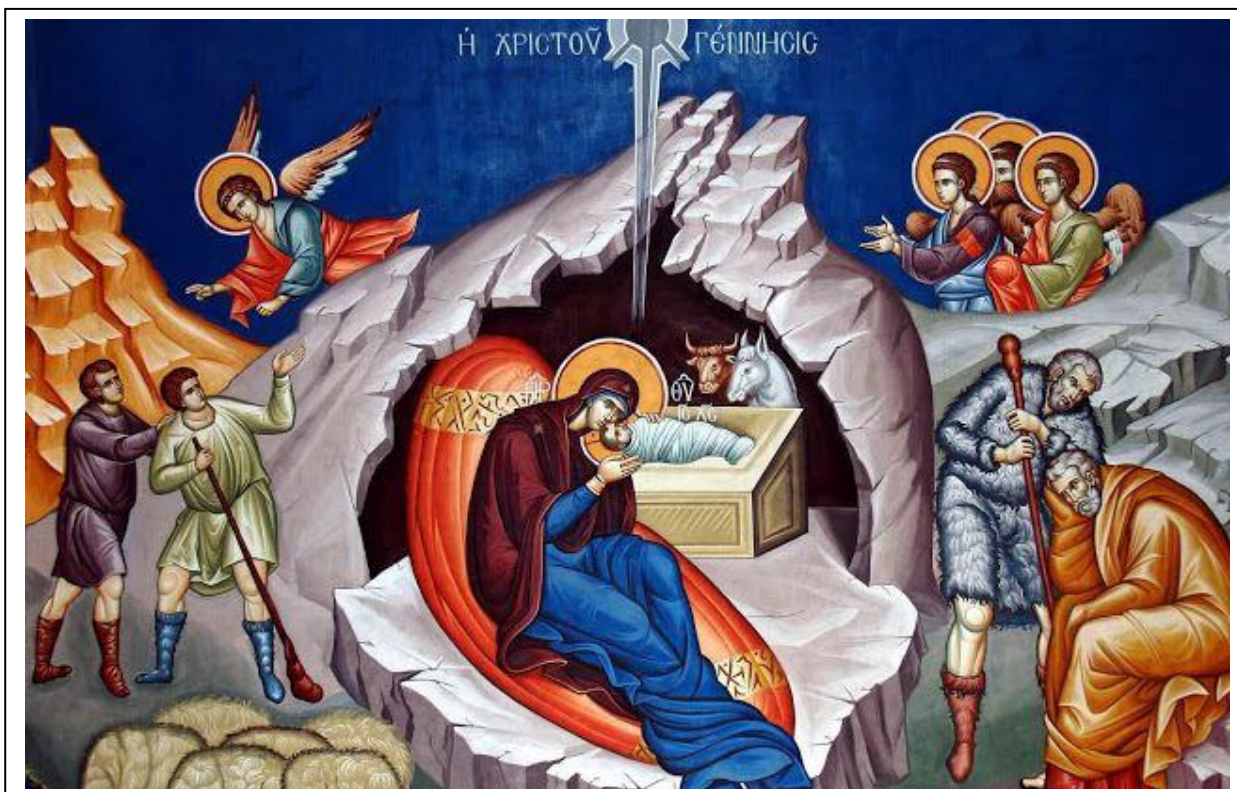




Prophet Elias News

News and Views for the Orthodox Church
of the Holy Prophet Elias in Devon
December 2023

For service times see Noticeboard on P8



On the Eve of the Nativity by Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh

When Christ was born into our world, that world was in a state of utter, tragic confusion, bitter and sorrowful. The suffering of people, both spiritual and material, was the same as it is today; people had lost their faith in the false, deceiving, tempting ideologies and gods. There was no firm foundation on which to base one's life, and in people's personal lives there was so much bitterness and misfortune. This is how Job, many centuries before Christ's time, describes the despair and hopelessness of the ancient world: "My days are past, my purposes are broken off, even the thoughts of my heart. If I wait the grave is mine house, I have made my bed in the darkness and where is now my hope." (Job 17: 11,13)

Thousands of people in our own time could say the same thing - my earthly hope has gone. Job can serve as the image of countless people. He was robbed of all his possessions, his children perished, his body became diseased, he was abandoned by everyone, and his wife, wise with the wisdom of the world, told him to curse God and die. But Job remained unshakeable in his faith and as Holy Scripture says he did not ascribe madness to God, but he stood before Him in the full height of human greatness, not as a slave, not in fear, but in the great dignity of a man praying for, demanding an answer without which he could not live.

