



# Christmas

PARISH OF ESHER

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

# This Christmas

We are delighted to offer Christmas services in both our churches, Christ Church and St George's, West End.

## 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.





# Christmas

*gift-giving can be a reflection of the deepest truth about reality.*

When the Three Wise Men handed over their offerings of gold, frankincense and myrrh to the infant Jesus, they started a trend of Christmas gift-giving which has proved extraordinarily popular.

And while some may decry the commercialisation of the festive season – and who could deny that a good deal of it has gotten way out of hand – I think we should be slow to condemn the impulse to give. After all, many of us are pretty self-absorbed much of the time! And so, having these weeks of the year when the focus is on thinking of others, and being generous towards them, can be a powerful counter-weight to self-preoccupation.

Besides, gift giving is very often the language of the emotionally inarticulate. Giving someone a thoughtful present enables the tongue-tied to express the things they find so difficult to say ... things like 'Thank you' or 'I love you' or 'I don't know what I would ever do without you?' I say this – you understand – as a man, and as a husband!

And most importantly of all, seasonal gift-giving can be a reflection of the Divine – a reflection of the deepest truth about reality. That, after all, is the heart of the Christmas message: the audacious claim that within, beneath and beyond all things there is an infinitely generous Love which delights in giving itself away; a Love which can be seen most clearly in the self-giving life of Jesus Christ; a Love which comes to us as pure gift and which – if we accept it – can transform our giving and our living too.

Happy Christmas!

Revd Darren McCallig  
Rector of Esher



## For everyone

The Parish of Esher is for everyone.

The two church buildings, Christ Church in Esher and St George's in West End, have been beacons of faith, hope and love in this area for over a century. Generations have come through the doors to celebrate their marriages, welcome their new-borns and grieve their losses – all of it embraced by the beauty of the worship offered in these houses of prayer week in and week out.

## All belong

We're all sorts of different people with many different stories – some sad, some beautiful, all important. For us, faith, hope and love abide, and the greatest of these is love. We want to be part of a kinder, just and more joyful world.

On Sundays we explore the riches of the Christian spiritual tradition through music and words, 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 (search 'Esher Parish') to get a flavour of what we are about, or just come along some Sunday to St George's, West End at 9am or Christ Church, Esher at 10.30am.

**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.**



### A wing and a prayer

*A beautiful and thought-provoking display greeted everyone who came through the doors of Christ Church in November. Pupils from Esher Church School, along with members of the Third Esher Scout group, crafted dozens of peace doves (from paper plates no less!) to remind us that 'blessed are the peacemakers' – a timely message for us all.*



## New ways of being 'Church'

When the world changed after the first 'lockdown' in March 2020, things changed at the Parish of Esher too. However, even when the pandemic temporarily closed the buildings, other means of being 'Church' opened up. New ways of gathering remotely, broadcasting services and staying in touch kept the bonds of community strong through the toughest of times. A particular priority was to reach out to those who might be feeling lonely or anxious, and so many volunteers sprung into action – shopping for the housebound, collecting medications, making phone calls, and generally keeping the lines of communication and support open.

### New initiatives

New initiatives were started and continue even now that our churches are open once more. Sunday services from Christ Church are still broadcast every week, with access through YouTube and SoundCloud. This has proved very popular, with listeners and viewers both locally and globally racking up thousands of views. It also gives those curious about Church an opportunity to see what it's like without having to leave home!

Other technology also played its part, with Zoom used to the full for Book Group meetings, Bible studies, prayer Fellowship gatherings and family-friendly events. Many of these groups are now back meeting in person again.

### Christmas boxes of love

*Our Christmas shoebox appeal – with the charity 'Link to Hope' – gives a chance to bring a little festive joy to those living in desperately difficult circumstances in parts of Eastern Europe. Dozens and dozens of boxes filled with gifts and practical items were collected by church members, pupils at Esher Church School and Esher High School and some local Scouts. The boxes were blessed at the church service on Sunday 28 November before being sent on their way.*



### Supporting the local

Meeting local needs is a concern for any church community and the Parish of Esher does this in many ways. This year's Advent Appeal will raise funds for the Lower Green Community Centre, while October's Harvest Festival collected many boxes and bags of food for the East Elmbridge Food Bank. The 2021 Lent Appeal provided funds and secondhand laptops to help with school pupils' technology needs. Everyone is equally important.

### Young people

We are proud to support our two local schools, Esher Church School and Esher High School in various ways, not least through the provision of regular Assemblies – online during 'lockdown' and now in-person – nurturing the faith of hundreds of students and their families.



## Hitting the high notes

We have always been known for our music, so it is really wonderful to be back singing again on Sunday and hearing our excellent choir. But this is not the only string to our bow!

