

PEWTALK

£1

February 2026



EAST & WEST TILBURY AND LINFORD PARISH MAGAZINE

Parish web site: www.stcatherinesthurrock.org.uk

BITs AnD PiECes

100 Club - A young man drew the winning ticket at the Morning Service on January 3rd and I was delighted to be able to give £10 for her first win to Pam England. Pam has been a great supporter of the 100 Club from day one selling tickets to friends and family and buying tickets for the Grandchildren. Congratulations Pam. *Norman*

Children's Society box holders . It's that time of year again. Time to hand over your boxes for opening so time to top them up. I will be collecting them in March . Thank you *Jane Schroeder*.

The 18th February 'Ash Wednesday' marks the beginning of Lent. The morning service of Holy Communion at St. Francis will include the 'imposition of Ashes' for those members of the congregation who wish to be marked with the sign of the cross. During the season of Lent as we look forward to the events of 'Holy Week' and Easter there will be opportunities for Bible Study and Fellowship at St. Francis on the following Mondays from 10.30am to noon:-

23rd February

9th March

16th March

30th March.

All are very welcome.

At the Wigtown Book Festival last year Kim and I heard John Davidson speak about his life with Tourette syndrome, in the Parish Church. He has suffered with this condition since a teenager and was treated very badly both at school and generally has spent his

adult life campaigning for a better awareness of the syndrome. He was awarded the MBE. for this work. One of the things he has done is that he has organised an annual two-day residential Tourette camp for young people in Galashiels, his home town.

"People who feel isolated in their own town can come to Galashiels for a weekend and feel part of a like-minded tribe," said John. "They can shout as loud as they like without worrying about upsetting or offending others. Hopefully, they return to their homes in better fettle and feeling stronger and less isolated." At the end of December a film of his life, 'I swear' was released on DVD and it is an excellent tutorial on Tourettes. However, if you plan to watch it be aware that one of the manifestations of John's condition is uncontrolled, spontaneous swearing including swearing in front of the queen when receiving his MBE.

The Thurrock foodbank have been allocated a week's collection at Morrisons Grays from Monday 2nd - Sunday 8th February and are hoping to cover 10am - 4pm. The duties are greeting customers, giving them one of our pre printed shopping lists, receiving items donated and thanking customers and packing the items into crates for our van to take away.

The foodbank is currently 12% down on donations from this time last year and we are having to buy food to give out so this and all our collections this year are vital. If you are able to help please contact Helen by email at admin@thurrock.foodbank.org.uk.

A prayer for all those affected by sickness and ill-health

Keep us, good Lord, under the shadow of your mercy. Sustain and support the anxious, be with those who care for the sick, and lift up all who are brought low; that we may find comfort knowing that nothing can separate us from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Reflections from The Rectory



As the calendar turns to reveal the month of February I feel myself breathe a sigh of relief.

After the grey, cold and gloomy weeks of January, it is time to feel hopeful and to look forward. As we make our way through the weeks of February the mornings and evenings get increasingly lighter, we hear the bird song return and pushing through the very cold earth will be the tips of the earliest spring

flowers.

Snowdrops in particular speak to me of resilience and courage and are such a joy to see whenever and wherever they appear. Very often they can be found in and around churchyards, in wooded glades and country lanes. Most people will know these winter wonders as Snowdrops but they are also known as 'Candlemas Bells' because they often appear around the church festival of 'Candlemas' which is on the 2nd February.

Candlemas is a day of significance in the Churches year because it brings to an end the joyful celebrations of Christmas and Epiphany and points us towards Lent and Easter. Traditionally on this day the candles that would be used in the church throughout the rest of the year would be blessed during the service of communion or 'Mass'. The list includes Candles for the Altar; candles to light as a prayer for others; candles for Baptism candidates and candles for Wedding couples. The candles in a church serve as a reminder of one of the ways Jesus described himself. He said, 'I am the light of the world'. As Christians we also seek to be lights shining in the darkness.

