

## Latest News – 24th December 2021



## Watch the service – Midnight Mass at St Paul's Cathedral



### Worship at Home for Christmas.

Gather for Midnight Mass - wherever you are this Christmas Eve.

St Pauls Cathedral hosts our online worship as we prepare to celebrate this first service of Christmas with the Bishop of London.

As we remember the birth of Jesus Christ into the world, discover - or rediscover - what's #AtTheHeartOfChristmas. The service is broadcast on the [Church of England's website](#), [Facebook page](#) and [YouTube channel](#). The service remains available to view afterwards.

*All of the video content is manually subtitled. To turn these on, go to the bottom left of the video and click the filled-in box with two broken lines inside. The service is BSL-interpreted throughout.*

### Local Services

**Friday 24th December - Christmas Eve 9.30pm Sibsey Holy Communion**

**Saturday 25th December - Christmas Day**

**9.30am Holland Fen Holy Communion, 10.30am Sibsey Family Service**

## Covid Regulations and Protections during Advent and Christmas

Dear all

Following an update from the Bishop's Office we are now to introduce the following:

- Sunday Services will remain socially distanced as at present but face masks will now be required by everyone (unless exempt).
- Singing may still be undertaken but I request that face masks are kept on to prevent droplet spread.
- Masks may be removed for Leading Services and for Readers.
- Holy Communion will stay in the form it currently is. *[The congregation remain seated and the priest will go to each person in their seats – leaving an empty pew between each row assists this as well as helping with social distancing].*

Being guided to seats is recommended but Track and Trace does not need to be done.

Refreshments may still be served if desired providing those who serve wear face masks and people stay seated and have refreshments brought to them.

Currently there are no restrictions for services such as baptisms, weddings and funerals but face masks must now be worn and the church re-sanitized after such services.

Christmas activities will require a risk assessment and face masks will be required. Refreshments: it is advisable that people stay seated and refreshments be taken to them again with face masks being worn by servers at all times.

Carol Services and Christingles: these services can at present still proceed indoors as long as everyone over the age of 11 years of age wear face masks. It is advised that good ventilation must be in place and that face masks stay in place whilst singing.

Meetings held in church and church halls will be subject to Social Distancing and face masks will be compulsory. Risk assessments will be required if these are new events.

This guidance supersedes that issued on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2021.

Reverend Clive

### Online Services from The Church of England

One of a number of ways in which the Church of England is aiming to help those suffering sadness, bereavement or isolation over Christmas the Church of England's national online services and reflections are available to be heard on the Daily Hope line, the free 24 hour telephone line from the Church of England (**0800 804 8044**).

A live 'carols and chat' event will be held on YouTube on Christmas Day for those on their own to chat and singalong together.

The Church of England will share on Twitter mental health reflections and phone lines for those alone on Christmas Day.

## **Lincoln Cathedral – Chapter Letter – 26<sup>th</sup> December**

As we reflect on the past 12 months and look forward to what the coming year may bring, it is reassuring to be reminded of that constancy of faith and witness through the centuries.

We approached 2021 with cautious optimism; in-person services resumed in mid-February and the vaccine rollout was picking up pace and offering protection and peace of mind. While the journey through 2021 may not have been as smooth as we might wish, there has been much to celebrate – not least the faith, resilience and creativity shown by the community as we navigate the uncertainties of life together and embrace new ways of fulfilling our mission.

Online worship has now become a regular part of our lives; what began as a response to the restrictions imposed by lockdown, has now flourished into an established way for more people to encounter faith and spirituality. Those who are unable to visit the Cathedral to take part in services – not just those who are housebound, but also people from all over the world who hold the Cathedral in their hearts – can now join in from their own home and feel part of our community. Similarly, we contributed to a video for care workers to share with their housebound clients – bringing the music of our talented choir and the joy of the Christmas story directly into their homes.

