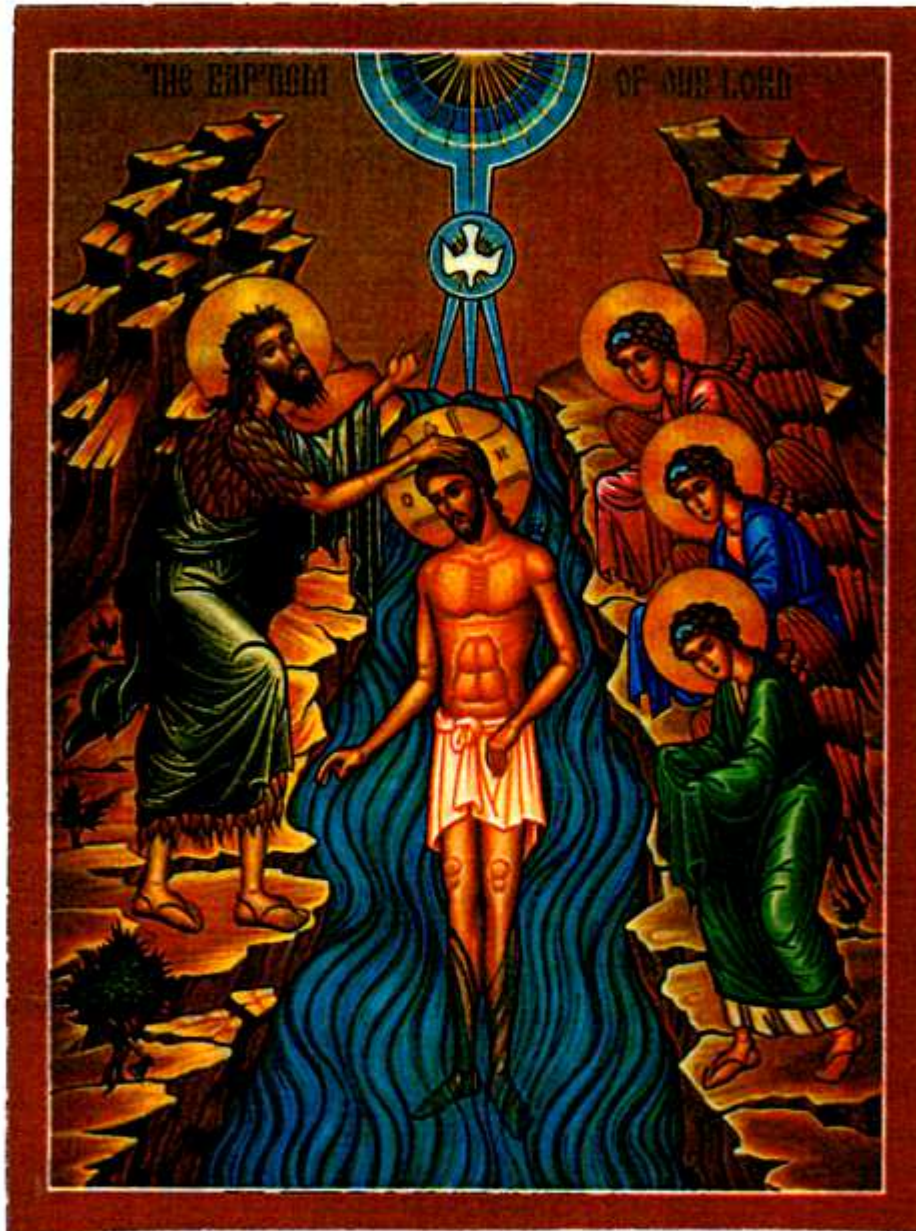


ST. FURSEY'S ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY AND PARISH,
ST. FURSEY'S ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN PARISH CHURCH,
YARMOUTH ROAD, STALHAM . NR12 9PG.

COMMUNITY PROGRAMME

JANUARY 2020



*The Epiphany, or the Baptism of our Lord Jesus Christ in
the Jordan (January 6th)*

Troparion

WHEN thou wast baptized in Jordan, O Lord, then
was made manifest the worship of the Trinity:
for the Voice of the Father bare witness to thee,
naming thee his beloved Son; and the Spirit in form
of a dove made good the certainty of his word. O
Christ our God, who wast manifested and hast
enlightened the world, glory be to thee.

BRITISH ORTHODOX SAINTS
 COMMEMORATED IN
 JANUARY.

