Prophet Elias Quarterly

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

July-August-September 2026

St Sidwell of Exeter

2nd August



There are two saints that hold a special place for me because I can feel their proximity, either in time or in place. One is Saint Maria of Paris, whose life overlapped with mine, if only briefly: the other is Saint Sidwell, whose feet, as she walked her father's land, would have trodden the ground we stand on as we gather in Saint Anne's.

Saint Sidwell was a virgin martyr of the eighth century, murdered by farm workers on the orders of her pagan stepmother. A spring opened up at the site of her martyrdom – a spring which by the year 1000, and probably much earlier, had become a site of pilgrimage for its healing properties. During the later middle ages her reputation spread throughout Devon. There are seven surviving stained-glass windows depicting her, including one in Exeter Cathedral, and at least twelve of the parish church rood screens which were not removed at the reformation are thought to have depicted her. (Probably there were far more, but the iconoclasts of Edward VI's reign did a very thorough job in Devon as elsewhere on the orders of Edward Seymour.) Sidwell, Sedwell or Sedwella remained a popular Christian name for Devon girls as late as the eighteenth century.

A Small Miracle of Saint Sidwell



One day, while exploring the promontory between the Tamar and Tavy rivers, I visited Saint Andrew's Church in the small village of Bere Ferrers, where I found one such screen. There were eight panels which had once contained depictions of saints, but seven of them had been completely obliterated by Seymour's iconoclasts. One, though, was intact – the image of Saint Sidwell, clearly identifiable by her scythe. True, she was suffering the depredations of time, but otherwise she was untouched. What had happened on the day the iconoclasts came? They had certainly not been careless – the other seven panels had been painstakingly scrubbed so that no hint remained of their identity.

Either someone had risked their liberty by guarding her – 'You'll have to get past me first' – or something about her had softened the heart of the person who had been paid to destroy her. Either way, to my mind her survival can only be seen as a small miracle.

Martin Olsson

Parish Life



Adam was received into the Church on Lazarus Saturday and was baptised before Vespers on 4 April. He was sponsored by Hugh Allen and took Constantine as his patron saint, whose feast day is on 21 May.





We wish Adam Constantine Many Years!



Guests from Exeter and Torquay

We celebrated the marriage of Joshua Moses and Aisha Ruth, which took place at the Church of St John Chrysostom in Cheltenham on Saturday 2 May.



Congratulations and Many Years to Moses and Ruth!

Letter from Elena

Elena Kalinichenko and her daughters Vika and Vlada returned to Ukraine a few weeks ago. They had been living in Sidmouth for the past 4 years and were regular and much loved members of our congregation. Here is part of her recent letter to Nadya Keenan (reproduced with permission of both of them).

It was lovely to receive your letter. I'm very glad that you've not forgotten us and are praying for us. I also pray, as before, for all of you, my friends, and remember those times with deep affection.

Life here is not easy, but we immediately tried to join this whirlwind of people, things, and nature. I expected it to be like this after all. Thank God I had some savings, and we've been able to adjust calmly, but the prices here are really high!

In Ukraine it is very warm now, even hot already. For two days we had good rain. The air temperature has reached 28 degrees.

Not all churches have become part of the OCU, so now we have to travel to the district centre on Sundays, where the service is held in Ukrainian. It is not far, about 15 minutes by minibus. We hear the air-raid siren quite often, but thank God there have been no strikes in our village, they intercept them.

The girls feel freer here. The school is not far from home (10 minutes on foot), and they are improving their Ukrainian. Everything is good with us, thank God! Recently we received information that my brother may possibly be a prisoner in Donetsk; we are waiting for confirmation.

Please keep Elena and her family in your prayers, as well as all the suffering people of Ukraine.

NOTICES

All the parishioners of St Anne's have been invited to

St James' Church Patronal Feast

Friday 24th July

Service at 7pm

Followed by Refreshments at St James' Hall

Parish of Prophet Elias Patronal Feast

Sunday 26th July

Liturgy at 10.30am

Followed by a Festive Bring & Share Meal at Saint James' Hall

Please bring some food to share…

Saint Boniface

Anglo-Saxon monk, missionary and martyr
Patron saint of Crediton, near Exeter
Apostle of Germany



Celebrating the Feast Day of St Boniface on 5 June, a group met up at the Roman Catholic Church in Crediton to venerate St Boniface, where two relics of the Saint are enshrined (vertebrae).



