

# The Orthodox Parish of St Martin & St Helen Colchester

Newsletter | November 2023



The Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of the British Isles & Ireland | Metropolitan HE Silouan Oner



On November 21, the Orthodox Church celebrates the **Feast of the Entry of the Most Holy Theotokos into the Temple**. The life and times of Mary, the Mother of Our Lord, are not recorded in the Holy Gospels, rather we draw our understanding from Holy Tradition; specifically a second century work known as the Book of James or *Protevangelion*. We read in it that Mary's parents, the Righteous Joachim and Anna fulfilled their promise to God and brought her to the Temple, where she was joyfully received by the High Priest Zacharias who proclaimed: *"It is in you that He has glorified your name in every generation. It is in you that He will reveal the Redemption that He has prepared for His people in the last days."* Taking her into the Holy of Holies, a place where only the High Priest was permitted to enter once a year on the Day of Atonement, he placed her on the steps of the altar, and the grace of the Lord descended upon her. She arose and expressed her joy in a dance as wonder seized all who saw this happen. She dwelt there nine years before being entrusted to Joseph, the guardian of her virginity. The Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple signifies her total dedication to God and her readiness for her future vocation as the Mother of the Incarnate Lord. *This is a feast of anticipation. As honor is shown to Mary, the faithful are called to look forward to the Incarnation of Christ, celebrated in a little more than a month by the Feast of the Nativity on December 25*

**The Nativity Fast starts on 15 November**, in preparation for the Feast of the Nativity. Let us therefore strive to emulate Mary's joyful obedience to *her* calling by setting aside *our* petty desires and wants, and asking God to transform and renew our hearts and minds; to make us into the truly human persons He would have us be! Have a blessed and fruitful struggle dear ones!

*Father Mark*

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**Holy Baptism and Chrismation** - On Sunday 22 October we were blessed to receive three of our faithful catechumens into the Holy Orthodox Church. John was received by Holy Baptism and Denis and Rafaella by chrismation. It was a very happy occasion and a sign that we are experiencing real growth in our community, with many, particularly young people drawn to the life giving Truth of Christ in the fullness of His Holy Church. Glory to God!

**Heating and Lighting** - Our electricians started installing the new heating system in St Martin's on 23 October and we hope that our new chandeliers will also be installed over the next couple of weeks. The heaters will make a real difference to the temperature in the church. Those of us who have endured three freezing winters since 2020 will not wish to repeat that experience again!

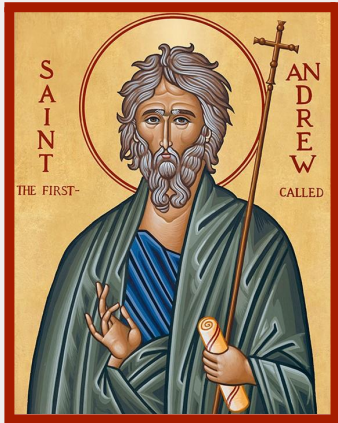
**Annual General Meeting** - The Parish annual General Meeting (AGM) was held after the Holy Liturgy on 29 October in accordance with our statutory duties to the Charity Commission, as a Community Interest Organisation (CIO)



**Iconostasis & Icons** - Our new iconostasis is taking shape. There have unfortunately been some unavoidable delays but we are confident that the finished article will look wonderful. This month we will be letting you know about how you can get involved in funding our icons. Information will be published about the various prices in each case.

**IMPORTANT:** There is likely to be a period of several weeks when St Martin's is a little untidy or contains various equipment, materials and tools. We will do our best to work with our contractors to ensure they are tidy and safely stored while we are using the church, but we ask everyone, especially parents, to ensure their children are supervised at all times while the works continue.

**A WORD FROM THE FATHERS** But let us who are weak and passionate have the courage to offer our infirmity and natural weakness to Christ with unhesitating faith, and confess it to Him; and we shall be certain to obtain His help, even beyond our merit, if only we unceasingly go right down to the depth of humility. **St John of Damascus - The Ladder of Divine Ascent**



## **The Saint: Holy Apostle Andrew, the First Called** A native of

**Bethsaida**, he was the brother of Simon Peter and a fisherman with him on the sea of Galilee. He was a disciple of St. John the Forerunner and Baptist (John 1:36) and through John's witness of Jesus, became Jesus' first follower, believing Him to be the Messiah. When Christ called him and Peter from their lives as fishermen to be His disciples, they immediately left everything behind and followed Him (Mt. 4:18). He was one of the Twelve and seems to have had a special gift for engaging individuals and introducing them to Christ. Thus he brought his brother Simon to Christ (John 1:41), introduced a young boy with five loaves and two fishes to Christ (John 6:8) and even, with Philip, introduced some Greeks to Him (John 12:20-22). In his later apostolic travels, he went as far as Scythia near the Black Sea (and is therefore hailed by Russians as their national patron) and established a church in Byzantium upon his return. He then

went to preach in Greece. He was finally martyred by being tied to an X-shaped cross, he lived for some days in this state and preached to all who saw him. This martyrdom took place probably in Patras in Achaia. His relics were at length translated to Constantinople. Some relics were taken by St. Regulus to Scotland in about the fourth century so that Scotland looks to him as their patron as well.

We are grateful to those continuing to support our church by regular or occasional gifts; may God bless you. Bank details: Orthodox Parish of St Martin & St Helen: Registered Charity No: 1192469  
IBAN: GB05BUKB20226780219819 Sort Code: 20-22-67 Account No: 50349364  
Appeal Account No: 80219819

### **Regular Service Times:**

**Saturdays:** Great Vespers 4:30pm

**Sundays:** Matins & Holy Liturgy from 9:45am

Weekend services at St Martins. Additional (weekday) services usually at St Helen's Chapel unless otherwise stated.

St Helen's Chapel is open daily for prayer and pilgrimage.

### **Additional Services for November**

**Wednesday 1 November: Hours & Holy Liturgy: Saints Cosmas & Damian - 9.30am St Helen's Chapel**

**Thursday 9 November: Hours & Holy Liturgy: St Nektarios Kephalas, Metropolitan of Pentapolis - 9.30am St Helen's Chapel**

**Thursday 16 November: Hours & Holy Liturgy: Holy Apostle & Evangelist Matthew - 9.30am St Helen's Chapel**

**Tuesday 21 November: Hours & Holy Liturgy: Entry of the Most Holy Theotokos into the Temple - 9.30am St Helen's Chapel**

**Thursday 30 November: Holy Apostle Andrew the First Called - 9.30am St Helen's Chapel**



**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. Nearest car park NCP: Nunns Road, CO1 1EJ. **Confessions:** Saturdays 5pm, after Vespers or by arrangement. **Holy Marriage, Holy Baptism, Funerals, Memorials etc:** by arrangement.

**CLERGY: Father Alexander Haig**, 17 Maidenburgh Street, CO1 1UB. Phone: 01206 530 530 \ Mobile: 07947 047 201  
Email: parishpriest@orthodoxcolchester.org.uk **Father Mark Shillaker** 24 Orchard Gardens, Ipswich Rd, CO4 0BX Mobile: 07917 161 295 | Email: markshillaker@gmail.com

**parish website: [orthodoxcolchester.org.uk](http://orthodoxcolchester.org.uk)**