven.

These lessons the Church presents to each one of us to take notice of before we enter the disciplines of the Great Fast.

I do hope this may be at least the beginning of our return to a more normal experience of our faith and religion than we have been able to know during the extraordinary time the world has been going through for the last year. God help us to get closer to him and to rejoice in our holy faith.

A Word from the Fathers: St Sophronius of Jerusalem

Let us all run out to meet him, we who honour and venerate the mystery of the Lord with pious devotion. Let us all go to meet him with eager minds. Let there be no one who does not share in this meeting, let no one refuse to carry a light.

We add to this the bright shining of candles. In this

way we show forth the divine splendour of the coming of him who makes all things bright, in the abundance of whose eternal light all things are bathed in light when the evil shadows have been driven away.

In this way we show the brightness of soul with which we must go to meet Christ.

REVISING OUR PARISH MAILING LIST

We are revising our Parish Newsletter List to help cut costs.

- If you can accept it by email, send your email address to:
parishpriest@orthodoxcolchester.org.uk
- If you wish to continue to receive it by post send your name and postal address to:
17 Maidenburgh St, Colchester CO1 1UB.
- If you do not reply within the next three weeks, we will assume you do not wish to receive it in future.

We thank you for your past interest, ask your prayers, and wish you God's blessing always.

Here and There

BEIRUT DISASTER: Last summer there was a terrible explosion and destruction in Beirut in Lebanon—one of the homelands of the Patriarchate of Antioch to which this parish is attached. We had a collection to show our concern for the people there. Thank you for your contribution, which I divided in half: £150 to the Archdiocesan fund for Beirut, and £150 to Therese JOHAE's privately-raised fund.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:

- **Clean Monday**, the first day of Lent, is 15 March;
- **The Entry into Jerusalem** (Palm Sunday) is 25 April;
- **Holy Pascha** is 2 May.

FEBRUARY DAYS

Tue	2	MEETING OF OUR LORD IN THE TEMPLE
Wed	3	Righteous Symeon the God-receiver & Anna the Prophetess
Sat	6	S Photios, Patriarch of Constantinople
Sun	7	Pentecost 35, Sunday of the Talents
Mon	8	Gt Martyr Theodore Stratelates
Wed	10	Hieromartyr Charalambos, Bp of Magnesia
Fri	12	S Meletios, Archbishop of Antioch
Sun	14	Pentecost 36, Sun of Canaanite Woman
Wed	17	Gt Martyr Theodore the Recruit
Fri	19	N Martyr Philothei of Athens
Sun	21	Sunday of the Publican & Pharisee <i>Beginning of the Triodion</i>
Tue	23	Hieromartyr Polycarp, Bp of Smyrna
Wed	24	1st & 2nd Findings of the Head of John the Forerunner & Baptist
Sat	26	S Raphael, Bishop of Brooklyn
Sun	27	Sunday of the Prodigal Son, Virgin-Martyr Kyranna of Ossi, S John Cassian the Roman