

St Theodore and St Teilo Orthodox Church

Archdiocese of Churches of Russian Tradition in Western Europe (MP)



Apostles' Fast, 2023
Newsletter

Christ is in our midst!

Although most of us speak regularly when we are together for the Liturgy, it has been a long time since I wrote to update you all on the comings and goings of the Parish.

Indeed, the last year at St Theodore and St Teilo's has been a fruitful one, which we have seen in numerical growth at Divine Liturgy; the improvement of our physical space by means of a newly-decorated iconostasis, at least one new icon stand, and even some new, Russian-style vestments; increased numbers of liturgical observances; wider engagement with the community; and, finally, a substantial number of people whom we will shortly bless as catechumens. Throughout all of this, it has been a joy to serve as your priest.

In the wake of all this, there are a number of important notices that I need to bring to your attention.

1. From **Sunday, 3 September**, our service of **Divine Liturgy will begin at 12:30** at Conway Road Methodist Church. This is currently the earliest possible time we can gather after our Methodist hosts' service, and we are grateful to our Methodist hosts for enabling us to serve closer to the traditional – and more appropriate morning – hour.

In order for this to be successful, however, it will be **VITAL for at least one person to arrive with me at 12:00** so that everything might be laid out properly according to our liturgical needs, and I might be able to offer all the preparatory prayers. Wherever possible, then, please plan on arriving at the church for 12:00.

2. Since we moved into the Methodist Church in the Spring of 2021, we have neither paid anything to them, nor been asked to. I have been informed, however, that due to the rising cost of utilities, they have recently had to raise rents with all their external users. I was therefore asked by their building committee if there was anything we could offer. They have made it clear that they do not want anything from us if it is going to hurt us at this early stage in our development as a parish, but I committed us to **£1000 per year**.

In light of this, we need to give some thought to how we might ensure **a consistent monthly income**, and also how we might raise additional funds as we move forward – particularly by means of fundraising. Consequently, over the coming weeks I would ask you to give some thought both to what you are able to give to St Theodore and St Teilo's, and how you are able to give (whether by weekly donations in the plate, or by means of direct debit).

3. As you know, we have been participating in the Methodist Church's **cleaning rota** for the last two years, and it is something they appreciate very much. Being on the rota means being available to clean the upper and lower floors of the church around once every six weeks. Since we have been part of this cycle, more often than not it has fallen on Matushka and I to do the cleaning, and it would be very helpful if all those who are able could make a formal commitment to the schedule so that the work is more widely shared. Of course, the more people that contribute in this area, the less we all have to do it, as it means extending the intervals at which any of us come up. Please speak to Matushka if you are able to take part in this.
4. Do you enjoy baking? Would you consider baking for the Liturgy? **At every Divine Liturgy, we use five loaves of prosphora** – bread that is specially baked and prepared for the purpose, according to strict requirement. It can be both a challenge and a joy to bake, and it would be a blessing to share the responsibility for baking it with others. If this is something you would

like to partake in, I would love to hear from you! Please speak with Matushka Anastasia or me at any point to express your interest and/or to find out more.

5. On **Saturday, 30 September, from 10:00 until 12:00**, I will be offering a **seminar online on the topic of mission and Orthodoxy**. It is possible to register for this via <https://www.orthodoxexchange.net/seminars>, and I would ask you – if at all possible – to consider attending. Half the seminar will be given over to a consideration of the theology behind mission, and half to the practicalities. If we are to fulfil our vocation as Orthodox Christians – and especially Orthodox Christians in Wales – understanding what this means for us is vital. The seminar is appropriate for, and open to, clergy and laity alike.
6. Also starting in September are two opportunities for Orthodox Young Adults (18-35).

The first of these is the **Young Orthodox Book Club**, which will read nine books together over a three-year period, including works by the great Orthodox scholars Alexander Schmemmann, John Meyendorff, Vladimir Lossky, Sergius Bulgakov, and others. All sessions will be led by me, and it is my sincere hope that as many of the young adults from this parish as possible will sign up and participate. More details can be had by visiting <https://www.orthodoxexchange.net/book-club>.

Alongside the Book Club, I will also be leading the **Orthodox Theology Experience**. This is a two-year programme wherein we delve more deeply into key themes in Orthodox theology, including everything from God the Holy Trinity to the saints and the afterlife. More information on this, too, can be had by visiting <https://www.orthodoxexchange.net/theology-programme>.

7. I am spearheading the publication **of a new magazine on Orthodox Christian life**, that will include contributions from priests, teachers, and others, on many topics of interest. Its purpose is to proffer edifying, educational, and interesting, articles and other material for people across the Orthodox Church in the West. The publication will be pan-jurisdictional and non-polemical, seeking only to build up members of the Church spiritually, intellectually, and evangelically. More information, and the way to subscribe, can be found here: <https://www.orthodoxexchange.net/magazine>.
8. There are **a number of resources available on YouTube** that I hope you will find helpful. The first and most important of these is an **Online Dictionary of Orthodox Christianity**, which is made up of entries of one minute or less, covering many terms of relevance to understanding the Orthodox Faith. There have been around twenty-five entries uploaded so far, with terms to come running all the way through A to Z. Please consider visiting the Dictionary and letting me know if you find it helpful and if there are terms you would like to see appear.

In addition to the dictionary, there is also **a podcast entitled 'Under My Roof'**, that can be found on YouTube, Spotify, Apple, and many other podcast services. The most recent episode is a discussion with an Orthodox philosopher on the question of the existence of God and whether or not it is relevant to Orthodox Christians. The next episode will be on the role of the artist in Orthodoxy.

Finally, there is **a series of introductory 'shorts'** that can be shared with enquirers into Orthodoxy.

You can find it all here: <https://www.youtube.com/@sttheodoreandsteiloorthodox>, where I would ask you to click the 'subscribe' button if you haven't already.

There is indeed much to discuss, and we will look forward to doing so on a formal basis in September, when we will look to hold our next parish meeting. In the meantime, rest assured of my

prayers for each and every one of you. As always, should you have any issues or concerns, I would ask you to get in touch.

In the meantime, I remain yours,

in the Lord,

Fr Jacob