

THE PARISH OF EAST and WEST TILBURY

and LINFORD

THE REPORT OF

THE WORK & ACTIVITIES

of the PARISH

2018

**Our Church's *PURPOSE* is to *Worship* God,
and to *grow* through developing as disciples, bringing other
members of God's family into our Church, and demonstrating
God's love and care.**

Churchwardens' report for the year ended 31st December 2018

2018 and the interregnum continues. The vacancy for a Priest in Charge has been advertised but unfortunately there have not been any applications. However, it has been a busy and interesting year and life and worship at St. Catherine's and St. Francis have continued with the support of the congregation. Colin continued to work hard to make sure all our services were covered by visiting clergy.

In May after several meetings between the Churchwardens, the Rural Dean and the Venerable Mike Lodge, Archdeacon of Southend it was decided that the Archdeacon would approach Rev'd Barry Johnson who had taken several services for us during the interregnum to take the role of Lead Minister. So although the Parish is still in interregnum Barry now takes most of the services at St Catherine's and St Francis and is available to advise the wardens and the PCC. We are immensely grateful to him for the support he is giving to the Parish.

The Family Service continues to be on the first Sunday of every month and in 2018 the service has had some very interesting guest speakers including Julie Hobby of the London Tilbury Seafarers' Centre and Joanne Phillips from St. Luke's who told us about the work of the Hospice. The congregation included mothers and children who attend this Service in particular. It was hoped that the Family Service would encourage people to find out more about the Christian faith and going forward the plan is to include the Sunday School children in the service. The numbers of people attending the Wednesday morning services at St Francis and the Drop-Ins afterwards continue to grow. The Rogation services which includes a procession around West Tilbury in the company of Grays Town Band was a huge success. We were joined by the congregation of the "Banner of Praise Ministries International" with their Pastor Frank Osagie who hold their service in West Tilbury Village Hall. We ladies who provide tea and cake after the service were going through the cupboards looking for every cup, saucer and plate we could find and madly counting cakes, happily there turned out to be plenty for everyone.

During the year the Queen approved the nomination of Dr John Perumbalath to be Bishop of Bradwell. We were very fortunate to have him officiate at our Communion Service at St Catherine's in September. He stayed for coffee after the service and chatted with the congregation. The Spring of 2018 was a period of sunshine and showers which meant the grass in the churchyard was growing like mad. Colin was unable to make contact with the Community Payback Team who have in recent years come in and spent time cutting grass and so was struggling to

keep the whole area cut. This led to some complaints on Facebook. It was pointed out that all the grass cutting is done by volunteers and if people are unhappy about the long grass in the churchyard perhaps they should come and help and they did. This resulted in a number of people from the parish coming along on our Open Days and assisting Colin and our team of volunteers. We for our part made sure they were offered tea or coffee and cakes.

Just before Christmas some members of the congregation were at East Tilbury railway station for the early morning commute to distribute Christmas cards and "breakfast" bars to the commuters and some of the drivers waiting at the level crossing from time to time. This seemed to be much appreciated and surprised many of the "customers".

Finally a grant application is being written to try to raise funding for exterior work to St. Catherine's. The work needed was outlined in the 2016 Quinquennial report and the later Condition Survey conducted by the Church's inspecting architect. Large areas in the stonework in the windows is decayed and significant areas of the flint-rubble walls need re-pointing. It is hoped the grant application will be sent in during January 2019.

As always we move into the new year with optimism. The rest of this report outlines the life and work of the parish.

Colin Strong and Sue Spiers

Church Attendance

There are 66 parishioners on the Church Electoral Roll, 17 are not resident within the parish. The average Sunday worship attendance, counted during October 2018, was 28 adults and 2 children, this number increased at festivals and for the St. Cedd weekend when 34 adults and 5 Children attended. The number attending the weekly communion service is regularly around 19.