As well as these alternative methods of engagement, a source of much personal joy has been welcoming so many people into the Cathedral again. After the quiet imposed by the enforced closure of the Cathedral in 2020 and at the start of 2021, it has been uplifting to feel the building resonate with life, music, prayer and thanksgiving. Our recent festive, orchestral performances of *The Snowman* created a magical atmosphere, bringing light into the dark – both metaphorically and literally – as the nave was illuminated with vibrant colours and sparkling snowflakes, and families and friends came together for an experience which they will remember for years to come.

The cathedral lit purple to reflect the season of Advent has inspired the city and it was wonderful to welcome Songs of Praise for the first time in 16 years. While it was undoubtedly unusual to see Christmas trees in the nave and to be singing Christmas carols in September, the event brought some welcome enjoyment and was a great opportunity to share this city which we all know and love with people from across the country. Heritage Rescue have also been filming throughout the year, shining a spotlight on the skill and dedication of the teams that tirelessly maintain and conserve this historic building. The opening of our new shop and café has allowed us to offer hospitality to more people than ever before, and in the coming weeks, the final parts of our new visitor centre will officially open, with the unveiling of the Romanesque Frieze which forms the magnificent centrepiece of our new exhibition gallery. The scaffolding on the West Front comes down next month.

On behalf of the Chapter may I express our deep gratitude to all the staff and volunteers who enable our work and ministry to happen and ensure that the Cathedral fulfils its mission of welcome and hospitality every day of the year. Thank you for the faithfulness of our worshipping community, in the prayerful spiritual resourcing of our life which is at the very heart of all that we do.

As we step into 2022, there can be no certainty about what the next year will bring. But what we can be sure of is that we will step forward with hope, demonstrate love and compassion, and continue to ensure that the Cathedral is a visible sign of God's love where all are welcomed.

May you and your loved ones keep safe in these uncertain times and know the peace and love of the Christ child in your hearts and homes this Christmas.

THE VERY REVD CHRISTINE WILSON, DEAN OF LINCOLN

The Autumn journal of the Lincoln Cathedral Community Association 'In-House' has been published and can be downloaded from here

<https://lincolncathedral.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/In-House-Autumn-2021.pdf>

## Nothing can cancel the message of Christmas – bishops speak of hope amid uncertainty

Nothing can 'cancel' the message of hope and new life at the heart of Christmas even if some celebrations are smaller this year, bishops have said in their Christmas messages. In their annual Christmas messages, bishops of the Church of England speak of the end of 2021 as a time of uncertainty and anxiety but say the message of the Christmas story is needed more than ever.



To read more click on the following link

<https://www.churchofengland.org/media-and-news/press-releases/nothing-can-cancel-message-christmas-bishops-speak-hope-amid>

## Your dream wedding



As COVID restrictions have lifted, many couples will be thinking about their dream wedding and 'setting the date'.

Estimates of the average cost of a wedding today range between £16,000 and £30,000, depending on what you include. This is beyond the budget of many people. But you could get married in church for less than £1,000 including music and bells in a ceremony that is personal and meaningful.

Wherever you have the celebration afterwards you could hold the ceremony itself in a beautiful church in the parish where you live, in a church to which you have a family connection or you can make your own by attending that church's usual services for six months. Many people think they're not allowed to be married in church, but you don't have to have attended church regularly for years and you don't have to be 'religious'. However, it is a religious ceremony in that you will take your vows in the name of God. To many people, the spiritual element is very powerful.

Revd Andrew Roberts, Diocesan lead for promoting weddings said: "I love doing weddings and a church wedding is very special. It's wonderful for families to come together to celebrate, but the really meaningful part of the day is that the two people have come together and made promises to each other to last their lifetime. You can do this very simply and still have a beautiful day. I have many weddings booked for this year and 2022 and I hope as restrictions have lifted that I welcome more couples into the church as they take this next step on their journey together."

