

ST. FURSEY'S ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY
ST. FURSEY'S HOUSE, 111, NEVILLE ROAD,
SUTTON, NORWICH. NR12 9RR.
Tel. 01692 580552

COMMUNITY PROGRAMME
MARCH 2018.



MARCH 25

The Annunciation of our Most Holy Lady,
the Theotokos and Ever-virgin Mary

Dismissal Hymn. Fourth Tone

TODAY is the fountainhead of our salvation and the manifestation of the mystery which was from eternity. The Son of God becometh the Virgin's Son, and Gabriel proclaimeth the good tidings of grace; for this cause, we also cry to the Mother of God with him: Rejoice, thou who art full of grace; the Lord is with thee.

**BRITISH ORTHODOX SAINTS
COMMEMORATED IN
MARCH.**

(See selected lives of Saints on another page.)

- 01 Swithbert the Elder, Bishop of the Frisians
- 02 Chad, Bishop of Lichfield
- Cynibil, Confessor
- 04 Owen of Lichfield, Hermit
- 06 Baldred and Billfrith, Hermits
- Cyneburgh and Cyneswith, Abbesses of Castor and Tibba,
Anchoress
- 07 Eosterwine, Abbot of Wearmouth
- 08 Felix, Bishop of Dunwich
- 09 Bosa, Bishop of York
- 12 Alphege the Elder, Bishop of Winchester
- Gregory the Great, Pope of Rome and Apostle of the English
- 13 Gerald of Mayo, Abbot
- 16 Aristobulus the Holy Apostle, Bishop of Britain
- 17 Withburgh of Dereham, Virgin
- 18 Edward the Martyr, King of England
- Egbert of Ripon, Confessor
- 19 Alcmund, Martyr
- 20 Cuthbert, Bishop of Lindisfarne and Wonderworker of Britain
- Herbert of Derwentwater, Hermit
- 23 Ethilwald of Farne, Hermit
- 24 Hildelith, Abbess of Barking
- 25 Alfwold, Bishop of Sherborne
- 27 Alkeld, Martyr in Yorkshire
- 30 Osburgh, Abbess of Coventry

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.



SERVICES IN MARCH.

FRI.MAR. 2nd. VESPERS 4pm.(St. Chad of Lichfield 672.)

SAT.MAR.3rd. Saturday of Souls.DIVINE LITURGY 10am.

Memorial Service for Departed Loved Ones.11.45am

(Please give names to Father Stephen)

SUN. MAR.4th.No Liturgy today.Vespers 4pm.

SAT.MAR. 10th.VESPERS 4pm.

SUN.MAR.11th.THIRD SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT.Veneration of the Cross.

DIVINE LITURGY OF ST.BASIL.10am.

VESPERS 4pm.

SAT.MAR. 17th.VESPERS 4pm (St Withburga of Dereham 743)

SUN.MAR 18th.FOURTH SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT St John climacus of Sinai.7th.

St Edward king and Martyr 978

DIVINE LITURGY OF ST.BASIL 10am

VESPERS 4pm.

FRI.MAR. 23rd.AKATHIST HYMN TO THE MOTHER OF GOD 7PM

SAT.MAR.24th.Forefeast of the Annunciation Vespers 4pm.

SUN.MAR.25th.FIFTH SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT;THE ANNUNCIATION TO OUR LADY.

LITURGY OF ST JOHN CHRYSOSTOM 10am.

FRI.MAR.30th.VESPERS 4pm.(for Lazarus Saturday)

SAT.MAR.31st.LAZARUS SATURDAY .

DIVINE LITURGY 10am (Followed by vegan finger buffet)

VESPERS 4pm (for Palm Sunday and the beginning of Holy Week)

DAILY SERVICES IN ST. FURSEY'S CHAPEL.

These are normally 3rd. Hour 9am with a reading from the early church Fathers,6th Hour 12noon.Vespers4pm Compline 9pm when visitors are in residence on retreat or after an evening event.Local readers are very welcome to attend these services especially during lent when they have a more penitential character with the Prayer of St. Ephraim the Syrian and the prostrations which are a part of it.It is printed below for your use in your daily prayers at home.

