

CHRIST CHURCH, DARTFORD

Church office: 01322 221589,
christchurchdartford@hotmail.co.uk

Wednesday 24th November 2021

Dear Christ Church community,

As we approach December, I want to extend a warm welcome to you all for our Christmas services this year. We are really looking forward to meeting up with people again as we celebrate the coming of our Lord as a tiny baby, in a stable, 2,000 years ago.

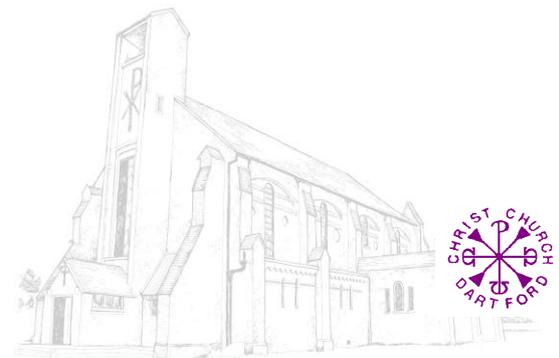
The birth of Jesus reminds us that God comes into the dark and hidden places of the world and brings his light and hope, a message we need to hear again as we continue to wrestle with rebuilding our society in the face of the long term consequences of the pandemic.

So please take a look at our Christmas services card and see which services you can come along to. While we are still encouraging people to wear masks, out of kindness to others, our programme is looking much more like our usual pattern with our **Carols by Candlelight** on the Sunday before Christmas and **Midnight Communion** and children's **Crib Service** on Christmas Eve (although we won't be asking the kids forward as we used to, to reduce the likelihood of infection). We are also pleased to offer a **New Year's Eve Watchnight** Service for those who like to bring in the New Year with worship and with a blessing. Please look at the card for a summary of events.

We also enclose our new **quarterly 'What's On' sheet** which shows the Sunday themes for the next quarter and the events planned for our winter season (December to February). Please note the **socials on 30th Jan and 26th Feb** to which you are warmly invited.

I would also like to invite you to our **Following Christ course, running 4pm each Sunday for 7 weeks from 13th Feb**. We created the course through lockdown and found it to be a great way for people facing many questions about life, God and Christianity to explore together. So this is intended for anyone seeking and questioning God, but it will also serve as preparation for those seeking Confirmation (if you don't know what that means come along and find out!).

Finally, a brief mention about our **church magazine**. We were unable to produce this during lockdown but have taken the opportunity to refresh the format. So in March you will be getting a new quarterly Christ Church News



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magazine, which will incorporate our quarterly What's On programme and will now be in colour!

But beyond all this information I want to end on a simple message, which is to remind you that God loves you – loves you enough to send his only Son for YOU – and that we are seeking to grow afresh as a church, centred on that love.

This last year and a half have been horrendous for the pain and loss endured and for the breakdown of community brought by that. Over that time our church community has become more fragmented, and at a personal level I am sorry for the people we've lost touch with, despite our best efforts. Of course, there have been blessings over that time as well, and one of those blessings is the number of new people now regularly worshipping at Christ Church, and for that I give thanks. But if we have lost touch at all, please know that you are loved and we'd be delighted to see you with us again as soon as you feel able, and so to grow together in the love of God himself.

With love, and God bless you all,

Richard
(Rev Dr Richard Mortimer)

