



The Celtic Orthodox Church in Britain

Community of St Gwenn

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*The **Celtic Orthodox Church** is an Ancient Christian Church, founded in AD37. It is the original Church of Great Britain, and its spirituality blessed our land for the first twelve centuries of the Christian era. Now it is revived!*

Parish Priest – Fr Leonard Hollands Asst Priests – Fr John Francis, Fr Patrick Mary Fr Deacon Tugdual Meharg

St Gwenn's News No 154 – October 2025



**We celebrate our
Liturgies at the
Woodbury Community
Hall, Woodbury Lane,
Axminster EX13 5TL**

October Liturgical Calendar

Wed 1 Oct	The Protecting Veil
Thu 2 Oct	Holy and Righteous Ancestors of God, Joachim and Anna
Sat 4 Oct	St Francis of Assisi and Feast of CREATION (OR tomorrow)
Sun 5 Oct	PENT 17 (OR St Francis and CREATION)
Thu 9 Oct	St James, son of Alphaeus, Apostle
Sat 11 Oct	St Philip the Deacon, Apostle of the Seventy
Sun 12 Oct	PENT 18
Sat 18 Oct	St Luke, Apostle and Evangelist
Sun 19 Oct	PENT 19
Thu 23 Oct	St James, brother of the Lord, Apostle
Fri 24 Oct	St Raphael the Archangel
Sat 25 Oct	St Clotilde of California, nun
Sun 26 Oct	PENT 20 St Cedd of Lastingham. .St Alfred the Gt, King
Tue 28 Oct	St Simon and St Jude, Apostles, Martyrs
Sun 2 Nov	PENT 21 ALL SAINTS/ALL SOULS Liturgy: 10.30am

From Fr Leonard

The blessing of the Lord and His mercy be with you all!

As I sit here preparing this Newsletter I am very cold and all too aware of the changing season, and, in this I know I am not alone; many of our friends and neighbours have now turned on their heating and I think we must soon follow suit, despite the fact that a few days ago we were quite warm enough. At present, in my personal reading plan,

I am working my way through the Apocalypse, the Revelation to St John. It was what the Spirit said to the Church at Laodicea that springs to mind as I sit here typing with cold, stiff fingers, wishing I were warmer. The Laodiceans were accused of being neither hot nor cold, but luke warm. They were neither debauched sinners nor living the lives of ardent followers of Christ.

I have a feeling that we might all benefit from endeavouring to discern whether we are hot, cold or indifferent towards Christ our Saviour. We can be lukewarm Christians, going to church, sometimes praying, sometimes even reading bits of the bible, but do we *burn* for Christ, take opportunities to be *loving and helpful* to those in need? As we begin to warm our homes let's 'heat up' our life in Christ. Let us be more willing to see and help those in need; let all our contact with others shed some of the Light of Christ that should be in us. Let us spend more time actively tuning our hearts into Christ's 'wavelength.'

Blessings and love in Christ to you all

Fr Leonard +

From Fr John

As this Newsletter hits the press we shall be close to 4th October, the Feast day of St Francis of Assisi – observed in the Celtic Orthodox calendar also as the 'Feast of Creation'. A fairly obvious link as we often instinctively link Francis with the natural world. The photo shows a woodcarving of him, together with armfuls of birds and flowers, that I was given by a group I led to Assisi many years ago.



St Francis of Assisi

In fact I was nearly named Francis after my mother's brother who died during the war. My father didn't say anything but was silently unimpressed (he thought it was a sissy name and anyway he had other ideas). Perhaps over trustingly he was sent off to register my birth. He arrived back with the Certificate with just 'John' on it, the name of his beloved stepfather – I believe a state of hostility ensued!! Some sort of peace was achieved by adding the name Francis at my baptism (together with George) but, as he didn't really approve of middle names anyway, it was never used.

