

In a world of sin, sickness and sorrow, Christmas brings joy and hope

It is midwinter when Joseph and Mary arrive in their ancestral home of Bethlehem to be registered, and are allowed to use the cave kept for the beasts. She is due to give birth to her first child, but she is confident for the future: her trust in God is absolute and she has promised her obedience to his will.

But, even then, Joseph is uncertain, as shown in the icon of the Nativity. Yet he too finds trust in God resulting in confidence in God that he will work out his plans.

So Christ is born in Bethlehem, and shepherds sing with angels, and wise men acknowledge the true divinity of the Child and worship him, presenting gold and frankincense and myrrh—for his Kingship, for his Priesthood, for his sacrificial death and resurrection.

To show that, as well as fully divine, he is fully human, the midwives wash the new-born.

Even animals come and worship their Lord.

The message of this for us all, is that however much trouble we experience, if we put our trust in the God-man Christ, we shall in the end be all right, protected and cherished by the Father, watched over by the holy angels.

If there is trouble in the form of sickness, Covid even, sorrow from heavy burdens of family and friends, difficulties brought on us by our own stupidity and sinfulness, 'God is with us', Emmanuel.

Your sorrow will turn into joy!

**Father Alexander
Alexander**

FOR YOUR DIARY IN DECEMBER

SATURDAYS	4.30 pm Great Vespers in <u>St Martin's</u> (except Christmas Day)
SUNDAYS	10.30 am Holy Liturgy in <u>St Martin's</u>
SUNDAY 5 DEC	10.30 am Holy Liturgy in <u>St Martin's</u>
MONDAY 6 DEC	9.30 am Holy Liturgy in <u>St Helen's</u> St Nicholas the Wonderworker
FRIDAY 17 DEC	9.30 am Holy Liturgy in <u>St Helen's</u> Prophet Daniel & the Three Holy Children
FRIDAY 24 DEC	9.30 am Royal Hours in <u>St Martin's</u> 4.30 pm Vigil in <u>St Martin's</u> (Compline & Mattins) EVE OF NATIVITY (CHRISTMAS)
SATURDAY 25 DEC	10.30 am Holy Liturgy in <u>St Martin's</u> NATIVITY OF CHRIST (CHRISTMAS)
SUNDAY 26 DEC	10.30 am Holy Liturgy in <u>St Martin's</u> SYNAXIS OF THEOTOKOS
WEDNESDAY 29 DEC	9.30 am Holy Liturgy in <u>St Helen's</u> HOLY INNOCENTS

APPEAL FOR ST MARTIN'S REMAINS OPEN

We are grateful to those continuing to support the Appeal by regular or occasional gifts: God bless you.



A very blessed Christmas to you and your family and friends, whether all together or separated. Christ give you true peace of mind and heart.

Confessions before Christmas after any service or by arrangement

St Martin's Church, West Stockwell Street CO1 1HN St Helen's Chapel, Maidenburgh 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 department store, and very close to St Martin's. Little street parking available.

SERVICES IN ST MARTIN'S CHURCH

Saturday: usually Great Vespers 4.30 pm Sunday: 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

17 Maidenburgh Street, Colchester CO1 1UB

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

Deacon: Father Mark Shillaker 07-917-161-295 Eml: markshillaker@gmail.com

Readers: George Harrison 07-869-488-842, **Catalin Fliscu** 07-815-682-820

Churchwardens: Dusan Radunovic 07-880-778-385, **Jon Kanaar** 07-596-221-079

Orthodox Parish of St Martin & 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>

Here and There



The icon of Prophet Daniel and the Three Holy Children displays the faith they had in God, that he would care for them as long as they put their trust in him. They were put in the fire but suffered no hurt. The Three were in the furnace, but a Fourth, the Son of God (represented here by the Angel) was seen sharing their experience, and saving them—just as Christ entered this suffering world, and saves us. The story is in the Old Testament book of the Prophet Daniel, chapter 3. Their feast is on 17 December, and the Troparion in their honour is as follows:

Great are the accomplishments of faith,
for the Three Holy Youths rejoiced in the fountain of
flames as though in the waters of rest;
and the prophet Daniel appeared,
a shepherd to the lions as though they were sheep.
So by their prayers, O Christ God, save our souls!

