

THE TIDINGS

St. Francis Anglican Church, 915 E. Main St., Turlock, CA 95380 ~ 209.632.0788 ~ www.saintfrancisturlock.com

Notes from Fr. Gerry

*“In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan,
earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone...”*

The opening words of this hymn speak to us about the natural season we are in. Perhaps the writer meant not only the winter months, but the season of mankind’s soul before the birth of Our Savior, Jesus Christ.

As we move deeper into the Christmas and Epiphany Seasons and open ourselves up to let Jesus into our lives more fully, the awful coldness in the center of our beings gives way to the warmth of His presence; the fatigue of holiday busyness gives way to new physical strength; the fear and anxiety of a new year give way to peace and joy. This actually happens as we receive God’s power and love through Jesus Christ.

This midwinter, I pray that we shall all walk and live our daily lives thanking God for the gift of His Son – a debt we shall never be able to repay.

Anglican Prayer Beads

Anglican Prayer Beads are a relatively new form of prayer, blending the Orthodox Jesus Prayer Rope and the Roman Catholic Rosary.

The use of the rosary or prayer beads helps to bring us into contemplative or meditative prayer—really thinking about and being mindful of praying, of being in the presence of God—by use of mind, body, and spirit. The touching of the fingers on each successive bead is an aid in keeping our mind from wandering, and the rhythm of the prayers leads us more readily into stillness.

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Let us cast off all traces of the world’s over-spiritualized cold religiosity. In 2012, I pray that we shall walk the streets of our community as living symbols of God’s deep, soul-warming and life giving love.

Remember how the hymn ends:

*“if I were a wise man, I would do my part;
yet what I can I give Him – give my heart.”*

My love to you in Christ,

Fr. Gerry

Symbolism of the Beads

The configuration of the Anglican Prayer Beads relate contemplative prayer using the Rosary to many levels of traditional Christian symbolism. Contemplative prayer is enriched by these symbols whose purpose is always to focus and concentrate attention, allowing the one who prays to move more swiftly into the Presence of God.

The prayer beads are made up of twenty-eight beads divided into four groups of seven called weeks. In the Judeo-Christian tradition the number

On the Calendar

WE CARE-Men's shelter feeding program!

Please bring dishes for dinner to the Church kitchen 4:30PM on the following Sundays: Feb. 5th & March 4th. Contact Deacon Wayne.

"Start your New Year Resolution early!" come to Saturday Fitness Class. All ages & all fitness levels welcome. Call Richelle Alexander 277-5094.

Looking ahead:

Annual Parish Meeting, January 15 @ 11AM

30 Hour Famine, February 24 – 26

Visit by Bishop Eric Menees, March 10 & 11



access: Jesus meets on the 1st & 3rd Wed. of each month in the Office House @ 6:30PM for Bible Study, Friendship and a bit of fun too. Ages 11 to 15. Bring a friend!

915 E. Main St. ~ www.saintfrancistorlock.com

Call the Church Office for our regular schedule of meetings and events. 209.632.0788

The Continuing Conversation...

We imagine ourselves in the presence of baby Jesus, and Mary and Joseph. We are surprised to see men of eastern appearance come. They see baby Jesus and fall on their knees. They offer him homage and give him presents of gold, frankincense and myrrh, gold because Jesus is king, frankincense since Jesus is divine and myrrh prefiguring his Passion. They tell us about the star and about Herod who knew nothing about Jesus' birth. After their stay they set out on their return journey eastwards but not via Jerusalem since they want to avoid Herod. After their departure we spend time with baby Jesus. Baby Jesus, we do not have gold, frankincense and myrrh to give you but we can give you our love. Let our love be your manger.

God has communicated to man, the infinite to the finite. The One who made man capable of language in the first place has communicated to man in language about both spiritual reality and physical reality, about the nature of God and the nature of man. – Francis Schaeffer



When the wise men arrived in Jerusalem, it seems they no longer had the guidance of the star, otherwise they would not have had to ask Herod for advice. Sometimes we too feel as if we're in the dark, like the magi. Sometimes what or whom we relied on is not there anymore. Sometimes we see only darkness around us. But we know that you are there, Jesus, and that eternal life awaits us even if sometimes in this world there is no star for us. Lord, in our moments of darkness without a star, help us not to give up but to keep searching, hoping and praying because that would be the best way forward. Let us pray now for strength to remain steadfast when there is no guiding star....

Saints Preserve Us!