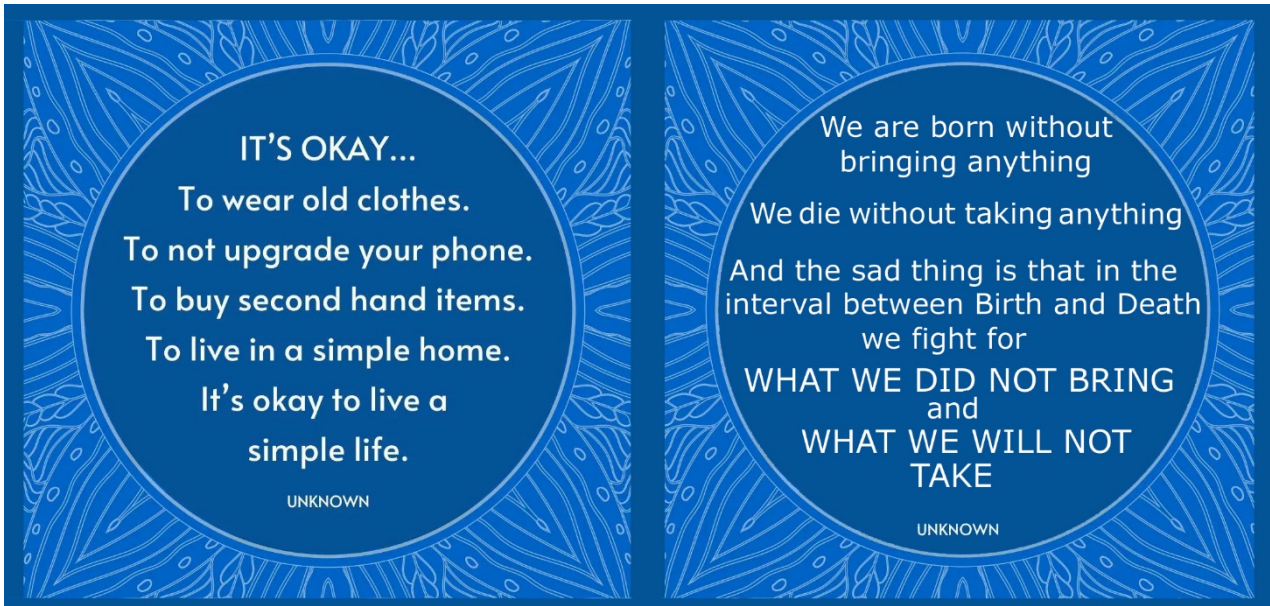
Francis though is a Saint we can all feel a pull towards: yes, in one sense he was a bit crazy, a bit extreme, a bit over the top. Yet he understood something about the importance of Creation and what it has to teach us about God and our faith. The Celtic Orthodox Church, of course, resonates firmly with that. Whatever else 'Celtic Christianity' brought to the Church a resonance with the natural order and a respect for Creation has got to be right near the top.

I was wowed by the miracle of nature at the end of this summer. What an astonishing summer it's been! Walking across grass that was so dried out it crunched underfoot and with leaves fallen early, which sounded like stepping on glass. One doubted that it would ever recover; and then the rain started and in just a couple of days one could see signs of life again. Within a week the grass looked as if nothing had ever happened; in next to no time one looked out in astonishment at what seemed like a true miracle, yet another miracle of Creation, new Green growth where something had appeared to be completely dead. Suddenly it was time to cut the grass!

Nature is full of little miracles. I guess that is why the Celtic peoples paid so much attention to it, and learnt so much about it which was helpful to them in their Christian lives. The natural world was interwoven into their ordinary daily lives. Let us learn from it too.

The other aspect of Francis is in his call to simplicity. This too was woven into the outlook of the Celtic Church and is enshrined in its very foundation. Simplicity and a simple life often seem to be looked down on, yet where simplicity is to be found, there too we find God.