O LORD AND MASTER OF MY LIFE

GRANT NOT TO ME A SPIRIT OF LAZINESS,DESPONDENCY,LUST OF POWER

OR OF GOSSIPING (prostration)

BUT GRANT UNTO ME ,THY SERVANT, THE SPIRIT OF PURITY,HUMILITY,PATIENCE

AND OF LOVE,(prostration)

YEA O LORD AND KING,GRANT THAT I MAY SEE MY OWN ERRORS AND

TRANSGRESSIONS AND NOT TO JUDGE MY BROTHERS

AND SISTERS,FOR BLESSED ART THOU UNTO THE AGES OF AGES.AMEN.(prostration)

O GOD CLEANSE ME A SINNER.(12 times with the sign of the cross and a bow each time and

then the whole prayer is repeated

with a final prostration.)

ANNUNCIATION OF THE MOST HOLY THEOTOKOS

Small Vespers

On Lord, I have cried, four stichera are sung:

TONE FOUR

Taking pity upon that which He has made and bending down in His tender mercy, the Maker hastens to dwell in the womb of a Maiden, the Child of God. To her the great Archangel came, saying to her: 'Hail, O thou who art full of divine grace, our God is now with thee.¹ Be not afraid of me, the chief commander of the armies of the King. For thou hast found the grace that thy mother Eve once lost: and thou shalt conceive and bring forth Him who is one in essence with the Father' (*twice*).

Mary said to the Angel: 'Strange is thy speech and strange thine appearance, strange thy sayings and thy disclosures. I am a Maid who knows not wedlock, lead me not astray. Thou sayest that I shall conceive Him who remains uncircumscribed: and how shall my womb contain Him whom the wide spaces of the heavens cannot contain?' 'O Virgin, let the tent of Abraham that once contained God teach thee:² for it prefigured thy womb, which now receives the God-head.'

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

TONE ONE

(*by Byzas*)

In the sixth month the chief of the angelic hosts was sent to thee, pure Virgin, to declare unto thee the word of salvation and to greet thee, saying: 'Hail, thou who art full of grace: the Lord is with thee. Thou shalt bring forth a Son, begotten before the ages from the Father, and He shall save His people from their sins.'¹

Eleventh Century

The Great Schism

In the mid-eleventh century a major controversy arose between Constantinople and Rome. The immediate cause of the conflict at this time was the Pope's suppression of Greek liturgical practices in South Italy, and the suppression of Latin practices in the East by the patriarch of Constantinople. In 1053 the Pope sent legates to Constantinople in an attempt to restore communion between the churches. **Michael Cerularius**, the patriarch of Constantinople, refused to give the papal legates a hearing because he thought they were politically motivated.

On July 16, 1054, **Cardinal Humbert**, the head of the papal delegation, was tired of waiting. He was irritated by the lack of respect shown to the Roman ambassadors, so he placed a document of **anathema** and excommunication (applying only to the "patriarch Michael Cerularius and those in sympathy with him") on the altar table of the Holy Wisdom cathedral. At the same time, the cardinal was very careful to praise Constantinople as a "most orthodox city."

The official reasons for Humbert's anathema and excommunication of Cerularius were the removal of the filioque from the Creed; the practice of married clergy; and liturgical errors. Patriarch Michael Cerularius responded to Humbert's action by excommunicating "all responsible" for the July 16 incident. He drew up a long list of Latin abuses, mostly of divergent liturgical practices such as the use of unleavened bread for the eucharist.

Although Cardinal Humbert acted only against the person of the patriarch and his sympathizers, and although the patriarch reacted only against Humbert himself, the attempt to restore unity between East and West in 1054 resulted in a permanent schism between the two churches which persists until today. Several gestures of reconciliation, such as the symbolic "lifting of the anathemas of 1054" by Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras I in 1966, were made, but to no avail.

