



CHRIST CHURCH NEWS

DECEMBER 2025 – JANUARY 2026



CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS

AT CHRIST CHURCH

OLD ROAD EAST

SUNDAY 21ST DECEMBER

6pm Service of Lessons & Carols

WEDNESDAY 24TH DECEMBER

CHRISTMAS EVE

3pm and 5pm Crib Service

11pm Midnight Mass

THURSDAY 25TH DECEMBER

CHRISTMAS DAY

8am Holy Communion

**10am Christmas Eucharist
with Carols**

**WE WISH YOU THE JOY AND PEACE
OF THE CHRIST-CHILD**

CALENDAR

Monday 1st December

10.30am Service at St Andrews Mission Church

Wednesday 3rd December

10am Holy Communion

5pm Evening Prayer

Friday 5th December

7.30pm GEMS concert

Saturday 6th December

2.30pm GEMS concert

Sunday 7th December

Second Sunday Of Advent

8am Holy Communion

10am Parish Eucharist with God's Gang (followed by refreshments)

12noon Holy Baptism

Tuesday 9th December

Mothers Union Christmas lunch

6.15pm Semiquavers Concert

Wednesday 10th December Ember Day

10am Holy Communion

2pm First Steps.

5pm Evening Prayer

Thursday 11th December

10am Pilgrim Bible Study *Jacob, Leah and Rachel – fourteen years* Genesis 29

2.30pm Mustard Seed Christmas party

Saturday 13th December

9am – 11am Wheelbarrow collection for the Foodbank & Daily Hub

From 9.30am Working morning

12noon Carol Singing at St George's Centre

Sunday 14th December

Third Sunday of Advent

8am Holy Communion

10am Parish Eucharist (followed by refreshments)

Wednesday 17th December *O sepientia*

10am Holy Communion

5pm Evening Prayer

Friday 19th December

Carol singing 6.30pm Larchwood 7.30pm

Springwood Corner

Sunday 21st December

Fourth Sunday of Advent

8am Holy Communion

10am Parish Eucharist with God's Gang (followed by refreshments)

6pm Carols and Lessons

Monday 22nd December

10.30am Christmas Communion at Springwood Corner.

Wednesday 24th December

3pm & 5pm Crib service

11pm Midnight Mass

Thursday 25th December

8am Holy Communion BCP

10am Christmas Eucharist with Carols

Sunday 28th December First Sunday of Christmas

8am Holy Communion

10am Parish Eucharist (followed by refreshments)

Wednesday 31st December

New Years Eve Party from 8.30pm

Sunday 4th January

Epiphany

8am Holy Communion

10am Parish Eucharist (followed by refreshments) including God's Gang

Wednesday 7th January

10am Holy Communion

5pm Evening Prayer

Thursday 8th January

10am Pilgrim Bible Study Group Genesis 30 & 31 *Leaving Laban*

Saturday 10th

From 9.30am Working Party – come and help the keep the church spic and span

Sunday 11th January

The Baptism of Christ

8am Holy Communion

10am Parish Eucharist (followed by refreshments)

Tuesday 13th January

1pm Mothers Union – bring left over goodies!

Wednesday 14th January

10am Holy Communion
 2pm First Steps
 5pm Evening Prayer
 7.45pm Parochial Church Council

Thursday 15th January

2.30-4pm Mustard Seed

Saturday 17th January

7.30pm Beetle and Bingo

Sunday 18th January**Second Sunday of Epiphany**

8am Holy Communion
 10am Parish Eucharist (followed by refreshments)
 including God's Gang
 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity begins

Wednesday 21st January St Agnes

10am Holy Communion
 5pm Evening Prayer

Thursday 22nd January

10am Pilgrim Bible Study Genesis 32 *Preparing to meet Esau – wrestling with...*

Sunday 25th January**Third Sunday of Epiphany****Conversion of St Paul**

8am Holy Communion
 10am Parish Eucharist

Wednesday 28th January

10am Holy Communion
 5pm Evening Prayer

Sunday 1st February**Presentation of Christ in the Temple**

8am Holy Communion
 10am Parish Eucharist with God's Gang
 (followed by refreshments)
 6pm Evensong

Advent Reflection

Advent is a wonderful time of year in the Christian Church, first of all it marks the beginning of our annual liturgical journey, then it sets us out on a path of reflection and expectation as we wait for the coming of Christ, both at his incarnation but also at the end of times and finally we get revel in the calm that we get from prayer and preparation for the big day in bizarrely 3 1/2 weeks' time.

