



St Paul's Church



Are You Ready for Christmas?



Firstly, we would like to express our heartfelt gratitude for the warm welcome we have received as a family within the parish. Your kindness is truly appreciated – whether in the form of thoughtful gestures that often go unnoticed, generous gifts, kind words, or, most importantly, your prayers. These offerings of goodwill help to foster a sense of community and belonging, for which we are deeply thankful.

As we embark on our Christmas shopping this weekend and into next week, it is inevitable that we will encounter the familiar question from retailers and those we meet: "Are you ready for Christmas?" Perhaps you have already found yourself pondering this very question. Yesterday evening, while in a supermarket, I overheard someone remark, "Christmas is about Jesus." Although I did not recognise him as a member of our church, I instinctively sensed he must be a fellow Christian, someone who holds a personal relationship with Christ close to heart.

Donning my clerical collar often prompts people to comment that I must be particularly busy during this season. Secretly, I always hope for these moments to become opportunities to invite them to attend one of my two churches, sharing in the joy and meaning of Christmas together.

The question of readiness for Christmas persists. Yet, the answer may vary, shaped by our individual theological perspectives and our desire to gently share our beliefs without dampening anyone's festive spirit. For some, the response might be, "I'm ready for Christmas every day, as Christmas is about the second coming of Christ... but more importantly, are you ready for Christmas?"

As a vicar I can now say, "My midnight Mass and Christmas Day sermons are written, so yes, I am ready for Christmas in church, and I hope to see you at one of the services."

Alternatively, readiness might be measured by ticking off tasks, such as, "Yes, I'm ready – I've just got the turkey to buy, presents for the in-laws, all the gifts to wrap, fill up the car with petrol, withdraw some emergency cash in case the payment terminals go down, pick up Alka seltzer and medicine for upset tummies, but other than that, I'm all set."

If Christmas is truly about welcoming strangers, supporting the weak and outcasts, and standing up for the poor, can any of us honestly say we are ready?

Perhaps we ask the question out of habit or simply to be polite. Whatever your answer may be, Christmas is nonetheless a time to offer others hope, peace, joy, and, if possible, love. Let us endeavour to share these gifts generously, making Christmas meaningful for all.

Rev Claude

SERVICES

SUNDAY 21 DECEMBER – Advent 4

9.15 am for 9.30 am - Bubble Church - dress-up nativity

10.30 am – Christmas Morning Praise – Gwyn

WEDNESDAY 24 DECEMBER @ 2.30 pm

Crib & Christingle Service – Rev Claude & Gwyn

THURSDAY 25 DECEMBER @ 10 am

Christmas Day Communion – Rev Claude

SUNDAY 28 DECEMBER – First Sunday after Christmas

No Service

SUNDAY 4 JANUARY - Epiphany

10.30 am - Café Service – Café Church Team

EVENTS

FRIDAY 10 JANUARY @ 9.30 am

Baby & Toddler Group

THURSDAY 15 JANUARY @ 2.30 pm

Fellowship: Bring and Buy Auction

FRIDAY 30 JANUARY @ 7 pm

Church Crafts

FRIDAY 6 FEBRUARY @ 9.30 am

Baby & Toddler Group

THURSDAY 19 FEBRUARY @ 2.30 pm

Fellowship: Life on an African Mission

PRAYER RESOURCE

Prayer Resource for Christmas 2025

'The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light...' (Isaiah 9: 1a)

We thank God for:

- The birth of His Son that first Christmas, and for the people who He may have sent into our life as a gift, to show us something of himself.
- 2025, and as we look back, we give thanks for the good times and leave with God the struggles and worries of the world.

Please pray for:

- The peace and joy of Jesus to touch each person's heart this Christmas.
- God's love and hope to reach every corner of our world.
- The loved ones of all who have been killed or injured this year: in war-torn areas, terrorist attacks, road traffic accidents, natural and man-made disasters, and in other incidents around the world.

- All who have to work during the festive season; for the bereaved or those separated from loved ones; for people spending Christmas on their own or in unfamiliar surroundings.
- The homeless, hungry and frightened, and may God's loving presence fill every night shelter and warm space this winter.
- Our Church family: all who are struggling; for Edith, Alice, Jill, Sandra, Brenda, Elizabeth, Carol, Di, Ray, Percy, Paul; and for Meaghan, Alison, and all at Maidstone Care Centre.
- Our memories of this year, leaving with God the struggles, worries and uncertainties faced and hopes dashed; and, as we look ahead, ask God to lift our eyes, renew our minds, soften our hearts, transform our lives and give us hope for the future.

Hope. Peace. Joy. Love.

It is about the light of the world that broke our fear.

An Emmanuel. A God who is here.