

# Chester Diocesan News



THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND  
Diocese of Chester

#EverydayFaith across the Diocese of Chester | December 2021

## At the heart of Christmas



[At the Heart of Christmas campaign Pg 4](#)

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“Stop for a moment and enjoy this time... and then look beyond the tinsel and notice what really matters. Take a moment to tell friends or family members how much you appreciate them. Don't faff about if relationships need mending as you will only regret the time you wasted. Spare a thought (and maybe a phone call, text, or letter) for those who find Christmas tough.

And while you are at it, reflect for a moment on the story that lies at the heart of Christmas: the child born at Bethlehem. For me, the real amazement is that story is actually true, and that changes everything, everywhere, and every day.”

**Bishop Mark Tanner**

At the heart  
of Christmas





# At the heart of Christmas



At the heart of Christmas is the Church of England's theme for Advent and Christmas 2021

Inspired by readings from the Gospels of Luke and John read at so many Christmas services, At the heart of Christmas is an invitation to everyone to discover – or rediscover – the good news of God's saving love as revealed in the birth of Jesus. It is also a challenge to each of us to ponder in our hearts – as Mary did – what the extraordinary events of the first Christmas might mean for us now and in the years ahead.

At the heart of Christmas is a deliberately simple and open theme – one it's hoped can be used by churches to invite their communities to share in celebrating the good news of Christmas in a variety of ways, whatever the prevailing circumstances.

A wide range of resources and support is available for use by churches, including webinars, printed materials, and reflections.



On the 25 November, the Church of England premiered a film to launch the theme and the national resources available.

## Resources include:

### Daily Advent reflections

These will be shared freely in digital format, including audio.

### Weekly online services

A new service for each Sunday of Advent will be available on YouTube and Facebook.

### Stories and meditations

Starting on Christmas Eve, and lasting for 12 Days of Christmas to help people explore the Christmas message.

Printed materials from Church House Publishing are also available.

[View all the resources here.](#)





## For Christmas

Every church can have a presence on A Church Near You (ACNY), the website platform which is helping churches to share service details with people who might be unfamiliar with Church and seeking a local Christmas service.

It's a totally free service, provided by the national church for all parishes to use. Think of it as a search engine for all of our churches across England, where anyone can find out where their nearest church is, what facilities it offers - such as a cafe, toilets, hearing loop and ramp access - and what services and events are coming up. You can see an example of how your church facilities would be displayed, [here](#).

Every Church of England church can control what information appears,

which makes it an excellent tool for attracting people through your doors. You can list your events, news and service times, and many other types of information.

### A spike of interest ahead of Christmas

Research has shown that A Church Near You receives a huge spike in visitors before Christmas as people unfamiliar with church seek out local services to them. This makes it a great time to update your listing to ensure that your details are useful to people.

### Recent data

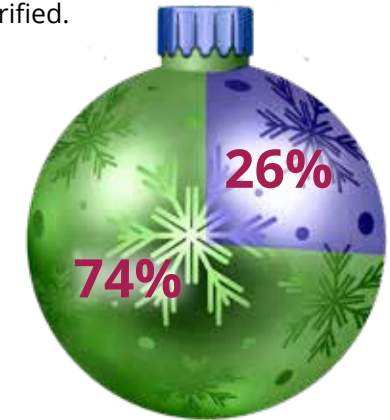
Recent data seen by the Diocese of Chester indicates that 53% of all churches registered on ACNY have not logged in in the last 3 months. Many still display details about services during the pandemic or even that their church is currently closed due to

Government guidance. The data also shows that 26% of churches registered on ACNY have unread messages on the platform, with one church sitting on 12 unopened messages.

Most churches in the Diocese of Chester have already registered with ACNY, so someone at your church just needs to log in and make the necessary updates to reflect what you have to offer in the run-up to Christmas and beyond. Whether that's carol services, a Christmas lunch, or midnight mass - you can add as much as you like."

If your church hasn't yet taken advantage of this free service, just visit the [A Church Near You](#) website and click the 'Edit this church' button on the left-hand side of the page. You'll

then be guided through a registration process that will have you up and running once your details have been verified.



**1017: Total number of messages**  
**268: Unread messages**

## Bishop Sam interviewed on BBC Radio



Bishop of Stockport, Sam Corley was interviewed on BBC Radio Manchester on Sunday 28 November. Host Mike Shaft, asked Sam various questions about his faith and his ministry, such what advent means, the challenges of Covid and how he came to faith; "Faith's always been a part of my way of understanding the world. right from an early age, the age of four... I've wanted to be a vicar. I don't know where that came from, neither do my parents. They weren't really church goers."

You can read more about the interview and listen to the recording on the [Diocese of Chester Website](#).



# Events

At the heart  
of Christmas



## Carols on the Kop

18 December 2021 - The Kop

After the Tranmere Rovers home game on Saturday 18 December, the Kop end of the pitch plays host to a carol concert and readings from the Christmas story. Entry to the carol service is FREE. [More](#)



## Retreat day Still, Small Voice

13 December 2021 - Foxhill

A day to recognise the peace that Christmas should bring rather than the strain and stress that it often does. The theme of the day is 'Treading Boldly in the Master's Steps'.

[More](#)



## Chester Cathedral Christmas Tree festival

Open daily, from Saturday 27 November to Tuesday 4 January 2022. Open normal Cathedral opening hours.

If you are travelling especially to see the Christmas Tree Festival, please call us to ensure the event is fully open for the day.



## Sunday Brunch with Santa

Join Santa at Chester Cathedral for a magical Sunday brunch inside the stunning thirteenth century Refectory. Children (and the young at heart) will meet Santa and children receive a selection box. Sittings at 9am and 11am.



## Out of the Darkness

21-23 January 2022 - Foxhill

A retreat for Leaders of Young Generations. Come and reflect on what it means to be called out of the darkness, for yourself and your ministry. Take time out to refresh, recharge and relax. [More](#)