



“JOY OF ALL WHO SORROW”

No 14 January '10

CHURCH LIFE

In January 2009 our church was nothing more than foundations and a concrete slab. The actual construction began on 1 February. Many people have been amazed that we have done so much “so quickly”. Living with it every day, the actual building work seemed quite slow but the constructing and furnishing the church is only part of the process. Church is not just a building, it is people, and developing a cohesive community is clearly going to be a much slower and more difficult task.

The building is in a Russian style, which is dramatic in its own way and attracts a great deal of attention. It is clearly an Orthodox church but the emphasis must always be on *Orthodox* rather than *Russian*. In church life, nationalism is inappropriate and unacceptable. In church we stand before God as the Christian nation; we leave our worldly ethnicity outside. The important thing is that we are Christians, that we believe in Christ, Who came for everyone regardless of ethnic identity.

The recent snow afforded an opportunity to take some wintry pictures of the church. These will be added to the growing archive of photographs of the church here in Mettingham. The illustration in this issue of the bulletin is derived from one of the snow photographs. It is an example of the fact that almost anything can be done on a computer these days, given the necessary expertise. We are indebted to our friend, Les Tozeland, for his efforts in this respect. This photograph has been given the appearance of a charcoal drawing!

THE WEST DOOR

A design fault has become apparent. The west door of the church is flush with the west wall. In wet weather, the rain blows onto the door. We could not have imagined just how much the wood of the door would swell as a result. It makes the door very stiff and difficult to open. Whilst it is possible to shave a bit off the door, this is not really the answer. Maybe a porch to protect the west door from the elements is the only long-term solution. This is something we will have to consider.

THEOPHANY - 6 January

On this day we commemorate the Baptism of Christ in the River Jordan. All the references in the hymns for this day concern this biblical event. The order of the services for Theophany is the same as it is for Christmas Day but with one significant addition. In symbolic commemoration of Christ's baptism it is customary to go and bless the local river. In coastal towns, if there is no suitable river, the sea is blessed instead. After the hymns and prayers of the service, the *Great Blessing of the Waters*, a cross is plunged into the river three times. The cross symbolises Christ and the triple immersion emulates the ritual of the sacrament of baptism. In his introductory notes in the Menaion, Bishop Kallistos writes “Lest the phrase *Great Blessing of the Waters* be misunderstood, it should be immediately emphasised that the blessing is effected, not by the officiating priest and the people who are praying with him, but by Christ Himself,

who is the true celebrant of this as in all the mysteries of the Church. It is Christ who blessed the waters once for all at His baptism in the Jordan: the liturgical ceremony of blessing is simply an extension of Christ's original act."

(It will be noted that, because of the use of Julian Calendar, Theophany falls on the day designated 19 January in the civil calendar.)

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LOOKING AHEAD

In 2010 Easter is very early. Easter Day is 4 April and this means that Theophany is hardly over before we begin the Triodion. (The Triodion is the Serve Book containing the texts of the church services for the three weeks before Great Lent, Great Lent itself and Holy Week)

The first Sunday in the Triodion is the Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee. The Gospel reading for this day is the story of the publican and the Pharisee (Luke 18: 10-14). The Pharisee prayed by boasting about his absolute adherence to the religious rules of the time and said "I fast twice in the week.....". The publican, in his humility, just asked for God's mercy .

In most weeks throughout the year Orthodox Christians fast twice in the week; on Wednesday because it is the day that Christ was sold by Judas and Friday because it is the day of the Crucifixion of Christ. In the week following the Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee, the Church forbids us to fast at all. Why? This is to remind us that fasting is not simply about adherence to rules and regulations but it is a spiritual discipline concerning obedience. The prayer of the publican, *Lord have mercy on me a sinner*, is the prototype for the Jesus Prayer, which is widely used in the Orthodox Church. This Jesus Prayer is *Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner* which is used in conjunction with prayer beads (chotki), sometimes erroneously referred to as the "Orthodox rosary".

Dates to remember in 2010

24 January - Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee

7 February - Meat-fare Sunday - this is the last day of eating meat until Easter

14 February - Forgiveness Sunday - this is the last day of eating dairy products until Easter. Also on this day we ask forgiveness of our relations and friends for all the ways we have offended them in the past year.

15 February (Monday) - the first day of Great Lent.

28 March - Palm Sunday

4 April - Easter Day

13 May (Thursday) - Ascension Day

23 May - Pentecost / Trinity Sunday

30 May - All Saints Day

(Note - all these days are identified according to the date in the regular civil calendar for convenience.)

ANNIVERSARY

On Wednesday 21 July Saint George Orthodox Information Service will celebrate the 40th anniversary of the registration of the title as a business name. We will have to consider what will be the most appropriate way to celebrate this milestone in our service to the Church.

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

6 January - Christmas Eve - 9am Royal Hours 6pm Vigil

7 January - Christmas Day - 10.30am Liturgy, followed by the Christmas Party in the house.

Orthodox Church of the Mother of God *Joy of All Who Sorrow*
The White House, Low Rd, Mettingham, Suffolk NR35 1TP
Telephone - 01986 896708

REGULAR SERVICES: Every Sunday 10.30am - Every evening 6pm

Extra services for festivals and saints days will be announced in the bulletin.

e-mail churchmettingham@aol.com Website www.joyofallwhosorrow.org.uk

Cheques for the church fund should be made payable to "*Joy of All Who Sorrow*" Church.

The account is in HSBC Bank, 3 New Market, Beccles, Suffolk NR34 9HQ

Account No 71395912 Sort Code 40-09-24
