

# The Orthodox Parish of St Martin & St Helen

## Colchester

Newsletter | December 2023



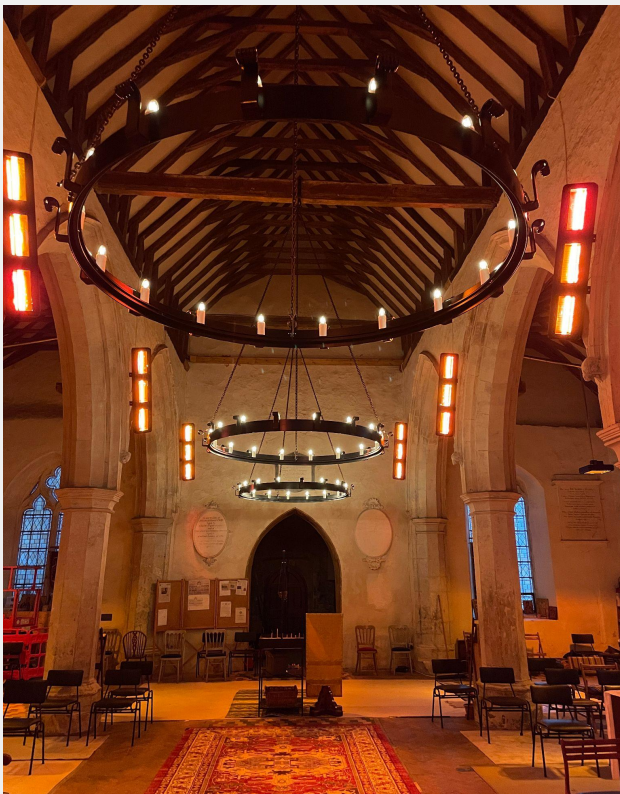
The Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of the British Isles & Ireland | Metropolitan HE Silouan Oner



*The Feast of the Nativity of our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ, as Christmas is known in the eastern church, has always held a place of great importance in the liturgical life of the Orthodox Church. Its origin goes back to the time of the Apostles. In the Apostolic Constitutions (Section 3, 13) it says, "Brethren, observe the feast days; and first of all the Birth of Christ..." In another place it also says, "Celebrate the day of the Nativity of Christ, on which unseen grace is given man by the birth of the Word of God from the Virgin Mary for the salvation of the world." It was jointly celebrated with the feast of Theophany in earlier times as Christ's baptism was seen as the first, glorious manifestation of His divinity. At any rate, Christmas has assumed greater prominence in the West over the centuries and despite the later onslaught of commercialism, sentimental nonsense, parties and material excess, the great feast's revelation of the arrival of the God-Man Jesus Christ; God incarnate, coming to live among us, to save us from the slavery of sin and death, has not been entirely lost, even in a somewhat indifferent culture. Let us Orthodox Christians therefore, give thanks this Christmas for the arrival of our King and our God and the bountiful gifts which He has bestowed upon us and our blessed community. **Father Alexander and Khouria Hilary, Khouria Paula and I wish you all a blessed and happy Christmas. Christ is born! Glorify Him!***

*Father Mark*

+ News + + News + + News +



**Heat and Light!** After three bitter winters since making our new home in St Martin's we finally have our heaters and chandeliers. The whole of the church is now pleasantly warmed by our radiant heating units which can be turned on separately or all at once and varied in output. Now that the first real frosts have arrived, the difference in church is impossible to overstate. A much more comfortable environment, especially for our older people and little ones. The chandeliers, handmade by local ironworker Adam Ferretti, perfectly complement the architecture of the church and give light which can be dimmed or brightened as needed. Glory to God!

**Iconostasis and Icons.** Progress continues on our new iconostasis and our original icons. The timber and fabrication for the iconostasis is fully funded and we hope for an installation before Christmas. We recently asked for pledges of money to pay for the icons and have been overwhelmed by the generosity of our community who have come forward in just a few short weeks to fund a full 17 out of the total 25 icons. The remaining icons are 8 of the 12 feasts which will be placed across the top row of the iconostasis. If you are interested in helping to pay for one of these, then please contact **Father Mark** for details.

