Encourage Christmas visitors to your church with this easy, engaging social media content idea. Share a picture of your church before and after adding Christmas decorations.
One of my personal favourite things about Advent and Christmas is the decorations. The intentional changing of how a room looks, signifies that it's a time like no other in our often busy calendars.

A simple garland, bauble, or string of fairy lights often reminds me to take a moment to reflect on the story of Christmas, and the joy of being around those that we love.

With 2022 bringing a much anticipated return to 'more normal' Advent and Christmas services, we hope you're excited to welcome your community in through your doors – so they too can take stock of the year gone, reflect on the Christmas story, and share time together with loved ones.

So as your church prepares for Christmas this year, join us in sharing the excitement and extend an invitation across your social media platforms by posting your Christmas decoration 'before and after' photos.

Following the success of our #StainedGlassSummer campaign, where we encouraged churches to share photos of their windows – we want to see your churches as they are now, vs how they look all decorated ready for Christmas.

The aim is to let people know that a warm and festive welcome is waiting for them in church. Your post is likely to get even more engagement if you can include some smiling faces of those who have done the decorating, in your ‘after’ image.

So, tag us in a post, on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram, and together we can extend the great invitation, and let people know that we're ready to welcome them this Advent and Christmas season.

**How to do it**

1. **Sort your images**

You can take two still photos, or two short videos. Take both from the same position in your church. One before you start decorating, and one when you're done.

It's great if you can include some smiling faces of those who have done the decorating, in your ‘after’ image. Just make sure they understand you are putting the picture on social media and check they are happy with this, before you post the images.

2. **Add a welcoming message and a link to your service/event details**

Here are a couple of examples you could try:

"We're ready to welcome you this Christmas at Holy Trinity! Find details of all our services and events at... #FollowTheStar"

Our decorations are up, and we can't wait to celebrate Advent and Christmas with you at Holy Trinity!
As we look to return to a more ‘normal’ Christmas period, come and gather with us and share in the good news of the Christmas story.

#FollowTheStar

3. Use the hashtag #FollowTheStar

Don’t forget to add the hashtag #FollowTheStar, to become part of the national wave of invitation. Using the hashtag also means we can find your posts – we’ll be resharing, retweeting and reposting a selection from the central Church of England social media accounts.

Examples

You could post and before and after image like this:
Maybe you’d want to post a reel to Instagram and Facebook showing the difference, like this:

Perhaps you want to take a short video highlighting your favourite decoration in your church?

However you want to show off your church’s festive ‘glow up’ – just be sure to tag @thechurchofengland and use #FollowTheStar

Now, best start untangling these fairy lights...
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[Image]

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