- 01 Elvan and Mydwyn, Missionaries
- 03 Fugatius and Damian, Missionaries
- 06 Peter, Abbot of Canterbury
- 07 Brannoc of Braunton, Monk
- 08 Athelhelm, Archbishop of Canterbury
 Ethelbert, Bishop in Ireland*
 Pega, Anchoress
 Wulsin, Bishop of Sherborne
- 09 Adrian, Abbot of Canterbury
 Berhtwald, Archbishop of Canterbury
- 10 Sethrid, Abbess in France
- 12 Benedict, Abbot of Wearmouth
- 13 Kentigern (Mungo), Apostle of North-West England
- 15 Ceolfwulf, King of Northumbria, Monk
- 16 Fursey of East Anglia, Missionary
- 17 Mildgyth, Virgin
- 18 Wilfrid, Missionary and Martyr in Sweden*
- 22 Berhtwald, Bishop of Ramsbury
- 25 Sigebert, King of East Anglia, Martyr
 Thordgyth of Barking, Nun
- 28 John the Wise of Malmesbury
- 30 Bathild of Chelles, Queen*
- 31 Adamnan of Coldingham, Monk
 Wilgils, Hermit

TROPARION OF ST. FURSEY.

Establishing thy monastery in a Roman fortress
 thou didst teach men that the Orthodox Faith is
 a true bastion against the onslaughts of every evil
 force O Father Fursey.

Where fore pray to God for us that we may all be
 bastions of the Faith standing firm against the rising
 tide of falsehood that our souls may be saved.

KONTAKION OF ST. FURSEY.

Thou didst need the walls of stone to defend the Faith
 against its pagan enemies , O Father Fursey, but pray
 for us that we may have a spiritual wall around us to
 defend the Faith against its enemies. Following thee
 and praising thy eternal memory we stand firm against
 every error ever singing ; Rejoice beloved of God,
 our Father Fursey.



ST FURSEY'S CHURCH COMMUNITY PROGRAMME

SERVICES IN JANUARY 2020

(In the Parish Church unless otherwise stated)

Wednesday Jan 1st	Circumcision of our Lord. St Basil. Divine Liturgy 10am St Fursey's Chapel.
Friday Jan 3rd	Fore Feast of the Theophany. Royal Hours, 3rd Hour 9am, 6th Hour 12 Noon, 9th Hour 3pm. (St Fursey's Chapel). Vespers 4pm.
Sunday Jan 5th	The Holy Theophany of our Lord. The Hours 9:30am – Divine Liturgy 10am. Great Blessing of the Waters 11:30 – Blessing of the Waters at Stalham Staithe 12:30pm.
Monday Jan 6th	The Hour Theophany of our Lord. TYPIKA 9am (St Fursey's Chapel) (House blessings begin).
Saturday Jan 11th	Saturday after the Theophany Vespers 4pm.
Sunday Jan 12th	Sunday after the Theophany Divine Liturgy 10am.
Wednesday Jan 15th	Patronal Festival (St Fursey's Chapel). Vesperal Liturgy for St Fursey 7pm.
Saturday Jan 18th	Vespers 4pm (St Athanasius the Great).
Sunday 19th	Sunday of the Ten Lepers and Patronal Festival of St Fursey. Divine Liturgy 10am
Saturday Jan 25th	St Gregory The Theologian Vespers 4pm.
Sunday Jan 26th	Sunday of Zacchaeus Divine Liturgy 10am.

THEOPHANY HOUSE BLESSINGS

In the Orthodox Church it is the custom for the homes of the faithful to be blessed with the Holy Water from the Great Blessing of the Waters. Please let Father Stephen know if you would like your home to be blessed in this way.

Daily Prayers in St Fursey's Chapel, Neville Road, Sutton.

In addition to the above services at the Parish Church daily services continue at St Fursey's Chapel. These are normally 3rd Hour 9am with a reading from the Fathers. Vespers 4pm.

Local Readers are very welcome to come to these services but please check before coming (Tel: 580552) in case I have been called away as sometimes happens.

CHRISTMAS THANKS

As I prepare this newsletter on December 16th, may I thank all those who have sent cards and donations, they are much appreciated. As we prepare to celebrate Our Lord's Nativity, we are also preparing to celebrate the Great Feast of Our Lord's Baptism or Theophany (see above for further info) and also, the Patronal Festival of St Fursey's Community and Parish.

