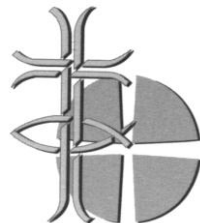


CHRIST CHURCH
United Reformed and Methodist

CHRIST CHURCH
LINK

DECEMBER 2025
JANUARY 2026



Prince Edward's Road
Lewes BN7 1BL
www.christ-church-lewes.org

MINISTER

Rev Barbara Evans-Routley

(Day off is Friday)

Tel: 07948 119787

Email: barbaraevansroutley@gmail.com

LAY WORKER

Claire Bell

Tel: 07725 592658

Email: layworker@christ-church-lewes.org

CHURCH SECRETARY

Neil Fisher

Tel: 01273 471487

Email: secretary@christ-church-lewes.org

ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY

Lindsay Frost

Tel: 01273 486448

Email: secretary@christ-church-lewes.org

CHURCH TREASURER

Irene Gannon

Tel: 01273 813003

Email: treasurer@christ-church-lewes.org

The publication date is normally the final Sunday of the preceding month, and items for inclusion should be sent to the Secretary by the Wednesday before that date.

Church Office Telephone: 01273 488237



MINISTER'S REFLECTIONS

From Rev. Barbara Evans-Routley

I'm sure many of us are beginning this season of Advent preparing. Most of us will be thinking about the practicalities of the season – guests, food, gifts, decorations and events. But in a theological sense we are also preparing. Advent marks the period of Mary's pregnancy. For those who have had children or know someone who has, you will be aware of the preparation that goes into waiting for the big day. Somehow, one tiny arrival can cause enormous amounts of upheaval. And likewise, for us advent can be a fairly frantic time preparing for the "big day". Who gets what, who visits whom, what we hope for, where we will be. Cleaning the house, finding a spare space for the extra guest to sleep in or the extra chair for them to be seated at. And if the magazines and tv adverts are to be believed, the secret to surviving it all is the preparation.

Alongside this preparation is also the waiting. Babies come in their own time. But in a world full of instant gratification, social media and 24-hour news coverage, waiting is something that is becoming increasingly alien to us. We struggle with waiting and rarely experience it in a positive light. The need to wait is a challenge when we have become unaccustomed to doing so.

Putting these two, preparation and waiting, together, leads to us being invited into a particular place. Yes, we can just focus on the practical elements of waiting for Christmas, but we can use the time to look inward too. The preparation of our hearts and minds is a task in itself. What is the purpose of Christ, if it is not to change us – and I don't mean because we will feel a little poorer and possibly be a bit gift richer. We are invited to experience love. The love of a vulnerable baby, born into an unforgiving world, born to love and be loved. For to experience in ourselves the unconditional love of the God who created us and wishes to hold us in eternal love.

What would it mean to you to really know, deep in your heart, that you are loved? And what would it change?

Let this time of Advent be a time to prepare yourself so that you can know in your heart that this is true. I wish you a very happy Christmas.

Barbara

FROM THE SECRETARIES

Welcome to the December 2025 and January 2026 edition of **CC Link**. We wish a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all our readers.



Advent Sunday marks the start of another church year and, of course, the calendar year will turn around to 2026 at the end of December. **It has been a good year for Christ Church.** After several years without a minister, we were very pleased indeed to welcome Rev. Barbara Evans - Routley to Christ Church in September. Barbara is still settling into her new role – alongside her many other duties with CSUA and four other churches - but is already making her mark, as she gets to know Christ Church, its congregation and the local Lewes community.

With Claire Bell standing down as our lay worker in spring 2026, we were encouraged to bid for funding from the URC Southern Synod's Strategic Mission Fund to carry forward our lay work in the local community, and also to strengthen our administrative capacity in an increasingly complex world.

Our bid was successful, and we have secured funding which should take us up to early 2031. The challenge for us is now to use this enhanced ministerial and lay capacity to grow our church and develop a stronger role in the local community.

We have made good progress with **recruitment of new Lay Worker**. After advertising in October., and interviews in November, we have made a conditional offer to **Hannah Clark**, which she has accepted. We hope that this will enable Hannah to start work with us early in the New Year, once all the paperwork has been completed. She will work alongside Claire for three months to settle into the job.

We feel very fortunate to have recruited Hannah. She currently works as Communications Officer with IBEX South Coast, a Christian charity helping churches find ways to use their resources and spaces to support communities across Hampshire and Dorset. She formerly worked in the URC's central communications team at Church House London. Hannah also has teaching experience, and led work on setting up Crossway Tots in Seaford. She lives in Seaford with her young family.