And this year we will also be filling the church with Christingle candles as we hold a special afternoon where children are invited to 'Come and make a Christingle at Candlemas' (see below more details).

Candlemas is also known as 'The Presentation of Christ in the Temple'. It commemorates the ritual purification of Mary, 40 days after the birth of her son Jesus and the presentation of the baby to God in the Temple at Jerusalem. In Jewish tradition women were considered unclean after the birth of a child. For 40 days (after a birth of a boy) and for 60 days (after the birth of a girl), they weren't allowed to worship in the temple. At the end of the 40 or 60 days, women would be taken to the Temple or Synagogue to be purified after which they could take part in religious services once again.

Similarly the Christian Church made provision for special prayers to be said acknowledging the safe delivery of a child to its mother. In the Book of Common Prayer there is a service called 'The Thanksgiving of Women after Child-Birth' commonly called 'The Churching of Women.' It is something our grandmothers and great-grandmothers may well have gone to church to partake in before they went out and about with the new baby.

The story of The Presentation of Christ in the Temple can be found in the Gospel of Luke (chapter 2 verses 22-38). Luke tells us that Mary and Joseph were met by the elderly Prophetess Anna and Prophet Simeon. Simeon holds the baby Jesus and calls him a 'Light to the World'. If you have ever

attended a service of Evening Prayer or Evensong you will have heard the 'Song of Simeon' in the canticle the 'Nunc Dimittis'. The words are as follows:

'Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word.

For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,

Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people;

To be a light to lighten the Gentiles and to be the glory of thy people Israel.'

(Book of Common Prayer 1662)

Simeon had been waiting his whole life long for God's promised Messiah to come and in the infant Jesus he recognises that the promise has been fulfilled. It is a moment of ending for Simeon but also the place of a new beginning for the whole of humanity.

And so within the church a season has come to an end and the next one begins. Sundays are now described as 'Sundays before Lent' and '**Ash Wednesday**', which falls on the **18th February** this year, marks the start of Lent and the journey towards Holy Week and Easter.

So, I hope like me you will enjoy this month of February and when you see those beautiful snowdrops spare a moment to think of Candlemas and the light shining in the darkness in a world where light and hope is needed.



Stay safe and take care,

Every blessing,

Revd Michèle.



**'Come and make a Christingle at Candlemas'
at St Catherine's, East Tilbury
on Sunday 1st February at 3pm**

As the season of Christmas reaches its conclusion we invite you to come to this very special activity. Children attending will make their own

Christingles learning about the different parts of it along the way. The afternoon will conclude with a short service where the Christingles will be lit reminding us that the light of Christ shines in the darkness well beyond the 25th December.

You will need to book a place for your child/children and all children must be accompanied by an adult



For further information and to book a place for your child/children call

Revd Michèle on 07749303622 or

email: mjmarshall@fastmail.co.uk

The Old Rugged Cross

Julie Guest writes that when planning her late Auntie's funeral, her Aunt had asked for the hymn, 'The old rugged cross' and that got her thinking what does it mean?

George Bennard, a Methodist evangelist and hymn writer from Albion, Michigan, is the author and composer of "The Old Rugged Cross."

The inspiration for the hymn came to Bennard during a particularly difficult period of ministry. After facing opposition and mockery while preaching on the cross of Christ, he began to meditate deeply on the meaning of Christ's suffering and sacrifice. He later recalled, "I was praying for a full understanding of the cross and its plan in Christianity." Over time, the words "I'll cherish the old rugged cross" took root in his heart and grew into a fully formed hymn. He wrote the first verse and chorus while holding revival meetings in Michigan and completed the rest of the hymn while staying at the home of friends in Pokagon, Michigan. The hymn opens with:

"On a hill far away stood an old rugged cross,
The emblem of suffering and shame..."

