

The Orthodox Christian Community of St. Constantine

“The Church of Antioch in the City of York”



The Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of the British Isles and Ireland. Archbishop: H. E. Metropolitan Silouan
The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East. Patriarch: H. B. John X

Parish Newsletter November

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Advent—Preparation for The Nativity



THE WEEKS before the celebration of the birth of the Christ Child - known as Advent in English - should be an important time for Orthodox Christians; a time to think seriously about what it means for us that the God, who made the Universe, took human form and lived among us as an ordinary man. This astonishing act of the Divine Will reminds us all of the love and care which Almighty God has for us, His children. For this reason, the Church calls on us to keep a fast during the weeks before the Nativity so that we can better appreciate the wonder of the Feast when it arrives. It is especially important in our current age, when Christmas has lost its meaning in our society and is simply an excuse for enormous self-indulgence, and a celebration of crass materialism. The Advent Fast, beginning on Wednesday 15th November, enables us, as Orthodox Christians, to stand as witnesses to the true meaning of this great festival.

However because the Nativity is such a joyful event the fast is less penitential than the other Great Fasts; e.g. fish may be eaten on many days in the first weeks. In addition, no-one should be harmed by fasting practice, so if anyone has health or other personal circumstances which make it difficult to follow the fast rigorously please talk to the priest about how to manage that.

Today we received a gift which we did not ask for; let us bestow alms to those who cry out to us and beg!
The present day has opened the door of heaven to our prayers; let us also open our door to those who ask of us forgiveness!

Today the Godhead placed upon Himself the seal of humanity, and humanity has been adorned with the seal of Godhead!

St. Ephraim the Syrian + AD 373

Christmas—A Time Of Gifts

St. Ephraim reminds us in this hymn, that Christmas has been a time for Christians to exchange gifts for many centuries, after the example of The Magi. As well as gifts to our loved ones, the saint reminds us that we should also give to those less fortunate than us in life. This fits very well with our preparation for Christmas through our fasting, because St. John Chrysostom tells us that when we fast, praying more fervently and *giving alms (i.e. gifts to the poor)* are more important than abstaining from food. As in previous fasts, we will be collecting food and personal hygiene items for the homeless in York, of whom there are far more than you would think. Beginning on Sunday 19th Nov we will have a box by the Parish Table to leave donations. A list of what is needed will also be on the Parish Table. A little gift each Sunday will soon mount up. Thank you!



It is also time to think about what we can give to the Church in return for what it gives us, supporting our spiritual life and worship in fellowship with each other. I know how generous you already are, but remember, unlike the Church in some other countries, we have no other source of income except what we all give. To help our finances further we are introducing a scheme called **Gift Aid**, which you can read all about on the next page.

Service Schedule Nov-Dec

Sun 12th Nov
9:30 am Parish Matins
10:15 am Divine Liturgy

Sun 19th Nov
9:30 am Parish Matins
10:15 am Divine Liturgy

Mon 20th Nov
6:30 pm Great Vespers
At Heslington Parish Church

Sun 26th Nov
9:30 am Infant Baptism
10:45 Divine Liturgy
Later start time

Sun 3rd Dec
9:30 am Adult Chrismations
10:45 Divine Liturgy
Later start time

Sun 10th Dec
9:30 am Parish Matins
10:15 am Divine Liturgy

Wed 13th Dec
6:30 pm Daily Vespers &
Paraklesis to the Theotokos

Sun 17th Dec
9:30 am Parish Matins
10:15 am Divine Liturgy

Sun 24th Dec
9:30 am Parish Matins
10:15 am Divine Liturgy

Sun 31st Dec
9:30 am Parish Matins
10:15 am Divine Liturgy

Confessions:

To arrange confession prior to the Liturgy please ask the priests *before* Sunday morning. The Chaplaincy Quiet Room is usually available on weekdays for anyone needing a longer time for confession / spiritual or personal advice and guidance. Speak to the priest about what is best for you.

Parish Discussion Group Coming Soon

This will restart in the New Year using Zoom. The first topic will probably be *The Divine Liturgy*. Details about dates and times and how to join in will be in the next Newsletter .

Gift Aid and Planned Giving

A New Chapter for Our Parish Finances

St. Constantine's has been blessed with a growing parish of enthusiastic Orthodox Christians but we need to plan seriously for our future. His Eminence, Met. Siloan, has recommended that each parish adopts the "Thanksgiving Project" approach through which we can be good stewards of what our Blessed Saviour has given us to enjoy.

To support our growing parish we need to ensure that our income enables us to do this in a planned way. This will include, in addition to our other outgoings, the establishment of a Building Fund, so that we can look forward to the day when we have our own properly-furnished Orthodox church, either to own outright or rent a on a long-term lease. Fortunately there is a way for us to increase our income through the Gift Aid scheme.

What is Gift Aid?

Gift Aid is a government scheme that allows us, as a registered charity, to reclaim the 'basic rate' tax you pay as a UK taxpayer. This includes Income tax and Capital Gains tax that you have paid in the tax year (6 Apr - 5 Apr). It means that we can claim an additional 25p of tax from the UK Government for every £1 you donate, at no extra cost to you!

There are 2 ways we can claim Gift Aid on your behalf:

1. Fill in a declaration form, which can be found at the back of the church. This is the best way for us to reclaim the Gift Aid amount from donations made directly into the Church's bank account. You only need to do this once unless your circumstances change.
2. Fill in a Gift Aid envelope, also found on the table at the back of church. This is the easiest method for cash and cheque donations, but it is only valid for that donation, so you will need to use an envelope every time you give something.

Please remember to notify us if you no longer pay tax, or if you change your name or address.

Non-tax payers can still help us by setting up a standing order with their bank for a regular weekly payment. You don't have to pay a big amount. It's the guarantee of a *regular* payment which helps our planning. Of course you can still continue to offer one-off donations to the parish if you wish to do so.

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