### Music on the Green

Launched in 2012, Music on the Green (MOTG) began as a simple monthly organ recital and is now an established monthly lunchtime concert series. Held on the third Wednesday of every month, the light lunch offered has become almost as much of an attraction as the music itself! We regularly have audiences upwards of 50-60 each month.

MOTG now holds full-length weekend concerts two or three times a year, like the recent Beethoven 250th celebration. And for Holy Week, 'Music in the Tower', is our special presentation of chamber music with readings. This is held in Christ Church's Tower Room, a wonderfully intimate space with the best acoustics in the building! We look forward to the 2022 series after a lengthy Covid absence.

### Looking ahead

As we get back on our feet, we eagerly anticipate our 10th anniversary concert on Wednesday 19 January 2022. Marking this occasion, Ensemble Pensiero, our new 'ensemble-in-residence', will perform one of the greatest chamber works of all time, Schubert's Trout Quintet. But to close out this year we have our bumper 'Come & Sing Carols' event on Wednesday 15 December. You will be very welcome.

## Thank you for being a friend

Both churches remain an unquestionable and enduring presence in Esher. With no central funding, parishes maintain church buildings through voluntary donations. Without this generosity our parish would not function and our iconic buildings would fall into disrepair and close.

### Friends of Christ Church, Esher and St George's, West End

Our 'Friends' scheme is designed to help maintain the two churches, and enable them to serve the community for many more years. We are working to make the buildings and facilities available for a variety of activities and events – developing closer links with local organisations and the wider neighbourhood.

### Join today

Membership will give free or special entry to wine tastings, film showings, talks on local issues, guided trips to historic towns, cathedrals and heritage sites and coffee mornings. Pick up an application form in church or download one from the parish website. In the meantime, if you fancy a coffee, some cake and a chat our regular coffee mornings are open to absolutely anyone. Come to St George's on 8 December or Christ Church on 22 December at 10.30am.

### InSpire

The parish's quarterly e-magazine covers news on what is happening at our churches and in the local community. To receive InSpire, please subscribe via our website.

## A big thank you

We would like to thank Lodge Brothers for their valued support with the production of this Parish Christmas message.

*We asked William and John Lodge (Sixth Generation) to share their history and some secrets of their success.*

When a family business has spanned 240 years and has been developed over seven generations, the loyalty to each other is ingrained. The exchange of knowledge and mentoring from one generation to the next allows progress and new ideas to move the company forward and build a reputation based on trust, recommendation and the quality of service we provide. Everyone strives to maintain that reputation and it is a real team effort.



## Advertorial

In recent years we have observed a very gradual shift in philosophy away from the traditional funeral service, with sombre mourners dressed in black to more upbeat services, with families opting to 'commemorate and celebrate' the life of a loved one instead. Nowadays, with the rise in natural burials and 'greener' funeral options, the freedom of choice for our clients is far wider than ever before and it has been very interesting to see this development.

It has been a difficult and upsetting two years for us, with so many bereaved families not able to arrange the funeral their loved ones would have wanted due to the restrictions imposed, sometimes not being able to have the service in their usual place of worship. We look forward to continuing

on our path back to normality, ensuring families are able to say goodbye the way they want to.

**Lodge**  
BROTHERS 1780  
*the family you can turn to*

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# Christmas 2021

In 2020, lots of us experienced a Christmas when many of the ways we traditionally mark the season were suddenly denied to us. This year, we hope and pray that the familiar experiences that help Christmas come alive can return to our homes, our churches and communities. Here in the Parish of Esher we have a programme of Advent and Christmas services to do just that. There's something for all the family, from interactive all-age gatherings to formal choral services – with plenty of opportunities to sing much-loved Christmas carols and hear again the timeless story of that birth in Bethlehem.

Of course, the Covid situation can change rather rapidly, so do please check out our parish website – [www.esherparish.org.uk](http://www.esherparish.org.uk) – for the very latest arrangements and precautions. Here's the full list of seasonal services:



## **Sunday 5 December**

### *Christingle Service*

10.30am Christ Church, Esher

## **Wednesday 15 December**

### *Come & Sing Carols*

1.15pm Christ Church, Esher

## **Sunday 19 December**

### *Festival of Lessons & Carols*

6.00pm Christ Church, Esher

## **Christmas Eve**

### *Crib Service*

4.00pm Christ Church, Esher

### *Midnight Mass*

11.30pm Christ Church, Esher

## **Christmas Day**

### *Christmas Communion*

9.00am St George's, West End

10.30am Christ Church, Esher

## **Sunday 26 December**

### *Parish Communion*

10.30am Christ Church, Esher



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

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