By Kathy Rappley

We have two Saints to celebrate in this issue. As we all know February 14 is St Valentine's Day, so without further ado, I present to you a letter from St Valentine himself:

Dear beloved in Christ,

Let me introduce myself. My name is Valentine. I lived in Rome during the third century. That was long, long ago! At that time, Rome was ruled by an emperor named Claudius. I didn't like Emperor Claudius, and I wasn't the only one! A lot of people shared my feelings.

Claudius wanted to have a big army. He expected men to volunteer to join. Many men just did not want to fight in wars. They did not want to leave their wives and families. As you might have guessed, not many men signed up. This made Claudius furious. So what happened? He had a crazy idea. He thought that if men were not married, they would not mind joining the army. So Claudius decided not to allow any more marriages. Young people thought his new law was cruel. I thought it was preposterous! I certainly wasn't going to support that law!

Did I mention that I was a priest? One of my favorite activities was to marry couples. Even after Emperor Claudius passed his law, I kept on performing marriage ceremonies -- secretly, of course. It was really quite exciting. Imagine a small candlelit room with only the bride and groom and myself. We would whisper the words of the ceremony, listening all the while for the steps of soldiers.

One night, we did hear footsteps. It was scary! Thank goodness the couple I was marrying escaped in time. I was caught. (Not quite as light on my feet as I used to be, I guess.) I was thrown in jail and told that my punishment was death.

I tried to stay cheerful. And do you know what? Wonderful things happened. Many young people came to the jail to visit me. They threw flowers and notes up to my window. They wanted me to know that they, too, believed in love.

One of these young people was the daughter of the prison guard. Her father allowed her to visit me in the cell.

Sometimes we would sit and talk for hours. She helped me to keep my spirits up. She agreed that I did the right thing by ignoring the Emperor and going ahead with the secret marriages. On the day I was to die, I left my friend a little note thanking her for her friendship and loyalty. I signed it, "Love from your Valentine."

I believe that note started the custom of exchanging love messages on Valentine's Day. It was written on the day I died, February 14, 269 A.D. Now, every year on this day, people remember. But most importantly, they think about love and friendship. And when they think of Emperor Claudius, they remember how he tried to stand in the way of love, and they laugh -- because they know that love can't be beat!

See you in February!

Love, Your Valentine



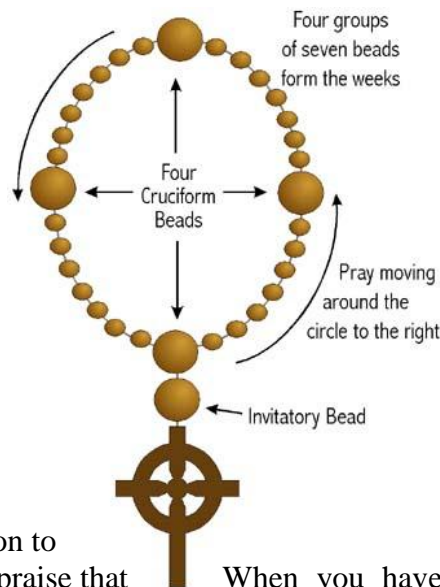
Prayer Beads from page 1

seven represents spiritual perfection and completion. Between each week is a single bead, called a cruciform bead as the four beads form a cross. The invitational bead between the cross and the wheel of beads brings the total to thirty-three, the number of years in Jesus' earthly life.

Praying with the Beads

To begin, hold the Cross and say the prayer you have assigned to it, then move to the Invitational Bead. Then enter the circle of the prayer with the first Cruciform Bead, moving to the right, go through the first set of seven beads to the next Cruciform bead, continuing around the circle, saying the prayers for each bead.

It is suggested that you pray around the circle of the beads three times (which signifies the Trinity) in an unhurried pace, allowing the repetition to become a sort of lullaby of love and praise that enables your mind to rest and your heart to become quiet and still.



Praying through the beads three times and adding the crucifix at the beginning or the end, brings the total to one hundred, which is the total of the Orthodox Rosary. A period of silence should follow the prayer, for a time of reflection and listening. *Listening is an important part of all prayer.*

Begin praying the Anglican Prayer Beads by selecting the prayers you wish to use for the cross and each bead. Practice them until it is clear which prayer goes with which bead, and as far as possible commit the prayers to memory.

Find a quiet spot and allow your body and mind to become restful and still. After a time of silence, begin praying the prayer beads at an unhurried, intentional pace. Complete the circle of the beads three times.