This powerful image captures both the humiliation of the Roman crucifixion and the glory of God's redemptive plan. Though the cross was a symbol of shame in Roman society, Bennard's lyrics proclaim it as the Christian's highest treasure. It is at the cross where sin was paid for, where grace was extended, and where salvation was won.

Each stanza of the hymn presents a different aspect of the believer's relationship to the cross. It speaks of clinging to the cross through life's trials, bearing reproach for Christ's sake, and ultimately exchanging the cross for a crown in heaven. The refrain expresses the longing hope of every believer:

"So I'll cherish the old rugged cross,
Till my trophies at last I lay down;
I will cling to the old rugged cross,
And exchange it someday for a crown."

This theme of sacrificial love and eternal reward resonated deeply with congregations from the very beginning. The first public performance of the song was in 1913 at a revival meeting led by Bennard. Though Bennard wrote many other hymns during his lifetime, none achieved the lasting fame of "The Old Rugged Cross." Today, over a century after it was written, "The Old Rugged Cross" continues to be one of the most treasured hymns of the Christian faith. It points believers back to the foundation of their salvation—the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ—and calls them to live in the shadow of the cross until they see their Saviour face to face.

Information taken from [https://www.hymnallibrary.org/blog/the-story-behind-the-old-rugged-cross-hymn/.....Ed](https://www.hymnallibrary.org/blog/the-story-behind-the-old-rugged-cross-hymn/)



Dear Friends,

Who do you share your shoes with? Do you wear them one day and someone else wears them next? Or do you take turns morning and afternoon?



We delivered your gift-filled boxes to one family in Kosovo and discovered the boys took turns at wearing their one pair of shoes. The one who didn't have shoes was barefoot. He was glad to find socks in his box. The toddler in the family had nothing from the waist down. New underpants in the shoebox were put to good use very quickly.

Another family had a foam mattress blocking the space where an outside door should be. It kept some cold out, but it didn't stop rats coming in. Dad was in prison and mum had no money for Christmas presents. Imagine how much your gifts meant to them!

The poverty of others is less obvious. Some young people were brought by their parents to a centre for people with disabilities to receive the boxes you had sent. It was so good to see them leave with smiles on their faces.

Thank you for all you have done to help us with our shoebox appeal. In eight countries across southeast Europe, people who are poor and disadvantaged in other ways were thankful to receive a box. We could have given away more. There are never enough but our partners know their communities and make sure your boxes go to the people most in need. They couldn't do it without your contribution.

The people who give out shoeboxes asked us to thank you. And we know that the children and adults who received a box all for themselves want us to thank you, too. You made them so happy!

Wishing you the very best in 2026.

Three in four car thefts unsolved

Keep a close eye on your car this year, because sadly, no one else seems to be able to do so. Recent figures have revealed that more than 121,000 car theft offences were not solved in 2024-25.

The British Transport Police, South Yorkshire, City of London, Sussex and Warwickshire police forces reported that more than 80 per cent of car thefts were unsolved. 35 of the 44 police forces in England and Wales had a total rate of 60 per cent of all cases going unsolved. Some critics even say that the dismal figures shows that car theft has been decriminalised in the UK.

Of course, theft has been around for a long time. For this very reason, Jesus warned us not to over-value the things that we own. He said: "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where ... thieves break in and steal." (Matthew 6:19).

Sadly, no data exists from the 1st century, to tell us how many stolen camels and donkeys were ever recovered.

Mary Shelley and Frankenstein by Tim Lenton



It was 175 years ago, on 1st February 1851, that the novelist Mary Shelley died. She is best known for her Gothic novel *Frankenstein*.

Her parents were the influential philosophers William Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft, a strong advocate of women's rights who died 11 days after Mary's birth from complications. The future Mary Shelley was herself fascinated by books and philosophy but spent two long,

enjoyable spells "for her health" with the Baxters, a dissenting family who lived near Dundee.