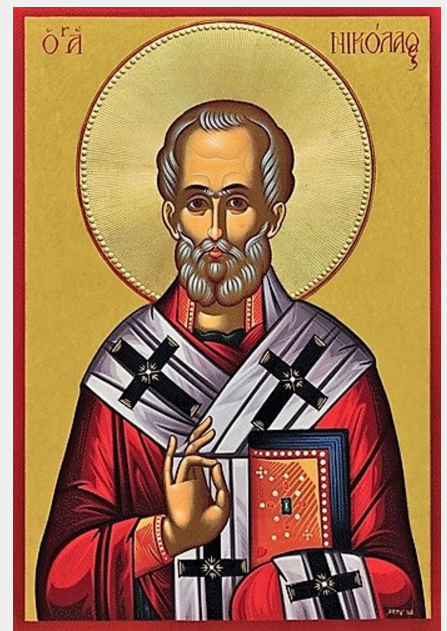
**Christmas Morning:** After the liturgy on Christmas Morning, please join us to sing a few Christmas carols from different national traditions

+Today the Virgin gives birth to the Transcendent One, / and the earth offers a cave to the Unapproachable One! / Angels with shepherds glorify Him. / The wise men journey with a star, / since for our sake the Pre-Eternal God was born as a young Child.+ Kontakion of the Nativity of Our Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ. Tone 3

## ***St Nicholas the Wonder Worker, Archbishop of Myra in Lycia.***

*By tradition, Nicholas was born in the province of Lycia during the Third Century in the southern part of Asia Minor in the city of Patara to well-to-do parents. Having inherited his parents' estate, he became known for his generous gifts to those in need. As a youth, he made pilgrimages to Palestine and Egypt. He was subsequently consecrated Archbishop of Myra as the fourth century began. He was imprisoned during the persecutions of Diocletian and released by Constantine after his ascension to emperor. Nicholas was noted for his defense of Orthodoxy against the Arians. He is reputed to have been present at the Council of Nicea, but his name does not appear among any documents from that era. He died in Myra on December 6 in a year uncertain, but between 342 and 352.*

After St Methodius' life of Nicholas became available in the Ninth Century, Nicholas was acclaimed and honored throughout Europe and especially in Italy. When Myra was captured by the Saracens in 1034, many Italian cities planned to "rescue" his relics. In 1087, forces from Bari, Italy, attacked Myra and carried away his relics from the lawful Greek guardians in Myra to Bari where they were enshrined in a new church. His fame increased. The story of his rescue of sailors in the Aegean Sea during his lifetime established him as the patron of mariners. His popularity in Russia rose to the point that almost all churches had some sort of shrine honoring St. Nicholas.



***Holy St Nicholas, pray to God for us!***

***From the Fathers ~ Let us always guard our tongue; not that it should always be silent, but that it should speak at the proper time. St John Chrysostom***

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 and Nativity Services**

**Wed 6 Dec:** Hours & Holy Liturgy St Nicholas the Wonderworker 9:30am St Helen's Chapel

**Tue 12 Dec:** Hours & Holy Liturgy St Spyridon of Trimethus 9:30am St Helen's Chapel

**Wed 20 Dec:** Hours & Holy Liturgy St Ignatius God Bearer of Antioch 9:30 St Helen's Chapel

**Friday 22 Dec:** Royal Hours 9:00 St Martin's Church

**Sunday 24 Dec:** Matins & Holy Liturgy from 9:45am + Nativity Vigil Service 6pm St Martin's church

**Christmas Day:** Hours & Holy Liturgy from 9:30 followed by Christmas carols.

**Wed 27 Dec:** Hours and Holy Liturgy Protomartyr and Archdeacon Stephen. 9:30 St Martin's Church.



**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)