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The statistics also show that 2.4 million attended a Church of England Church at Christmas in 2014 and 1.3 million people attended a service at Easter. Additionally, 2.2 million people attended special Advent services for the congregation and local community whilst 2.6 million attended special Advent services for civic organisations and schools.

The statistics also highlight the other services carried out by the Church of England on a regular basis. In 2014 the Church carried out just under 1,000 weddings, 2,000 baptisms, and almost 3,000 funerals every week of the year. Some 12% of births during 2014 were marked by a Church of England infant baptism or thanksgiving service whilst 31% of deaths were marked by a Church of England funeral.

As a whole the figures represent a continuing trend which has shown a 12% decrease in attendance over the past decade with an average decline of just over 1% a year.

Speaking on the publication of the statistics, the Bishop of Norwich, the Rt. Revd. Graham James, said: "The 2014 figures are not in any way a surprise. Whilst the recent trend of the past decade continues, it has been anticipated and is being acted on radically.

"As part of a prayerful and considered response to these trends the Church is embarking upon the biggest renewal and reform process in over 150 years focusing our resources on prayer, evangelism, discipleship, vocations, leadership & training.

"We do not expect that trend to change imminently or immediately over the next few years due to demographics. We lose approximately 1% of our churchgoers to death each year. Given the age profile of the CofE, the next few years will continue to have downward pressure as people die or become housebound and unable to attend church.

"As a Church we are unashamedly committed to following the teachings of Jesus Christ in our worship of God, discipleship and service to the poor and the marginalised. Our confidence, resilience and service is rooted in Jesus.

"The story is not one of inevitable decline. During 2013-14 some dioceses continued to increase their attendance. In the past 12 months alone there are examples of growth and new churches across the country. In my own diocese the church of St. Thomas Norwich has grown from 50 to 450 people in the past two years. In Bournemouth, St Swithin's - a church which started in 2014 - now sees 500 people attending every week whilst in Birmingham St Luke's Gas Street in is already attracting hundreds of young people since its beginning in 2015. There are many others like these and each is a sign of hope.

"Attendance statistics do not tell the whole story. There are many things that churches do that are not included in these data from running

homelessness services and hosting foodbanks, to educating a million children a day in our schools to providing welcome and accompaniment to the least, the last and the lost in our society."

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