



St Nicholas, Linton December 2023

Sunday 26th November

9.30am Holy Communion at St Nicholas

Tuesday 28th November

10am -12 noon Special community coffee morning at St Nicholas Linton, with Christmas Raffle.



29th November

12 noon Midweek Holy Communion in Linton. followed by a light lunch of soup and a roll.

Advent & Christmas in the Benefice

We will be joining together for a Benefice Holy Communion service at **10:30am** each Sunday morning throughout Advent, and also on Christmas day:

3rd December – St Mary's, Hunton

10th December – St Nicholas', Linton

17th December – Ancient Parish Church, East Farleigh

24th December – All Saints, West Farleigh

25th December – Holy Trinity, Coxheath

Christmas Day will be an informal family service, followed by an opportunity to receive Communion for those who wish to.

31st December (fifth Sunday) Benefice service at Holy Trinity Coxheath.

We will be arranging lifts for any who do not drive to get to each service. If you are able to give someone a lift – please do offer. And if you are in need of a lift – please do ask. If you find yourself struggling to find someone to help, then please give one of the churchwardens a ring and we will do our best to help.

The hope is that as many of us as possible will take this opportunity to share our worship in different surroundings, enjoy each of the lovely buildings we inhabit, and enjoy the warmth of fellowship as we gather as a benefice family.

Pastoral Letter from The Rector

Years ago, when we were particularly strapped for Christmas cash, we received an envelope through the door 2 days before Christmas. It had £300 in it, and a note suggesting we fill the kids' stockings. £100 extra for each child! There were more than a few happy tears. And then the most extraordinary thing happened. I began to feel uncomfortable and explained to my husband that seeing as we had already bought the children's presents and spent what we could afford, we ought not to keep the money. We ought to give it away. It would be wrong to buy 'too much'.

We had been miraculously given the opportunity to bless our kids with unexpected abundance, and I passed it up. I am ashamed to say I didn't stop to think about what it would have meant to my children to have experienced that blessing.

So, all at my behest, we put some of the money back in an envelope and posted it through what I now realise was the door of the very people that gave it to us! The rest would go to another friend and then to charity. We had Christmas and the boys were delighted with the presents they had. And I felt utterly dreadful.

A couple of years later I was cleaning the house on Christmas Eve and remembering the incident – still feeling the pinch of regret. As I cleaned, I prayed, asking God for another chance. And as I prayed, there was a knock on the door! I was so excited. Could it be?? I ran downstairs and opened the front door, and there stood a lady I didn't know, holding a... huge tray of... Mushrooms!!!

Well, what could I do? I had to laugh. And I accepted the mushrooms. God was winking at me, I am sure. The truth is, we might get ourselves all het up about what we do or don't buy; what we can or can't afford; we might even have hoped for £300 and got mushrooms instead... but nothing we could imagine could compare with the gift of the child whose birth is at the heart of this celebration.

In Jesus, God has given us the most precious gift. The gift of himself. All we need to do is open the door of our hearts to receive him.

'For to us a child is born. To us a son is given...'
Wishing you all a very happy and peaceful Christmas.

Lorna

Other Services & Events in the Benefice Every Thursday

10am Midweek Holy Communion, Holy Trinity Coxheath

Starting on Tuesday 28th November

Brew and a Bite is returning to Holy Trinity Coxheath. Please join us for a cuppa and a bite to eat at our new times on Tuesday 2.30-5pm and Thursdays 11am-1pm. We look forward to seeing you soon.

There is no charge for Brew and a Bite, however you are able to make a donation should you wish to, but we mainly just want to see your lovely faces.



Saturday 2nd December

4pm The Hartlip Singers come to Holy Trinity, Coxheath to get us all in the seasonal mood with their Christmas programme. We are privileged to have this small group of talented singers performing for us, coming from all walks of musical life ranging from Rochester Cathedral, the BBC Chorus, and Amateur Operatics, as well as Nancy Davis (Clinton's wife). Come along and join us for an afternoon of beautiful music and festive refreshments. Parking near the church is limited, however, the car park at the Heathside Centre just across the road will be available. **Tickets £10 (Includes festive refreshments) – Under 16s free** For more information, and to book email sandra-rogerbaker@live.co.uk or call Sandra 07754 182426. **In aid of Holy Trinity chancel restoration**

**Saturday 9th 10am-5pm &
Sunday 10th December 1-5pm**

Christmas Tree Festival at Holy Trinity, Coxheath. If you would like to enter a tree please contact Becky on 07949 646865. Otherwise come along and have a look at what other people have created.



Friday 15th December

Come along to the Christmas Fayre at the Bull Inn Linton from 3pm – 7pm and join in carol singing for half an hour or so from 4pm or from 6pm.



Saturday 16th December

3pm – **Messy Christingle** in St Nicholas Linton. A fun afternoon for all the family, making Christingles and other crafts before continuing in Church at 4.15pm **Carol Service** with Christingles Festive refreshments to follow.

You can come to the whole afternoon or just come along to the Carol Service at 4.15pm. Please let Becky know if you will be at Messy Christingle at 3pm.

Sunday 17th December

4pm - **Carol Service** at Holy Trinity Coxheath

Thursday 21st December

2-4pm **Christmas Crafternoon** in Holy Trinity Coxheath. Christmas crafts and activities with cuppa's and cakes for all the family. No booking required.

6pm – 7:30 pm **Lights of Love at Coxheath**

Holy Trinity Church will be open on the evening of Thursday December 21st for those who would appreciate a quiet space to remember a loved one this Christmas...

Christmas Eve

4pm **Christingle at East Farleigh Parish Church**

4.30pm **Christmas Eve Children's Service at Coxheath**

6pm **Carol Service at Hunton**

9.30pm **Christmas Eve Communion at West Farleigh**

11.15pm **Christmas Eve Communion at Coxheath**

Pastoral Support

"Sometimes we just need someone to listen"

The Benefice Pastoral Support Team will happily pray for you, or with you, if that is what you would like us to do. Call: 07437 544229 in confidence to speak to one of the team. If there is no answer please leave your name and number. You can also contact us online. <https://unitedbenefice.church/benefice-groups/pastoral-support-team/>

2nd hand book library in St Nicholas

If you love it, keep it. £1

If it's a good read, swap it for another. 50p

Donations welcome

St Nicholas Linton is now registered with

easyfundraising, which means you can help us for FREE. Over 7,000 brands will donate to us when you use **easyfundraising** to shop online with them – at no extra cost to yourself! All you need to do is sign up and remember to use **easyfundraising** whenever you shop online. It's easy and completely FREE! These donations really mount up, so please sign up to support us at <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/st-nicholas-linton>



BENEFICE CONTACTS

Rev. Lorna Faulkner, Rector 01622 747570

Rev. David Jones, Hon. Associate Rector 741474

For up to date details about benefice group meetings please contact the following people:

Children's Work Becky Parnham 07949 646865

<https://www.facebook.com/Coxheath-Benefice-Kids-112089254485427/>

Men's Prayer Group Mike Marsh 07595 428639

Ladies Prayer Group Dawn Burnell

Beacon Men Steve Poole 01622 297144

Mothers' Union Margaret Poole 01622 297144

Lesley Marsh 07814 817204

Safeguarding Margaret Poole 01622 297144

Our Benefice and five Benefice Churches website is

www.unitedbenefice.church

