

A huge thank you to dioceses and local churches across England and the Diocese in Europe for getting involved in #GodWithUs and bringing the Advent and Christmas journey to millions of people. We really appreciate the feedback given in the run up to the campaign and your help in shaping and sharing it.

Our three objectives were:

1. Sharing a Christian message with the public
2. Encouraging people to attend their local church for a service or event in December
3. Ensuring as many people as possible took the *Your Christmas Journey* reflections.

Working with Church House Publishing, we brought together print and digital, so posters, the printed reflections booklet and the social media resources all matched and were consistent for the public. In addition, our new Church of England and [A Church Near You](#) websites allowed us to better direct people to their local church and the reflection resources we made available.

Thanks to the collaboration across local churches, dioceses and national Church bodies, the campaign had a reach of **6.8 million**. Some people may have seen the content more than once, but our research suggests this overall figure is due to our targeted social media advertising and the appeal of the *Your Christmas Journey* reflections course.

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## A reach of 6.8 million across the #GodWithUs campaign



Three videos produced at All Saints High Wycombe church enabled us to open the doors to people who don't go to church regularly and show the joy of gathering as a local community to celebrate the birth of Jesus. These and the reflections videos received **two million views across Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube**. Here's an example of one of the videos shared:

The Christmas prayer, aimed at families and children, was also very well received, particularly on Facebook:

The reflections were seen a total of **844,000 times across social media, email and by text message**. The course performed well with 18-34 year olds on social media. Church House Publishing sold 80,000 copies of the booklet to churches to share with congregations, and 18,000 were distributed free to clergy. Thanks to John Kiddle, the Archdeacon of Wandsworth, for writing the open and accessible reflections.

We asked those who took the course by email and text to fill in a short survey. Of those who did, 70% read all of the reflections and we've received encouraging feedback such as "Back problems prevent me going to Church every week so it very helpful to receive reflections such as yours, thank you", "It has brought me closer to God and made me determined to get back to church" and "Texting is great in today's world as when I'm busy and forgetting the word it brings me back to Jesus". The reflections also achieved an average open rate of 45%, well above the industry average.

Churches did a fantastic job adding services to the new A Church Near You. There were 22,000 more Christmas services listed than 2016 and so the total number stood at over 56,000. We also saw the number of page views increase substantially from 925,000 in 2016 to 1.5 million in 2017. 69% of people were new visitors.

Thanks to churches for getting to grips with the new site and for being so willing to enter a huge number of Advent and Christmas services in a short space of time.

Facebook and Instagram proved to be a powerful platform for us to run targeted advertising to reach people who don't normally go to church and to share messages with Christians who go to Church of England churches. Here's one of the posts shared in December on Instagram:

Clergy have shared really interesting examples of how engaging with #GodWithUs may have helped with attendance: "I think your Facebook ad probably had a large effect on our numbers! The numbers at Midnight on Christmas Eve have been around 30-45 in the 4 years I've been here: but this year we had over 100. In similar vein, our 4pm Family Carols attracted over 150, after a couple of years when the attendance had been nearer 110-120".

We're delighted that the campaign brought more people into relationship with God and the Church at this key moment in the Christian year and our prayer is that we build on the successes and learnings to do more for Lent and Christmas 2018.

If you have any thoughts or questions then please do email us at [digital@churchofengland.org](mailto:digital@churchofengland.org).

**Adrian Harris is Head of Digital Communications at the Church of England**

***The work of the Digital Communications team is part of the Church of England's Renewal and Reform programme, aimed at helping us become a growing Church for all people and for all places.***

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