Our Orthodox Parish Church in Stalham

The beginning of the building of our new parish church began in July. The delay was caused by a planning problem which is now resolved. Some drains were moved, the foundations were dug; we had to go down 5ft to the subsoil and the concrete raft was laid down. All this cost £3000 instead of £500!! The steelwork has now been delivered and we hope to have it erected by the end of January, early February, weather permitting. This has cost us £4000.

Offertory: Great Entrance

It is now time for the sacrificial offering to God. There is only one true and acceptable offering with which God is pleased. It is the offering of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God Who offers himself eternally to the Father for the sins of the world.

In Christ men can offer themselves and each other and all men and the entire world to God. Christ has united all things in himself, and has taken all things upon himself. Thus, in and through him, men can offer all that they are, and all that they have, to God the Father. They can do this because they are in Christ, and have received the Holy Spirit from him.

At this moment in the Divine Liturgy the celebrant prays for himself, confessing his personal unworthiness and affirming that the only Priest of the Church is Jesus:

For Thou art the One who offers and the One who is offered, the One who receives and the One who is given, O Christ our God. . . .

The altar table, the icons and all of the people are incensed once again as the Cherubic Hymn is sung:

Let us who mystically represent the cherubim and sing the Thrice-holy Hymn to the life-creating Trinity, now lay aside all earthly cares.

The Gifts of bread and wine which stand for Christ, and in him, for all men and the entire world of God's creation—for Life Itself—are now offered to God. They are carried in solemn procession from the table of oblation, into the middle of the church, and through the royal doors of the iconostasis to the altar table. This procession is called the **Great Entrance** as distinct from the Small Entrance that was made earlier with the Book of the Gospels. In some Orthodox Churches the offertory procession of the Great Entrance is made around the entire nave of the church building, and so it is actually of greater length and solemnity than the small procession with the Gospel Book.

During the offertory procession of the Great Entrance, the celebrant once again prays to God on behalf of all with the prayer of the Crucified Thief: **Remember, O Lord in Thy Kingdom. . .** The bread and wine are placed on the altar table and the people conclude the Cherubic Hymn:

That we may receive the King of all who comes invisibly upborne by the angelic hosts. Alleluia.

At this time the celebrant quietly recites verses which call to remembrance the absolute perfection and total sufficiency of Christ and his self-offering. For the Lord who "fills all things" with himself makes even his tomb "the fountain of our resurrection."

The Cherubic Hymn and the meditative verses of the celebrant just mentioned are a late addition to the Divine Liturgy. They were added in the imperial era



of Byzantium in order to enhance the essential liturgical act of the offertory which is the movement of the Church offering itself to God the Father through its Head, High Priest and King Jesus Christ who is also the Suffering Servant, the Lamb of God and the New Passover; the sole sufficient sacrifice which is perfect, total and fully acceptable to the Father.

In the liturgical offertory, the faithful give themselves in sacrifice to God together with Christ. They do so through the Holy Spirit as those who have died and risen with Christ in baptism. In order for the liturgical act of offering to be genuine and true, it must be the living expression of the Church's constant and total self-offering to God. If each member of the Church is not in perpetual sacrifice with Christ to the Father and is not "bearing his cross" by the power of the Spirit, the offertory entrance of the Divine Liturgy be-

comes a sterile symbol devoid of reality. As such it is done not as a movement towards God, but unto condemnation and judgment.

Thus, once again a litany is chanted and a prayer is made that God would be merciful, because of the sacrifice of Christ, and would accept his people and their offering in spite of their sins; and would allow them worthily to offer the Gifts and to receive Holy Communion with God.

O Lord God Almighty, who alone art holy, who acceptest the sacrifice of praise from those who call upon Thee with their whole heart. Accept also the prayer of us sinners, and bear it to Thy holy altar, enabling us to offer unto Thee gifts and spiritual sacrifices for our sins and for the errors of the people. Make us worthy to find grace in Thy sight that our sacrifice may be acceptable unto Thee, and that the Good Spirit of Grace may dwell upon us, and upon these Gifts here offered, and upon all Thy People. . . .

At this time in the Divine Liturgy the gifts of money for the work of the Church, the propagation of the Gospel and the assistance of the poor and the needy are collected and offered to God.