Boniface, then known as Wynfrith, was born in Crediton in 680. At the age of seven he studied at the monastery in Exeter and then in his early teens at Nursling Monastery near Southampton. He was noted as a brilliant scholar and teacher and compiled the first-ever dictionary of Latin grammar, being ordained a priest at the age of thirty.

For many years he felt called to missionary work, wanting to follow the example of the holy Irish monks, and in 716, at the age of 36, left Nursling and with three companions went to Frisia, now part of Northern Holland. His first mission was unsuccessful and he returned to Nursling, where he was offered the job of Abbot. Declining this, his mind still set on missionary work, he went to Rome and was commissioned by Pope Gregory II in 719 as a missionary to Germany, being given the name Boniface, meaning maker of good or good deeds.

In 722, Pope Gregory II consecrated him Bishop and Boniface embarked on 30 years of missionary work throughout Germany. In 739, by then Archbishop, Pope Gregory III commended him on his bringing as many as 100,000 souls into the Church in Bavaria.

He is mainly remembered for boldly confronting pagan superstition by felling a giant oak tree sacred to the god Thor, whom the idolaters venerated as holding up the vault of the heavens. The tree fell in four pieces in the shape of a cross and the pagan beliefs were shaken and many became Christian believers. With the wood, he laid the foundations of a new church, later founding a monastery nearby.

In 753, then in his 70s, he set out again to convert the pagan tribes of Frisia. On 5 June 754, he and his companions were attacked at dawn by a band of pagans near Dokkum. Boniface forbade his companions to fight back and he was struck down by a sword which pierced the holy book he raised to shield his head, as depicted in the icon. St Boniface and fifty-two others were martyred that day. According to his wishes, his body was taken to Fulda for burial and it is from here that two of his relics were given to Crediton.



He set up many monasteries and sees and is described as the Apostle of Germany and is greatly revered in Holland and France. His many letters provide unique insights into the religious, ecclesiastical, political and social history of early medieval Europe, and he has been described by eminent historians as one of the greatest Englishmen of all time.

Elizabeth Axon

LIBRARY CORNER

HM King Charles III (as HRH The Prince of Wales; with Tony Juniper and Ian Skelly): *Harmony: A New Way of Looking at Our World* (Blue Door, 2010).

I make no apology for publicising this thought-provoking and lavishly illustrated volume sixteen years after its first appearance, as the need to recognise and rectify the imbalance between modern industrial society ("the Machine") and the natural order is as great now as it was then, if not more so. Although hamstrung by the constraints of his position he has no hesitation in attributing our present woes at least in part to our neglect of God, even if unlike Paul Kingsnorth in ***Against the Machine*** (reviewed in our January-March issue) he seems less sure about how to restore our relationship with Him than with that of His creation. Readily available second-hand.

Mother Thekla: *Eternity Now: an introduction to Orthodox Spirituality* (Canterbury Press 1997).

This little book of just over 100 pages is a positive goldmine. Again, no apologies for highlighting a work nearly three decades after publication. While it would be ideal for an enquirer or new convert there is much in its small compass to benefit even relatively seasoned members of the Church. An introductory chapter on Orthodox Essentials leads into four chapters taking us through the principal feasts of the Church year, with numerous quotations from a modern translation of the proper liturgical material. There follows a short section on Prayers of the Heart, the book concluding with a useful Glossary of Orthodox Terms.

Frederica Mathewes-Green: *The Jesus Prayer: the Ancient Desert Prayer that Tunes the Heart to God* (Paraclete Press 2009).

Again, not a new book, but like the other two one that has only come into my hands quite recently, and which I'm still working through. The opening part (40+ pages) deals in a quite chatty and personal way (maybe not everybody's favourite medium, but we warm to the author as we get to know her as the book goes forward) with the origins and theory of the Jesus Prayer. Part Two (100+ pages) is entitled "Getting Started" and is a practical guide, arranged as questions and answers, most of which are no more than a page or two in length and need to be taken slowly, one at a time. Copies are available on Amazon and elsewhere. A Google search reveals that she has shared some of the material on two YouTube videos, one of eight minutes' duration and a fuller one lasting just over an hour.

