



**The Orthodox Parish  
of the Holy and Life-Giving Cross,  
Lancaster, UK.**

***The Stavronian***

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*Ἐθρονος Χριστός Ζωοδότης.  
(Φ. Κόντογλου, 1962).*

*The Parish of the Holy and Life-Giving Cross,  
belongs to the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of the British Isles and Ireland.  
The Patriarchate of Antioch is third senior of the Orthodox Churches.  
The Patriarch is His Beatitude John X.*

***The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch  
(Acts 11:26)***

## MUSIC OF THE SOUL – THE SOUND OF ORTHODOXY

I was scrolling through some channels on the radio the other day when I happened to come upon a sound that disturbed my senses. Words were delivered in a rapid, loud, aggressive manner, the vocabulary was dark and rude and the “music” dissonant and arrhythmic beat. “*What a contrast,*” I thought, “*to Orthodox music!*”

Byzantine chant soothes and calms the soul and it awakens the spirit. It is music which is the vehicle for life saving truths, conferred and conveyed in a simple, prayerful way. In contrast to the modern secular world whose music is largely driven by pace, romanticism and emotional impact. Byzantine music slows the heart down to be in tune with God - to listen quietly to the voice of Orthodoxy which bears and delivers the life saving Gospel truths within the Holy Tradition of the Church.

We pray the Liturgy and in order to do this we must humble ourselves to receive the word of God. Our praise and offering should not be carried by an emotional superficial indulgence but based upon a deep spiritual experience.

Why do we sing in Church? Because all creation sings - the birds sing! Blessed Augustine once said: “*He who sings, prays twice.*” St Basil of Ceasarea draws an analogy of medicine mixed with honey; the melody in the doctrine adds sweetness to the words. Next to the throne of God the angels, archangels, cherubim and seraphim sing in endless praise. In fulfilment and continuity of the old covenant, the Church adopted the singing of the Psalms. The proclamation of the Church is conveyed in standard texts of Byzantine chant. Extempore singing is not to be encouraged because of possible doctrinal heresy.

Music is delivered in Liturgy by the human voice since God made humanity in His own image so the human voice is the most appropriate musical instrument for the glory of God.

Music is very powerful so we who are entrusted with the Holy Mysteries and Liturgical worship must take great care to use this power carefully and for it to be chanted well and in good order. For this reason the *Psaltis* and choir lead the singing but this is not to exclude or restrict the congregation from joining in at certain points of the Holy Liturgy.

One of the features of Byzantine chanting is the use of the *isson* or drone. The *isson* is one continuous note which is hummed - it is the most important note because it is the tonic key and upon which the particular tone has its base and upon which it is resolved.

I like to think of this twofold harmony as a symbol of our faith - the tone or melody which is variable and the *isson* which is a constant. In faith we require sincerity and flexibility, integrity and adaptability.

The famous modern 20<sup>th</sup> c. Orthodox composer John Tavener called the *isson* the “eternity note”. The melody of the tone moves from one note to another but it finds its rest when it is united with the *Isson*. Likewise our life song (melody) may takes us to many places but it finds its rest, at the end, in God; the Voice behind the Universe.

*Fr Jonathan*



## WHAT IS MISSION

*“Indifference to mission is a denial of Orthodoxy”*

--- Archbishop Anastasios of Albania

*“Mission is part of the Church’s DNA”*

--- Fr Luke Veronis

### What mission is not

1. Mission is not proselytising or sheep stealing. Mission is not setting out to get other church members to leave their churches.

2. Mission is not using the social work of the church to catch people. The Orthodox Church certainly must carry out the gospel of the *“inasmuch as you have done it to the least of these My brethren you have done it unto Me”* (Matthew 25:31-45), but this must be from love of Christ and people alone, without ulterior motive, as the Antiochian Orthodox Church does in its homelands.

3. Mission is not relying on immigration from traditional Orthodox countries for church growth, however welcomed a development it has been in recent years .

### What mission is

#### Mission within the walls of the sheepfold

The sheep within the Church should be spiritually fed in order to protect them from the danger of wandering away.

1. Children within the Church need instruction and activities for young people. There are many pressures in modern society for young people to choose other paths as they grow up.

2. Some people who are members of other churches do voluntarily choose to be received into the Orthodox Church. Instruction both before the choice, so that all are fully aware of the implications of such a choice, and after reception, for growth, is essential.

