

Our Christian Mission : Blessings of School involvement, Café Church, Christmas and Blessings of School involvement

As followers of Christ, we are called to share His love far beyond the walls of our church building. Our mission is not merely to gather on Sundays but to bring Christ's hope, compassion, and welcome into every corner of our community. Jesus sent His disciples out with a simple yet powerful instruction: *"Go and make disciples of all nations."* For us today, this mission invites creativity, courage, and a willingness to meet people where they are.

One of the beautiful ways our parish is living out this calling is through the return of **Café Church**—a relaxed, open, and friendly space where faith and fellowship meet over coffee, conversation, and community.

Why Café Church Matters

Café Church offers blessings that enrich both our parish family and the wider community:

- **A welcoming doorway for newcomers**
Not everyone feels comfortable entering a traditional service. Café Church provides a gentle, informal setting where people can explore faith without pressure or expectation.
- **Space for honest questions**
Around small tables, people feel more confident to express doubts, share experiences, and explore Scripture together in a warm, supportive atmosphere.
- **A place for intergenerational connection**
Families, children, young adults, and older members can gather in one shared space—learning from one another and strengthening parish bonds.
- **Faith expressed through hospitality**
Sharing food and drink echoes Jesus' own ministry, where meals became moments of teaching, healing, and welcome. Café Church continues that tradition in a fresh, accessible way.
- **A mission-shaped ministry**
This is outreach with heart. It invites those who might never attend a Sunday service to experience Christian friendship and gentle introductions to the Gospel.

How the PCC can support this Resurrected Venture

Now that Café Church has returned to life within our parish, we ask for the help of all who believe in its mission. There are several practical ways you can get involved:

- **Prayer Support**

Pray for the people we hope to reach, for our volunteers, and for the conversations that will take place. Prayer is the foundation of all fruitful ministry.

- **Help with Hospitality**

Could you make cakes, serve drinks, set up tables, or offer a warm welcome at the door? A smiling face can mean more than you realise.

- **Share Your Gifts**

Perhaps you can lead a short reflection, play music, read a Bible passage, or simply listen to someone who needs encouragement.

- **Invite a Friend or Neighbour and come along with them**

Word of mouth is the most powerful form of outreach. A simple invitation might be the beginning of someone's journey toward faith.

- **Practical Donations**

Contributions toward refreshments, craft supplies for children, or general running costs are always appreciated.

Café Church is more than an event—it is an expression of our Christian mission to share Christ's love in open, joyful, and accessible ways. With your support, this revived ministry can continue to grow, bless, and transform lives.

Why the Celebration of Christmas Matters

Every year, as lights begin to brighten our streets and familiar carols fill the air, the Church invites us to pause and remember the deepest truth of Christmas: **God came to dwell among us**. In the birth of Jesus Christ, the Creator of all things enters human history—not in glory or power, but in humility, vulnerability, and love.

Christmas is not simply a nostalgic tradition. It is the heart of our faith: the astonishing moment when God becomes one of us to save us, guide us, and walk beside us in every joy and struggle.

The celebration of Christmas matters because it reminds us who we are, whose we are, and the profound hope we are called to share with the world. It rekindles wonder, renews faith, and strengthens community. In a world that often feels hurried or fractured, Christmas brings us back to the light, the peace, and the promise of Emmanuel—*God with us*.

This holy season is enriched through the beauty of our parish traditions, each offering a unique doorway into the story of Christ's birth.

Nine Lessons and Carols

This cherished service traces the great arc of salvation—from humanity’s fall to the prophecy of the Messiah, and finally to the birth of Jesus—through nine carefully selected Scripture readings.

Between each lesson, the choir and congregation respond with carols that illuminate the readings and lift our hearts in worship.

Why it matters:

- It grounds us in the whole biblical story leading to Christ’s coming.
- It invites deep reflection through the poetry of Scripture and music.
- It brings the whole community together in shared voice and shared hope.

For many, Nine Lessons and Carols is the moment when Christmas truly begins: a doorway into wonder.

Christingle

The Christingle service, loved by children and adults alike, uses a simple orange, candle, red ribbon, and sweets to tell the story of God’s love for the world. Each element symbolises an aspect of the Gospel: the world God created, the light of Christ, His redeeming love, and the fruits of the earth.

Why it matters:

- It communicates the Gospel in a simple, visual, joyful way.
- It places children at the centre of our celebration.
- It reminds us that Christ’s light shines in the darkness—and the darkness cannot overcome it.

Christingle is often the first time young families step back into church. It is one of the most welcoming and mission-shaped services of the whole year.

Christmas Morning Eucharist

On Christmas Day, we gather around the altar to celebrate the incarnation at its deepest level. As we receive the Body and Blood of Christ, we meet the same Jesus who was born in Bethlehem’s manger—God’s gift of life, love, and salvation.

Why it matters:

- It connects the Nativity to the heart of our faith: Christ given for the world.
- It reminds us that Christmas is not only about a birth long ago, but a living presence with us today.
- It unites us as one family around Christ's table, sharing joy, thanksgiving, and hope.

There is no better way to begin Christmas Day than in joyful communion with Christ and with one another.

Why It's So Important to Attend—and to Invite Others

Christmas is a moment when hearts are more open, questions are more tender, and faith can be rediscovered. By coming to worship—whether at Lessons and Carols, Christingle, or the Christmas Eucharist—we make a statement of hope, witness, and belonging.

Your presence matters because:

- It strengthens our parish family.
- It encourages those who might be hesitant to come alone.
- It shows the wider community that the Church is alive, welcoming, and full of joy.
- It fulfils our shared mission to make Christ known.

And your invitation matters even more. Many people are simply waiting for someone to say, *"Would you like to come with me?"* A single invitation can change a life.

It is wonderful that members of our parish are once again able to go into our two schools, and that staff and pupils are visiting our churches for their Christmas services. These moments of shared worship and learning are such an important part of our mission with young people, helping them to experience Christian faith not just in the classroom but within the living community of the Church. The recent Remembrance service for St Bartholomew's School, held in church for pupils and teachers, was especially moving—an occasion marked by deep respect, thoughtful reflection, and a sense of togetherness. It stood as a powerful testimony to the bonds of care, faith, and partnership that unite us. This closeness with our schools is very encouraging, and we give thanks for the opportunities it brings to nurture faith, hope, and understanding in the lives of our children.

Our Common Mission This Christmas

Let us approach this holy season not only as worshippers, but as messengers of the Good News.

Invite a neighbour. Bring a friend. Welcome a family.

Together, let us share the light, joy, and peace of Christ—and help others discover the profound meaning of Christmas for themselves.