

PEWTALK

£1

January 2025

Creator of the heavens,
who led the Magi by a star
to worship the Christ-child:
guide and sustain us, that
we may find our journey's end
in Jesus Christ our Lord.



EAST & WEST TILBURY AND LINFORD PARISH MAGAZINE

Parish web site: www.stcatherinesthurrock.org.uk

BITs AnD PiECES

100 Club - Sheila and I were on Holiday in early December so unfortunately we missed the Christmas Fayre. The 100 Club draw for £50 was made during the Fayre and Kathy Bird, a previous Churchwarden, was the winner. Kathy and family have supported the 100 Club for many years so a major prize was about time and well deserved. I hope that it will help a little at this expensive time of year. We still have a second £50 draw next year so if you have yet to join please get in touch.

Happy New Year. *Norman*

The 'poppy' collection at St. Catherine's and at the the Bata memorial raised a total of £126.67 as acknowledged on the Royal British Legion receipt.

Recently the Tesco Bank sent out information about 'digital wallet' fraud. Here is their advice:-

Many of us are now using a digital wallet app (like Google Pay or Apple Pay) to securely store our credit cards on a 'phone or wearable device. This is a safe and easy way to pay when you use your own device.

We'll help you stay ahead of the latest scams if you're already using a digital wallet, or are setting one up for the first time.

Stay safe in two simple steps

When you add your card details to a digital wallet, your card provider will send you a one-time passcode (by text or email) to check it's you.

1. *Never share this passcode with anyone*

else. Your card provider will never ask you to do this.

2. *If you ever receive an unexpected one-time passcode, contact your card provider right away.*

The Children's Society – during the Scouts & Guide group Carol Service and at the Crib Service the cash collection totaled **£110**. With this donation we were able to purchase from the 'Give Hope' store a **winter coat, a hygiene & health kit, a keep warm bundle, books, a mindfulness session and education supplies**. These gifts will be given to a child in England on your behalf so that they can hold on to hope. June Schroeder is our Children's Society contact and has collecting boxes if you would like to support their work.

Looking back - and forwards- A man had spent many years as a drunkard and a layabout. But through the Salvation Army, he turned to God, and his life gradually changed. He joined a local church, and became known for his honest, if unusual, prayers.

As the New Year dawned, he stood up in church and prayed: "Lord, we're not what we wanna be, we're not what we oughta be, and we're not what we're gonna be – but thanks to You, Jesus, we're not what we used to be!"

And as we enter the New Year please remember that our service pattern at St. Catherine's and St. Francis is changing. The details are set out on the back page of this issue of *Pewtalk*.

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

Have you ever wondered when exactly the 'Twelve Days of Christmas' take place?

We often sing the much loved Carol during the Christmas season but we may not give much thought to its title or its meaning.

Well, depending on when you read your copy of the January Pewtalk we may still be travelling through the Twelve Days. They begin on Christmas Day, 25th December and conclude on 5th January, counting first and last. The evening of the last day is Twelfth Night or Epiphany Eve, the next morning 6th January being Epiphany.

The original 12 days of Christmas were a series of religious feast days celebrated as part of the Roman Catholic religion in medieval and Tudor England. There were 12 days of religious celebrations, feasting and entertainment. The 12 days included: Christmas Day, The Feast of St Stephen (26th Dec), The Feast of St John (27th Dec), Feast of the Holy Innocents (28th Dec), New Years Eve (31st Dec), New Year's Day (1st Jan) and Twelfth Night (5th Jan). The celebrations over this time would have included special meals, games and dancing and the singing of Christmas songs and carols.

And speaking of Carols - 'The Twelve Days of Christmas' is believed by some to have originally served as a tool to teach children the Christian faith during a time of persecution when practising Catholicism openly was restricted in England. Each of the 12 gifts in the song represents an aspect of the Christian faith. Working backwards:

The **'twelve drummers drumming'** represent the twelve points of doctrine in the Apostles Creed.

The **'eleven pipers piping'** signify the eleven faithful apostles who continued to spread the Gospel after Judas's betrayal.

The **'ten Lords a-leaping'** represent the Ten Commandments given to Moses on Mount Sinai.

The **'nine ladies dancing'** symbolize the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

The **'eight maids a-milking'** refer to the eight beatitudes taught by Jesus during the Sermon on the Mount.

The **'seven swans a-swimming'** signify the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit: wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord.

The **'six geese a-laying'** represent the six days of creation.

The **'five gold rings'** represent the first five books of the Old Testament, also known as the Pentateuch or the Torah.

The **'four calling birds'** represent the four Gospels – Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

The **'three French hens'** symbolize the theological virtues of faith, hope and charity (love).