Hugh Allen



On May 2nd we had the joy of attending the Launceston Poetry Festival for a reading by Dr Rowan Williams and our very own Luke Kennard (baptised in Saint Anne's). Dr Williams read from the Charles Causley Commemorative Anthology The Drifted Stream, as well as from his own collection The Edge of Words, while Luke read several sections from his recent The Book of Jonah – a complex, multilayered exploration of the nature of commitment - or not - to the prophetic and/or poetic calling. It's also often very funny. After the interval Luke and Dr Williams treated us to a fascinating discussion about trying to express faith (and doubt) in poetry.

It was lovely to catch up with Luke, and he has promised to do his best to visit Saint Anne's sometime later in the summer. *Celia and Martin Olsson*

RECIPE CORNER

One-pot Spanish Chickpea Soup

From Joseph Haj Ali:



Ingredients:

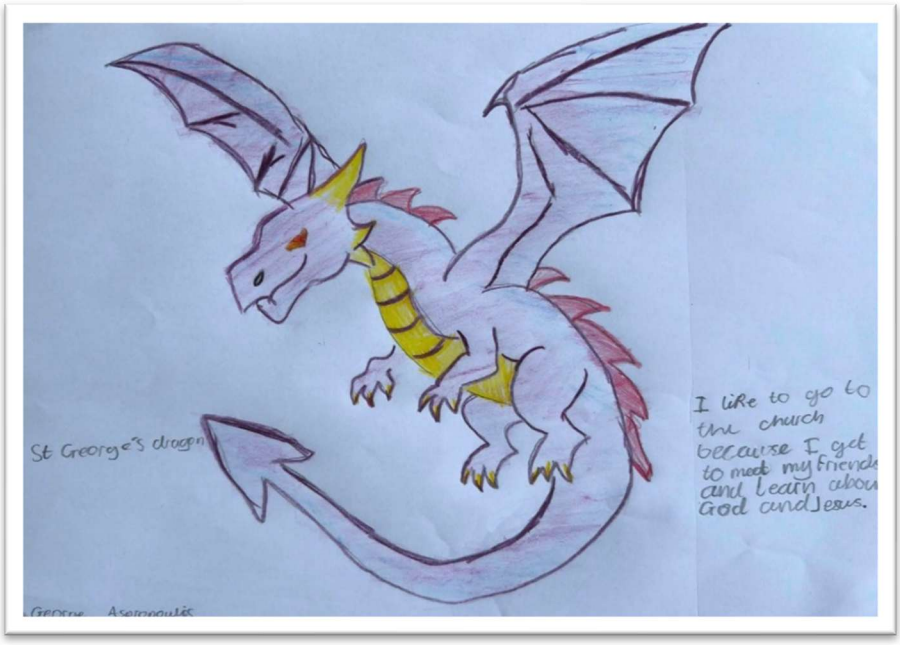
500g raw chickpeas
2 red bell peppers (400g)
1 medium potato (220g)
2 medium onions (120g)
7 garlic cloves
Bunch of spinach

Method:

Soak the chickpeas overnight. Rinse them and add half a teaspoon of bicarbonate of soda if you are impatient (as I am). Bring to the boil and simmer for 30 minutes.
Add the potato, cut into 1–2 cm cubes, to the water. Place the quartered onions and the bell pepper cut into large chunks on top. Cook for another 10–15 minutes until the potatoes are fully cooked.
Turn off the heat.
Pour most of the cooking water into a bowl to control how thick the soup is later. Transfer all the cooked bell pepper, onions, garlic and some of the chickpeas and potato pieces to another bowl. Add salt and olive oil. Blend into a smooth sauce. At this point, I would recommend adding some red chilli paste, e.g. the not-so-Spanish Tunisian harissa or Korean gochujang. Add your spinach and pour the sauce over the top. Mix everything together and it's ready! Enjoy!

Have a blessed Dormition fast!

And if you're not fasting... you can also add some diced chorizo.



This beautiful image was drawn by George Aspropoulis – aged 8

2026 Deanery Conference

The annual Deanery Conference was held over the bank holiday weekend at High Leigh Conference Centre in Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire. This year's theme " Peace I leave with you; My peace I give unto you" was covered in a series of talks and workshops and a programme for the children.

The first talk was on Metropolitan Anthony's vision of Orthodoxy and the background of our Deanery. The other talks expanded on this and included 'The Liturgy after the Liturgy', 'Transmitting Peace - the teaching of Elder Tadej of Vitovnica', 'War and Peace in heaven and on earth' in which we were first asked to think about what peace means to us. After tea on the Saturday and Sunday afternoons there were workshops which furthered the theme, all on such interesting topics that it was difficult to choose which to attend. For those who couldn't get to the conference there is information on the talks on the Deanery website: https://thyateira-deanery.uk and the photographs taken during the conference should be available fairly soon. Also, the talks may become available on YouTube.

