



Christmas Services & Events

Saturday 21st December

9.30 am Christmas Connect Café

Sunday 22nd December

8.00 am Traditional Communion (BCP)

10.30 am Dress Up Nativity...for everyone!

6.00 pm Community Carols with brass band outside church, followed by mulled wine and mince pies

7.15 pm Carol Service

Tuesday 24th December

5.00 pm Christingle Service

11.30 pm Midnight Communion

Wednesday 25th December

8.00 am Traditional Communion (BCP)

10.30 am Christmas Day Celebration

**Details are inside this leaflet and on our website
www.stpaulsbeckenham.org.uk**



St Paul's Church, Brackley Road, Beckenham, BR3 1RB
Telephone: 020 8650 0501 Email: admin@stpaulsbeckenham.org.uk
The church office is open Mon, Tue & Thu, 9.15 am to 2.15 pm



CONNECT

@ St Paul's

December 2024

Christmas at St Paul's



WWW.STPAULSBECKENHAM.ORG.UK

Christmas Greetings from St Paul's



Rev'd Rachel Winn

Having been Vicar at St Paul's for a mere four months, someone asked me 'what have the highlights been so far?'

Initially I thought about events like the summer Community BBQ and the new 'Knit and Natter' group; or the special services.

But then it struck me: it's actually the people who are the highlights — those dedicated volunteers growing the life of the church, and the neighbours from the Parish whom I encounter and talk with daily, and who share important 'stories' which shape their lives.

The Bible is full of 'life stories' — complicated lives, full of ups and downs, tragedies and miracles. We can see where God is present in the messiness and darkest of places. God often turns what seems to be rubbish into gold. This is what the prophet Isaiah describes as 'beauty for ashes'.

St Paul's is truly a beautiful church, inside and out. The loving care spent tending the premises is reflected in the way the church family cares for one another. Our vision is to reach out especially to people who are feeling isolated, whether lonely from living alone or lonely within their relationships.

But why do we care? What is the driving force shaping lives, our services and busy community activities? The answer is the One who is life-transforming: Jesus Christ.

We find great comfort and joy in a God who chose to come right into the messiness of the world — a light that shines into the darkness and offers hope to all people.

If you would like to discover more, why not join us for one, or all, of our services?

Rachel Winn

'Jesus gave life to everything that was created, and his life brought light to everyone.'

'The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it.'

(John Chapter 1, verses 4-5)

Let there be Light!

Changes are taking place at St Paul's. The slow, steady growth of the yew trees has cast ever-darker shadows over the entrance path. Our single door light struggles to penetrate the gloom. So, the yew trees have received a much-needed prune, and new lighting is being installed to improve safety for people walking on the church paths.



Pruning the yew trees will allow more light to reach the path and enable everyone to see the church entrance and tower more clearly. Don't be alarmed that some branches are bare! Yew trees regenerate, and they will start to green up again over the coming months.

Following extensive consultation with a specialist lighting company, and mindful of light pollution and the church's Victorian heritage, we will be erecting a Victorian lamppost on the path to the church entrance, adding uplighters either side of the church door, and installing lanterns above the church door and at the entrance to the church hall.

Please do look at the display at the back of church, as we apply for planning permission.



The Team behind our Connect Café



Here are just some of the intrepid crew running our monthly Connect Café and Litter Pick!

On **21st Dec** they will once again be serving our Christmas-themed breakfast fayre, where pigs in blankets and mince pies augment our usual coffee, bacon butties and pastries.

Members of our church and local community thoroughly enjoy the welcome, chat and friendly atmosphere each month at the Connect Café. Our neighbours have been very generous, donating special aprons for the cooks.

So why do our Connect Café crew give up their Saturday once a month — and what do they get out of it?



Marian loves the teamwork and especially the chance to chat with people in the community.



Roger wants to provide a friendly place, with good food and coffee, so that church and community members are able to relax and interact. It's a way of giving glory to God.



David leads the Litter Picking team and wants to care for God's world by helping clear some of the rubbish from our local streets.



Liz wants the church to be a place where the community feels included and welcomed....and loves the buzz and chatter.



Clari hopes people just dipping into community and church have a place to go, and will see God at work in the team.

All of the team stress that they see the Café as an active part of their faith, and hope it gives a glimpse of God's love for all the people of New Beckenham.

What is 'Connect' at St Paul's?

St Paul's Parish at a glance:



- 7000 people in 3500 households
- Massive 40% in single person households
- Big concentration of 35 to 44 yr olds
- Lowish proportion of retirement age.
- Lots of pre-school children, but fewer older ones.
- Professional and technical occupations dominate

Source: 2021 Census

St Paul's has a pastoral responsibility towards all the people living in the area — not just to those who go to church!

That's because Jesus gave two great but simple commandments to his followers:

Love God and Love your Neighbour

We have a friendly and welcoming programme of 'Connect' events and activities that aim to build a community of neighbours of all faiths and none. There's no need to feel lonely or isolated here.



Our 2025 programme will include:

- Knit & Natter/Crochet & Chatter
- Monthly Connect Café/Litter Pick
- Winter Super Soup days
- Weekly Thursday Babies & Toddlers Group
- Weekly Thursday Friendship Group
- Summer Community BBQ and Band
- Themed social nights
- Green Week & Autumn Fair
- 'Resolve' course on lifestyle
- Monthly Gardening Team

Look out for details on our noticeboards and website!

The Christmas Journey at St Paul's

Beginning on Advent Sunday, we reflect on the special time leading up to when Jesus was born: 'God with us,' who came to earth so that we could be reconciled with God, and with one another. Our Sunday services leading up to Christmas explore the great spiritual themes of thanksgiving, patience, humility and joy. We welcome people of all ages and at all stages of faith to join us in our variety of Christmas services.

**Advent Sunday
1st December**



Advent Sunday marks the start of our spiritual preparations for Christmas.

**Week beginning
1st December**



We share the 'Christmas Experience' with a specially decorated church and stories with children from Worsley school, St Paul's Pre-School and our Babies and Toddlers Group. Come and see the story decorations when the children's events have finished

**Saturday
21st December**



The pace hots up the weekend before Christmas Day with our special **Christmas Connect Café** from **9.30 - 11.30 am**

**The Sunday before
Christmas
22nd December**



Join us for the **Dress Up Nativity Service** for all ages at **10.30 am**
Community Carols with Brass Band around the outdoor Christmas tree at **6.00 pm**, followed by **Mulled wine and mince pies** and then our **Carol Service** at **7.15 pm**

**Christmas Eve
24th December**



Welcome the birth of Jesus with the wonderful and popular family **Christingle Service** at **5.00 pm** and our **Midnight Communion** at **11.30 pm**

**Christmas Day Services
25th December**



We begin with traditional **Holy Communion** at **8.00 am** followed by our family **Christmas Day Celebration** at **10.30 am**

The festive season ends with Epiphany in January, after which we explore how we can strengthen our resolve to change in 2025:

The church will be open every day during the Christmas period.

Resolve

Resolve is a four-week course exploring what it means to enact positive change in your life.

Begins Monday 6th January 7.30 pm