The **'two turtle doves'** represent the Old and New Testaments of the Bible.

And the **'partridge in a pear tree'** ~ symbolizes the ultimate gift of Jesus Christ, representing God's love for us. The partridge is a bird known for its self sacrifice as it protects its young from predators and the pear tree a symbol of the cross on which Jesus died.

So, the 'Twelve Days of Christmas' remind us that the joy of Christmas is not confined to a single day but is a journey of faith, hope and love that lasts throughout the year and beyond.

The very last Festival of the Christmas season is **Candlemas on the 2nd February**. On this date we will be holding a **'Come and Make a Christingle at Candlemas'** workshop and service at **3pm at St Catherine's**. Each child attending will make their own Christingle and be reminded of what the orange, the red ribbon, the fruits and sweets and the candle represent.

The light of Christmas stretches beyond the 25th December and helps us travel towards Lent and Easter where the story of God's love continues.

As we begin another New Year I pray that you may you know God's love, peace, hope and joy in the year ahead.

Take care, stay safe and Every Blessing for 2025,

Revd. Michèle

Christmas at St. Catherine's and St. Francis

The Christmas services at both of our churches were varied in many ways.

Carol services for the East Tilbury Scout and Guiding groups were held at St. Francis for some of the Beavers and at St. Catherine's for the East Tilbury Scout and Guiding group Carol service on the 16th December which was the first time since COVID-19 pandemic. It was so good to be back with a pleasing 39 parents (adults) and 28 children in the congregation. The service finished with mince pies and hot chocolate. The East Tilbury Scout and Guide group thanked Revd. Michèle for leading the service, our organist Robin, for the music, and Val and Les Schwar, for their support on the night.

On the previous Sunday (the 15th) we had our annual 'Carols and Candlelight' service with the Grays Town Band providing accompaniment for most of the carols. The congregation were in good voice and enjoyed the mince pies and mulled wine after the service.



The following Wednesday the Community drop-in had their opportunity to enjoy the singing of carols in a very relaxed atmosphere and were able to enjoy their mince pies with their usual tea or coffee. It was good to see our 'regulars' joined by some who had simply come to enjoy this start to their Christmas.

There were two services on Christmas Eve. Having had an empty stable in the church for the Advent season with the various Christmas characters on their journey to Bethlehem at various locations around the church, the crib service was the time for them all to arrive. During the service the children 'of all ages' took their turn to bring Mary, Joseph, their donkey, the shepherds, the wise men and all their animals and the baby Jesus to the stable where they were arranged to produce the complete scene.



Later in the day, at 11.30pm to be precise, we had our first Holy Communion of Christmas.

Our final Christmas celebration was our 10am Family Communion service on Christmas morning where the children in the congregation provided the reading and the percussion accompaniment to our carols.

Although that may have completed our traditional Christmas programme, Revd. Michèle reminds us that the Church's Christmas season continues until Candlemas on the 2nd February 2025 when we will be having our Christingle workshop at 3pm.



Did You Know?

'Silent Night' one of the best loved Christmas carols, with a haunting tune, was written as an emergency stop gap. A little village Church in Germany had problems with the organ. Mice had done such damage to the instrument that the special music planned for Christmas Day could not be used. A new carol was written in haste. No one in the Church could have guessed that it would be sung around the world with it's message of reverence and peace.

Norman

The Christmas Fayre - Chris Ford

This year our Christmas Fayre was held on Saturday 7th December which just happened to be during named storm Darragh. Our trusty volunteers had been busy setting things up on the previous Thursday and Friday and all was set to welcome visitors. On the day of the Fayre I got a telephone call at 7am from Iris Crane to tell me that there was a power cut in the village - a great start to the day!



Fortunately the power was restored by 07.30am but we still had huge concerns that, with the storm raging, we would have few or no visitors. As 10am approached many of us were thinking that we would be packing everything up shortly but how wrong we were!

Despite the weather there was a fairly continuous foot fall, we had to send out for more bacon and the tombola sold out! Thanks to all our stall holders and visitors in the course of the 4 hrs and with lots conversations and 'catching up' we raised over £1,100 - a great result all round.

Deaths by accident are on the rise

Are too many of us becoming clumsy or careless? Accident-related deaths have soared by 42 per cent in the last decade with more than 20,000 people killed each year.

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) warns that we are "substantially more likely" to suffer a serious accident than 20 years ago. Data from the United Kingdom shows that Accidental deaths are the top cause of preventable death for people under 40, and more than half of all fatal accidents take place in our own homes.

More than half of accidental deaths are the results of falling. A quarter are from accidental poisoning, and 7 per cent are due to a road-traffic or transport-related accident.