During the course of his argument with God about the meaning of life, about wisdom, about human righteousness and righteousness of heaven, he exclaimed, "where then is he who will stand between me and my judge, who will put his hand on my shoulder and on his shoulder?" His words could be understood to mean: where is the one who, unashamed and undisgraced, can put his hand on me, rejected by God and men, and can at the same time put his hand on God's shoulder, can unite us, can keep us together, and find a solution to this apparently insoluble problem. He foresaw that to stand in this way between him and his judge would be possible only to someone who was the equal of both, who was at the same time man and God.

Centuries passed and indeed his expectation, his hope, was fulfilled; the one who was true God become man, came into the world and was able to put his hand on God's shoulder, and being real, true man, could put his hand on man's shoulder too, without crushing him, and unite them in his own person, and bring them to each other. The God-man Jesus Christ is the only one who can unite us with God as His friends who have grown to the full measure of human dignity, and therefore can, together with Christ, become the sons and daughters of God Himself.

Today Christ is born into the world, and we are just as bewildered as were the people in the centuries preceding the birth of Christ, who had lost their faith in what they used to worship and did not know what else to seek. But we have nothing further to seek; only God, the living God who became man, who is one of us, near and dear to us, can resolve the consternation and despair both of the individual soul and of our present human situation. Therefore let us go to Him with confidence, let us go to Him knowing that He did not remain afar while we suffered and sorrowed on earth; He is amongst us.

In the Book of Daniel is told the story of how King Nebuchadnezzar cast three faithful men into the fiery furnace and then came to see whether they had perished. In holy terror he exclaimed: "Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? How is it then that I see four men, freely walking about in it, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God?" Christ entered into human history, He took its whole weight upon Himself, all the grief, all the horror, and He overcame all the bewilderment, horror and grief. It is to Him, and only to Him that we must go; He is the way and the truth and the life.

*Sermon preached by Metropolitan Anthony on 5th January 1977 (Christmas Eve o.s.)
Copyright: The Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh Foundation*

Uganda News

Father Daniel wrote on 19-10-23 from Saint Cyprian Parish

Greetings to you in the name of our merciful Lord Jesus Christ. I thank the Lord that he is still caring for you. Thank you also for the love and communication on behalf of the parish. How are the priests and the parishioners?

Thank you and the parish for the contribution towards us. It was well received and the breakdown is indicated here:

Repair inside part of Mayindo church and classroom [sub-parish of Saint Mary of Egypt]
plastering will be 1,000,000 shillings [£240 +] for cement, sand and labour
School fees for 5 orphans - each orphan 300,000 a year totalling 1500000 [£360 +]
Priest expenses 1,200,000 [£270+]
The elderly, widows and the sick 800,000 [£175]
and savings to the bank 500,000 [£120]

It is on another side sad that 15 priests have joined the Russian church leaving ours. We still need your prayers. Greet the priests and the faithful for me. May God bless you. Yours, Fr Daniel Kaddu

News of Dr Dimitrios

Dimitrios Kunsu, the young medical intern who came close to death last year from Ebola has, thank God, made a full recovery. Having had great difficulty finding employment because of the dire state of the public finances in Uganda, he has taken the courageous step of setting up a clinic in partnership with a young pharmacist in Namungoona, a district of Kampala which also houses the Orthodox Cathedral and the diocesan Hospital and High School. (One of the main roads through Namungoona has recently been renamed Archbishop Jonah Lwanga Road in memory of the late Metropolitan of Kampala and All Uganda.) We pray for his success in this enterprise.

Martin Olsson

This Month We Celebrate

On Saturday December 2nd: **Saint Porphyrios of Kafsokalyvia** (Mount Athos) 1991

On Monday December 4th: **Great Martyr Barbara** and **Martyr Juliana** (c306)

We wish **Varvara K** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**

Saint John of Damascus (c749)

On Wednesday 6th: **Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker** Archbishop of Myra in Lycia (c345)

On Thursday 7th: **Saint Ambrose**, Bishop of Milan (397)

On Saturday 9th: **Conception of the Most Holy Mother of God by the Righteous Anna**

We wish **Anna C** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**

On Tuesday 12th: **Saint Spyridon the Wonderworker** Patron Saint of Corfu (c348)

On Wednesday 13th: **Saint Herman of Alaska**, Wonderworker of All America (1837)

Virgin Martyr Lucia (Lucy) of Syracuse (304)

On Friday 15th: **Saint Stephen**, Bishop of Sourozh in Crimea (787)