Services were held each morning and evening, starting with Compline on the Friday evening after the first talk and ending with a Moleben on Monday before departure. Several of the Deanery clergy served at the Divine Liturgy on Sunday and the choir comprised people from many parishes under the 'baton' of Lisa von Schlippe. They worked really hard to make wonderful services – I spent part of Saturday afternoon sitting on the terrace hearing the choir practice in the marquee – lovely.

Sunday evening was party evening. After dinner we gathered in the marquee which had been set out with small tables, chairs and a bar. The children started the proceedings with a performance of the life of St Panteleimon – quite amazing what can be put together in just two days. This was followed by the grown-ups giving poetry readings, singing and musical pieces – all accompanied by glasses of wine and chatting to friends.

A most important part of the conference is the chance to get together with friends from all over the country. Much catching up and discussions of talks and workshops were done during the days and in the evenings over a glass or two - this year we were blessed with glorious warm sunny weather and many of us spent a lot of time on the terrace.

I would recommend attending the conference – it is a wonderful chance to understand more about our Orthodoxy and to meet new friends. Next year the conference will be held near Northampton – according to my map a little easier to get to than Hoddesdon (no M25!).

Celia Olsson

If you would like to contribute something to the next newsletter, please either send it to **Hugh Allen** by email to hughallen188@gmail.com or give it to him in person.

The Newsletter is published **quarterly**.

Contributions for the next edition (October-November-December 2026) must reach Hugh by **31st August 2026**.

ORTHODOX PARISH OF THE HOLY PROPHET ELIAS IN DEVON

SERVICES IN JULY 2026

Saturday	4	Vespers	6.00 pm
Sunday	**5**	Typika	11.00 am
Saturday	11	Vespers	6.00 pm
Sunday	**12**	Typika	11.00 am
Saturday	18	Vespers	6.00 pm
Sunday	**19**	Liturgy	10.30 am
Saturday	25	Vespers	6.00 pm
Sunday	**26**	Liturgy **PATRONAL FEAST CELEBRATION HOLY, GLORIOUS PROPHET ELIAS (20 July)**	10.30 am

Service followed by Festive Bring & Share Meal

SERVICES IN AUGUST 2026

Saturday	1	*Dormition Fast*	
Wednesday	5	Vespers	6.00 pm
Thursday	6	Liturgy **TRANSFIGURATION**	10.30 am

Service followed by Blessing of Fruit

Friday	14	Vespers	6.00 pm
Saturday	15	Liturgy **DORMITION**	10.30 am
Sunday	**30**	Akathist 'Glory to God for All Things'	11.00 am

SERVICES IN SEPTEMBER 2026

Saturday	5	Vespers	6.00 pm
Sunday	6	Liturgy	10.30 am
Tuesday	8	**NATIVITY OF THE MOTHER OF GOD**	
Saturday	12	Vespers - Forefeast of the Exaltation of the Cross	6.00 pm
Sunday	**13**	Liturgy	10.30 am

Service followed by Bring & Share Meal

Monday	14	**EXALTATION OF THE CROSS**	
Saturday	19	Vespers	6.00 pm
Sunday	**20**	Liturgy	10.30 am
Saturday	26	Vespers	6.00 pm
Sunday	**27**	Typika	11.00 am

NB: *All services are in St Anne's Chapel, Exeter unless otherwise indicated.*

Please note the start time for Typikas and Akathist is 11am rather than 10.30am

All services will be followed by light refreshments in St James' Church Hall or by a Bring & Share Meal.

July

We celebrate…

2 July Saint John of Shanghai and San Francisco (1966)
We wish Edward S a Happy Feast and Many Years!

4 July Venerable Andrei Rublev the Iconographer (15thC)
We remember Sid Andrei S. May his Memory be Eternal!

7 July Great Martyr Kyriaki (3rdC)
We wish Kyriaki H a Happy Feast and Many Years!

12 July Saint Veronica who was healed by Christ (1stC)
We wish Veronika M and Eve - Veronica B - a Happy Feast and Many Years!
We remember Veronica D. May her Memory be Eternal!