The Papacy

The mid-eleventh century also saw the beginnings of a powerful reform movement centering on the papacy. Often, this movement is called the **Gregorian Reform**, for its most famous proponent, **Pope Gregory VII** (1073-1085), or **Hildebrand**. The movement sought to establish the independence of the Church from any secular authority. In the process, it greatly extended the claims of the papacy. This made any reconciliation with the East difficult. For example, in 1089, as part of an effort to reestablish good relations between the churches, the East asked **Pope Urban II** for a confession of faith. He refused to comply since such a compliance would presume that the bishop of Rome could be judged in the Church by another. Thus, although Patriarch Nicholas III of Constantinople (1084-1111) said: "Let the pope confess the orthodox faith and he will be first," this was never again to happen in history.

The Crusades

By the time of the first crusade in 1095, the Pope's position of leadership in Western society was well established. It was ultimately the crusades which sealed the schism between the churches. The crusaders took over Jerusalem in 1099, expelled the Moslems, and established a Latin hierarchy in place of the local, existing church order.

Kievan Russia

In Kievan Russia in the eleventh century the new Christian faith was flourishing. **Saint Anthony** (d. 1051) founded the monastery of the caves in Kiev, the **Kievo-Pecherskaya Lavra**. **Saint Theodosius** (d. 1074), its greatest saint, came to be called the "founder of Russian monasticism." Saint Theodosius followed the example of the humble Christ of the gospels in an evangelical form of spiritual life. This form has come to be known as Russian **kenoticism** which means a life of self-emptying humility and love for the brethren. (cf. Philippians 2:6) The Kievan Monastery of the Caves was the center of Christian charity and social concern, as well as of spiritual and intellectual labor and enlightenment.

Boris and Gleb

Among the saints of Kiev are numbered the brothers **Boris** and **Gleb** who were the sons of Saint Vladimir. They refused to fight their brother Sviatopolk in a power struggle after the death of their father. As they knew there was no hope of winning in battle, the two young brothers refused to fight in order to save the lives of their faithful followers who were certain to be punished if they did fight. As "sufferers of non-resistance," Saints Boris and Gleb were the first to be canonized by the Russian Church in 1020. They were glorified — not as martyrs or Christian pacifists — but as those who laid down their lives that others might live.

Theological Works

During this period **Theophylactus of Bulgaria** was writing voluminous commentaries on the holy scriptures in the East. **Anselm of Canterbury** (d. 1109) in the West was producing his most influential theological discourses which contained the so-called "ontological proof" for the existence of God, a defense of the doctrine of the filioque, and the so-called "satisfaction theory" of the atonement in which it was contended that the death of Christ on the cross was the adequate sacrifice necessary to satisfy the justice and wrath of God the Father.

The West

The eleventh century in the West witnessed the **Cistercian reforms** of the Benedictine order (now known as the "trappists"). This movement's greatest representative, **Bernard of Clairvaux**, was an ascetical, mystical theologian and church activist. He preached crusades and fought with **Abelard**, the famous author of *Sic et Non*. The **Carthusian** movement of eremitic monasticism began as well at this time.



From a letter by Saint Leo the Great, pope

THE MYSTERY OF MAN'S RECONCILIATION WITH GOD

Lowliness is assured by majesty, weakness by power, mortality by eternity. To pay the debt of our sinful state, a nature that is incapable of suffering was joined to one that could suffer. Thus, in keeping with the healing that we needed, one and the same mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ, was able to die in one nature, and unable to die in the other.

He who is true God was therefore born in the complete and perfect nature of a true man, whole in his own nature, whole in ours. By our nature we mean what the Creator had fashioned in us from the beginning, and took to himself in order to restore it.

For in the Savior there was no trace of what the deceiver introduced and man, being misled, allowed to enter. It does not follow that because he submitted to sharing in our human weakness he therefore shared in our sins.