3. It is not for us to judge individuals, but for various reasons, some baptised Orthodox may have a very limited knowledge of the Orthodox faith and its riches.

#### Missions beyond the walls of the sheepfold

1. To seek to extend the values of the Kingdom that Christ preached (e.g. Mark 1:14) into the earthly kingdoms. The Biblical emphasis, from the days of Israel, is on communities.

2. Mission to the unbaptised or unchurched.

It is not a statistical survey, but an impression, that where there has been growth in parishes, it has been mainly by reception of those who belonged previously to other churches, or as the result of numbers of fellow Orthodox believers, who have come to this country from traditional Orthodox countries. Census surveys show increasingly fewer people in Britain define themselves as Christians. Statistics show the number of people who have been baptised or are active regular church attenders continues to decline. Church of England child and infant baptism services decreased at a rate of around 20,000 baptisms a year between 2010-2015. At present the number of adult baptisms of the unbaptised into the Orthodox Church would appear to remain very low.

3. Strangers and unbelievers must then be lovingly welcomed into our midst re-

membering the prayer of St. Philaret of Moscow “*Teach me to act firmly and wisely, without embittering and embarrassing others*”.

Gladys Bland

## PARISH NEWS

We are so very grateful to those who remember us in their prayers and show their love as generous benefactors of our Parish. We would like to thank Ioanna Plater for the beautiful Altar cloth that she made for the Church. It’s rich colour and decoration with the gold Cross is most fitting with our Iconostasis and it enhances the beauty of our worship. May God give you the reward for your labour and talent!



## MAJOR CELEBRATIONS THIS MONTH

4<sup>th</sup> Dec: Great Martyr Barbara

6<sup>th</sup> Dec: St. Nicholas the Wonderworker, Archbishop of Myra in Lycia

9<sup>th</sup> Dec: The conception of the Most-Holy Theotokos by the Righteous Anna

11<sup>th</sup> Dec: Hieromartyr Metropolitan Seraphim (Chichagov)

12<sup>th</sup> Dec: St. Spyridon the Wonderworker, Bishop of Tremithus

13<sup>th</sup> Dec: St. Herman of Alaska, Wonderworker of All America

20<sup>th</sup> Dec: The repose of St. John of Kronstadt

25<sup>th</sup> Dec: The Nativity according to the flesh of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ

27<sup>th</sup> Dec: Protomartyr and Archdeacon Stephen

For the lives of Saints please visit the Calendar of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America: [www.calendar.goarch.org](http://www.calendar.goarch.org)

### Services at St Martin’s in December\*

<b>Sat 1<sup>st</sup></b>	15:00	Great Vespers
	15.45	Fasting meal (fish, wine, oil allowed), music and songs with the Orthodox students from Lancaster University.
<b>Sun 2<sup>nd</sup></b>	09:30	Matins and Divine Liturgy
<b>Sat 8<sup>th</sup></b>	15:00	Great Vespers, Memorial, Catechism, and Confessions
<b>Sun 9<sup>th</sup></b>	09:30	Matins and Divine Liturgy
<b>Sat 15<sup>th</sup></b>	15:00	Great Vespers, Memorial, Catechism, and Confessions
<b>Sun 16<sup>th</sup></b>	09:30	Matins and Divine Liturgy
<b>Sat 22<sup>nd</sup></b>	15:00	Great Vespers, Memorial, Catechism, and Confessions
<b>Sun 23<sup>rd</sup></b>	09:30	Matins and Divine Liturgy
<b>Mon 24<sup>th</sup></b>	15:00	Vespers of the Nativity
	18:30	Divine Liturgy of the <b>Nativity</b> of our Lord Jesus Christ
	20:00	Breaking of the Fast with Christmas Feast and Carols
<b>Sat 29<sup>th</sup></b>	15:00	Great Vespers, Memorial, Catechism, and Confessions
<b>Sun 30<sup>th</sup></b>	09:30	Matins and Divine Liturgy followed by Parish Lunch

\*Help setting up the church is greatly appreciated and starts half an hour before the service.



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“God cares for everyone. Despair is in effect a lack of faith”  
- St. George Karslides -



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The following blogs of Old Stavronians are available in Romanian, [Constiinta Ortodoxa](#), in English, [Orthodox city hermit](#), and in Greek, [Orthodoxy rainbow](#).

