Prophet Elias News

News and Views for the Orthodox Church of the Holy Prophet Elias in Devon
December 2024

For December service times see P4



CHRIST IS BORN! GLORIFY HIM!

Christ is born: glorify Him. Christ comes from heaven: go out to meet Him.
Christ descends to earth: let us be raised on high.
Let all the world sing to the Lord; let the heavens rejoice and let the earth be glad,
for His sake who was first in heaven and then on earth.
Christ is here in the flesh: let us exult with fear and joy –
with fear, because of our sins; with joy, because of the hope that He brings us.
O strange conjunction! The Self-existent comes into being; the Uncreated is created.
He shares in the poverty of my flesh, that I may share in the riches of His Godhead.

Saint Gregory of Nazianzus

Correction

In the November issue, I reported that Charlie Arsenios was tonsured as Sub-Deacon. This was a mistake: he was ordained, as Deacon Philip had been the day before. While tonsuring plays a part in the ceremony (as it does in the chrismation of all Orthodox believers), the central action of ordination is the laying-on of hands (cheirothesia) by the Bishop. *MO*

This Month We Celebrate

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

On Wednesday December 4th: **Great Martyr Barbara** and **Martyr Juliana** (c306)
We wish **Varvara K** and **Varvara M** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**
Saint John of Damascus (c749)

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

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

On Monday 9th: **Conception of the Most Holy Mother of God by the Righteous Anna**
We wish **Anna C** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**

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

On Friday 13th: **Saint Herman of Alaska**, Wonderworker of All America (1837)
Virgin Martyr Lucia (Lucy) of Syracuse (304)

On Sunday 15th: **Sunday of the Holy Forefathers**
We wish **Mother Sarah, Naomi S** and **Sally L** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**
Saint Stephen the Confessor, Bishop of Sourozh in Crimea (787)

On Tuesday 17th: **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 Friday 20th: **Hieromartyr Ignatius 'The God-Bearer'** of Antioch (107)
Repose of **Saint John of Kronstadt** (1908)

On Sunday 22nd : 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 Wednesday 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 Thursday 26th: **Synaxis of the Most Holy Mother of God.**

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

On Saturday 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 Sunday 29th: **The Holy Innocents,** Infants slain by Herod in Bethlehem
Saint Joseph the Betrothed, David the King, and **James the Brother of God**
Righteous John the Barefooted, Fool for Christ's sake (Ukraine, 1849)

Saint Ambrose of Milan – December 7th

No one heals himself by wounding another.

There is your brother, naked, crying, and you stand there confused over the choice of an attractive floor covering.

Nativity Sermon by St. Isaac the Syrian

This Christmas night bestowed peace
on the whole world -
So let no one threaten;
This is the night of the Most Gentle One –
Let no one be cruel;
This is the night of the Humble One -
Let no one be proud.
Now is the day of Joy -
Let us not seek revenge.
Now is the day of Good Will -
Let us not be mean-spirited.
In this day of Peace
Let us not be conquered by anger.
Today the Bountiful One became poor for our sake -
So, rich one, invite the poor to your table.
Today we receive a Gift for which we did not ask -
So let us give alms to those who implore and beg us.
This present Day has cast open the heavenly doors to our prayers;
Let us open our door to those who ask our forgiveness.
Today the Divine Being took upon Himself the seal of our humanity,
In order for humanity to be decorated by the Seal of Divinity.

Nativity: An Altarpiece

The wise men are still on the road, searching,
crowns and gifts packed in their saddlebags.

The shepherds are still asleep on the hill, their woollen
caps pulled over their ears, their campfire low.

It's the wondering animals, ox and ass, unused
to human company after dark, who witness

alone with Mary and Joseph, the birth; who hear
the cry, the first cry

of earthly breath drawn through the newborn lungs
of God.
And the cord is cut, and the shepherds
that selfsame moment have sprung to their feet

in a golden shower of angels, terrified, then
rejoicing. They lope downhill to the barn,

to see their Redeemer. A cloud of
celestial music surrounds them.
The wise men
are still far off, alone on the road with a star.

But the ox and the ass
are kneeling already, the Family's oldest friends,

in the glow of light that illumines the byre, the straw,
their eyes and the human eyes – a glow

shed from no source but the living Child Himself.

Denise Levertov

in A Door in the Hive New York: New Directions 1989

Saint John of Damascus – 4th December

'The whole earth is a living icon of the face of God.'

'All who ask receive, those who seek find, and to those who knock it shall be opened. Therefore, let us knock at the beautiful garden of Scripture. It is fragrant, sweet, and blooming with various sounds of spiritual and divinely inspired birds. They sing all around our ears, capture our hearts, comfort the mourners, pacify the angry, and fill us with everlasting joy.'

Saint John of Damascus



Our venerable and God-bearing Father **John of Damascus** (c. 676 - December 5, 749) was also known as *John Damascene, Chrysorrhoas,* "streaming with gold," (i.e., the golden speaker). He was born and raised in Damascus, in all probability died at the Monastery of Saint Sabbas (*Mar Saba*), South East of Jerusalem. His feast day is December 4