When you have completed the round of the prayer beads, you should end with a period of silence. This silence allows you to center your being in an extended period of silence. It also invites reflection and listening after you have invoked the Name and Presence of God.

Looking for a place to start? Visit <http://www.myrosarybeads.com/anglicanrosary>

Our problem is that we assume prayer is something to master the way we master algebra or auto mechanics, where we are competent and in control. But when praying, we come "underneath," where we calmly and deliberately surrender control. - Richard J. Foster

Love Turlock

Imagine really making a difference by serving people in our community – blotting out blight one block at a time, sharing with a lonely senior, collecting canned food for the hungry, helping with handyman chores, coming alongside those ministries and agencies touching so many lives. This is the inspiration for Love Turlock!

Love Turlock is a one-day event, **APRIL 28, 2012**, that serves as a catalyst between those in need of help and those who can help. Thousands of volunteers will be scouring the streets of Turlock serving and meeting the needs of our community and impacting lives with the love of Jesus

Please see *Love Turlock* on page 6

The Deacon's Bench

By Deacon Wayne Hinds

When Pope Gregory I sent Augustine to the British Isles (597), he was surprised to find in this lonely outpost of Western Christendom, the existence of a thriving Celtic Christian church within a pagan environment. Then upon receiving an inquiry from his missionary monk regarding what ought to be done about local Christian practices, the bishop of Rome instructed Augustine to adapt those beliefs and behaviors that are 'most pious, religious and correct' in the existing churches to the Apostolic faith of Rome. (See: J.R.H. Moorman, *A History of the Church in England*, 3rd ed., pp. 12-16). Thus, from the very beginning of Anglican Christianity there existed a conflict between local (contextual) practices and the universal (catholic) faith. This historic tension continues today as shown in the various strands of belief and practice that constitutes the Anglican tradition in the United States and throughout the world.

So, what is Anglican Christianity? What is meant by the Anglican way? To follow an Anglican ethos in faith and practice means what in worship, theology or ethics? These are the questions raised for our examination within this column during the coming year. And, by so doing, it is prayerfully hoped that in the humbling fear of God we shall grow in wisdom (Ps. 111:10), enabling us to rightly defend our faith (I Peter 3:15).



Saints Preserve Us! From page 3

Our other Saint for this issue is St. Matthew. Ok, I have to admit - this is the name of my youngest son and the last of my children. So you won't have to read anymore saints related to my children.



Matthew was a first century Galilean. During the Roman occupation, he collected taxes from the Hebrew people for Herod Antipas. As a Jewish tax collector he was despised and considered an outcast. However, he was educated and literate in Aramaic and Greek. He is one of the 12 Apostles and is the author of the first book of the New Testament. His name, also known as Levi, is mentioned in the books of Mark and Luke. He preached the Gospel to both the Jewish and Gentile nations. The Gospel of St Matthew was written to fill a need for both believers and non-believers. For the believers it was written as encouragement to prevent the danger of falling back to Judaism; for the non-believers, it was to convince them that Jesus was the Messiah. After being called as an apostle, Matthew got Jesus in trouble by having a sort of going-away party at his house before leaving on their pilgrimage. The Gospel states that tax collectors other sinners came to the dinner. This drew a protest from the Pharisees and Jesus replied "I came not to call the just, but sinners." It is recorded that he was present at the Resurrection and Ascension after which he left with the others for the upper room.

St Matthew is recognized as a saint in the Anglican, Lutheran, Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic faiths. His feast day is September 21.

Till next time, peace be with you and I'll save a seat for you in my pew.

**St. Francis
Anglican Church**
915 E. Main St.
Turlock, CA 95380

Service Schedule:
Sunday Services:
8:00AM – Chapel
9:30AM – Main Service

Midweek
Thursdays @ 6:30AM
in the Chapel.

For other classes, meetings and
events, please call the Church Office
at 209.632.0788 or visit
www.saintfrancisturlock.com

Lives Change Here

Love Turlock from page 4

Various organizations around the community are evaluating their needs and the needs of the community around them.

Love Turlock will enter the project information on www.loveturlock.com and in early spring the website will turn into a project-volunteer registration site where we can sign up for a project that fits us.

On April 28th the entire Love Turlock Community will meet at a central location and celebrate with a kick-off. After a short orientation, all volunteers and project leaders will break out into the community to complete their projects!

There will be more information coming soon! Let's make a difference!

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