He took the nature of a servant without stain of sin, enlarging our humanity without diminishing his divinity. He emptied himself; though invisible he made himself visible, though Creator and Lord of all things he chose to be one of us mortal men. Yet this was the condescension of compassion, not the loss of omnipotence. So he who in the nature of God had created man, became in the nature of a servant, man himself.

Thus the Son of God enters this lowly world. He comes down from the throne of heaven, yet does not separate himself from the Father's glory. He is born in a new condition, by a new birth.

He was born in a new condition, for, invisible in his own nature, he became visible in ours. Beyond our grasp, he chose to come within our grasp. Existing before time began, he began to exist at a moment in time. Lord of the universe, he hid his infinite glory and took the nature of a servant. Incapable of suffering as God, he did not refuse to be a man, capable of suffering. Immortal, he chose to be subject to the laws of death.

He who is true God is also true man. There is no falsehood in this unity as long as the lowliness of man and the preeminence of God coexist in mutual relationship.

As God does not change by his condescension, so man is not swallowed up by being exalted. Each nature exercises its own activity, in communion with the other. The Word does what is proper to the Word, the flesh fulfills what is proper to the flesh.

One nature is resplendent with miracles, the other falls victim to injuries. As the Word does not lose equality with the Father's glory, so the flesh does not leave behind the nature of our race.

Christian asylum seekers forcibly returned from Europe live in fear

AFGHANISTAN

An Amnesty International report, released in October, highlighted the plight of Afghan Christian converts deported back to Afghanistan.

Farid was deported to Kabul in May 2017, after nine years in Norway, during which time the 32-year-old learned Norwegian. European authorities told him he would be safe, but he has been rejected by his immediate family and cannot live in his family's province. "I am scared," he explained, "I don't know anything about Afghanistan. Where

will I go? I don't have funds to live alone and I can't live with [Muslim] relatives because they will see that I don't pray [Islamic prayers]."

More than 9,000 asylum-seekers, some of whom are Christians, have been returned to Afghanistan from European countries since 2015. Afghan Christian converts from Islam can legally face the death penalty for apostasy; the last time a case reached the courts in 2006, the man was spared execution after being declared "insane."

Christians face potential new threat as Islamist group calls for jihad

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

An Islamist group in the DRC released a video in October calling for volunteers to wage jihad. In the video, which was publicised on Islamic State media outlets, a jihadist with three child soldiers also called for the DRC to become an Islamic state in Central Africa.

Christians in the conflict-ravaged north-eastern regions of the DRC have endured years of sporadic attacks from Islamic militants of the Allied

Democratic Forces (ADF), which has been fighting to make Uganda an Islamic state since the late 1990s. Fifty Christians were hacked to death in the village of Rwangoma in August 2016, in one of the deadliest ADF attacks in the DRC. The call for jihad comes from a little-known group (called The City of Monotheism and Monotheists). Christians now face a new threat from this militant organisation.

Churches attacked and torched by Islamists who threatened to kill Christians seen praying

MALI

"Our churches and chapels are now being targeted by extremists, who've told Christians not to gather to pray," explained a church leader in Mali. In September and October, several churches in central Mali were ransacked and set on fire. In one attack, the congregation were driven out of the church where they were worshipping and told they would be killed if they were "seen praying."

In 2012, Tuareg separatists and Islamist groups linked to Al Qaeda seized control of northern Mali and

declared the region an Islamic state. Sharia law, including punishments such as amputations for theft, was

"Our churches and chapels are now being targeted by extremists, who've told Christians not to gather to pray,"

imposed in Timbuktu. French and U.N. soldiers have since been deployed in Mali, but despite the government agreeing a peace deal with rebels, violence continues.

Christian families forced to flee homes for the second time as Kurds and Iraqis clash

IRAQ



Teleskof village

A thousand Christian families from Teleskof were forced to flee their homes again in October because of clashes between Kurdish and Iraqi forces; they first fled in 2014, when Islamic State (IS) captured the village. The Christians had returned to their village after it was liberated from IS. The mainly Christian village of Teleskof, 19 miles north of Mosul, had recently been rebuilt with aid money from the Hungarian government. However, on Tuesday 24 October, "an emissary from the Iraqi government told the people of the village that they had until sunrise to evacuate." Children and other civilians have been wounded in clashes between Kurdish Peshmerga forces stationed in the village on one side and Iraqi army troops and Shia militia on the other. The Iraqi forces have stated they will "forcibly evict" the Kurds.