On Sunday 17th: **Sunday of the Holy Forefathers**

We wish **Mother Sarah, Naomi S** and **Sally L** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**

Prophet Daniel and the **Three Holy Children** (c600BC)

We wish **Fr Daniel Kaddu** in Uganda, **Daniel L** and **Daniel W** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**

On Wednesday 20th: **Hieromartyr Ignatios 'The God-Bearer'** of Antioch (107)

Repose of **Saint John of Kronstadt** (1908)

On Sunday 24th: Sunday before the Nativity, on which we celebrate **All the Righteous who pleased God, from Adam down to Joseph the Betrothed of the Mother of God.**

We wish **Adam R** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**

On Monday 25th: **THE NATIVITY ACCORDING TO THE FLESH OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST**

The Adoration of the Magi, Melchior, Caspar and Balthazar

Commemoration of the Shepherds in Bethlehem who went to see the Lord.

We wish **Christos P** and **Father Ian** and all members of the **Parish of the Nativity of Christ** in Lewes a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**

On Tuesday 26th: **Synaxis of the Most Holy Mother of God.**

On Wednesday 27th: **Protomartyr and Archdeacon Stephen**

On Thursday 28th: **Apostle Nicanor the Deacon**

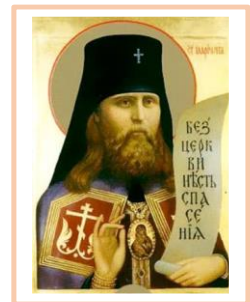
We wish **Father Nicanor** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**

Saint Hilarion (Troitsky) Archbishop of Vereya,

Hieromartyr under the Bolshevik yoke (1929)

On Friday 29th: **The Holy Innocents**, Infants slain by Herod in Bethlehem

Righteous John the Barefooted, Fool for Christ's sake (Ukraine, 1849)



Saint Hilarion Troitsky

On Sunday 31st: **Saint Joseph the Betrothed, David the King, and James the Brother of God**

Speaking About Christ

When we speak about wisdom, we are speaking about Christ.

When we speak about virtue, we are speaking about Christ.

When we speak about justice, we are speaking about Christ.

When we speak about peace, we are speaking about Christ.

When we speak about truth and life and redemption,
we are speaking about Christ.

Saint Ambrose of Milan – December 7th

Christ's Nativity

Awake, glad heart! get up and sing!
It is the birth-day of thy King.

Awake! awake!
The Sun doth shake

Light from his locks, and all the way
Breathing perfumes, doth spice the day.

Awake, awake! hark how th' wood rings;
Winds whisper, and the busy springs
A concert make;
Awake! awake!
Man is their high-priest, and should rise
To offer up the sacrifice.

I would I were some bird, or star,
Flutt'ring in woods, or lifted far
Above this inn
And road of sin!

Then either star or bird should be
Shining or singing still to thee.

I would I had in my best part
Fit rooms for thee! or that my heart
Were so clean as
Thy manger was!
But I am all filth, and obscene;
Yet, if thou wilt, thou canst make clean.

Sweet Jesu! Will then. Let no more
This leper haunt and soil thy door!
Cure him, ease him,
O release him!
And let once more, by mystic birth,
The Lord of life be born in earth.

Henry Vaughan *Silex Scintillans* 1650

Innocent's Song

Who's that knocking on the window,
Who's that standing at the door,
What are all those presents
Lying on the kitchen floor?

Who is the smiling stranger
With hair as white as gin,
What is he doing with the children
And who could have let him in?

Why has he rubies on his fingers,
A cold, cold crown on his head,
Why, when he caws his carol,
Does the salty snow run red?

Why does he ferry my fireside
As a spider on a thread,
His fingers made of fuses
And his tongue of gingerbread?

Why does the world before him
Melt in a million suns,
Why do his yellow, yearning eyes
Burn like saffron buns?

Watch where he comes walking
Out of the Christmas flame,
Dancing, double-talking:
Herod is his name.

Charles Causley (1917-2003)



The 14000 Holy Innocents slain at Bethlehem, honoured by the Church on December 29th as the first martyrs for Christ.

Memory Eternal!

Fr Ioann Sviridov Fr Peter and Irina and Fr John and Dawn first met Fr Ioann, known affectionately as Fr Vanya, in 1988 when the four went on pilgrimage with others from parishes across the country organised by the diocese of Sourozh for the celebration of the millennium of the baptism of Russia.

