

The number of Christmas services and events being advertised on the Church of England's church-finding website is up by more than a quarter on pre-pandemic levels as parishes prepare to welcome people back in person to celebrate the birth of Jesus.

The [A Church Near You](#) website is advertising just over 23,850 services and other gatherings with a tag relating to Christmas – including Advent events, carol services, Midnight Mass, and Christmas Day services.

There are more than 20,300 events listed using the tag “Christmas” alone so far this year – up 29 per cent on the figure for the same point in 2019.

In the last few days search engines have seen a surge in people searching for phrases such as “midnight mass” and “carol service near me”.

An estimated 682,000 people have visited AChurchNearYou.com in December so far, and around 80 per cent of these visitors were on the site for the first time.

Events listed on the site include ‘no rehearsal’ nativities, Christmas bingo, and family activities such as a puzzles and code cracking ‘escape room’ game based on the Nativity story.

The Church of England's Christmas advert was launched earlier this month on Instagram, TikTok, Facebook and Twitter, as part of the Christmas campaign: “Follow the Star – the Great Invitation”.

It has been seen on TikTok more than five million times in the last 24 hours alone.

After two years in which the festive season was marked for many by loneliness and uncertainty because of Covid-19, churches across England are fully open and inviting people to join services and other events.

The campaign is geared towards people who might not normally – or ever – attend church.

It includes a plain-English explainer on [what to expect at church this Christmas](#) with answers to common questions which people may be too embarrassed to ask such as “How will I know what to do?”, “What should I wear?” and “What if I do not know all the words?”.

The Church of England's Head of Digital, Amaris Cole, said: “This Advent and Christmas has seen a strong rebound in the number of services listed on AChurchNearYou.com, a mobile-friendly and convenient way to find a church service or event wherever you are in the country.

“Our parishes are inviting people to church this Christmas after a year marked by challenges including the impact of the cost of living crisis. We hope that people will feel able to take up this invitation to join us and hear the message of hope and comfort that is the Christmas story.”

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