



earYou.com this December.

The last few Christmases have been difficult for all of us. This year, the Church of England has worked on resources to help our churches and regular churchgoers to invite those around them to church to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ.

We're already seeing fantastic ideas from churches using their digital platforms to reach their communities, but we've compiled a list of five free ideas you might like to try this December to join us giving The Great Invitation.

If you do give these a go, remember to tag @thechurchofengland when you're sharing on social media and use #FollowTheStar.

1. Share stories of Christmas memories at church from your congregation

Seeing someone who is like you telling their warm memories of going to church can help people consider giving church a go themselves this December.

For a uniform set of posts, you could film your congregation sharing their favourite memories of Christmas past. Alternatively, ask individuals to film themselves against any Christmas background, to create a range of different posts for social media. Find out more about [good questions to ask to create these memory videos](#).

Think about gathering stories from a diverse group of people if possible – ages, stages, backgrounds. When you're sharing these, think about how you can encourage as many people as possible to watch, including asking your congregation to share these to their own social media accounts.

2. Share a video explaining what you have planned

A great way of making your services and events understood and welcoming is to record a short video going through the details of a couple of upcoming events. Remember to include things like what might happen, how long it might last, whether children are welcome and perhaps any refreshments on offer!

You could share this on Facebook, Twitter or try creating an Instagram reel. Find out more about [creating Reels](#). If possible, use subtitles to ensure the video is as accessible as possible.

Using video rather than longer text can also help those who find reading difficult and ensure that visitors have someone to look out for and recognise if they do attend.

3. Add services to AChurchNearYou.com

List your onsite and online Advent and Christmas services on AChurchNearYou.com, using an Advent or Christmas tag. From the start of Advent,

they will then appear on a special Christmas landing page, that we will be driving the public to via advertising and publications.

Last year, [AChurchNearYou.com](https://www.achurchnearyou.com) received 77 million page views, and 80 per cent of visitors were on the site for the first time.

The Church of England will be using social media organic posts and some advertising to guide the public to find out about their local church's services and events this December – make sure they can find yours by adding all that you have planned.

While on the site, from the start of Advent onwards, you'll also discover improved 'Share with a friend' buttons on all events, and 'Add to calendar' functionality to make it easier for visitors to plan their services.

Also, an invitational graphic will appear when you use the improved share buttons to share links for each event on social media. Share yours and take the first step in inviting your community to celebrate with you.

Think about the language you're using when adding these services. Could someone who's never attended church understand?

The busiest time on the site all year is Christmas Eve – it's never too late to update your page.

Find out [how to list and tag your services](#).

4. Use the free graphic generator and templates on ACNY

The Resource Hub on AChurchNearYou.com is carrying a range of 'Great Invitation' features to help you invite family and friends this year.

Create free content to use across your social media channels. Our social media graphics can be edited to include your tailored messages. Keep them short and welcoming – you can put the details in the social media post and add a link to your AChurchNearYou.com event with the full information.

Create as many social media graphics as you'd like – for free.

You'll also find 'Great Invitation' PowerPoint slides to download for your own invitation messages to be used at church.

Browse [downloadable files and graphics in the Resource Hub](#) or try the [graphic and video generator](#).

5. Amplify the Church of England's explainer posts, with information about what you're doing locally

This year, the message of the campaign is clear – you are welcome to church.

Lots of the Church of England's social media posts this year are being designed to break down the unknowns for those who might not have been to church for a long time – or ever!

With lower levels of religious literacy now, some of your community might not know what a 'Crib service' is or why we light candles on the Advent Wreath. [This blog can help explain some of the unknowns.](#)

We'll be sharing posts that explain the meaning of traditions, services and carols. You could share these posts to your own social media channels, including a message from you about your own services and events.

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