Fr Vanya accompanied the group throughout their visit across Russia and a great friendship was cemented. Fr Vanya visited Exeter soon after and on subsequent occasions and even served in Exeter at St Anne's. Both Shusha and Celia frequented services at the church where he served for a short while when they were both studying in Moscow in the early 90s. Peter and Irina would see him each time they visited Moscow. Many evenings were spent both at his old, slightly dilapidated wooden family home on the outskirts of Moscow set in a wild unruly garden (until it was sadly demolished) and in his beautiful apartment in central Moscow. The last time was in September 2019. Fr Vanya died on November 9th, aged 72, having suffered with dementia. Memory Eternal to our friend. Shusha Scorer

Mariamna Fortounato Mariamna, the late Father Michael's wife, died on 20th November, just a few weeks short of her 94th year. Both Fr Michael and Mariamna were good friends of our parish, and in Saint Anne's we have a lasting reminder of Mariamna in the icon panels she painted of the Four Evangelists on the Royal Doors. May her memory be eternal!

Deanery Conference & Festival



Conference & Festival

One in Jesus Christ: faithfulness in a world of conflicting identities

24th May to 27th May 2024

at High Leigh Conference Centre

[click [here \(Google\)](#) or [here \(Outlook\)](#) to add to your calendar]

We are taught that 'Christ is our peace' (Eph 2:14), breaking down the barriers that divide human communities. And we are told that in the Apostolic Age, Christians lived in their own countries as sojourners, and in every foreign land as in their homeland (Epistle to Diognetus). Yet we live now in a world where natural and social 'identities' e.g. national, racial, ideological - and often now 'gender' – are seen as much more than elements in the make-up of each unique person; increasingly they become new 'middle walls of enmity', dividing humanity into 'us' and 'them'.

In this cultural climate, we question how to bear witness to our oneness in Christ without becoming yet another faction in identity politics. How does/can the Church offer 'a vision of humanity... that is higher and greater' (Metr. Anthony - *Sourozh* 86, Nov 2001) – of a creature flawed and fallen, yet made according to God's image?

Talks will address our shared 'identity' in Christ; what it means to be human, especially in light of Transhumanism, Artificial Intelligence etc.; sexuality and gender in the Christian understanding, and more.

All the accommodation is en suite, at a cost per adult of £275, and £50 per child aged 6-16 years (infants are free). (Day visitors may be possible, but only by special arrangement with the venue staff.)

The annual Conference and Festival is the most important event in the life of our Deanery, where we can explore our faith together as well as refresh old friendships and discover new ones. Generous bursaries are available. Booking details will be posted in the next newsletter.

Ed.

A Plea from our Treasurer

Those of you who read my latest report to the Parish Annual General Meeting, may have noticed that the parish is currently running at a deficit. Over the last few months, it has become apparent that we no longer bring in enough income to cover all our costs.

We don't have huge running costs - we are lucky to rent St Annes for a nominal cost from a local charity - but we do need to cover the cost of candles, electricity, insurance and travel and expenses for the Clergy and members of the Parish Advisory Council.

Therefore, I am coming to you cup in hand. The best way for us to pay our 'bills' is through receipt of regular donations from standing orders. The collection plate at Liturgy contributes vital funds, while regular standing orders make up the backbone of our income.

Many of you may have a longstanding regular donation that has not increased for many years; I know this because I am one! Please can I ask you to consider if you can afford to increase your payments. For those of you newer to the parish or who haven't felt able to set up a standing order in the past, I ask that you consider it now. We do reclaim gift aid, so please also fill out a gift aid form if appropriate. (This is attached to the newsletter, or available from me; I will also make copies available in church.)

Even small regular amounts make a big difference, so please pay what you can afford.

With many thanks and love in Christ,

Alice, Parish Treasurer

alicescorer@gmail.com

P.S. As I write today, an electrician is doing a safety test in St Anne's on our very old wiring. I suspect it will need a certain amount of updating and we need new radiators as we go into winter. If anybody has ideas, time or energy for fundraising events to cover the costs please get in contact with myself or Philip.

Bank Details for Donations

Bank: **Lloyds Bank**

Account name: **The Orthodox Parish of the Prophet Elias in Devon**

Sort code: **30-90-49**

Account No: **00169223**

If you are a UK tax payer and would like your donation – whether single or regular – to be Gift Aided, please print off, sign and return the Gift Aid Donation Form on next page.

The beautiful 17thC pewter plate we use in Saint Anne's for distribution of the antidoron bread was originally a collection plate, and bears the fitting legend:

The Lord loveth a cheerful giver

(2 Corinthians 9:7)

Contributions for the January issue should reach the Editors at martinolsson827@btinternet.com or by post at *Little Linhay, Bondleigh, EX20 2AJ* by **Monday 18th December**, please.