Accidents cost the UK almost £12 billion every year – £6 billion in NHS care and £5.9 billion in lost working days. The statistics are awesome:

More than 740,000 people were admitted to hospital after an accident in 2022/23.

More than 4.4 million bed days were used to treat patients with accident-related injuries in England alone last year, costing the NHS an estimated £4.6 billion.

Accidents led to about seven million A & E visits in the UK last year, costing a further £613 million

All in all, accidents cost the NHS about £6 billion each year.

Becky Hickman, the chief executive of RoSPA, says: "The UK is facing an accident crisis. Increasing numbers of accidents are choking the UK economy and engulfing the NHS.

"We must take action now to stop further preventable deaths and serious injuries – accidents are avoidable and do not need to happen."

Left out in the cold

A member of a certain church, who previously had been attending services each week, stopped going.

After a few weeks, the minister decided to visit him. It was a chilly evening. The minister found the man at home alone, sitting before a blazing fire. Guessing the reason for his minister's visit, the man welcomed him, led him to a big chair near the fireplace and waited. The minister made himself comfortable but said nothing. In the grave silence, he contemplated the play of the flames around the burning logs.

After some minutes, the minister took the fire tongs, carefully picked up a brightly burning ember and placed it to one side of the hearth all alone. Then he sat back in his chair, still silent. The host watched all this in quiet fascination.

As the one lone ember's flame diminished, there was a momentary glow and then its fire was no more. Soon it was cold and dead and dark.

Not a word had been spoken since the initial greeting. The two men sat on in reflective silence.

A little while later, just before the minister was ready to leave, he picked up the cold, dead ember and placed it back in the middle of the fire. Immediately it began to glow once more with the light and warmth of the burning coals around it.

As the minister reached the door to leave, his host said, "Thank you so much for your visit and especially for the fiery sermon. I shall be back in church next Sunday."

New year Reading - Kim Ford

Here are some reading suggestions for 2025 from my favourite books of 2024 and before:-

A Memoir of My Former Life by Hilary Mantel

The Year of the Runaways by Sunjeev Sahota

Demon Copperhead by Barbara Kingsolver

Old God's Time by Sebastian Barry

The Gallows Pole by Benjamin Myers

The Whale Theatre by Joanna Quinn

Trespasses by Louise Kennedy

The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry by Rachel Joyce

For Thy Great Pain Have Mercy On My Little Pain by Victoria MacKenzie

Hamnet by Maggie O'farrell

The History of Bees by Maja Lunde

Small Things Like These by Claire Keegan

So there you are, one for each month of the year!

Remember the 'Millennium Bug'? By Tim Lenton

It was 25 years ago, on 1st January 2000, that the calendar switched over to the year 2000, with no major computer problems from the Y2K "Millennium Bug".

The Y2K bug was a computer flaw involving software and hardware that might have caused problems when dealing with dates beyond 31st December, 1999. This was because, for storage reasons, there had been a practice of using two figures for dates – for instance 78 instead of 1978. It was therefore feared that 00 for 2000 might be interpreted as 1900, with chaos resulting in the power industry, transportation or anywhere that computers were critical.

When this potential problem was recognised – surprisingly late, in the mid-1990s – a great deal of money was poured into preventing it from happening, particularly by countries like the USA and Australia, as well as the UK.

Other countries, such as Russia, South Korea and Italy, spent almost nothing on the problem. Ironically, they suffered no more in the end than those who invested many millions, because it turned out that there were very few difficulties.

A nuclear energy facility in Japan experienced failure in its radiation equipment, but backup facilities ensured there was no danger. Missile launches were detected in Russia and attributed to the Y2K bug, but the launches had been planned as part of Russia's conflict in Chechnya.

Because of the lack of disastrous outcomes, many people dismissed the Y2K bug as a hoax or an end-of-the-world cult. A small number of fundamentalist Christians had been interpreting the whole issue as apocalyptic, involving the breakdown of society, the Last Days and the subsequent Second Coming.

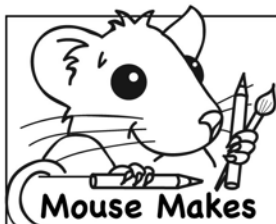
Similar computer problems had been predicted for other years, for similar but obviously not identical reasons. They include 1975, 1999, 2010, 2022 and – wait for it – 2038.

I have to say that I remember this very well, being involved in the I.T. Infrastructure of a major global logistics company at the time. In fact I made a couple of trips to Brazil to check on the preparedness of an organisation we were in the process of buying.....Ed

Buckingham Palace opens its front gates to tourists

Next time you are in London, you can pop into Buckingham Palace. And for the first time, starting this month (January) tourists visiting the iconic building will be welcomed to walk in through the front gates and then proceed across the famous forecourt.

