

Celtic Orthodox Church

Parish of St Gwenn, Wessex

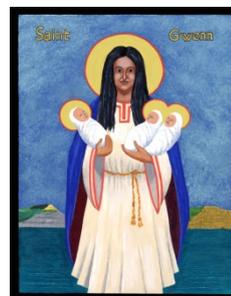
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St Gwenn's News 51 JANUARY 2017

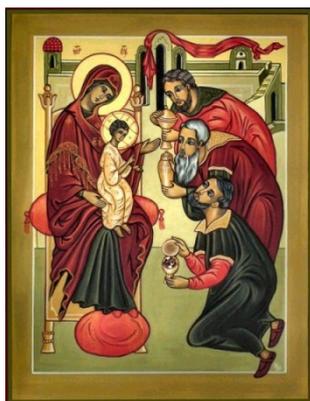
Services at St Gwenn's

Sun 1 Jan – **NATIVITY 1 – Naming of Jesus**

NO LITURGY today



Fri 6 Jan – **EPIPHANY**
Divine Liturgy 9.30am



Sun 8 Jan – **THEOPHANY**
Divine Liturgy with Blessing of
Holy Water 10.30am
Blessing of S Wite's Well 2.30pm



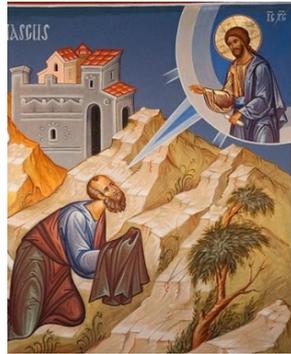
Sun 15 Jan – EPIPHANY 2
Divine Liturgy 10.30am



Tues 24 Jan – Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
Afternoon Office and Meditation 4.00pm



Wed 25 Jan – Conversion of S Paul, Apostle
Matins with Communion 9.30am



Sun 22 Jan – EPIPHANY 3
Divine Liturgy 10.30am

From your Parish Priest

Greetings in Christ our Incarnate Lord and Saviour!

As I send these words we are still in 2016 and celebrating Christmas, the Nativity of the Christ-child. I sincerely hope that this is a time of deep joy for you. However, this is the January St Gwenn's News and so I wish you all a Blessed, Peaceful and Happy New Year.

Trish and I will be in Cumbria from Christmas until the New Year staying with very dear friends, and meeting up with other Northern friends whilst we are there. We will be staying with the son of the Methodist farmer who made my mentor and inspirational hero, Romany of the BBC (Rev Bramwell Evens), welcome on his farm, Old Parks, at Glassonby, just a few miles from where we shall be staying. I first discovered Romany (through the school library) when I was eight. It was through him that I gained my love of wildlife, and painting it. Most significantly, however, it was Romany who brought me to the Faith, and later, with the Holy Spirit at his elbow, the ministry. These influences remind me of many a Christmas past when family and friends gave me Romany books as presents, until, eventually, I had every book he ever wrote and every book written about him. He was a man of simple and solid Faith, and, of course, I now see how Celtic he was in his outlook – always seeing the hand of God in the beauty of the earth and its creatures.

May we all find time to reflect on the influences for good in our lives, and may 2017 be a year of consolidating our joy in believing.

Blessings to you all.

Fr Leonard

The NATIVITY according to the flesh of Our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ

[Fr Leonard's few words at the Christmas Liturgy]

One of the most distinctive features of Celtic spirituality is the reality, one might almost say 'earthiness,' of the sense of the presence of God; finding God present in every aspect of our daily lives. Immanuel – 'God with us.'

Throughout Advent we have been preparing ourselves for the quintessential 'God with us' moment – the Incarnation. Hopefully you have noticed that I ended all my Advent sermons with the Aramaic word Maranatha, 'Come Lord.' Today we celebrate the Hebrew word Immanuel – 'God with us.'

'O come, O come, Immanuel,' runs the ancient Advent hymn; now He has come; now He is with us.

He Who existed with the Father and the Spirit before time was, the Word of God, came to us in human form this night 2000 years ago, and so God's redemptive plan was set in train.

The angels sang, the holy star shone forth, the magi understood and came to worship. 'Glory to God in the Highest, and peace to the earth,' rang out.

For those of us who *believe*, the joy of this birthday celebration cannot be quenched, but for much of the world today, there *is* no glory offered to God, and certainly no peace.

For the vast majority, Jesus will be denied access to His own birthday party. It is for us to make the Incarnation, Immanuel, a reality in our lives, and to shine like the Bethlehem star as a light for all to see.

As we celebrate this Holy Night, and rejoice in the joy of the Incarnation, let us also offer to God in prayer those for whom this Christmas will not bring joy, those who have no home in which to celebrate, those who are in pain and sorrow; also, those who do not know God or have rejected Him.

Above all, let us thank God for His presence with us – Immanuel! God with us!

THEOPHANY

As is customary, we shall bless water at the Theophany Liturgy. This will provide us with Holy Water for the coming year.

Many Orthodox Christians like to have their homes blessed at or soon after Theophany. If this is something that you would like, just ask. There will be more than enough Holy Water to splash around!

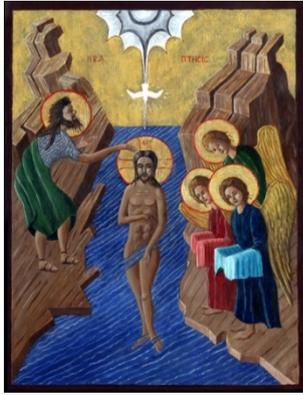
Unless the weather is horrendous we shall go to St Wite's (St Gwenn's) well at Morecombe in the afternoon to bless its waters. If anyone is unclear as to the precise location of the well we can provide details.