She started on the novel *Frankenstein* – not the name of the eight-foot, lovelorn 'Christian' monster but of the scientist who created him – at the age of 18 after a conversation about ghosts with her husband, the atheist Romantic poet Percy Bysshe Shelley, and others. After her book was published anonymously, many suspected that her husband and written it or was co-author, but this was not the case: he may have done some light editing.

Mary, a baptised Anglican who came to despair and doubt, wrote several other books, but her life was tragic on many levels. Her husband had affairs, and they mixed in circles where that was encouraged. A four-year period in Italy with Byron and others, initially welcomed by Mary, became especially hard for her to endure. According to him, she had described Naples as "a paradise inhabited by devils".

Three of her four children died at a very young age; only the fourth, Percy Florence, reached adulthood. And her husband died, aged only 29, in a mysterious sailing accident in 1822 in The Gulf of Spezia near Genoa.

Her last book, however, was a travel narrative about rambles in Germany and Italy which she had undertaken with her son Percy in the early 1840s. She died aged 53, perhaps of a brain tumour or a stroke. She was buried at St Peter's Church in Bournemouth.

Shrove Tuesday – Pancake Day – 9th February

It's odd, really, to think that that confessing one's sins to God should be linked to making pancakes. And yet the beginning of Lent brings us both – Shrove Tuesday is Pancake Day, and is followed by Ash Wednesday, and so Lent begins.

In centuries gone by, the pancakes were made to use up the milk and eggs before the fasting of Lent. More recently, many readers will have childhood memories of the wonder of watching our mothers break an egg, mix it with milk and flour – and out of that gooey mess, to produce a light and delicious pancake.

These days, more of us buy pancake mix, or even ready-made pancakes. It seems we prefer the certainty of ending up with pancakes - to the risk of having made nothing BUT a mess of the kitchen.

In many parishes they used to hold pancake races on the day. Why anyone would want to run around a field while holding a pancake is not clear, but in Olney, Bucks, they have held a pancake race almost every year since 1445.

Introducing Dame Sarah Mullally - the 106th Archbishop of Canterbury

The Rt Revd and Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE officially became Archbishop of Canterbury on 28th January 2026, when she was legally confirmed at St Paul's Cathedral. What do you know about her?



She was born in Woking in 1962, and is one of four children, with two sisters and one brother. She attended Winston Churchill Comprehensive School and Woking Sixth Form College. She went on to South Bank Polytechnic and Heythrop College, University of London

She worked as a nurse in the NHS, which she has described as "an opportunity to reflect the love of God". She specialised as a cancer nurse and became a ward sister at Westminster Hospital, before being made Director of Nursing at Chelsea and Westminster Hospital. In 1999, at the age of 37, she was appointed the Government's Chief Nursing Officer for England in the Department of Health. She was the youngest person ever to be appointed to the post. Bishop Sarah was made a Dame Commander of the British Empire in 2005 in recognition of her outstanding contribution to nursing.

She had become a Christian at the age of 16. While working as the Chief Nursing Officer for England, she discerned a call to ordination and entered training ministry. She was ordained in 2001 and served her curacy in St. Saviour's Battersea Fields, initially as a self-supporting minister, before leaving her government post in 2004.

In 2012 she was installed as Canon Treasurer at Salisbury Cathedral and three years later took the role as Suffragan Bishop of Crediton in the Diocese of Exeter, the fourth woman to become a Bishop in the Church of England.

On 12th May 2018, Bishop Sarah was installed as the 133rd Bishop of London at St Paul's Cathedral. Bishop Sarah sits in the House of Lords as one of the Lords Spirituals, having been introduced on 24th May 2018. Her maiden speech she said "I am the Bishop I am today because of that first vocation to nursing, and compassion and healing are constants at the heart of who I am."

She was sworn in as a member of the Privy Council in March 2018 and became Dean of Her Majesty's Chapels Royal in July 2019.

As Bishop of London, she led the Church of England's Living in Love and Faith process from 2020 to 2023. This included the formative stages of discernment and decision making which saw the introduction of the Prayers of Love and Faith for same-sex couples.