To see what a Church wedding can offer go to <https://www.yourchurchwedding.org/> And to find the contact details why not wander down to your local church and look at the Notice Board, or simply go to <https://www.achurchnearyou.com> and search for where you live or the church where your family are.

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## Hope at the heart of Christmas: Bishop of London's message as second pandemic Christmas approaches



The Bishop of London, Sarah Mullally, has urged people to take steps now to protect each other as we prepare to celebrate Christmas – the second during the global Covid-19 pandemic – amid a rise in cases.

Bishop Sarah, who leads the Church of England's Covid Recovery Group, was speaking as updated guidance for churches was published. She said: "As we look forward to celebrating again the coming of Jesus into our world, we can do so with hope. Few of us imagined when we first heard of the coronavirus at the beginning of last year that we would now be approaching our second Christmas of a global pandemic. The recent emergence of the new Omicron variant and the evidence we've seen already of its rapid spread is a cause of real concern. And while we are hugely thankful for the rapid development and mass rollout of the vaccines - and the current booster programme - there are important steps we should take now to protect ourselves and each another.

"As Christians we have a duty to care for one another, especially those who are most vulnerable, and the latest measures announced by the Government should offer some extra protection and reassurance for people. Caring for one another, sharing, hope, faith and most of all the knowledge that God is with us are at the heart of Christmas. This Christmas we will be coming together – whether in person or online – to worship God and celebrate his coming into the world as a human being like us. Amid all that we have been through together in the last two years that hope is as strong as ever."

## Church of England Statistics for Mission 2020

Church of England figures from the Church of England show that more than 9,000 churches (eight in 10 parishes) offered 'Church at Home' worship, such as online or dial-in services, during the March-July 2020 lockdown.



The full report also details in-person attendance figures for services which were, as expected, significantly lower than usual, amid legal restrictions on numbers because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Most of the figures are based on an annual snapshot taken in October, which fell just before the second full national lockdown in England, when adult average weekly attendance was 57 per cent lower than 2019. Despite the restrictions, the figures were still collected by the Church of England Research and Statistics Unit to record and recognise those things that churches were able to do in such difficult circumstances, understand the impact of the pandemic on

church life and give context to future figures.

A spokesperson for the Church of England said: "The 2020 Statistics for Mission figures are very much in line with expectations and really underline the scale of the challenge churches faced in the first year of the pandemic. "The main figures represent a snapshot in time in October last year, as the second wave of Covid-19 gathered momentum, while many churches in England were still closed for public worship, and all were under a legal requirement to limit numbers.

"The Advent and Christmas figures show this even more starkly - given the restrictions we all remember being introduced just a few days before Christmas last year. So they bear tribute to the resilience of local churches in the face of real challenges to which they responded in remarkable ways.

"We know that eight in 10 parishes offered 'Church at Home' online, via email, post and telephone during the first lockdown, helping sustain parish life when it was so dearly needed and also bringing the good news of Jesus Christ to some people for the first time."

## Bishop's unusual inspiration for Lincoln Cathedral's Christmas Day service

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The John Lewis Christmas advert has undoubtedly become a staple of the festive season, with stories including a young girl who spots a lonely old man on the moon having previously gripped the nation.

But while many of us may simply turn our minds onto other pressing festive matters after seeing the annual campaign, the messages that they deliver linger in the minds of many. One such person this year is the Right Reverend Dr David Court, the Bishop of Grimsby, who will be delivering the Christmas Day service at Lincoln Cathedral. This year's John Lewis Christmas advert, entitled "An Unexpected Guest", tells the story of a young boy who falls in love with an alien after showing her the staples of Christmas on earth.



Acknowledging the fact that delivering Christmas Day services means delivering the same story every year, Reverend Court says that he tries to find new ways of doing so on each occasion. He told Lincolnshire Live: "During the festive period, the congregation obviously expect to hear the Christmas story but you have to be careful to not totally repeat yourself every year. So it is about finding new ways to tell that story and to bring home its key messages and there are several ways

in which you can do that, but I must say that the John Lewis Christmas advert this year has been an absolute gift. It obviously tells the story of an unexpected guest and so in many ways that will be able to provide me with inspiration this year."