Love and Faith

Before the Divine Liturgy can proceed further, there are two conditions which must be fulfilled by the faithful. These are the solemn expressions of love and of faith which are essential to the Christian life, and without which there can be no self-offering and no communion with God. Therefore at this time the proclamation is made from the altar: **Let us love one another that with one mind we may confess. . . .** And the faithful people continue the sentence: . . . **Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the Trinity, one in essence and undivided.**

Love is the foundation of life. This is the fundamental Christian truth. Without love there can be no life, no truth and no communion with God, for **God is Love.** (I John 4:8, 16) Thus Jesus Christ has taught that the whole Old Testament Law and the Prophets depend on the two great commandments of love for God and men, and he has given his own "new commandment" that his disciples should love "even as I have loved you." (John 13:34)

Thus at the Divine Liturgy the Christians are continually called to love. The outward expression of this love in the liturgy today is the **kiss of peace** exchanged by the celebrating clergy, which kiss in times past was certainly exchanged among the faithful people as well. Without this love, the liturgy cannot go on.

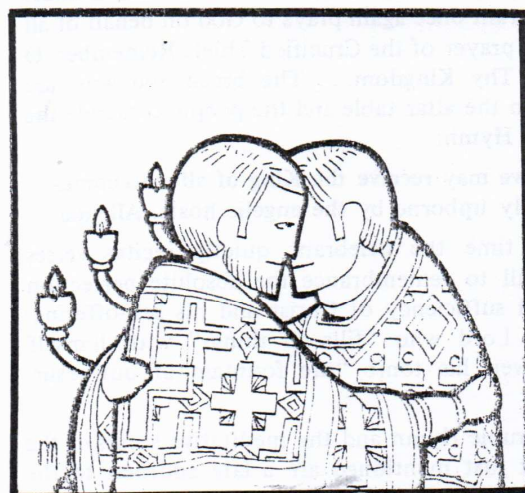
Following the call to love, the **Symbol of Faith**, also called the **Creed**, is chanted. The traditional introduction to the recitation of the creed in the liturgy is the exclamation: **The Doors! The Doors! In wisdom, let us attend!** The doors referred to here are the doors of the church building, and not the doors of the iconostasis as some have been known to think, since this is

a call to assure that all catechumens and non-communicants have left, and that now no one may enter or leave the liturgical assembly. The historical reason for such an exclamation in the Divine Liturgy was not only that order might be kept in the church, but that the Creed might be pronounced only by those who had already officially pronounced it at baptism, and continued to confess it within the life of the Church.

The recitation of the Symbol of Faith at the Divine Liturgy stands as the official acknowledgment and formal acceptance by each individual member of the Church of his or her own baptism, chrismation and membership in the Body of Christ. The recitation of the Creed is the only place in the Divine Liturgy, with the exception of the very similar pre-communion confession of faith, where the first person pronoun is used. All through the liturgy the community prays in the plural **we**. Only here does each person confess for himself his own personal faith: **I believe.**

No person can believe for another. Each must believe for himself. A person who believes in God, in Christ, in the Holy Spirit, in the Church, in baptism and in life eternal, in short, a person who affirms and accepts his baptismal membership in the Church, is competent to participate in the Divine Liturgy. A person who cannot do this, cannot participate. He simply is not able to, since this specific faith is the specific requirement for membership in the Orthodox Church and for participation in its Divine Liturgy. Without this faith, the movement of the liturgy cannot proceed further. With it, and its official acknowledgment in the chanting of the Creed, the liturgical action goes on.

It is the custom in the Church for the clergy to fan the eucharistic gifts during the singing of the Creed. This fanning was an act of veneration used toward the earthly emperor in the Byzantine period, during which time it was incorporated into the Church's liturgy, and used as an act of veneration toward the "presences" of the Heavenly King in the midst of his People, namely towards the book of the Gospels and the eucharistic gifts. (In some churches special liturgical fans are carried by the altar servers at all processions and expositions of the Gospel book and the eucharistic gifts.)



We have £14,364 in the building fund and £983 in the current account. We will be relaunching our appeal in February for the completion of the new church and God willing, it will be finished in June. We already have two weddings planned. **PRAISE THE LORD FOR THE PROGRESS ALREADY MADE!**

Monday Bible Study

This has been suspended for the time being due to the changed circumstances of those who attend. All being well, we hope to resume in the near future.

ADVANCE NOTICE! COFFEE MORNING & OPEN DAY

This is planned for Saturday 9th May 2020. More details later but note the date!

God Bless you - Father Stephen.