Gift Aid and Planned Giving 2018

The Gift Aid Scheme allows the parish to claim 25% on all donations from U.K. Taxpayers. In addition, from 2014 HMRC allows us claim for collections in Church and for donations including ingredients for cakes / wool for knitted items etc. and for services funded by parishioners. In accordance with the advice of the examiner of accounts we have claimed for donations at St. Francis centre coffee mornings. Planned Giving has increased by 5% in 2018. We have 27 Individuals / Families

who give generously and regularly through the envelope scheme or by direct debit. Loose collections at services and Parochial Fees are down because of a reduction in the number of services particularly weddings. I am confident that over a full year our lovely, warm and refurbished Church will be used more by the local community and our financial position will improve. The majority of the regular givers pay tax and have filled in the required declaration. If you have yet to fill in the required declaration please let me know, Tax thresholds have risen and if you are no longer pay tax please make sure that we stop claiming tax relief in your name. Thank you to all for your continued and generous support of the work of the Parish.

Norman

The St. Francis Centre

Apart from its use for church activities we have got a lot of regular booking for the hall, supporting the local community. The hall is in use almost every day. We have bookings on Monday from 9.30 - 12.30 and 6.30 to 8 pm, on Tuesdays from 10am to 7pm, on Wednesday from 10 - 12 and 5.30 - 7.3-pm and on Thursdays from 10.30am - 1pm and 7.30 - 9.30pm. We are currently looking at a new booking for Friday between 10am and 1pm. In September we, once again, provided the venue for a local McMillan nurse's coffee morning which was very well supported.

The various activities include dancing and karate classes for children, our local Women's Institute, craft and sewing groups and a regular meeting place for the "Linford ladies".

In addition we have had several "one off" bookings for Church members and our various social events. So things continue to go well.

The income generated from the bookings allow us to keep the premises in good order and during the year the complete outside of the building was repainted.

Patricia Strong (Bookings Secretary)

Thurrock Foodbank at the St Francis Centre

The parish continue to support the Thurrock foodbank which exists to help people in Thurrock who find themselves in a crisis situation, by:-

- Regularly donating food
- Making cash contributions through our donation "buckets"
- Operating a food distribution centre at St. Francis in Linford
- Assisting with supermarket collections

St. Catherine's also provided the venue for the foodbank's fundraising "afternoon tea" which was very successful.

The Linford distribution centre is officially open on a Thursday morning between 11am and 1pm but we have also provided food on a Wednesday morning during the "drop in" session if clients have arrived with the relevant food voucher. We also work closely with Rachel Farmer (who took over from Samson Obaduju), our Local Area Coordinator by providing a friendly environment for some of our lonely and more vulnerable residents. Although this is not strictly a "foodbank" facility it is clearly part of our Christian ethos.

Chris Ford

The Wednesday "Drop-In"

After our Wednesday service of Holy Communion at the St. Francis centre the hall is swiftly transformed into a coffee shop. While some of the worshippers remain they are joined by a number of other local residents. At these weekly meetings information and stories are exchanged, technical advice is given regarding computers, mobile 'phones etc. and we also have a very well used book exchange. All are welcome and the event is funded by the donations of the visitors. Rachel Farmer, our Local Area Coordinator, also uses this time to meet with her clients.

Chris Ford

St. Catherine's Flowers

Flower arranging in St Catherine's always a pleasure not a chore but an inspiration to achieve an art form with flowers.

The year starts in January, but the flowers and decorations are usually okay for a couple of weeks into the New Year until Epiphany when decorations are taken out. Depending on when lent falls we have a few weeks of general flowers.

Lent often falls in February / March and we have no flowers in church during these six weeks until Easter.

The Season of Easter and the Church was decorated with many Lilies and spring Flowers. The Lilies are paid for by members of the congregation in memory of loved ones. Thank you to Carol and John Bell who arrange the Easter Garden on the tomb. This always depicts the Easter Garden.

Flowers are always put into Church for our weekly Services and are economically used. Festivals are noted by different colours in the arrangements.

We did have a few weddings during the year. Flowers or colours in the arrangements were often requested by the bride.

Church was decorated for Harvest with Autumn colours and a small amount of produce.

November brings Remembrance and Poppies are arranged.

