

## SHARE THE MEANING OF CHRISTMAS DESPITE COVID

Read through these great ideas for celebrating Advent and Christmas in church and community – shared over Zoom by around 50 people from URC’s Yorkshire Synod and Mersey Synods.

They conform to social distancing requirements and all safety and legal requirements should be adhered to.

Don’t try them all! Pick out the ones that work for your church in your community.

Please be aware of issues of consent and personal data sharing if you are putting things online or on social media.

### PRAYER IDEAS

Hold a **Zoom Prayer Room** and encourage as many people as you can to attend.

Send **Christmas cards** to people – church members, friends, relatives, neighbours – and put a prayer slip inside for prayer requests that can be returned to the church.

If you’ve got room outside your church, put up a **prayer Christmas tree** on which people can leave prayers. Useful resources, including perspex baubles, can be found at [Baker Ross](http://www.bakerross.co.uk) ([www.bakerross.co.uk](http://www.bakerross.co.uk)).

Give out prayer ribbons and ask people to tie them to your prayer Christmas tree.

[Try Praying](https://www.trypraying.co.uk) (<https://www.trypraying.co.uk>) provides a Perspex box with booklets to take away.

Hold a **nativity trail** which finishes at your church and includes prayer stations.

Set up **prayer stations** around the outside of your church.

“Love Life, Live Advent” provides resources aimed at young people –

<https://www.eden.co.uk/love-life-live-advent>



Yorkshire churches: [ashley@bvurc.org.uk](mailto:ashley@bvurc.org.uk)  
Mersey churches: [mde@urcmerseysynod.org.uk](mailto:mde@urcmerseysynod.org.uk)



## IDEAS FOR INVOLVING FAMILIES

Give away **Christingle kits** so that families can make their own Christingle at home.

Dependent on guidelines at the time, you may be able to hold a Christingle in church – with take away kits – and perhaps you could film it for those not able to attend.

<https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/how-you-can-help/fundraise-and-events/christingle>

Get imaginative with a Posada! Share photos or pictures on social media of Mary and Joseph looking for somewhere to stay as they travel around your community.

Share your nativity scenes on **social media** – building up the scene day by day. Put them on display in your household windows. Figures can be knitted, fabric, painted – they can be anything – the more varied the better!



Hold a **nativity trail in the windows of local shops** and businesses. Families can photograph themselves at the different places. Prizes for completing the trail can be picked up by arrangement.

Nativity Plays – just need a bit more imagination in 2020!

**Record your nativity play online** – either on Zoom or filmed in section in houses and then edited together. Show in church or online.

Does your **church have windows which face onto busy streets**? Use them for an Advent calendar – put up a picture each day culminating in the Nativity scene on December 24.

Do you usually have a Messy Church or Junior Church? **Make Advent craft kits** or Advent activity bags for collection, or delivery.

### Other resources

<https://lyymbaptistchurch.com>

<http://compassionexplorers.org>

CHURCH, CHRISTMAS AND COVID Facebook group (which includes a good 'Lockdown Nativity' script) <https://www.facebook.com/groups/951188848699906/>

## IDEAS FOR INVOLVING YOUR COMMUNITY

**Post Christmas cards** to your local community – with a message that Christmas is still happening.

Put knitted angels, and other Christmas tree decorations, on your **church gates** and invite people to take them home for their Christmas tree or hang them on a Christmas tree in your church grounds. Top Tip! Don't put them all out at once as they will soon disappear!



Engage with **local schools** – knitted or fabric angels and knitted hearts along with the message. “What can I give Jesus? Give him my heart”. Jesus pegs made out of wool with the message “Keep Jesus safe this Christmas” and an invitation to photograph the peg in safe places and post on social media.

Engage with local shops and businesses to participate in an **Angel Trail or Christmas Treasure Hunt**. Each venue to have a picture or scene and an anagrammed or otherwise scrambled Christmas message (eg *Joy to the World*, *Love Came Down at Christmas*).

<https://www.messychurch.org.uk/tags/sheep-trail>

## IDEAS FOR FORMING AND MAINTAINING RELATIONSHIPS

Work on your ecumenical relationships and look at doing more together with partner churches in Advent and Christmas and 2021.

Ensure you **connect with everyone** who comes to your church or who has contact during the week via activities, whether church related or not. Be ready to take up requests for help as people are often more ready to connect at this time of year.

Make sure your church looks **“open for business”** even if the doors are locked now. Use your church grounds, church windows, church railings, church lights, church Christmas tree, church notice boards. Make sure your church is giving out the message that ‘We are here and we are celebrating Christmas’.



Send/deliver Christmas messages/cards to people who use the church, as well as church members, to reach out and maintain the relationship – ‘We haven't forgotten you and we are still here’.

Socially distanced **carol singing** – outdoors in church grounds or at the end of the street.

**Leave things that people can take away** – in the church grounds, or on a Christmas tree or on church railings – angels, Christmas tree baubles, chocolate coins, knitted nativity figures, knitted animals, prayers, prayer request cards.

Collate the **Christmas greetings** of your church friends and members and circulate on paper (newsheet, church magazine) as well as electronically.