13 July Saint Alexander Schmorrell of Munich (1943)
We wish Mitch Alexander a Happy Feast and Many Years!

18 July Martyrs the Grand Duchess Elizabeth and the Nun Barbara (1918)
We wish Eliza S and Megan Elizabeth H a Happy Feast and Many Years!

20 July Holy, Glorious Prophet Elias (Elijah) (9thC BC)
Saint Alexis (Medvedkov) of Ugine, France (1934)
New Martyrs Saint Maria of Paris and Ravensbruck (1945) and her co-workers Fr Dimitry Klepinin (1944), Elias Fondaminsky (1942) and George (Yuri) Skobtsov (1944)
We wish Otto S, Kevin Elijah and all Parishioners a Happy Feast and Many Years!
We wish Maria G and all our friends in the French Vicariate of Saint Maria of Paris and Saint Alexis of Ugine a Happy Feast and Many Years!

22 July Holy Myrrh-bearer and Equal to the Apostles Mary Magdalen (1stC)
We wish Margaret E, Mary S, Madeleine S and Michelle G a Happy Feast and Many Years!

24 July Martyr Christina of Tyre (3rdC)
We wish Christine A, Christina S and Kirsty S a Happy Feast and Many Years!

25 July The Dormition of the Righteous Anna (1stC), mother of the Most Holy Mother of God
We wish Emma G-L a Happy Feast and Many Years!

28 July Saint Nicanor of the Seventy Apostles (1stC)
We remember Archpriest Nicanor. May his Memory be Eternal!

August

We celebrate…

2 August Saint Sidwell of Exeter (7thC)
We wish all Exonian parishioners a Happy Feast and Many Years!

6 August **We wish Father Christopher and all in the Parish of the Holy Transfiguration at Great Walsingham a Happy Feast of the Transfiguration and Many Years!**
We remember Sylvia B. May her Memory be Eternal!

11 August Saint Blane, Bishop of Bute (6thC)
We wish all members of the Community of Saint Nicholas in Dunblane a Happy Feast and Many Years!
We remember Fr Alexander W. May his Memory be Eternal!

20 August Prophet Samuel (11thC BC)
We wish Sam Samuel a Happy Feast and Many Years!

28 August The Prophetess Anna (1stC), who met the Lord in the Temple
Venerable Moses the Ethiopian of Scete (4thC)
We wish Anya K and Felicia F a Happy Feast and Many Years!
We remember Wendy Ann R. May her Memory be Eternal!
We wish Josh Moses FW and David Moses O a Happy Feast and Many Years!

September

We celebrate…

1 September	**THE CHURCH NEW YEAR**
	Day of Prayer for the Protection of the Environment
4 September	Holy Prophet and God-Seer Moses
	We wish Moses K a Happy Feast and Many Years!
5 September	Prophet Zachariah and Righteous Elizabeth (1stC), parents of St John the Baptist
	We wish Zac L, Presbytera Elizabeth C, Alice S, Lily S and Elizabeth T and Elizabeth A a Happy Feast and Many Years!
6 September	Saint Bega (Bee), Abbess of Copeland in Cumbria (7thC)
	We wish Matushka Jenny Bega M and all those in the Parish of Saint Bega, Saint Mungo and Saint Herbert in Keswick a Happy Feast and Many Years!
	We remember Fr John M. May his Memory be Eternal!
11 September	**6th anniversary of the repose of Fr Peter. May his Memory be Eternal!**
16 September	Saint Edith of Wilton (984)
	We wish Edie O a Happy Feast and Many Years!
17 September	Saint Sophia and her daughters Faith (Vera), Hope (Nadezhda) and Love (Lubov) (2ndC)
	We wish Sophia R, Nadya K and Vera (Eleanora) F a Happy Feast and Many Years!
21 September	**We wish Deacon Philip Many Years on the 2nd anniversary of his ordination to the Diaconate!**
26 September	Holy Apostle and Evangelist John the Theologian (1stC)
	We wish Father John a Happy Feast and Many Years!

We try to include name days for all parishioners, so if it is not listed and you would like it added, please email the parish secretary on hpeliasdevon@gmail.com

For more detailed information on lives of the Saints, you can go to Orthodox Church of America website: https://www.oca.org/saints/lives

You can also go to website of the Orthodox Fellowship of St John the Baptist https://forerunner.org.uk/what-we-do/calendar/ and order a copy of the Calendar and Lectionary. There are a few copies still available at St Anne's.