She has served on the Church's National Safeguarding Steering Group and is also Lead Bishop for Health and Social Care issues.

Archbishop Sarah is married to Eamonn, an Irish-born IT and Enterprise Architect who enjoys beekeeping and volunteering as a London tourist guide.

The couple have two grown-up children, Liam and Grace.

She is Chair of Christian Aid. She has spoken openly about her dyslexia, describing her difficulties with writing and reading. In her spare time, she loves cooking, walking and pottery.



Mouse Makes

Read the story in
Luke 4:1-13



THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS

After Jesus was baptised in the River Jordan where did the Holy Spirit lead him to? v1

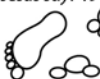
How many days was Jesus being tempted by the devil? v2

What did Jesus eat? v2

What did the devil tempt Jesus to turn a stone into? v3
What did Jesus say? v3-4

What did the devil offer Jesus if He worshipped him? v7-8
What did Jesus say? v7-8

What did the devil ask Jesus to do? v9
What did Jesus say? v9



FIRST TEMPTATION

THE DEVIL SAID:

"If you are God's Son order this stone to turn into bread."

JESUS REPLIED:

"Man shall not live on bread alone."

Read Deuteronomy 8:3

WE LEARN:
Read the Bible
Learn God's word.



SECOND TEMPTATION

THE DEVIL SAID:

"I will give you power and wealth if you worship me."

JESUS REPLIED:

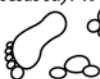
"Worship the Lord your God and serve only Him."

Read Deuteronomy 6:13

WE LEARN:
Put God first
Worship only Him.



What did the devil ask Jesus to do? v9
What did Jesus say? v9



T W L D G
R O G L O R Y L O
I B A P T I S E D
V O F O O T H D
S E R V E B T I
J O R D A N J E G



F O R T Y D A Y S S O N K L O R D N H
T D O W N O N W O R S H I P
T E S T W O R L D L T U N B
L V T E M P T A T I O N G R
E I A M J E S U S F N G D E
N L K P D E S E R T E R O A
T H O L Y S P I R I T Y M D
I M J E R U S A L E M F S J
W I L D E R N E S S J U M P

JESUS • BAPTISED • RIVER • JORDAN • HOLY SPIRIT • LED WILDERNESS • DESERT • FORTY DAYS • HUNGRY • DEVIL TEMPTATION • STONE • BREAD • WRITTEN • SON • WORLD KINGDOMS • GLORY • WORSHIP • SERVE • GOD • HIGH JERUSALEM • TEMPLE • SON • JUMP • DOWN • LIFT • FOOT • LORD • TEST • LENT

THIRD TEMPTATION

THE DEVIL SAID:

"If you are God's Son throw yourself down, the scriptures say God will take care of you."

JESUS REPLIED:

"Do not put the Lord your God to the test."

Read Deuteronomy 6:16

WE LEARN:
God cares, trust Him do not test Him.





PARISH DIARY FOR FEBRUARY

All services and events may be changed in the light of any new developments.

Please see our weekly newsletter for the latest Information. It can be found on our