December brings the Start of Advent and looking forward to the Christmas arrangements and decorations and we ask for ideas from the congregation. Chris and Kim arranged to get the tree and also put it up and, with help from some of the children, dressed it with Lights and Baubles. The Church was decorated on Saturday 15th December ready for our Carol Service on Sunday 16th with Grays Town Band in attendance as is our tradition.

I would like to thank Sue Spiers and Kathy Bird for all their help and ideas. Thank you also goes to John and Gina that lets me trim their bushes for greenery.

Pam Painter

SOCIAL COMMITTEE 2018

The Committee met six times during 2018

We started our events in 2018 with our Shrove Tuesday Pancake Social Evening

Lent Lunches were held in February and March and with the pancake event, were in support of the Bishop's Lent Appeal. This year these were held at St. Catherine's after Sunday Service and were reasonably well attended by congregation and friends from the Methodist.

Our Annual Spring Cake Sale at St. Francis Centre was a successful event. This is one of our outreaches in the Linford Community and raises funds for the Church. On the Saturday of the May Bank Holiday we held a Music Concert Arranged by Geraldine. This was a great success and it has been agreed to have another, possibly in 2019. This raised substantial funds for St Catherine's

May 6th saw The Rogation Service and procession around, West Tilbury, "beating the bounds". We were joined by friends of Grays Town Band who supplied the Music accompaniment, after which tea and cakes were served at West Tilbury Village Hall where we were joined by some villagers from the West Tilbury also we were joined by some of the Church people that meet in the village hall, they also joined us for tea. This was a pleasant afternoon and well attended.

The fete took place at St Catherine's on Saturday 22nd June, this was a little disappointing with attendance down also the weather was a little bit against our normal outside pitches in the Church grounds. The Grays town Band played under the tree but did not have many people listening as it was a little bit cool to sit with there cup of tea. We had changed the date and day so we did not clash with Horndon Feast and Fare.

Quiz nights were arranged in April and October these were both an outstanding success and substantial funds were raised for Church Funds. Thank you must go to Geraldine and her family for these events.

The Picnic was arranged for St. Catherine's and took place on 19th August and was enjoy by those who attended.

The harvest supper took place in the St. Francis Centre on the 7th October. Unfortunately numbers were low, but those who participated enjoyed the wonderful food that was on the menu.

The “St. Cedd” and open weekend at St. Catherine’s was when we again opened the Church on Saturday and Sunday for tea, cakes and activities put on by some members of the Congregation, it was busy on the Sunday and a number stayed for the Celtic evening service. On reviewing this weekend of activities it was suggested in 2019 we would only open on the Sunday Afternoon.

Last but not least, our main fund raiser of the year the Bazaar. This took place on 1st December at St. Catherine’s between 11am and 2pm. This seemed to be a reasonable result but will still need a lot more footfall to increase our revenue from this event. We also require more ideas and stalls to interest our customers and make them stay longer for a cup of tea/coffee and chat and possible bacon butty. More advertising to be thought about for future events. It was notable that there were several other Bazaars and Fares on that day in the area.

Mince pies and mulled wine were supplied at the Christmas Carol Services at St. Catherine’s and St. Francis.

Its seems to me that we as a parish we have had quiet a busy social calendar in 2018

I hope that I have not left anything out of my report on behalf of the Social Committee.

Thank you all for taking part and hope you will enjoy our forthcoming programme for 2019.

With many Blessings.

Pam Painter.

Pewtalk and Parish Communications

“Pewtalk”, our monthly parish magazine continued to be published during the year. 115 copies are printed monthly, with 80+ copies being delivered to subscribers in the parish by our band of dedicated distributors. The remainder are available at St. Catherine’s and St. Francis for visitors to pick up.

The magazine consists of contributions from the editor, parishioners and articles from many other sources including the Chelmsford

Diocese and “Parish Pump” (a resource for parish magazines) that we subscribe to. It includes our monthly calendar of events. It is also available on the parish website and we know from feedback that it is also accessed from there.

The contributors and distributors make the magazine possible and we thank them for their support. From time to time we produce leaflets for visitors to St. Catherine’s. We also produce a weekly newsletter, maintain our website (www.stcatherinesthurrock.org.uk) and are on the Church of England’s website - “A Church Near You” - which is frequently accessed by people wanting to contact the parish and church.