Sadly, though we are alone in the waiting. Those around us will be putting up the Christmas tree, attending parties and using this time to generally make merry and the paradox is that they expect us to join it, saying "oh come on its Christmas" making me want to shout back "Advent". We are taught that joy comes to those who wait and yet society seems unable to do that anymore. With Advent starting so late many people started putting up Christmas trees in the last couple of weeks, well before Christmas Eve when I normally put mine up. What does this say about society when all they want to do is celebrate and do anything to have fun, without recognising that by doing that they steadily diminish the joy that they receive.

Expectation, waiting, and preparing makes us all the more ready to have a party at the end of the process. It is like the process of studying, revision, taking of exams and then

the waiting for your results, it makes the celebration of your achievement that much more real and worthwhile. This is a concern because as humans we need to have fun, we need celebrations. It is no accident that Christmas was transferred to the Northern Hemisphere wintertime to give people something to look forward to in the cold winter months. But our society just wants immediate gratification and in doing so they will lessen the joy that should be Christmas, whether Christian or not the opportunity to decorate homes, party together and swap gifts should be a fun and enjoyable time.

I know this makes me sound a bit like a humbug and I am happy to wear that moniker because I think it is important to have that time of preparation and waiting, because I want my joy and fun to be that much more enhanced.

This is what Advent is there to do for us. It is a time for us to prepare. It is a time for us to take stock of what is important in our lives and to then make those things the focus for our celebration. It is a time for prayer and meditation in order that you can reflect and be ready for your heart to be open to receive Christ in whatever form he might come. We don't know in which form he might come. Last time he came as a child, then a refugee, then a carpenter, then a preacher and healer and finally as a criminal. What might he be next time? Perhaps all of the above again and the question that Christ is asking in his Gospel is will you be ready?

I don't think I will be but that's part of why I will spend the few weeks preparing. We know that we can all become frantically busy during Advent as we get ourselves ready with all the practical things, but it is as important to prepare our hearts and mind to be ready to meet our Saviour whenever he comes.

Chris Winter

Loving God, as we set out on our Advent journey, fill our hearts with the desire to walk in your paths and learn your ways. Give us the grace we need to build relationships of peace and reconciliation, one step at a time. Amen.

POSADA

What is posada?

Las Posadas is an Advent celebration with origins in Spain, now celebrated chiefly in central America. Posada is Spanish for "lodging", or "accommodation"; it is said in the plural because it is celebrated more than one day in that period.

The tradition commemorates Joseph and Mary searching for accommodation on their arrival in Bethlehem. People will re-enact the couple's arrival and



the refusal of innkeepers and potential hosts. There are a number of traditional verses which are sung between characters.

Posada customs have been adopted elsewhere using a pottery figures which 'visit' different homes and institutions in a parish.

A Christ Church Posada

We have a posada model ready to travel around the parish this advent.

Mary and Joseph will be starting their journey on Advent Sunday as they travel to Bethlehem.

The figures of Mary, Joseph and their donkey represent the presence of Christ with all travellers and homeless people.

Would you be willing to take the Posada to stay in your home for a night or two? During the visit the model can be displayed prominently - you may want to invite neighbours family and friends to receive hospitality, and join in advent prayers and hymns, and maybe contribute to a charity that supports the homeless, refugees or children; you may just wish to use the figures as a focus for your prayers overnight. There are no expectations other than your prayers. Some people take Mary and Joseph with them when they visit other homes.

We hope that Mary and Joseph will also visit local schools, as well as some of the businesses on Echo Square- calling in at Larchwood, Springwood Corner and anywhere else they will be made welcome. If you do take the posada home please arrange with the next person on the list to hand them on. It is your responsibility to hand the posada figure onto the next home. Please make sure you note down the arrangements and telephone numbers.



Carol singers wanted

We will be out and about singing carols on two occasions in December. On Saturday 13th December we will be singing at St George's Centre between 12 and 1230 for Christian Aid. On Friday 19th December we will be visiting Larchwood at 6.30pm and Springwood Corner at 7.30pm. Come and join us.

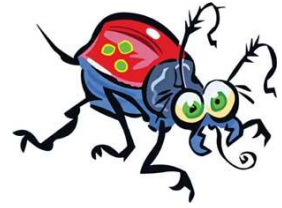
Saturday 13th December

9-11am Church open for gift for the Daily Hub/Foodbank

Please bring Tinned and dried food, also new warm hats, gloves, underwear and socks. Toiletries, toothbrushes, toothpaste. Seasonal items. Look out for more details of what is needed. You can also bring items on Sunday 14th December.