This is an annual calendar and lectionary, giving Scripture readings and an extensive list of saints for each day. It covers every day of the year: showing the feasts, forefeasts, afterfeasts, fasts, celebrated saints, the music tone of the week, and Bible readings. It also lists the special services for major seasons such as Pascha, Christmas, and Theophany.

Prophet Elias Quarterly 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
Retired Archpriest: Fr John Marks
Serving Priest: Fr Brandon Gallaher: fr.brandon.gallaher@gmail.com Tel: 07837 983433
Deacon Philip Scorer: philip.scorer@gmail.com Tel: 07812 170139
Parish Secretary: Edward Skidelsky: hpeliasdevon@gmail.com
Parish Warden: Kyriaki Hadjiafxendi: Contact Deacon Philip (see details above)
Safeguarding Officers:
Elizabeth Axon: axonelizabeth@hotmail.com Tel: 07391877811
Francis Rothery: francisrothery@yahoo.co.uk

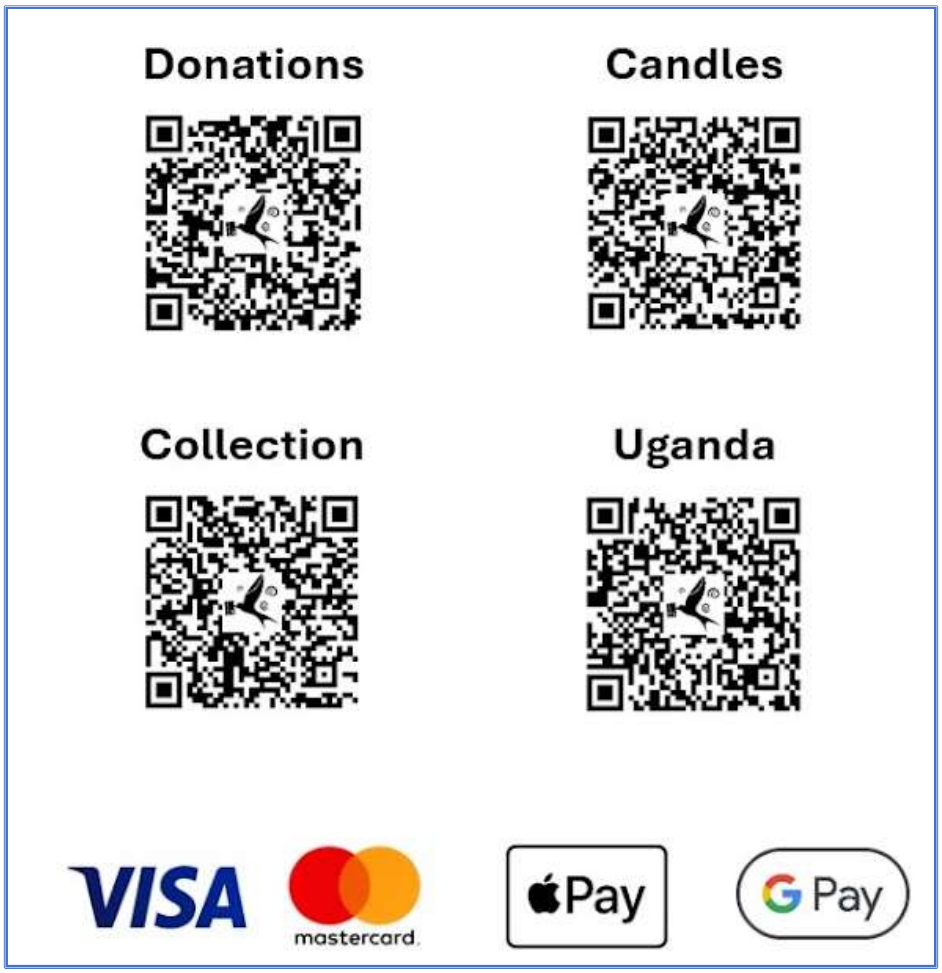
To arrange a confession, you can contact Fr Trayan Goranov either at otrayan@gmail.com or telephone 07800 644 599

For services in the Torquay parish either visit https://www.facebook.com/standrewtorquay/?locale=en_GB or telephone Father Trayan on the number above.

For services in Plymouth visit https://plymchurch.com/

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.

This newsletter and all past newsletters can be downloaded here:
Parish Newsletter – Orthodox Parish of the Holy Prophet Elias in Devon



Remember that we also take payment by mobile phone! The QR codes are all easy to find in the church on the candle desk and collection basket.