Bringing hope and healing to Syria's traumatised war widows

Christians in Syria have suffered not only the horror of the civil war but also much persecution because of their faith, leaving many bereft as young widows with fatherless children. As part of Barnabas' continuing multifaceted support for Christian widows and orphans in Syria, six meetings, including a psychological support conference, were held to help the women and children find emotional healing through God's Word. Three certified tailoring and sewing courses provided these vulnerable women with future earning potential and two certified first aid

courses provided the 39 women who took part with vital, life-saving skills.

The meetings were attended by 99 widows and their 198 children. Each one focused on a specific Biblical topic followed by a small discussion group. Special sessions were held for the children. A medical talk widened the women's knowledge of relevant diseases.



Group discussions for war widows are focused on emotional healing through Scripture

**£36,750 (\$45,700; €41,300)
renewed support to widows
and orphans for one year**

THE HOLY THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD

Vespers

On Lord, I have cried, *eight stichera are sung*:

ONE TWO

(by John the Monk)

The Forerunner beheld our Enlightenment, who has brought light to all mankind, draw near for baptism: and he rejoiced in soul while his hand trembled. And he shewed Him to the people, saying: 'Behold, the Redeemer of Israel, who sets us free from corruption.' O sinless Christ our God, glory to Thee (*twice*).

The hosts of angels were filled with fear, as they saw our Deliverer baptized by a servant and receiving witness through the coming of the Spirit. And the Father's voice was heard from on high: 'He upon whom the Forerunner lays his hand, the same is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.'¹ O Christ our God, glory to Thee (*twice*).

The streams of the Jordan received Thee who art the fountain, and the Comforter descended in the form of a dove. He who bowed the heavens,² bowed His head, and the clay cried aloud to Him that formed him: 'Why dost Thou command of me what lies beyond my power? For I have need to be baptized of Thee.'³ O sinless Christ our God, glory to Thee (*twice*).

Wishing to save man gone astray, Thou hast not disdained to clothe Thyself in the form of a servant. For it befitted Thee, as Master and God, to take upon Thyself our nature for our sakes. For Thou, O Deliverer, hast been baptized in the flesh, making us worthy of forgiveness. Therefore we cry unto Thee: O Christ our God and Benefactor, glory to Thee (*twice*).

Glory be to the Father . . . Both now . . .

SAME TONE

(by Byzas)

Thou hast bowed Thine head before the Forerunner and hast crushed the heads of the dragons.¹ Thou hast descended into the waters and hast given light to all things, that they may glorify Thee, O Saviour, the Enlightenment of our souls.

THE WATERS ARE MADE HOLY

Christ appeared in the world, and, bringing beauty out of disarray, gave it luster and joy. He bore the world's sin and crushed the world's enemy. He sanctified the fountains of waters and enlightened the minds of men. Into the fabric of miracles he interwove ever greater miracles.

For on this day land and sea share between them the grace of the Savior, and the whole world is filled with joy. Today's feast of the Epiphany manifests even more wonders than the feast of Christmas.

On the feast of the Savior's birth, the earth rejoiced because it bore the Lord in a manger; but on today's feast of the Epiphany it is the sea that is glad and leaps for joy; the sea is glad because it receives the blessing of holiness in the river Jordan.

At Christmas we saw a weak baby, giving proof of our weakness. In today's feast, we see a perfect man, hinting at the perfect Son who proceeds from the all-perfect Father. At Christmas the King puts on the royal robe of his body; at Epiphany the very source enfolds and, as it were, clothes the river.

Come then and see new and astounding miracles: the Sun of righteousness washing in the Jordan, fire immersed in water, God sanctified by the ministry of man.

Today every creature shouts in resounding song: *Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord*. Blessed is he who comes in every age, for this is not his first coming.

And who is he? Tell us more clearly. I beg you, blessed David: *The Lord is God and has shone upon us*. David is not alone in prophesying this; the apostle Paul adds his own witness, saying: *The grace of God has appeared bringing salvation for all men, and instructing us*. Not for some men, but for all. To Jews and Greeks alike God bestows salvation through baptism, offering baptism as a common grace for all.

Come, consider this new and wonderful deluge, greater and more important than the flood of Noah's day. Then the water of the flood destroyed the human race, but now the water of baptism has recalled the dead to life by the power of the one who was baptized. In the days of the flood the dove with an olive branch in its beak foreshadowed the fragrance of the good odor of Christ the Lord; now the Holy Spirit, coming in the likeness of a dove, reveals the Lord of mercy.