Website: www.stcatherinesthurrock.org.uk

1 Feb	Candlemas Holy communion service at St. Catherine's 'Come and make a Christingle at Candlemas' at St. Catherine's	10.00am 3.00-4.30pm
2 Feb	Bible Study and Fellowship Group at St. Francis	10.30am-noon
4 Feb	Mid week Communion at St. Francis <i>Then the community support 'drop-in'</i>	10.00am 10.30am-noon
5 Feb	Foodbank at St. Francis Linford Womens' Institute at St. Francis	11.00am-1pm 2.00-4.00pm
8 Feb	2nd Sunday before Lent Holy Communion at St. Catherine's Service of Holy Baptism at St. Catherine's	10.00am 2pm
11 Feb	Morning Prayer at St. Francis <i>Then the community support 'drop-in'</i>	10.00am 10.30am-noon
12 Feb	Foodbank at St. Francis	11.00am-1pm
14 Feb	'Start Thurrock' Basket Weaving Workshop at St Catherine's	12.30-3.30pm
15 Feb	Sunday next before Lent 'Worshipping Together' at St. Catherine's Café Communion at St. Francis	10.00am 3.30pm
18 Feb	Ash Wednesday Mid-week Communion and 'Imposition of ashes' at St. Francis <i>Then the community support 'drop-in'</i>	10.00am 10.30am-noon
19 Feb	Foodbank at St. Francis	11.00am-1pm
22 Feb	1st Sunday of Lent Holy communion service at St. Catherine's	10.00am
23 Feb	Bible Study and Fellowship Group at St. Francis	10.30am-noon
25 Feb	Morning Prayer at St. Francis <i>Then the community support 'drop-in'</i>	10.00am 10.30am-noon
26 Feb	Foodbank at St. Francis	11.00am-1pm

'Life Events' during January

Baptism

11 January Finn and Theo Baker

Weddings

None

Funeral

None

Committal of Ashes

None

The January Deanery Synod meeting

The Thurrock Deanery Synod met at St. Margaret's, Stanford le Hope on the evening of 14th January and had as its main agenda item a conversation with the Bishop of Bradwell, the Venerable Adam Atkinson and the Archdeacon of Southend, the Venerable Dr. Sue Lucas about the future of sustainable ministry in the Deanery.

The meeting opened promptly at 6pm with a service of Holy Communion presided over by the Bishop and this was followed by refreshments with the main business starting at 7.30pm.

The Bishop and Archdeacon explained, in a joint presentation, that the shape of ministry would have to change in the next few years. There were two main drivers; the fact that the parishes in the deanery are unable to raise sufficient funds to pay for the current number of stipendiary (paid) clergy and the fact that more clergy are leaving on retirement than are being newly ordained. These two factors inevitably lead to a position where the number of priests in the deanery will need to reduce and a plan was needed to find a workable solution.

Archdeacon Sue told synod that this was not a unique situation in that two other deaneries in the diocese had already had to make similar plans and it was clear that other areas of the Diocese would need to follow a similar path if sustainable ministry was to be maintained. This meeting was to be seen as the start of a process to develop a plan for the Thurrock deanery and she and the bishop were looking to work with a small group of 'the willing' from the deanery to work with them



If you would like to support the work of the parish and the churches of St. Catherine and St. Francis, this 'QR' code will take you to our 'Give A Little' donation page.

The Priest in charge

REVD. MICHÈLE MARSHALL

The Rectory

24, Somerset Road, Linford

Stanford-le-Hope

Essex, SS17 0QA.

Telephone: 01375 671754

email: mjmarshall@fastmail.co.uk

The Usual Service Pattern

- ◆ 1st, 2nd & 4th Sunday's, 10am at St. Catherine's, Holy Communion
- ◆ 3rd Sunday's, 10am at St. Catherine's, Family Service and at 3.30pm at St. Francis, a service of Café style Holy Communion.
- ◆ 5th Sundays a joint service with the Linford Methodist congregation

Wednesdays 10.00 a.m. at St. Francis 1st of the month Holy Communion,
other Wednesdays, Morning Prayer

For Baptisms, Weddings or Funerals please contact Revd. Michèle Marshall

Our Churchwardens

CHRIS FORD T: 01375-675863

E:- chris.pewtal@outlook.com

LES SCHWAR T: 07758-461380

E:- leslie.bowles2@gmail.com

PEWTALK Editor

Chris Ford

44, Northumberland Road
Linford, SS17 0PU

T: 01375 675863

E: pewtalk@talktalk.net

St. Francis Centre

The centre is available for hire at very reasonable rates. To discuss availability please contact Sheila King at:-

sheila.king9987@gmail.com

Copy Dates for Pewtalk

20th February 2026

22nd March 2026

22nd April 2026