

**The Parish of East & West Tilbury & Linford  
SAINT CATHERINE'S EAST TILBURY  
SAINT FRANCIS LINFORD**

**Parish Newsletter for the week beginning  
Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2023 – 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent**

*A prayer for the people of the Holy Land  
Published by The Archbishop of Canterbury*

God of Compassion and Justice,  
We cry out to you for all who suffer in the Holy Land today.

For your precious children, Israelis and Palestinians,  
Traumatised in fear for their lives.

For the families of the bereaved,

For those who have seen images they will never forget,  
For those anxiously waiting for news, despairing with each passing day.

For young men and women, heading into combat, bearing the burden of what  
others have done and what they will be asked to do.

For civilians in Israel, Gaza and the West Bank, that they would be protected  
and that every life would count and be cherished and remembered.

For the wounded, and those facing a lifetime of scars, for those desperately  
seeking medical treatment where there is none.

For medical and emergency personnel,  
risking their own lives to save those of others.

For those who cannot see anything but rage and violence,  
that you would surprise them with mercy,

and turn their hearts towards kindness for their fellow human beings.

For people of peace, whose imagination is large enough to conceive of a  
different way, that they may speak, and act, and be heard.

Mighty and caring God, you promised that one day, swords will be beaten into  
ploughshares, meet us in our distress, and bring peace upon this troubled land.

**Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer. Amen.**

**Collect for today:** Almighty God, as your kingdom dawns, turn us from the darkness of sin to the light of holiness, that we may be ready to meet you in our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

## BIBLE READINGS FOR THIS WEEK

### Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> December– 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 64:1-9 (OT 704) & 1 Corinthians 1:3-9 (NT 162) & Mark 13:24-end (NT 48)

**Monday 4<sup>th</sup> December** – Isaiah 25:1-9 & Matthew 12:1-21

*John of Damascus, monk, teacher of the faith, c. 749*

*Nicholas Ferrar, deacon, founder, founder of the Little Gidding Community, 1637*

**Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> December** – Isaiah 26:1-13 & Matthew 12:22-37

**Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> December** – Isaiah 28:1-13 & Matthew 12:38-end

*Nicholas, bishop of myra, c. 326*

**Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> December** – Isaiah 28:14-end & Matthew 13:1-23

*Ambrose, bishop of milan, teacher of the faith, 397*

**Friday 8<sup>th</sup> December** – Isaiah 29:1-14 & Matthew 13:24-43

*Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary*

**Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> December** – Isaiah 29:15-end & Matthew 13:44-end

### Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> December– 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 40:1-11 (OT 677) & 2 Peter 3:8-15a (NT 235) & Mark 1:1-8 (NT 33)

## PARISH DIARY

### Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> December: 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent

10.00am 'Worshipping Together' at St. Catherine's

12noon Holy Baptism of Georgie & Frankie McGiveney at St Catherine's

3.30pm Holy Communion at St. Catherine's

**Monday 4<sup>th</sup> December:** 10.30am-noon Bible study and fellowship group at St. Francis

**Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> December:** 10am 'Holy Communion' at St. Francis

followed by the 'Community Drop-in'

**Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> December:** 11am-1pm Foodbank at St. Francis

**Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> December:** 2.30pm-4pm 'Christingle' workshop & lighting of Christingles

at St. Catherine's

### Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> December: 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent

10.00am Holy Communion at St. Catherine's

#### Readers

3<sup>rd</sup> Dec: Chris / Geraldine

10<sup>th</sup> Dec: Norman / Kim

17<sup>th</sup> Dec: Robin / Veronica

24<sup>th</sup> Dec: Pat / Les

#### Prayers

Norman

Geraldine

Pat

Chris

#### Sides persons

Carol B / Jeannie

Valerie / Les

Kathy / Geraldine

John D / Pam P

#### Teas

Pam E / Kim

Pam P / Margaret

Pat / Carole H

Valerie / Les

## Dates for the Diary

**Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> December** at St Catherine's  
10am – 2pm The Christmas Fayre.  
Christmas gifts, craft stalls, soft toy  
tombola, books, bric a brac, homemade  
cakes to buy, raffle, refreshments a plenty  
and lots more.

**Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> December:** at St Catherine's  
2.30 - 4pm 'Come & Make a Christingle'  
Workshop & Service. Once again we will  
be doing 'Christingle' a little differently.  
During the workshop children will be  
making their own Christingles and learning  
the story behind this great tradition. When  
the Christingles are made we will have  
some refreshment and then conclude the  
afternoon with a short service when the  
Christingles will be lit. **Children must be  
accompanied by an adult and children's  
places will need to be booked in  
advance.** There is a signup sheet at St  
Catherine's. Come and share in this lovely  
activity for children and adults of all ages.

**Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> December** at St Catherine's  
6pm Carols & Candlelight Service with the  
Grays Town Brass Band. Service will be  
followed by mulled wine & mince pies.

**Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> December** - Christmas  
Carols at St Francis during the Community  
Drop-in.

**Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> December** (Christmas Eve) at  
St Catherine's –  
10am Holy Communion;  
3pm Crib Service;  
11.30pm First Communion of Christmas.

**Monday 25<sup>th</sup> December** (Christmas Day) at  
St Catherine's, 10am Christmas Day  
Celebration with Holy Communion.

**For our prayers** – please hold in your prayers  
the family and friends of *Lesley Beadle, Wendy  
Lambert and Christine Sherwood* who have all  
passed away recently and whose funeral  
services will take place in the coming weeks.

**Bible Study & Fellowship Group:** session  
dates are - **Monday 4<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> December,  
10.30am-12noon** at St Francis, Linford. All  
welcome.

### **Thurrock Foodbank Shopping List:**

Crisps/ Savoury Snacks, Mashed Potatoes,  
Tinned potatoes, Tinned Meat, Tinned  
vegetables, Tinned soup, Tinned Fruit,  
Sponge puddings/Angel delights/Jellies, Rice  
Pudding, Tinned custard, Christmas Cake/  
Puddings, Tea Bags, Coffee, Fruit Juice,  
Squash, Milk (Full Fat, Semi-Skimmed).  
Toiletries.

**Church Flowers** – if you would like to sponsor  
a floral arrangement or in memory of a loved  
one or to celebrate an event, or to make a  
donation towards the Christmas floral  
arrangements then please speak to Kathy Bird  
or Pam Painter.

**Church Family Christmas Card** – as in  
previous years we will have a large Christmas  
card for people to sign if they would like to.  
The idea is that you send your good wishes to  
everyone in this one card rather than writing  
lots of individual cards. And the money you  
would have spent on buying cards can be  
given as a donation towards the charity we will  
be supporting.

**New Year's Eve** – on Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> December  
2023 will draw to a close. It would be nice to  
gather together as a Church Family for fun,  
food and fellowship. Details to be confirmed  
but it would probably be 4pm-8pm, a bring &  
share meal and venue dependent on how  
many people want to come. There is a signup  
sheet in both churches to indicate your interest  
in coming along.

## Celebrating the Saints

6<sup>th</sup> December

### **St Nicholas – a much-loved saint**

One account of how Father Christmas began tells of a man named Nicholas who was born in the third century in the Greek village of Patara, on what is today the southern coast of Turkey. His family were both devout and wealthy, and when his parents died in an epidemic, Nicholas decided to use his inheritance to help people. He gave to the needy, the sick, the suffering. He dedicated his whole life to God's service and was made Bishop of Myra while still a young man. As a bishop in later life, he joined other bishops and priests in prison under the emperor Diocletian's fierce persecution of Christians across the Roman Empire.

Finally released, Nicholas was all the more determined to shed abroad the news of God's love. He did so by giving. One story of his generosity explains why we hang Christmas stockings over our mantelpieces today. There was a poor family with three daughters who needed dowries if they were to marry, and not be sold into slavery. Nicholas heard of their plight and tossed three bags of gold into their home through an open window – thus saving the girls from a life of misery.

The bags of gold landed in stockings or shoes left before the fire to dry. Hence the custom of children hanging out stockings – in the hope of attracting presents of their own from St Nicholas - on Christmas Eve. That is why three gold balls, sometimes represented as oranges, are one of the symbols of St Nicholas.

The example of St Nicholas has never been forgotten - in bygone years boys in Germany and Poland would dress up as bishops on 6<sup>th</sup> December and beg alms for the poor. In the Netherlands and Belgium 'St Nicholas' would arrive on a steamship from Spain to ride a white horse on his gift-giving rounds. To this day, 6<sup>th</sup> December is still the main day for gift-giving and merry-making in much of Europe. Many people feel that simple gift-giving in early Advent helps preserve a Christmas Day focus on the Christ Child.

#### **For help or information contact:**

##### **Priest in Charge**

**Revd. Michèle Marshall** - Tel: 01375 671754/07749303622; Email: [mjmarshall@fastmail.co.uk](mailto:mjmarshall@fastmail.co.uk)

##### **Churchwarden**

**Chris Ford** - Tel: 01375 675863; Email: [chris.pewtal@outlook.com](mailto:chris.pewtal@outlook.com)

##### **Parish Safeguarding Officer**

**Kim Ford** – Tel: **01375 675863**; Email: [kim.pewtal@outlook.com](mailto:kim.pewtal@outlook.com)

##### **Foodbank – Linford Location – 01375 768300**

**(open on Thursdays 11am-1pm at St Francis Church, Somerset Road, Linford, SS17 0QN)**

For all enquiries regarding the Linford Foodbank outside of the Thursday session please contact Chris Ford 01375 675863

**Parish Website:** [www.stcatherinesthurrock.org.uk](http://www.stcatherinesthurrock.org.uk)