The first social of 2026

Saturday 17th January at 7.00 pm we will be having the ever popular **Fish, Chips, Bingo and Beetle** event.



Together magazine latest edition

A reminder that the latest edition of *Together* magazine is now in church - [it's also available online](#)

Interfaith Week Walk

A day with rain threatening stayed dry for walking with friends from different faith communities, the council, our member of parliament and Kent Police beginning at Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, moving on to Emmanuel Baptist Church, Gravesend Hindu Mandir, Gravesend Mosque on Albion Terrace and the Guru Nanak Darbar Gurdwara. Conversations and food were shared, with the opportunity to see different places of worship and see others praying in their own traditions.



Christmas Bazaar

Its November it must be Christmas! Another amazing Christmas Bazaar raising £2545 for church funds. Masterminded by Sheila and Veronica with a cinema theme the bazaar provided a rich assortment of gifts, bric-a-brac, books, cakes and so much more.



Welcome to the Lord's Table



In February we will be starting a group for those children (8 years+) who wish to be admitted to communion at Easter. Please speak to Sheila or the Vicar if you think your family may be interested. There will be a meeting on Friday January 16th at 4pm for children and parents to explain what is happening. If the children have not been baptised that can be included in the Easter service.

Shoeboxes

98 shoeboxes what a wonderful result for our shoebox collection for Blythswood this year. I believe this is the highest total we have ever had the supervisor at the collection depot was very impressed especially as he had to transport them to the first floor of this year's checking facility. Most of the boxes from this area will be on the lorries going to people in desperate need in Kosovo and Albania this year. So once again thank you to everyone who contributed in any way large or small, financially, covering or filling boxes to this fantastic result. Happy Christmas. Veronica



It's Your Calling Days 2026

Organised by the Diocese's Vocations team, *It's Your Calling Days*, are aimed at anyone interested in exploring where God may be calling them.

Dates already planned for 2026 are:

- **Saturday 28 February, 9.30am to 3.30pm, St Benedict's Centre**
- **Saturday 16 May, 9.30am to 3.30pm, Christ Church, Orpington**

Anyone wanting to attend needs to have a form signed by the incumbent.

Christingle

On the first Sunday of Advent the church was ablaze with light as we celebrated Christingle – the coming of the light of Christ into our world. A moment of wonder and generosity as we collected for the work of the Children Society.



Singing for Christ the King

Celebrating our titular festival with great panache, our choir expanded to 33 voices for a memorable Choral Evensong. Thanks to Tom, the singers and everyone else who filled the church with music. A terrific way to launch our new hymn books. We were helped greatly by a grant from the Choral Evensong Trust.



Whales coming to Rochester Cathedral

Dive beneath the waves with us this February as the awe-inspiring Whales arrives at Rochester Cathedral

Three sperm whale sculptures will be suspended from our Nave and audiences invited to join us in their watery world. The artwork is by Tessa Campbell Fraser and is presented in partnership with Messums. Visitors are encouraged to marvel at these majestic animals and consider how the current climate emergency may impact on these exceptional mammals.

Accompanying Whales will be a bumper programme of events and activities inspired by the sea. There's music from the BBC Big Band, an evening of Sea Shanties and, for families, the chance to hear about Jonah and the Whales. Tickets for these events and many more are available on our website.

Whales opens at Rochester Cathedral on the 10th February until the 7th March. Admission is free during the day but charges apply for schools, groups and special events.



Budgeting for 2026

Money is probably the last subject we want to think about in December. We are very aware that the cost of living increases will be hitting all members of the Christ Church congregation. However we do need to keep in mind that the Church is not immune from these pressures. The Church also has to meet rising costs, particularly maintenance and energy.

We also have to contribute to the cost of the Vicar and the support services of the Rochester Diocese. We are the body of Christ, we are the Church. If Christ Church is to continue to thrive, and continue to have a place in the life of our community that means paying our way. Fortunately we are part of the Rochester Diocese where costs are shared – at present that means that our costs can be subsidised by others – this may not always be the case and it is far from ideal. The PCC believes, at the minimum if we want Christ Church to have a full-time Vicar we should aspire to paying that part of the costs in our contribution to the Diocese. It could take a few years to get there but that is one of our targets, at the moment we meet about 75% of that.