Any opinions expressed in this newsletter are entirely those of the named authors or identified sources and should not be taken as representing the views of the parish as a whole.

The Orthodox Parish of St Elias in Devon

Gift Aid Declaration

multiple donation

Gift Aid is the tax reclaimed by the Parish from the tax paid by the donor in the tax year(s) of donation. If the donor pays less Income Tax and /or Capital Gains Tax than the attributable Gift Aid claimed in that tax year it is the donor's responsibility to pay any difference.

I want to Gift Aid all donations made by me to The Orthodox Parish of St Elias in Devon

- ☐ in the current tax year
- ☐ in future tax years
- ☐ in the previous four tax years

One or more box(es) must be ticked

Signature_____ Date_____

Title_____ All forenames_____

Surname_____

Home address:

Postcode:

Bank details for the creation, variation or cancellation of a standing order –

Bank: Lloyds Bank

Account name: The Orthodox Parish of the Prophet Elias in Devon

Account No: 00169223 Sort code: 30-90-49

Correspondence address for –

- return of this form,
- cancellation of Gift Aid Declaration,
- change of name or home address notification (required),
- donor no longer paying sufficient tax to cover Gift Aid.

The Orthodox Parish of the Holy Prophet Elias in Devon

c/o Alice Scorer (Treasurer) 55 Regents Park, Exeter, EX1 2NZ

For and on behalf of The Treasurer, The Orthodox Parish of the Holy Prophet Elias in Devon

Noticeboard

Saturday December 2nd: Vespers 6pm

Sunday 3rd: 26th after Pentecost Divine Liturgy 10.30am

Friday 8th: Eve of the Feast of the Conception of the Mother of God Vespers 6pm

Saturday 9th: CONCEPTION OF THE MOTHER OF GOD Patronal Feast of Saint Anne's Church

Divine Liturgy 10.30 am

followed by bring & share lunch at the Sylvania Hall EX4 7DS

Sylvania Hall - the only venue available – is a mile away from Saint Anne's, so will drivers please offer lifts to non-drivers. (There is free parking on site.)

Also, we only have the Hall from 12.30 until 2.30, so please arrive promptly.

Sunday 10th: 27th after Pentecost No service

Saturday 16th: Vespers 6.0

Sunday 17th: Sunday of the Forefathers Divine Liturgy 10.30am

Sunday 24th: Christmas Eve *Orthros & Divine Liturgy at Torquay* 9.30am

Festive Vespers Saint Anne's 6pm

Monday 25th: NATIVITY OF CHRIST Divine Liturgy 10.30am

Saturday 30th: Vespers 6pm

Sunday 31st: 30th after Pentecost Divine Liturgy 10.30am, with Moleben for the New Year

All services in Saint Anne's unless stated otherwise

For services in the Romanian parish (Exeter and Newton Abbot) consult

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100064673836911> or telephone Fr Julian on 07469 262827.

Similarly for the Torquay parish either visit https://www.facebook.com/standrewtorquay/?locale=en_GB or telephone

Robert Skrivanos on 07971 316416. For services in Plymouth visit plymchurch.com

Two Christmas Concerts

Handel's *Messiah*

Join Exeter Bach Choir and Orchestra for a seasonal performance of Handel's *Messiah* at Saint David's Church, Exeter EX4 4HR on

Saturday 2nd December at 7pm

Musical Director: Jonathan Lucas Wood, Leader: Anna Cockcroft

Soloists: Bethany Partridge, Juliet Curnow, Brenton Spiteri, Tim Mirfin

There will be an interval of 20 minutes during which refreshments are available.

[Book Now](#)

Britten's *A Ceremony of Carols* and Bob Chilcott's *On Christmas Night*

A performance of Britten's *A Ceremony of Carols* - a beautiful collection of medieval English poems composed for mixed choir and harp - plus Bob Chilcott's *On Christmas Night* - a sequence of eight carols telling the Christmas Story at St David's Church, Exeter, EX4 4HR

on

Saturday 9th December at 7pm

A collection will be made in support of JDRF (Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation).

Get tickets here <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/exeter-choral-society/t-vvpaonm>

Welcome!

We are very happy to announce the birth on 28th October of Evanthia Rose, daughter of Kyle (Symeon) and Rachel Leitch. We wish her, her parents and brother Zack **Many Years!**

Celia and Martin would like to take this opportunity to wish all our readers a very

HAPPY AND BLESSED CHRISTMAS!