Chris Ford (Pewtalk editor)

Sunday School

During the year we continued with our Sunday School meeting once a month when a sufficient number of children are available. With the current age profile of the congregation this tends to be grandchildren and friends. The programme is based on the Bible Society’s “Roots” resource with a mixture of craft and bible teaching. We are very grateful to Kim for her efforts with this project. If you would like to know more, please contact Kim Ford.

Links with other churches

We endeavour to work with the Linford Methodist church when and where we can. Some of our congregation, together with the Methodists and others, are involved with the “Open the Book” project at the Woodside Primary Academy in Grays

We invite them to join with us in some of our services, particularly on Remembrance Sunday and our Carol services, and we invite each other to our social and fundraising events. We also have a shared monthly bible study and joint Lent group.

Deanery Synod Report for 2018/19

Kim Ford and Sue Spiers are our elected Deanery Synod representatives. There were four meetings of the Synod during the year.

17th May 2018 at St. Francis Linford

Nathan Whitehead, Diocesan Pastoral Secretary spoke about the General Data Protection Regulation which came into effect in May. This was the open part of the meeting and was attended by several non-members of the Synod as these regulations affect all Parishes. Units of Ministry and Mission – Tara felt that as it is intended that the Mardyke Team would form one of the deanery's units they could proceed to be formally commissioned. The Greater Grays Team are working together but there are still some points which need settling. It was announced that the Consecration of the new Bishop of Bradwell would take place in St Paul's Cathedral on Tuesday the 3rd July. Pamela Kirby had given notice that she had decided not to seek re-election as Deanery Secretary. Darren asked if anyone wishes to undertake the role to contact him.

4th July at St. Nicholas South Ockenden

Revd Canon Hugh Dibbens asked the meeting to explore the strategic role of seniors. "Calling all Seniors". Hugh brought along two "senior" people who were playing an important role in their parishes. One was part of a team of Street Pastors who were on the streets late at night helping where necessary people leaving night clubs and other premises. The other had started a Messy Church with a team of mainly other 'Seniors'. Hugh has devised a course of five sessions exploring the strategic role of Seniors in the work of Evangelism. An open meeting was to be held at St. Peter and St. Paul in Grays on the 17th September which would give an opportunity to meet the new Bishop of Bradwell. Four new Deacons would be ordained in September

23rd October at St. Mary's Little Thurrock

The first part of the evening consisted of a presentation by Ben Selfe, Essex Regional Coordinator of Christian Aid. Ben told us there are some 60 million displaced persons or refugees in our world at this current time. 40 million are displaced in their own countries. Christian Aid started helping refugees after World War 2. He explained Christian Aid encouraged support in Giving – Acting – Praying. Giving encompasses Christian Aid Week but also Community partnerships. Thurrock does not currently have a Christian Aid district

co-ordinator and we were asked to take this back to our parishes to try to find a volunteer.

Transforming Presence was discussed and the meeting was reminded that Thurrock was still required to lose three stipendiary clergy posts by 2025

A recent meeting with Mark Spraggins from the Chelmsford Diocesan Board of Finance had created much apprehension with regard to the financial aspect of MMU formation.

31st January at St. Catherine's East Tilbury

Chris and Kim Ford talked to the meeting about the setting up of Thurrock Foodbank. They explained the need for warehousing and the quantity of food needed to begin a Foodbank. After food is collected it is taken to the warehouse and sorted into difference size boxes for single people, couples, small families and large families. The boxes then need to be distributed to the Foodbank Centres. It was decided that in the Thurrock area there needed to be centres all across the area and they open on different days so that there is food available 5 days a week. Foodbanks were set up to help people at times of crisis in their lives. Sadly the need for Foodbanks seems to be growing. The special thing about Foodbanks is that the food is given by members of the community to help others in need at a difficult time in their lives. In Thurrock there is only one paid member of staff all the rest are volunteers.

Transforming Presence, a Cafe has been arranged for the 2nd March at St. Cedds. It is hoped people will go along to hear more about ministry.

There is still a vacancy for a Deanery Secretary!

Sue Spiers