A Word from the Fathers: St Augustine (354-430)

Wake up, O man—it was for you that God was made man! Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light. For you, I say, was God made man. Eternal death would have awaited you had he not been born in time. Never would you have been freed from your sinful flesh, had he not taken to himself the likeness of sinful flesh. Everlasting would be your misery, had he not performed this act of mercy. You would not have come to life again, had he not come to die your death. You would have broken down had he not come to help you. You would have perished, had he not come. Let us joyfully celebrate the coming of our salvation and redemption ... the hallowed day.

THEOPHANIS ARISTODIMOU: FRANK (as he was known) was father to MARIA, ANDREAS and the late ARIS, and grandfather to three. Our sympathy to them and all the family on his death. His funeral will be in St Martin's on Tuesday 21 December at 12.30 pm, followed by burial in Colchester Cemetery. Memory eternal

DAWN CAIRNS was not Orthodox, but lived close to St Helen's, and was a friendly person known to the older generation of Colchester folk. We shall miss her. Memory eternal!

MARINA LOCK was wife to KEN (CENNEDD) and they latterly made their home at Walsingham, pillars of the Orthodox community. They did not have a car but, using public transport, attended meetings and pilgrimages all over the place, with a habit just of turning up. The furthest away I met them was a few years ago when I was attending the conference of the Anglican/Orthodox Dialogues in Novi Sad in Serbia, and they turned up at Vespers in the cathedral! They were always charming and enthusiastic, and many will miss her. Our sympathy to Ken. Memory eternal!

WEEKDAY SERVICES are being held in St Helen's at the moment. This is good as it keeps the Chapel in use—and the people warm as the Chapel has heating! Services on Saturdays and Sundays are in St Martin's. This system will be discussed after Christmas and may be altered.

MATTHEW GREENLAND has been attending worship in St Martin's for a little while, but has now moved across The Pond to marry his fiancée SADIE. We wish Mr and Mrs Greenland very many happy years! Near where he will live, in Maine USA, there is an Orthodox church and Matt intends to continue his spiritual journey there. God bless them both.

St Martin's: good news at last!

At long, very long last, we hear that completion of the sale of St Martin's is upon us! The cash—gifts from you and from many others—is about to be paid over to the Anglican church in London, and we shall become owners of the beautiful and historic building. Give thanks to God—a wonderful building in the heart of Colchester (Britain's First City) will be an Orthodox temple, bearing Orthodox Christian witness to our God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Of course, as with any other ancient building, there will be restrictions on what we can and cannot do with it, but Listed Building Consent was granted to us some twenty months ago, granting us permission to get on with what we want to do immediately (i.e. over a period) and will keep us working for some while, dealing with heating and lighting, and on a more important level with the furnishing and setting out of it for Orthodox worship.

So praise God and keep an eye open for what you may be able to do to take part in this great act of faith. Thank you to all who have aided us: we trust to have the purchase completed by Christmas!

DECEMBER DAYS

Sat	4	Gt Martyr Barbara
Sun	5	Pentecost 24, S Sava the Sanctified
Mon	6	S Nicolas the Wonderworker
Wed	8	S Patapios of Thebes
Thu	9	Conception of Theotokos by R Anna
Sun	12	Pentecost 25, H Forefathers, S Spyridon
Mon	13	S Herman of Alaska, Wonderworker of All America
Wed	15	Hieromartyr Eleutherios, Bp Of Illyria
Fri	17	H Prophet Daniel and the Three H Children
Sun	19	Sunday before Nativity of Christ
Mon	20	Hieromartyr Ignatius the God-bearer, Bishop of Antioch
Fri	24	EVE OF NATIVITY
Sat	25	NATIVITY ACCORDING TO THE FLESH OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST
Sun	26	SECOND DAY OF THE NATIVITY, SYNAXIS OF THE HOLY THEOTOKOS
Mon	27	THIRD DAY OF THE TRINITY, S STEPHEN
Wed	29	HOLY INNOCENTS (Infants slain at Bethlehem by Herod)