Epiphany

Clarifying Epiphany and Theophany

The Latin Western Church, including the Anglicans, celebrate Epiphany – focusing on the coming of the Magi – on the 6th of January, and the main-stream Orthodox celebrate Theophany – the baptism of Christ and blessing of the waters – on the 6th of January (19th for the Old Calendarists), the Magi having been recollected along with the shepherds at the Nativity feast. Of-course in both Epiphany and Theophany, the



Theophany

manifestation of God is paramount.

In our Celtic Orthodox tradition we leave the Magi, or wise men, out of the picture at Nativity (Christmas) and celebrate them, and the revelation of the Christ-child's divinity, at Epiphany – 6th January. But we then keep Theophany on the following Sunday, recollecting Christ's baptism in the Jordan. The significance of the 'showing forth' of Theophany is that we not only see Christ's divinity, but we have the manifestation of the Holy Trinity: God the Father's voice is heard proclaiming His Son; God the Son is physically present in the waters of the Jordan; God the Spirit descends in the form of a dove.

Week of Prayer for CHRISTIAN UNITY

St Gwenn's has been invited to take part in the 2017 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. We have accepted and will host an afternoon service and meditation on Tuesday 24th January at 4pm. The whole week's programme follows at the end of this News. It would be good to support these services since *Disunity* is a such a dreadful disfigurement of the Holy Church, the Body of Christ, and is a stumbling block to the evangelistic work of the Church.

It does not help that some (and I would stress only *some*) 'hard-line' Orthodox begin from the premise that seeking Christian Unity is a sin. To them, Unity can only mean everyone becoming Orthodox! For all I know there may well be Roman Catholics who believe that Unity can only be achieved by everyone becoming Catholic. That is Uniformity, not Unity.

I am not blind to the doctrinal issues which divide denominations, but an unwillingness to listen to each other and seek for, and rejoice in, the common ground, is a blight on the Church. Surely Christ calls us to RECONCILIATION.

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE from BISHOP PAUL

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Despite the frightful persecutions of Christians in the Middle East and in Egypt, we still have reason to rejoice because 'Today is made known the mystery that existed before the foundation of the world.' We are celebrating the birth of Christ, the incarnation of God on Earth.

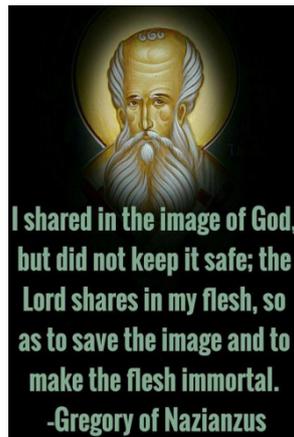
The Son of God took on flesh so that He could unite Himself to His creation. His Nativity makes our redemption possible. This is how God revealed His infinite love for us in the humble manger of Bethlehem.

Let us cleanse our heart so that He may be born in us. In this way, by divine grace, we are divinized just as Christ joined Himself to our humanity. As Angelus Silesius says,

**Though Christ a thousand times in Bethlehem be born,
But not within thyself, thy soul will be forlorn...**

Christ is born, all glory to You O Divine Lord!

Bishop Paul



For our Prayers

For the joy of the Nativity of Christ in the flesh at Bethlehem to touch the hearts of all. For those for whom there will be no joy.

For our Primate Metropolitan Marc and all our monks, nuns, clergy and people, and for the future of the Celtic Orthodox Church, and the Western Orthodox Communion.

For all in sickness, sorrow or distress, especially those on our prayer lists and on the hearts of all who read this. Please continue to remember Fr Deacon Cwyfan who awaits news his probable by-pass surgery.

For PEACE and stability in our troubled world. For an end to the horrors of religious extremism and radicalisation. For all persecuted Christians and other religious and ethnic groups. For the refugees forced to flee their troubled homelands and those endeavouring to deal with the refugee crisis.

For the Unity of Christ's Church – the unity He came to give us, and which we continue to shatter. For a wholehearted participation in the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. May there be true RECONCILIATION.

For the departed – Sybil, Archpriest Michael, Fr Anthony, Alan, Fr John, Eric, Bob and Chrissie,



WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY 18-25 January 2017



On the theme of RECONCILIATION

'The Love of Christ compels us,' 2 Corinthians 5:14 - 20

Wednesday 18th January - 10.30am Baptist Church, Silver Street, Lyme Regis DT7 3LQ

Thursday 19th January - 7.30pm Bethany Chapel, Coombe Street, Lyme Regis DT7 3PT

Friday 20th January - 6.30pm St Michael's Anglican Church, Church Street, Lyme Regis DT7 3DB
Alex Davies playing the organ, each piece followed by meditation

Sunday 22nd January - 10.00am Eucharist at St Michael's Anglican Church, Church Street, Lyme Regis DT7 3DB Preacher, Brother Hugh SSF, the Anglican Society of Saint Francis

Monday 23rd January - 7pm St Michael and St George Roman Catholic Church, Silver Street, Lyme Regis DT7 3LQ

Tuesday 24th January - 4pm St Gwenn's Celtic Orthodox Church, Marshwood DT6 5QF (Rear of Yew Tree Cottage, opposite layby with old milk churn stand)

Wednesday 25th January - 6pm Antiochian Orthodox prayers at St Michael's Anglican Church, Church Street, Lyme Regis DT7 3DB