In the perhaps unlikely vehicle of Facebook I came across the following this week; seems to sum it up:



Every blessing

John +

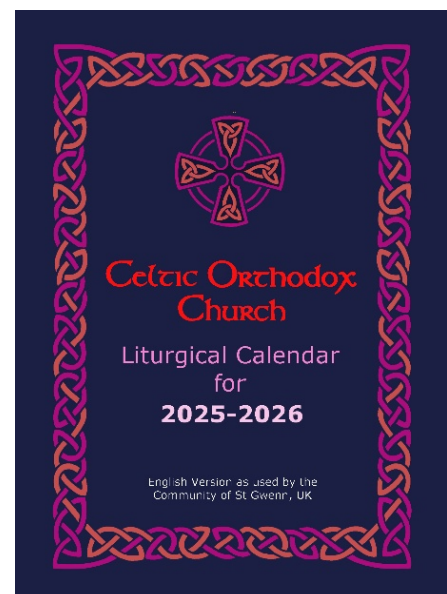
2025-26 Liturgical Calendar

Our Celtic Orthodox Liturgical Calendar for the new Church year, 2025 – 26 (Advent begins on 12th November) is now available.

The calendar gives saints for every day, Liturgical feasts and seasons, and three scriptural readings daily.

It is published by Lamorna Publications and printed by Lulu. The cost is £8 plus pp. It can be obtained direct from the printer:

www.lulu.com ref: Liturgical Calendar - Celtic Orthodox 2025-26 Fr Leonard Hollands ID 95m8468



IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

Following the recent AGM of the Woodbury Community Hall Committee (where we hold our monthly Liturgies) we have received notification that the hall management is running into difficulties filling important administrative roles, and that unless people are found to take on these roles the hall will be SOLD.

This would be very sad for us as we have only recently found such a good and convenient home for our Church. Here are extracts from the letter we have received from the President. Is it possible that you or anyone you know might be prepared to step forward.

From the Hon Life President of the Hall Committee

Dear Hall User,

It is with deep regret that I am writing to inform you that, unless a Chairperson and Secretary can be found by Thursday 13th November 2025, the hall will close.

At last night's AGM, our outgoing Chair & Secretary reiterated the desire they expressed two years ago that they wished to step down. Constitutionally the hall cannot operate without a Chair and Secretary.

The hall was built in 1933, and having given such excellent service for so long it was proposed that an Extraordinary General Meeting be convened for 13th November at 7.30pm at the hall, so that everyone benefitting from it may be given the opportunity to reflect upon our position, in the hope that two people will volunteer for the vacant posts.

If no one is forthcoming it was proposed that steps will have to be taken to sell the whole facility.

In view of this, I put to you that it would be tragic if Woodbury Community Hall is to close. PLEASE, consider very seriously if you could undertake one or other of these vacant roles on the Hall Committee. Our retiring Chair and Hon Secretary have honed the two positions down to make them workable without it needing to be an overwhelming commitment. A clear job description is available to any prospective candidate. You could stand for a defined period of time, say two or preferably three years. Please think about this seriously.

If you would like to explore this further, then please phone the Hon Life President, Graham Godbeer, on 01297 32767.

All Souls

All Souls, 2nd November, coincides with our November Liturgy. All Saints falls the day before. The intention for the Sunday, therefore, is to Celebrate the Liturgy of All Saints (in gold), followed by a Panikhida for All Souls (in purple).

If there are names of the departed that you would like to be included at the Panikhida, please get them to Fr Leonard in good time: frleonard@btinternet.com



Lord, in your mercy: Hear our Prayers

For our Patriarch His Beatitude Metropolitan Marc, Bishop Nicolas and all our clergy and people; For Bishop Martin (French Orthodox Church) and his clergy and people; For Bishop Gregoire (Orthodox Church of the Gauls) and his clergy and people;

FOR THE UNITY OF CHRIST'S CHURCH.

For His Majesty King Charles III, the Royal Family, our Government and all in authority; For the Heads of State and Leaders of every land.

FOR PEACE AND UNITY IN THE WORLD

For the future of our home, Woodbury Community Hall.

For the sick, the bereaved, the homeless, the starving, the war-wearied and all who suffer in any way, especially those known to us.

For all who have died recently, and for, Leslie, Steve, Eva, Charles, Ellie, Eric, Fred, Penny, Monica, Margeret, Leslie, June, Metropolitan Gabriel, Derek, David, Christine, Jean-Pierre and Rodney, whose anniversaries of reposing fall this month.