Reverend Court was appointed as the Bishop of Grimsby in 2014, and was consecrated by the Archbishop of Canterbury at St Paul's Cathedral later that year. In 2019, Reverend Court was chosen to serve as the acting Bishop of Lincoln following the suspension of the former holder Christopher Lawson, who failed to respond appropriately to safeguarding disclosures. A new acting Bishop of Lincoln, Stephen Conway, has now been installed and the process to appoint a permanent replacement has begun.

But Reverend Court will still be delivering the Christmas Day sermon at Lincoln Cathedral this year and despite the breathtaking nature of the venue, he says that he has another preferred setting for festive services. He said: "The cathedral is of course a magnificent venue, but particularly around Christmas, there is nothing quite like the intimate, close-knit community atmosphere that you get in a small village church. "I think in a smaller setting like that you also get a stronger sense of the community that you are addressing, which can make what you're saying more powerful and relevant to them. I am obviously used to delivering sermons to large numbers of people, but I can't pretend that there isn't an added pressure when doing so at Christmas."

This year's Christmas services at churches and cathedrals across the UK come after a year in which they were severely restricted by coronavirus restrictions, and in many cases cancelled. But this year, services are back in full swing and several events have been held at Lincoln Cathedral over this festive period, including a performance of The Snowman accompanied by a live orchestra. Reverend Court said: "For so many people, going to church to hear the Christmas story is such a special and magical part of their experience over the festive period and so I like to make sure that they are getting that experience. I'm also very mindful of the fact that for many people, Christmas will be the only time that they go to a church or a cathedral and they are of course people that we absolutely embrace."

With a new acting Bishop of Lincoln now in place, Reverend Court says that he will now be turning his focus back to his role as the Bishop of Grimsby. He added: "It's been an absolute privilege to serve in this role and step in, but I will be focusing back on Grimsby from the new year and I am keen to get back to the day job."

# Report your daily status on the Covid Symptom Tracker app even if you are well. Help science beat the virus.

Find out more at <https://covid.joinzoe.com/>

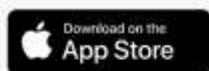


## 4,719,161

### CONTRIBUTORS

People of all ages and backgrounds are joining together to fight COVID. Support the NHS, help scientific research and help us get out of this pandemic safely.

Take 1-min to report your health daily, even if you are well.





