



Christmas

PARISH OF ESHER

Christ Church, Esher with St George's, West End



Christmas

*can be found in everyday encounters
and year-round acts of love and service*

Have you heard about the fourth Wise Man? The first three – named Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar by tradition – are well-known, but the fourth is less famous. He, named Artaban, was introduced to the world in the 1895 novella 'The Other Wise Man' by Henry van Dyke.

According to the story, the three Wise Men have a pretty uneventful journey following the star to present their gifts to the Christ-child in Bethlehem. The fourth, however, is repeatedly sidetracked as he seeks to deliver his gifts: a sapphire, a ruby, and a pearl.

First, Artaban stops to tend to a dying stranger, thereby missing his planned rendezvous with the other Magi and the chance to witness the first Christmas. The change of plan also costs him his sapphire as he's forced to return home to purchase new provisions and camels.

Undaunted Artaban sets out again. Soon, however, he gives away the ruby intended for Jesus in order to save the life of another child who – by King Herod's murderous decree – had been condemned to die. Over and over again Artaban interrupts his searching for 'the newborn king' to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, minister to the sick, and comfort the captive.

As the story ends, the fourth Wise Man is near despair. After a thirty-three year quest he finds himself in Jerusalem on Good

Friday, the day of Jesus's crucifixion. On hearing the news he decides to use his last possession – the pearl – to try to buy Jesus's release. Yet, before he can do this, he encounters a young girl being sold into slavery and – moved with pity – uses his final jewel to ransom her instead.

Now, Artaban truly has nothing left. What's more, he is mortally wounded by a roof tile dislodged by the earthquake that accompanies the crucifixion! As he lies dying – distraught that he never got to present his treasures to Jesus – he hears a voice saying 'Verily I say unto thee, Inasmuch as thou hast done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, thou hast done it unto me.' (Matthew 25:40). Finally, the fourth Wise Man realises that his gifts were indeed received.

It's a great story which conveys important truths: how delays and disappointments can sometimes take us to the place we need to be; and how God can be found, not just in a Christmas-time baby in a manger; but in everyday encounters, and year-round acts of love and service. Perhaps the fourth Wise Man was the wisest one of all.

Happy Christmas!

Revd Darren McCallig
Rector of Esher

Advent & Christmas 2022

We're delighted to offer Christmas services in both of our beautiful buildings, Christ Church Esher and St George's West End.

Advent Music & Prayer

The perfect antidote to pre-Christmas busyness! Three evenings of soulful organ music and quiet contemplation, with César Franck's celebrated Organ Chorales and the peaceful service of Night Prayer, also known as Compline.

Christingle Service

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

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.

Festival of Lessons & Carols

For many, attending 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 familiar Christmas carols and beautiful choral music is an event not to be missed.

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; a monthly lunchtime concert series, Music on the Green; book groups, study groups and prayer groups; regular 'Friends' coffee mornings; and much more besides. Check out our website www.esherparish.org.uk for more information.



Christ Church, Esher



St George's, West End

Sundays 27 November and 4 & 11 December

Advent Music & Prayer

6.00pm Christ Church, Esher

Sunday 4 December

Christingle Service

10.30am Christ Church, Esher

Sunday 18 December

Festival of Lessons & Carols

8.00pm Christ Church, Esher

Wednesday 21 December

Come & Sing Carols

1.15pm Christ Church, Esher

Christmas Eve

Crib Service

2.00pm St George's, West End

4.00pm Christ Church, Esher

Midnight Mass

11.30pm Christ Church, Esher

Christmas Day

9.00am St George's, West End

10.30am Christ Church, Esher

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

Telephone: 01372 462282

Website: www.esherparish.org.uk

Email: office@esherparish.org.uk

YouTube: [youtube.com/esherparish](https://www.youtube.com/esherparish)