Below you will see how we calculate our running cost, you will see there is a short fall- at present we are able to use other income streams, such as hall rents to help the balance the books – that means that we cannot always deal with some of the long-term issues when an aging building and contents need attention.

It cost £1,668 per week to run our church in 2024

What have we been spending it on?

Our weekly expenses in 2024

Ministry Costs and expenses £172

Parish Share £769

Church Maintenance £242

Utilities £184

Office and Other Costs £155

Music and Services £146

Total £1,668



But our weekly income through giving was...

Planned giving £539

Plate collections £ 348

Gift Aid refund £215

Total £1,102

A new year's resolution?

Please think over the coming month if you are able to contribute more to Christ Church in the new year. This may also be a good time to review your will – legacies often allow us to get on with some substantial work around the church. If you would like to join our weekly envelope scheme or contribute directly by standing order (or would like to increase your standing order) please speak to Anne Thrush.

PRAYER CALENDAR

	THE COMMUNITY	CHURCH
1	The Elderly	Those who use our hall
2	Those with poor mental health	Our preschool
3	The armed services	Our clergy
4	GPs and community health workers	Our Churchwarden Our Parochial Church Council
5	Foodbanks and those who use them The homeless	The children in our church Tots' Group, God's Gang and First Steps
6	Young people at university & college, or in work or apprenticeships	For vocations in the church, and those in training for ordained and lay ministry
7	The unemployed	Street Pastors
8	Our parliament and MP	Churches Together in Gravesend
9	Our emergency services	Our companion dioceses in Estonia, Zimbabwe and Tanzania
10	Social workers	Neighbouring Parishes
11	Children	Our lay ministers
12	Prisoners and prison staff	Prison chaplains
13	The victims of racism and discrimination	Christian Aid
14	Those who support people in the workplace	Our Bishops and Archdeacon
15	Our neighbours of other faiths	Those who are new in our church
16	Our local hospitals	Hospital chaplains
17	All who work with young people Our local Schools School pastors	Inclusive Church and all who work for inclusion and equality
18	Those living with dementia	Our safeguarding team
19	Musicians and artists	Our organist, choir & Semiquavers
20	Family life	Our Mothers Union
21	Our councillors and council	Those who are persecuted for their faith
22	All involved in the production and distribution of food The Foodbank and DailyHub	Mustard Seed Those who are housebound or isolated
23	All who work on the river RNLI	Those preparing for marriage
24	Victims of domestic abuse	Those who care for our buildings
25	Those who care for green spaces	That we may be more aware of our impact on our planet
26	Those who are affected by modern day slavery	Baptism families
27	Those who work in information, journalism and social media	Those who prepare our notice sheet and communications
28	Local businesses Our local funeral directors	The bereaved
29	Those fighting addictions	Uniformed organisations
30	Refugees and asylum seekers	Our Cathedral in Rochester
31	Care homes in our parish SpringwoodCorner, Larchwood and Sheringham	Those preparing for First Communion or Confirmation

2026 Programme for Christ Church Milton - next - Gravesend Mothers' Union

January 13th -
1 pm in the Church
for Meet and Eat



May 12th - 7.30
in the Hall with
Guest Speaker Karen
Roberts from ADS



September 8th -
7.30 in the Hall - An
Evening with Father
Chris Winter



February 10th 7.30
AGM



June 10th - 150th
Celebration at St Paul's
Cathedral



October 13th -
7.30pm
Curry Night



March 10th - 7.30 in
the Hall - Lent with
Fr. Michael Paine
our MCI Deanery
Chaplain



July 14th from 2.30
At Home with Veronica



November 10th -
Painting Icons with
Peter Murphy



April 14th - 3.00
Chat, Knit and Tea
at Jenny's



August 19th - T@3
Church Hall and Garden



December 8th -
Christmas Lunch



Dates for your diary: AGM Spring Members Meeting: Bromley TBA. 25th April. Garden Party: 10th June. National Gathering: 11th June. Wave of Prayer 13 to 15 July. Mary Summer Day: 9th August. RDMCI: Quiet Day - September TBA. Autumn Members Meeting - 10th October.

Christ Church Gravesend

We ask members of the community to come and help us support the Foodbank and Daily Hub by donating non perishable food.



Saturday 13th December
9am to 11am

Your donation will help families in Gravesham this Christmas.





CHRIST CHURCH GRAVESEND

NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY

Starts at 8pm
£10 per person
payment required in advance

Includes buffet and
fireworks

Bring your own drinks

To book see Jan or Lucy
or email

christchurch.chuchwardens@gmail.com