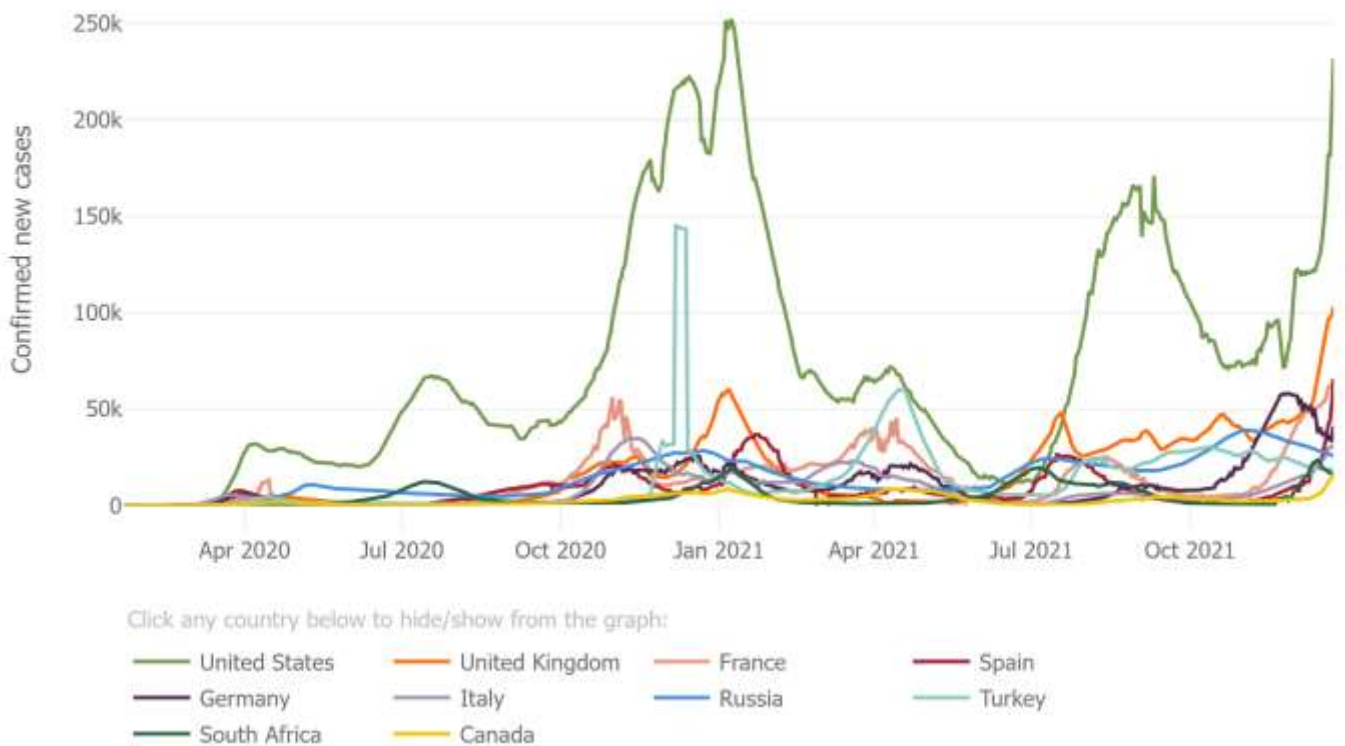
# Latest figures

The John Hopkins University, USA collates international Covid data on their website updated daily.



## DAILY CONFIRMED NEW CASES (7-DAY MOVING AVERAGE)

Outbreak evolution for the current most affected countries



## Topical Prayers

The Church of England website offers words you can use in your prayers for all kinds of situations ranging from the everyday to personal situations, family events and prayers for others. If you need some help finding the right words, please go to the Church of England website here

<https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/topical-prayers>

## Daily Hope

Daily Hope is a free phone number (0800 804 8044) offering music, prayers and reflections as well as full worship services from the Church of England at the end of a telephone line. This will enable as many people as possible to access the content we are developing.

## St Botolph's Church – Boston Stump



### Service Times

Services are available in-person and some are available online, via Zoom. To obtain the login details for our online service, please email [admin@parishofboston.co.uk](mailto:admin@parishofboston.co.uk) or call (01205) 310929. You are most welcome to join us. Please note that COVID-19 safety measures are in operation.

Weekly News is published in Pilgrim Progress at <https://parish-of-boston.org.uk/news/>

### Sunday services

#### First Sunday of the Month

8am – Said BCP Eucharist

11am – Sung Eucharist (also available online)

5pm – Choral Evensong (also available online)

#### All other Sunday's in the month

11.00am – Sung Eucharist (also available online)

### Wednesday mid-week service

10.30am – Said Eucharist (also available online)

### Christmas Eve

11.30pm Midnight Mass

### Christmas Day

9.30am Christmas Day Service

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DELIVERED BY  
ROYAL  
VOLUNTARY  
SERVICE



# Do you need some help while self-isolating?

If you need a hand with collecting shopping or prescriptions, or just want someone to talk to, our NHS Volunteer Responders are here to help.

Call **0808 196 3646** or visit [nhsvolunteerresponders.org.uk](https://nhsvolunteerresponders.org.uk)