

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

COMMUNITY PROGRAMME

JANUARY 2021



*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 Branton, 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 Furse 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

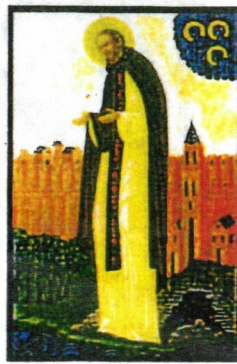
**TROPARION OF ST. FURSEY.**

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 Furse.

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 Furse, 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 Fursev.





**SERVICES AT THE PARISH CHURCH IN JANUARY**

<b>Fri Jan 1<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>Circumcision of Our Lord, St Basil -:</b> <b>Divine Liturgy of St Basil 10am.</b> <b>St Fursey's Chapel (Social Distancing)</b>
<b>Sat Jan 2<sup>nd</sup></b>	<b>Forefeast of the Theophany</b> <b>Vespers 4pm.</b>
<b>Sun Jan 3<sup>rd</sup></b>	<b>The Holy Theophany of Our Lord.</b> <b>Hours 9:30am – Divine Liturgy 10am.</b> <b>Great Blessing of the Waters 11:30am.</b> <b>Blessing of the Waters Stalham Staithe.</b> <b>(Please ask Fr Stephen about house blessings).</b>
<b>Sat Jan 9<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Saturday after Theophany.</b> <b>Vespers 4pm</b>
<b>Sun Jan 10<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Sunday after Theophany.</b> <b>Divine Liturgy 10am.</b>
<b>Patronal Festival Fri Jan 15<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Patronal Festival (St Fursey's Chapel)</b> <b>St Fursey's Day Vespers 4pm.</b>
<b>Sat Jan 16<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Patronal Festival</b> <b>Vespers for St Fursey 4pm.</b>
<b>Sun Jan 17<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Patronal Festival</b> <b>Divine Liturgy for St Fursey 10am</b> <b>(Parish Church)</b>
<b>Sat Jan 23<sup>rd</sup></b>	<b>Vespers 4pm.</b>
<b>Sun Jan 24<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Divine Liturgy 10am.</b>
<b>Sat Jan 30<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Vespers 4pm.</b>
<b>Sun Jan 31<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>Divine Liturgy 10am.</b>

# **Theophany House Blessings**

In the Orthodox Church it is the custom for homes of the faithful to be blessed with Holy Water from the Great Blessing of the Waters and this Holy Water is also taken home for the sue of the faithful when desired. Please let Father Stephen know if you would like your home blessed in this way; especially at this time.

## **Daily Services in St Fursey's Chapel (Neville Road)**

In addition to the services at the Parish Church, daily services continue at St Fursey's Chapel. These are normally 3<sup>rd</sup> hour 9am, with a reading from the Fathers. **Vespers 4pm**. Local Readers are very welcome but check before coming (Tel: 01692-580552) in case I have been called away as sometimes happens.

## **BUILDING OUR PARISH CHURCH IN STALHAM**

### **A setback and some encouragement:**

For personal reasons, our builder Nathan will no be able to continue as our builder in 2021. We thank him for what he has done for us, especially, on adapting the old police station to be our temporary place of worship. We wish him and his partner Pat all the best for the New Year and their projects in Wales. Meanwhile, St Fursey's Trustees are actively seeking another builder to complete the building work on the church which we hope will begin again in February and we hope for completion by October 2021.

## **THE ENCOURAGEMENT**

The Newsletter mentioned the need of another £20,000 to complete the building of our parish church. After much prayer and hope a very kind and generous lady sent us a wonderful donation of £20,000. May God bless her and all her family. As a result of having to get another builder we may need some more so watch this space!

## **EVERY BLESSING TO OUR READERS FOR THE NEW YEAR!**

**Father Stephen**



Persecution exposed

# Epicentre of Christianity or place of persecution?

## State-sponsored marginalisation of Christians in modern-day Turkey

Built in sixth century Constantinople, the Hagia Sophia, originally a church, remains symbolic of the ongoing struggle between Islamism and secularism

**T**urkey, a country where east meets west, is frequently ranked among the top ten holiday destinations in the world. Istanbul,

its cultural capital, spanning Asia and Europe, was, under its former name Constantinople, the centre of Eastern Christianity for more than 1,000 years. It was at Antioch (now Antakya) that the word "Christian" was first coined (Acts 11:26). Paul invested much of his ministry in Ephesus, equipping the early Christians through his letters to the early churches there, also in Galatia and Colossae, all of them in modern Turkey, as were the seven churches in Revelation chapters 2 and 3.

However, in 1453, the Ottoman armies conquered Constantinople. They seized the sixth century Hagia Sophia church, and used the building as a mosque. (In 1935 it was turned into a museum). Christians were subjugated under the Islamic Ottoman Empire's discriminatory *millet* system, in which each religious minority community governed itself and their head was responsible to the Ottoman authorities.

### From subjugation to genocide

In the late nineteenth century, subjugation turned to genocidal violence, which peaked in 1915. At least 3.25 million Christians (Armenians, Greeks and Assyrians) were murdered by the Turks, often using the minority Kurds to do the actual killing.

In 1923, Turkey became a secular republic, founded by Kemal Atatürk,

who also abolished the Ottoman caliphate. Today, Turkey's 81 million population is more than 99% Muslim, predominantly Sunni but with a large minority of Alevi Shias and Bektashi Sufis. Christians (approximately 32% in 1900) are around 0.2%, mainly from historic non-Turkish ethnic groups, but including some Turkish converts from Islam. There are also Christian refugees among the 3-4 million Iraqis, Iranians and Syrians escaping to Turkey from various conflicts, since the 1980s.



Christians in Turkey worshipping together

Since the end of the genocide, the status of the remaining Christians has fluctuated. The seizure of church properties by the state has been a recurring form of persecution for many decades. But in 2011 the government licensed a building in Van province used as house church by Protestant Christians (mainly converts from Islam), thus recognising it as a place of worship. However, the seizing of church buildings has intensified again in recent years.

The press is often hostile to Christians, and in 2009 the Ministry

of Education introduced a new school textbook aimed at 13-year-olds, which encouraged discrimination against Christians.

### The rise of the AKP

The situation has worsened in recent years, as secularism has given way to Islam, with the rise of the Justice and Development Party (AKP). Its founder, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (President of Turkey since 2014) has been outspoken about his desire to recreate the Ottoman Empire.

According to Armenian politician Garo Paylan, "hate attacks against churches and synagogues take place several times every year". On 23 February 2019, vandals spray-painted the disturbing words "you are finish" in English and Arabic across an Armenian church, in Balat district. In October 2019, the AKP initiated an overt anti-Christian, and anti-Semitic, poster campaign in Konya that warned Muslims to "not take the Jews and Christians as allies" (a reference to Quran 5:51).

In 2019, President Erdoğan suggested that the Hagia Sophia should be used again as a mosque, having already supported reciting the Islamic call to prayer there in 2016.

Since Erdoğan's premiership began, the secularism advocated by Atatürk has been diminishing in the public sphere. The rights of Christians to freely and safely practise their faith are being rapidly eroded, and a second-class status is being re-imposed on them. ■

## Vespers

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

TONE 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.'<sup>1</sup> 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,<sup>2</sup> 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.'<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>1</sup> 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.



From a sermon by Saint Proclus of Constantinople, bishop.

(Sermo 7 in sancta Theophania, 1-3: PG 65, 758-759)

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** (1) (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 \*Furseus 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 Egric 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 Egric 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, Furseus 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, *II.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. Furseus', *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.