The Kurdish ethnic group have for decades campaigned for independence in the Kurdistan region, which includes parts of Iraq, Syria and Turkey. Many Christians fled to the autonomous Kurdish-controlled area of northern Iraq when IS invaded Iraq, but they have experienced discrimination from authorities in Iraqi Kurdistan, including having their land appropriated by Kurds.



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COMMUNITY NEWS AND NOTICES

SATURDAY LITURGIES IN MARCH

We have two Saturday Liturgies in March; the normal first Saturday on March 3rd with a Memorial Service for Departed Loved ones followed by the usual finger buffet. The second one on Saturday March 31st, which is Lazarus Saturday also followed by a finger buffet both vegan due to the Lenten Fast. This is because the first Saturday in April is Holy Saturday and we are extra busy with services and getting ready for Holy Pascha (Orthodox Easter.

THE MONDAY BIBLE STUDY.

We have had a longer winter break than usual due to various events in our lives but we have made a start with Genesis using the Orthodox Study Bible as our guide. We meet in the library at St Fursey's House at 2.30pm. Teabreak 3.30pm Vespers 4pm Finnish 4.45 pm .Local readers are very welcome to attend.

AN ORTHODOX CHURCH IN STALHAM

As this newsletter is being prepared on Monday February 19th, slightly later than usual we are eagerly waiting to receive the final documents for signing by the Trustees of St Fursey's Charity we are almost there but not quite; hopefully we shall be completing by the end of this month are seven months of legal processes. We have been advised by a legal friend that this has taken far too long.

MARKET STALL IN NORWICH.

Our monthly market stall in Norwich will resume on the first Wednesday in April on the 4th and we will be on the charity stall on the first Wednesday of the month until December. The old stall has been closed and we are now on the main market opposite Tesco Stall no 183. Norwich City Council have kindly reduced the rent to £10 a session. We will have a new selection of Orthodox books a large number of icons; cards for various occasions and prayer ropes. Do come and support us if you can.

TALKS ON THE ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN FAITH.

Our evening talks on the Orthodox Christian Faith normally take place on Tuesday evenings in September and sometimes they produce people who would like to proceed towards reception into the Orthodox Church there is of course no pressure or obligation to do so. From experience it seems that our four talk course meets a need; They are;

1. Finding the New Testament Church.
2. Heaven upon Earth (the liturgy)
3. Deification; the purpose of human existence
4. Windows into heaven ; icons.

A fifth talk may be added on the subject of ; 'When England was Orthodox.' So that the mistaken idea that Orthodoxy is a foreign import from Greece or Russia can be covered. PLEASE KEEP THIS IN MIND.

SOME IMPORTANT EVENTS FOR YOUR DIARY'

ORTHODOX EASTER OR HOLY PASCHA Sunday April 8th. (We keep to the Julian or Old Calendar for this which was in use in New Testament times.)

ARCHDIOCESAN CONFERENCE SWANWICK Monday May 28th-Wednesday May 30th. with His Eminence Metropolitan Silouan; Theme Nurturing the Parish Community.

COFFEE MORNING ; THURSDAY MAY 24th. 10AM TO 12NOON

SELECTED LIVES OF THE SAINTS.

BOSA, bishop of York 678-86 and 691-705. This monk of Whitby was consecrated by *Theodore bishop of Delra (the southern half of Northumbria, roughly the equivalent of modern Yorkshire) when *Wilfrid had been expelled from Northumbria following his quarrels with King Egfrith. Bosa ruled his diocese until his death except for the years of Wilfrid's restoration. *Bede praised his 'singular merit and holiness'; one of his disciples was *Acca, later the follower and successor of Wilfrid at Hexham. Feast: 9 March.