It is part of the King's vision to give people greater access to Buckingham Palace. You can also now book a 90-minute guided tour, from January to May, to have a more in-depth look at the history of the rooms in the East Wing. For more information: <https://www.buckinghampalace.co.uk/buckingham-palace-tours.php>



After Jesus was born in Bethlehem, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem looking for the child born to be king of the Jews. They had seen his star and had come to worship him. King Herod was troubled so met with the wise men to tell them to let him know when they found him.



J E W S
M A R Y
W S O N
O T N A




When they saw the star rest over where Jesus was they rejoiced and gave him three special gifts. God warned the wise men in a dream not to go back to Herod so they went home by another way.

How many other words can you make from:
EPIPHANY

C H I L D K H M Y R R H
F R A N K I N C E N C E
J O Y A N G E L R H
G A E G Y P T P

EPIPHANY is the Greek word for **MANIFEST** which means 'to show'. God shows us who He is through His son Jesus Christ.

Herod wanted to destroy Jesus, but God told Joseph to flee to Egypt to be safe.
Where did Jesus finally grow up?


READ
the story of the wise men in *Matthew 2:1-23*

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

E G O D
B O R N
F L E E
L D G E



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

2025

PARISH DIARY FOR JANUARY

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 Jan	New Year's Day - St. Francis closed	
2 Jan	Foodbank at St. Francis	11.00am-1pm
3 Jan	Funeral of Shirley Smith-Allen at St. Catherine's	10.00am
5 Jan	Epiphany	
	Holy Communion at St. Catherine's	10.00am
6 Jan	P.C.C. Meeting at St. Francis	2.00pm
8 Jan	Mid-week Communion at St. Francis	10.00am
	<i>Then the community support 'drop-in'</i>	10.30am-noon
9 Jan	Foodbank at St. Francis	11.00am-1pm
12 Jan	1st Sunday of Epiphany - Baptism of Christ	
	Holy Communion at St. Catherine's	10.00am
13 Jan	Bible study and Fellowship Group at St. Francis - all welcome	10.30am-noon
15 Jan	Morning Prayer at St. Francis	10.00am
	<i>Then the community support 'drop-in'</i>	10.30am-noon
16 Jan	Foodbank at St. Francis	11.00am-1pm
19 Jan	2nd Sunday of Epiphany	
	Worshipping Together Family Service at St. Catherine's	10.00am
22 Jan	Morning Prayer at St. Francis	10.00am
	<i>Then the community support 'drop-in'</i>	10.30am-noon
23 Jan	Foodbank at St. Francis	11.00am-1pm
26 Jan	3rd Sunday of Epiphany	
	Holy Communion at St. Catherine's	10.00am
27 Jan	Bible study and Fellowship Group at St. Francis - all welcome	10.30am-noon
29 Jan	Morning Prayer at St. Francis	10.00am
	<i>Then the community support 'drop-in'</i>	10.30am-noon
30 Jan	Foodbank at St. Francis	11.00am-1pm
2 Feb	Candlemas	
	Holy Communion at St. Catherine's	10.00am
	'Come and Make a Christingle' at St. Catherine's	3.00pm

Life Events during November

Baptism

1 December Maison David Brain

Weddings

None

Committal of ashes

1 December Stella Morgan

17 December Mary Thomas

Funeral

4 December Elizabeth Bannister

19 December Joy Hunt

20 December Leonard Hart

A message from the Thurrock fostering and adoption team



Once again we wondered if you'd be able to help us to promote the huge need for more people to consider fostering with Thurrock Council. Now is the time when the most vulnerable of children are finding things the most difficult, and we really do need more people to come forward and to

consider becoming Foster Carers for this important sector in our communities.

We have two Microsoft Teams online information events every month for anybody who may want to know more about fostering and what's involved. People can join us, where there will be a presentation along with Q&A session. They just need to email our team email address; fostering.adoption@thurrock.gov.uk or give us a call on 0800 652 1256.

For more information on fostering or to enquire about fostering please visit our website thurrock.gov.uk/fostering

Even if we are unable to foster personally, we can pass on the request for help to others and thereby spread the message.....Ed



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

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Stanford-le-Hope

Essex, SS17 0QA.

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email: mjmarshall@fastmail.co.uk

The Usual Service Pattern -from January

- ◆ 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

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St. Francis Centre

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

sheila.kingbookings@outlook.com

Copy Dates for Pewtalk

20th December 2024

20th January 2025

20th February 2025