

People love singing carols. Singing is good for the body, mind and soul and carols can unlock emotions, tell stories and connect us to others, past and present while raising our prayers.

The Government has announced that choirs may sing indoors and congregations may sing outdoors at Christmas.

So we've put together these 12 tips to help you to make outdoor services safe, special and memorable:

1. Choose your **space** well – it could be a churchyard, or a village green or a park. Work with your local friends and organisations to choose the



Lichfield Cathedral

2. **Safety** is key for everyone involved, so complete a risk assessment using our template to ensure you have covered all bases. If you are using an outdoor site which is not the churchyard or on church property, you will also need to complete a statutory risk assessment. The Government has encourage those attending to be seated where possible, so you could invite people to bring their own seating.
3. **Sound and light**: find an outdoor sound system and speakers, add a few extra lights for atmosphere and safety and have a welcome team to help people to find a spot safely. This is an important part of health and safety, as well as accessibility.
4. Make the most of **phones** – distribution of carol sheets should be avoided, so make words available for people to view on a phone or print off at home. Phones also have torches to help people move around safely and can take photos to share later



5. Remind people on the way in and at the start of the service to have a look around to make sure their household bubble is **two metres** from others.
6. Decide your weather limits – and advise everyone to **dress sensibly**. Remember people are used to outdoor winter events in England, so flat shoes, waterproofs, mitts and scarfs should be usual.
7. Keep it **short** and have a few seats for those who can't stand the whole time or have not brought a chair. This will help to make everyone feel welcome, including those worried about being in the cold for too long.
8. Remember carols connect to a **whole range of emotion** – so include moments of joy and maybe a moment of quiet for when people are moved by their memories.



from The Lion Storyteller Bible.

10. **Make the prayers active** and imaginative – for example the [hand prayer](#) , or look up at the sky, down at your feet, round the community, across to the church etc. See the [Church Support Hub](#) for more ideas.
11. Balance the familiar with **the unexpected**: Use a choir or worship band to lead the singing and perhaps an unexpected soloist, for example from the tower or just hidden from view.
12. Tell people what you are doing – when and where it is happening and what to expect. Put details on [achurchnearyou.com](#) so everyone can find you.

Enjoy! And do it safely – making sure you have done all the checks you need so the good news can be heard and memories will be made.

More information:

- [Church of England guidance on Coronavirus \(Covid-19\)](#)
- See the Government's [guidance on safer singing](#).

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