SELECTED LIVES OF THE SAINTS.

PETER OF CANTERBURY (d. 607), abbot. First abbot of St. Augustine's (then called SS. Peter and Paul), Peter was probably the monk of that name who was sent by *Augustine to give news of the first Anglo-Saxon conversions to *Gregory the Great and who brought back to England Gregory's replies to Augustine's questions. Peter was sent later on a mission to Gaul, but was drowned in the English Channel in the bay of Ambleteuse (Amfleet). The local inhabitants, according to Bede, buried him in an 'unworthy place' but, as the result of a prodigy of mysterious light appearing over his grave at night, translated his relics to a church in Boulogne with suitable honour. At St. Augustine's, Canterbury, his feast was kept on 30 December; other authorities give 6 January.

Bede, *H.E.*, I. 27, 33; *AA.SS. Ian.* I (1643), 334.

SIGEBERT (I) (d. 635), king of East Anglia and martyr. Virtually all we know of him comes from *Bede. During the reign of his predecessor Redwald (who had attempted to combine the worship of Christ with that of the Germanic gods in the same church), Sigebert went into exile in Frankia and became a Christian. He returned as king in 630, a very learned man (*doctissimus*), and with the help of Honorius, archbishop of Canterbury, introduced *Felix as bishop of East Anglia, based at Dunwich (or possibly Felixstowe) and enabled with royal endowment *Fursey to establish his monastery at Burgh Castle. Felix under royal patronage also set up schools in East Anglia.

Sigebert did not reign for long: he resigned in favour of Ecgric and became a monk, possibly at Burgh Castle. Meanwhile Penda, king of Mercia, the scourge of other Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, made war on East Anglia. Sigebert's countrymen, fearful of the morale of the troops in battle, took him against his will out of his monastery and brought him to the army, hoping that the presence of one who had been a brave and famous general would allay their fears. He, however, refused to carry a weapon but only a staff. He was killed with Ecgric in the total defeat which followed. Sigebert, like some other Anglo-Saxon kings who died in battle, was venerated as a martyr. East Anglian liturgical books were destroyed in the Danish invasions and his feast has been variously assigned to 16 January and 27 September.

FURSEY (Fursa) (d. 650), Irish abbot or bishop. He became a monk in Ireland but left it as a 'pilgrim for Christ', coming to East Anglia c.630. King *Sigebert received him and his companions, especially *Foillan, kindly and gave them the old fortress of Cnobheresburg (Burgh Castle, Suffolk) with adjacent lands for a monastery. On the death of Sigebert in battle against Penda, king of Mercia, Fursey left for France. Again he was helped by a ruler, Erchinoald, mayor of Neustria, who gave him land for another monastery, which he built at Lagny-sur-Marne. He died at Mezerolles (Somme); his body was buried at Péronne (Picardy), afterwards called *Perrona Scottorum*, in another Irish monastery.

In 654 his relics were translated to a shrine 'in the shape of a little house', supposedly made by *Eloi. Another translation took place in 1056. Most of the relics remained until the French Revolution; a head reliquary survived even the Prussian bombardment of 1870. French, Irish, and English calendars (especially Canterbury, which claimed head-relics) attest his cult.

This was assisted by Bede's account of his vision of the after-life, one of the earliest of its kind. During a state of trance he saw visions of heaven and hell, angels and devils; on recovering he described his experiences and warned against future and detailed punishments for sins. Feast: 16 January.

AA.SS. Ian. II (1643), 35-55; Bede, *H.E.*, III. 19; *Vita Prima S. Fursei* in *M.G.H., Scriptores rerum merov.*, IV. 423-49; W. Stokes, 'Betha Fursa', *Revue Celtique*, xxv (1904), 385-404; J. Hennig, 'The Irish Background of St. Fursey', *I.E.R.* (1952), 18-28.

PEGA (d. c.719), virgin, sister of *Guthlac. She lived as an anchoress at Peakirk (i.e. 'Pega's church') in Northamptonshire, not far from Guthlac's hermitage at Crowland. When he realized that his end was near (714), he invited her to his funeral. For this she sailed down the Welland, curing a blind man from Wisbech on the way. She inherited Guthlac's psalter and scourge, both of which, it was claimed, she later gave to Crowland. She went on pilgrimage to Rome and died there c.719. Ordericus Vitalis claimed that her relics survived in an unnamed Roman church in his day, and that miracles took place there. Feast: 8 January.