



Christmas

PARISH OF ESHER
Christ Church, Esher with St George's, West End



Christmas

is not just for the children

A few years ago I heard a remarkable 'Thought for the Day' contribution from the hymn-writer and theologian John Bell. He used the BBC Radio 4 broadcast to argue that – despite much popular opinion – Christmas is not just a time for children. On the contrary, he said, the Christmas stories in the Bible are populated almost exclusively (apart from the baby Jesus, of course!) by older people.

Joseph, for instance, is usually considered to be an older man – just as in the picture on the front of this leaflet. The shepherds, similarly, would have been adults rather than boys. What's more, the Three Kings or Wise Men certainly ought to be thought of as mature in a culture where wisdom was considered to come with age.

It's also worth remembering that the biblical accounts of the birth of Jesus are bookended between episodes featuring senior citizens. First, there's Zechariah, a retired priest and his wife Elizabeth who, in their twilight years, become the parents of John the Baptist.

Then there's Simeon and Anna, two aged and devout believers who were eagerly awaiting the birth of the Messiah. All in all, we could say that although the Christmas story has an infant at its heart, it's also the story of older people being caught-up in, and in a sense enabling, a never-before-seen and world-changing event to take place. John Bell puts it like this:

'So if you once were a shepherd or an angel or even the hind legs of the donkey, don't let Christmas simply be a time for regression therapy ... particularly when now as always, God is looking for older people to be the midwives of the new things that need to happen.'

Happy Christmas one and all!

God bless

Revd Darren McCallig
Rector of Esher

Advent & Christmas 2023

We're delighted to offer Christmas services and free events in beautiful Christ Church and St George's.

Christmas Tree Lighting Up

Launching the season in Esher by lighting up the Christmas tree! The choir will sing carols in our warm, candle lit church whilst mulled wine and mince pies are served.

Christmas Crazy Crafts

We invite you to our second Christmas community crafting extravaganza! Come anytime 10am-1pm to the Lower Green Community Centre (Recreation Ground, KT10 8AU) and make a myriad of lovely Christmas decorations, gifts and greetings cards. Entry is free! Children will be given a goodie bag, lunch and the chance to decorate yummy biscuits. It's an event not to be missed.

Christingle Service

A favourite with all ages, this service gets its name from the Christingle oranges that explore the story of God's love for the world at Christmas. It's a magical moment when the candles are lit and the lights are dimmed, reminding us of that Light which no darkness can overcome.

Festival of Lessons & Carols

For many this traditional carol service heralds the start of Christmas. From the evocative opening notes of Once in Royal David's City, through time-honoured readings from the King James Bible, to the triumphant strains of Hark the Herald Angels Sing, this iconic blend of Christmas carols and beautiful choral music is an event not to be missed.

Come & Sing Carols

Our Music on the Green December concert is given over to festive singing interspersed with prose and poetry – at times humorous, at times thought-provoking. This year will be no exception, so come along and get in the yuletide spirit with some of your favourite carols.

Crib Service

This is our very popular child-friendly service and a great opportunity for little ones to come dressed as their favourite character from the Christmas story (wise man, shepherd, angel, etc.). There will be words and music as we assemble the crib and enter into the wonder of the nativity story. The service lasts about 50 minutes, so do come along – there's always room for one more angel or shepherd!

Christmas Eve 'Midnight Mass'

Experience the drama and beauty of Christmas at this traditional and atmospheric late-night service. There will be choral and organ music and well-known carols to usher us into Christmas Day through this celebration of Holy Communion. We promise that the church will be warm, and so will the welcome!!

Christmas Day Services

We pull out all the stops for this Christmas morning service of Holy Communion. With much-loved classic carols and the choir in full voice, we join together to celebrate how 'Love came down at Christmas' and what this means for us today. It's the perfect way to begin your festivities on this special day.

All Are Welcome

The Parish of Esher is for everyone. On Sundays we explore the riches of the Christian spiritual tradition through words and music, silence and sacrament. Some of us grew up in church and have never left. Some of us grew out of church, but are testing the waters again. Some of us have more questions than answers. All of us belong here.

You can check out some of our services on YouTube to get a flavour of what we're about, or just come along some Sunday at 10.30am in Christ Church or at 9am in St George's West End. Whether you join online or in person, we hope you'll find a community committed to a thoughtful Faith, a hard-won Hope, and a generous Love.

As well as the church services, there's a range of other activities and programmes: a vibrant Sunday School and Youth Group; a free monthly lunchtime concert series, Music on the Green; book groups, study groups and prayer groups; 'Friends' coffee mornings; and much more. Check our website www.esherparish.org.uk for details.



Christ Church, Esher



St George's, West End

Friday 1 December

Christmas Tree Lighting Up

5.30pm Christ Church, Esher

Saturday 2 December

Christmas Crazy Crafts

10am Lower Green Community Centre

Sunday 3 December

Christingle Service

10.30am Christ Church, Esher

Sunday 17 December

Festival of Lessons & Carols

6pm Christ Church, Esher

Wednesday 20 December

Come & Sing Carols

1.15pm Christ Church, Esher

Christmas Eve

Christmas Eve Holy Communion

10.30am Christ Church, Esher

Crib Service

4pm Christ Church, Esher

Midnight Mass

11.30pm Christ Church, Esher

Christmas Day

Christmas Day Holy Communion

9am St George's, West End

10.30am Christ Church, Esher

Parish of Esher - Christ Church, Esher with St George's, West End

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Parish Office hours: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday, 10am to 12 noon