Bede, *H.E.*, iv. 12; v. 19-20.

EOSTERWINE (650-86), abbot of Wearmouth. Of noble birth, he joined the service of Egfrith, king of Northumbria, and fought in his army. At the age of twenty-four he became a monk at Wearmouth, the monastery just founded by his cousin *Benedict Biscop. Here he followed all the regular observance, taking his full share in the menial tasks. He milked the cows and the sheep, he worked in bakehouse, garden, and kitchen, he shared in the harvesting and winnowing. In 679, he was ordained priest and in 682 he was appointed abbot by Biscop to rule during his own absence. As abbot, he was kind and accessible to all, just as he had been before his promotion. He had the same food and sleeping accommodation as the rest of his community and joined in the manual work. He died at the early age of thirty-six, on 6 March, while the community were at Matins. He was buried by the church-door, but his relics, with those of Benedict Biscop and *Sigfrid, were translated by *Ceolfrith to a shrine close to the high altar. His cult was mainly local but his name also occurs in the OE martyrology from Mercia. Feast: 7 March.

C. Plummer (ed.), *Bædæ Opera Historica* (1956), I, 364-404; II, 355-77; J. F. Webb and D. H. Farmer, *The Age of Bede* (1983).

ALKELDA (1) (Athilda) (d. c.800). She was patron of the church of Middleham (Yorkshire), also of Giggleswick (West Riding). Edward IV's patent survives which enabled his brother Richard (subsequently Richard III) to set up the college of Middleham in honour of Christ, the Blessed Virgin, and St. Alkeld. Local tradition claimed that she was a Saxon princess (presumably a nun), who was strangled to death by Viking women and buried in the church at Middleham. Feast: 28 (27) March.

R. Challoner, *Memorials of Ancient British Piety* (1771), v; Strutton, p. 135.

WITHBURGA (1) (Witburh) (d. c.743), virgin. The youngest daughter of Anna, king of East Anglia and a sister of *Etheldreda, she lived as a solitary at Holkham (Norfolk), and later at East Dereham, where she is reputed to have founded a community and to have died before the buildings were completed. She was buried in the churchyard; but after fifty years her body was exhumed, found incorrupt and enshrined in the church.

In 974 Brithnōth, abbot of Ely, stole the body under the pretext that she would have wanted to be buried near her sisters. A band of his monks accompanied by soldiers went secretly by night to Dereham, having obtained the approval of King Edgar and *Ethelwold. They removed the body to their wagons, drove twenty miles to the river Brandun, on which they continued their journey by boat to the dismay of the men of Dereham, who had pursued them by land and could only watch helplessly while their treasure slipped away. The body was reburied at Ely where, however, the incorruption story was never exploited, as it might have detracted from Etheldreda's glory. In 1102 Withburga's relics were moved into the new part of the church; in 1106 they were joined by the bones of the other three Ely saints (Etheldreda, *Sexburga, and *Ermegild). The church at Holkham is dedicated to her; water in Withburga's well at Dereham churchyard was reputed to have sprung up when her body was first exhumed. Withburga's emblem in art, as on six Norfolk screens, is a tame doe, which William of Malmesbury described as her companion in solitude who provided her with milk. Feast: 17 March; translation 8 July.

ALFWOLD (d. 1058), monk of Winchester and bishop of Sherborne. William of Malmesbury recorded the following details, derived from a priest of his diocese who knew him. He was noted for his habitual abstinence at a time when self-indulgence was said to be general; he used at table common wooden platters and bowls. He was specially devoted to *Swiðhun, whose image he set up in the church at Sherborne, and to *Cuthbert, whose shrine he used to visit and whose antiphon he would often repeat. He quarrelled at least once with Godwin earl of Wessex, who was smitten with sudden illness and recovered only at the saint's pardon. After his death, the sees of Sherborne and Ramsbury, both poorly endowed, were reunited and in 1070 became the see of Salisbury. Feast: 25 March.