is considered to be one of the best examples of a late Norman or Early English font in Essex.

- The ironwork on the south and north doors is 12th or even 11th century, probably the work of a local smith and an excellent example of early craftsmanship. The south door has a triangular knocker generally regarded as a Sanctuary Knocker. Recorded in Rolls of Edward 1st, who, when hunting in the district, granted a pardon to a criminal at Eastwood who had stolen three pigs. The man was condemned to be hanged, the rope broke, he escaped to the Church for sanctuary until he was pardoned. He was afterwards exiled. The horizontal strap of the South door has an inscription in Lombardic letters almost obliterated, "Pax regat intrantes eadem regat ingentibus"; "May peace rule those entering and also those leaving".

- The Priest's Room at the west end of the North Aisle is another unusual feature. It is an oak framed apartment of two stages lit by a small 15th century square headed window. The screen is 15th century oak with moulded and embattled head and rail. The use of this chamber is unknown, it may have been the sacristy and muniment room or a priest's room to accommodate the monk when the Church was served by Prittlewell Priory. The hinges of the door and the trap door are probably original.

- Before the Altar are 18th century tombs of the Vassal family, former owners of Cockethurst Farm, and an effigy in brass of Thomas Burroughs dated 1600. In the north aisle is a tombstone of Elizabeth Hooker dated 1666 and an oak table thought to have been used as a Communion table during the time of Cromwell.

- The 15th century Great West Window has modern (1978) stained glass depicting the life of Samuel Purchas, geographer, writer and Eastwood's most notable incumbent (1604-1614).
The earliest known record of the St Laurence Church is in 1100 A.D. when Robert of Essex, the founder of Prittlewell Priory, granted to the Priory the Church of Prittlewell and the Chapels of Eastwood and Sutton.

During the course of the church's existence Eastwood Parish, with its scattered population, changed from a woodland to an agricultural parish and today to a largely built-up area. The church is now protected as a Grade I Listed Building.

**Church Name: St Laurence & All Saints**

Halfway through the third century, Christians were again suffering severe persecutions. The Roman Emperor Valerian confiscated lands where churches had been built, put the pope to death, and then demanded that the treasures of the Church be surrendered to him. At this time Laurence acted as head archivist. The Emperor decided to postpone his execution and ordered him to give an account of the whereabouts of all the valuables owned by the Church.

Laurence, however, had other ideas. He first put the valuables into the hands of trustworthy men; and then he set out to gather the weak, widowed, infirm, and aged together - all those who were supported by the charity of the Church. Laurence presented them to the Emperor as 'the treasures of the Church.' The Emperor was far from amused. He demanded that Laurence be seized and tortured, until he should reveal where the booty was hidden. Laurence placed on a special type of grill, called a "gridiron," and the fire beneath it allowed to burn down to hot coals. He never divulged the whereabouts of the hidden treasures.

St Laurence is known as the patron saint of archivists, librarians and also of cooks!

St Laurence Church takes the form of a gridiron - the chancel representing the handle and the nave and two side aisles the bars.

**Historic Development of the Church**

The development of St Laurence's spans many centuries. The Nave is thought to be the original Norman church. It dates from the 12th century. In the north wall one of the original Norman window surrounds, and traces of two others, can be seen. There were probably three in each wall.

The first alteration was the piercing of the South wall by three 13th century Early English bays and the building of the South Aisle. The 14th century piscina and canymbly indicate that this Aisle may have been used as a Lady Chapel. Unusually, the angles of two columns that divide the Nave and the South Aisle have been flattened to give a view of the altar to the bell ringer in the tower. The Chancel and the lower part of the tower were also added around this time.

In the 14th century the North Aisle was formed by the piercing of the north wall of the Nave with two wide arches. These arches are unusual because they have no supporting columns but spring from the wall direct.

Externally on the south wall of the South Aisle the red Tudor brickwork alterations are clearly visible including the buttresses and the porch. The upper stage of the tower was added in the 19th century.

St Laurence is a typical country parish church of this period and many similar ones can be seen throughout Essex. The walls are of ragstone rubble with some pudding stone flints, Roman and Tudor brickwork and a shingle clad tower. The exterior was, at one time, covered with cement rendering which was completely removed in 1970-1971.

**Significant Features**

Inside the Church, there are many interesting features. Note in particular:

- The Chancel windows which date from the 13th and 14th century. The lower window on the south wall was probably unglazed with a wooden shutter and may have been used as a sanctus window through which the sanctus bell was rung at the Elevation of the Host.
- A hagioscope or squint has been cut in a very simple manner through the angle of the chancel wall giving a view of the high altar from the South aisle.
- The late 12th century Norman font with its circular bowl, ornamented with interlacing arcading around the drum. It...