Orthodox Wiki

Noticeboard

Services in December

1 Sunday	23rd after Pentecost (Luke 14) Divine Liturgy 10.30am
7 Saturday	Vespers 6.0pm
8 Sunday	24th after Pentecost (Luke 10) : Eve of the Conception of the Mother of God Divine Liturgy 10.30am, followed by Bring & Share Lunch (at St James's Hall)
14 Saturday	Vespers 6.0pm
15 Sunday	25th after Pentecost (Luke 11) : Holy Forefathers Divine Liturgy 10.30am
21 Saturday	Forefeast of the Nativity of Christ Vespers 6.0pm
22 Sunday	26th after Pentecost : Ancestors of Christ Divine Liturgy 10.30am
24 Tuesday	**Eve of the Nativity of Christ** **Vigil 6.0pm**
25 Wednesday	**Nativity according to the flesh of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ** **Divine Liturgy 10.30am**
28 Saturday	No Service (Note change from earlier calendar)
29 Sunday	30th after Pentecost Typika 10.30am followed by Prayers for the New Year

All services in Saint Anne's unless stated otherwise

For services in the Torquay parish either visit https://www.facebook.com/standrewtorquay/?locale=en_GB or telephone Father Trayan on 07800 644 599 . *For services in Plymouth visit* plymchurch.com

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****.*

Deanery Conference 2025

Next year's Deanery Conference and Festival will be held at High Leigh Conference Centre, Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire from 23rd to 26th May. The theme of the Conference will be

Preaching the Gospel to all creation:
vocation and witness at a time of ecological crisis.

'**The theology of creation, and the destiny of all things to be united in Christ,** are areas where the Orthodox tradition has great riches to offer: it is expressed in many writings, both patristic and contemporary; in the lives of holy people; and in the role of matter both in the natural world and in our liturgical and spiritual life.

But how do we express this in our daily lives, in our homes and parishes? And how do we proclaim it to a world thirsting for a teaching that brings into unity the material and the spiritual – but often failing to find it in Christianity? We live in times when 'ecological anxiety' is a real pastoral concern, among younger people especially: faced with this fear for the fate of the earth and all its inhabitants, how should we be bearing witness to the hope that we have in Christ?'

The cost will be £295 for adults and £50 for children 6-16 years (under 6's are free). **Bursaries will be available.** Anyone who might wish to attend, but who finds our charge(s) beyond their budget should seriously consider applying for a bursary - particularly those families with children.

The annual Conference and Festival is the only occasion when members of parishes across the Deanery have the opportunity to meet together as one eucharistic community. Do consider going: it is always a joyful occasion. Booking details will be circulated early next year.

Note from the Editors

As we announced last month, this issue of Prophet Elias News will be the last under our editorship. You will continue to receive regular information about services and other parish events, though what form this will take has yet to be decided: there will be a discussion at the Bring and Share after Liturgy on December 8th.

Prophet Elias News began publication, initially weekly, in March 2020, when the first Covid lockdown isolated us all from one another. The aim was to maintain some sense of communion between us even when we could not meet face to face in church. Before Covid precautions had eased enough for us to resume a normal routine, we were devastated by the untimely death of Father Peter, and it was felt that a weekly newsletter continued to have a part to play, particularly as many parish members were still shielding, and so unable to attend what services we could hold. From March 2021 to March 2022 we published fortnightly, and monthly from then on. With the ordination to the priesthood of Father Brandon in June 2023, the liturgical life of the parish became more settled, reinforced by Deacon Philip's ordination earlier this year. We now have a regular pattern of services, which has allowed the parish calendar to be published three monthly rather than monthly. It seemed a reasonable time to retire from our editorship. It has been a labour of love, and a privilege: we did not want it to become simply a chore.

Two people have predominated in the sermons and articles we have republished on *Prophet Elias News:* Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh, and Father Alexander Schmemann. The reason for this – quite apart from the fact that they were both giants of Orthodox teaching in the 20th century – is that both have a place deep in the DNA of our parish. Metropolitan Anthony oversaw the establishment by Father Barnabas of the monastery of the Holy Prophet Elias in Willand in 1967, from which our parish grew, and he remained our beloved Vladika until his death in 2003. Fr Alexander Schmemann was Father Peter's teacher during his studies at St Vladimir's Seminary in New York State in the 1960's. We like to hope that the glimpses of their teaching we have included in the newsletter may have inspired our readers to explore their work further. In both cases much of their work has been translated into Russian, Greek and Romanian, among other languages. Many of Metropolitan Anthony's talks and sermons are also available online, in both English and Russian.

"The Gospel is a harsh document; the Gospel is ruthless and specific in what it says; the Gospel is not meant to be re-worded, watered down and brought to the level of either our understanding or our taste. The Gospel is proclaiming something which is beyond us and which is there to stretch our mind, to widen our heart beyond the bearable at times, to recondition all our life, to give us a world view which is simply the world upside-down, and this we are not keen to accept."

"The Church is Love – and nothing more."

Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh

"If the Church is in Christ, its initial act is always the act of thanksgiving, of returning the world to God."

"Love is the essence of the holiness of the Church."

Father Alexander Schmemann

Prophet Elias News *is the newsletter of the Parish of the Holy Prophet Elias, Devon, Deanery of Great Britain, Archdiocese of Thyateira (Ecumenical Patriarchate) - Archbishop: His Eminence Archbishop Nikitas (Lioulias)*

Rector: Fr Patrick Hodson – hodson44@btinternet.com Archpriests (retired) Fr John Marks, Fr Nikanor Wilkins
Serving priest: Fr Brandon Gallaher b.gallaher@exeter.ac.uk Tel: 07837 983433
(Fr Trayan Goranov can be contacted at otrayan@gmail.com Tel: 07800 644 599 to arrange confession)
Deacon: Dcn Philip Scorer philip.scorer@gmail.com Tel: 07812 170139
Parish Secretary: Edward Skidelsky hpeliasdevon@gmail.com
Parish Warden: Kyriaki Hadjiafxendi k.hadjiafxendi@bathspa.ac.uk

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