Our **Bible Study** classes have continued with “**Christian Belief in the 21st century**”, taking as our starting point the Nicene Creed , which was written in AD 325 and so celebrated its 1700th anniversary this year. Thanks to David Smith and Claire Bell, who have worked on a draft booklet, which has been central to our discussions. The booklet will be further refined in the light of our discussions and, hopefully, finalised in 2026.

In January, our Bible Study classes will pick up the last of the **A Rocha New Zealand /Aotearoa “Rich Living” series on “Waste”**, the last in the series. After that, we will have a series of Lent classes, possibly in partnership with another Lewes church.



Thank you to Claire, and our friends at the Fitzjohn’s Food Partnership for organising the **Community Harvest Festival** on Wednesday October 29. More than 60 people attended, including some Tots families. It was a very wet day in the middle of half term. Curiously, this helped us attract a good turn-out, as we were providing an afternoon out for the family away from the rain.



The kitchen team

There was a wide range of food , crafts (making bird feeders) , face painting , a dressing up box, apple press, making flavoured apple jellies (thanks to Cllr Imogen Makepeace) and “guess the weight of the pumpkin “. The event was popular with the many local families who are having difficulty making ends meet, or who may not get out much to meet other people.



Apple pressing

We have applied to **Lewes Town Council's Exhibition Fund/ Blunt's Charity** for funding, which will enable us to organise three more similar events in 2026. We should hear more about that later in December. Before that, we have our **Community Christmas Party on Wednesday December 17 at 16:00**. We will need a number of volunteers to help on the day. If you can help, please speak to Claire.

Our programme for the Advent- Christmas-Epiphany season has now been confirmed and is as follows:

Sunday November 30: Advent Sunday (communion service) at 10:30 led by Rev. Barbara Evans-Routley (Jointly with Cross Way, Seaford)

CSUA Advent Carol service at 16:30 at Haywards Heath Methodist Church

Sunday December 7: Normal Sunday service at 10:30

Saturday December 13 : Setting up Christmas Tree Festival

Sunday December 14: Christingle service at 10:30 and Carols on the Green at 1430

Christmas Tree Festival [runs to January 4]

Wednesday December 17: Community Christmas Party at 16:00

Sunday December 21: Carol service and readings at 10:30

Thursday December 25 : Christmas Day service at 10:00

CTLA Seniors' Christmas Party from 12:30 -15:30

Sunday December 28 : Normal Sunday service at 10:30

Thursday January 1 : New Year's Day walk starting at Cliffe Corner, Lewes at 1100, heading to Mount Caburn

Sunday January 4 : Normal Sunday service at 10:30

Church Council is taking a fresh look at our **Vision and Work Programme** for the coming year. We made some progress at our November meeting and will pick it up again in January. We will also take into guidance at recent URC training on how church leadership teams can best work effectively.

New bike racks have been installed outside the entrance to the church, with the aid of grant funding from Lewes District Council. We will hope that this will encourage more visitors to the church to come by bike, and reduce traffic congestion and air pollution in the surrounding streets.



With best wishes for a joyful and Peaceful Christmas and a Happy New Year

Neil Fisher Church Secretary
Lindsay Frost Administrative Secretary

Wednesday 21 January 2026 at 7.30 pm

Rev Dr Peter Sills will be speaking on

"A response to Christian Nationalism "

Peter trained as a lawyer and was ordained in 1981 after initially teaching law at Kingston. He served in three parishes in South London and then as canon residentiary of Ely Cathedral. He is now attached to Ditchling parish. In his talk, he will address "the notion of Britishness and the place of the Christian church and Christian values within the nation".

FINANCIAL NEWS

Here are some bits of financial information to bring you up to date:

- The **CSUA assessment** for 25/26 (Sept to Aug) has increased by 3% and will be £6625 for Christ Church.
- The **URC Ministry & Mission Fund** contribution (which goes from Jan to Dec so this changes next January) is a 1% decrease for Christ Church and will be £3288 for the year.
- Our **special charity appeals** in September raised £218.31 for the Christian Aid (CA) Afghan Earthquake Appeal and £132.71 for the CA Harvest Appeal from last month.
- Christ Church Tots raised £115.11 for the **BBC Children in Need Appeal** on November 15

Irene Gannon Treasurer

BBC
CHILDREN
IN NEED

THANK YOU

Christ Church Tots

for raising

£115.11

THE MONEY YOU HAVE RAISED WILL HELP TO
MAKE LIFE LIGHTER FOR CHILDREN



© BBC 2022 Reg. charity England & Wales no. 802052 and Scotland no. SC039557.

Update from Karen and Vivian

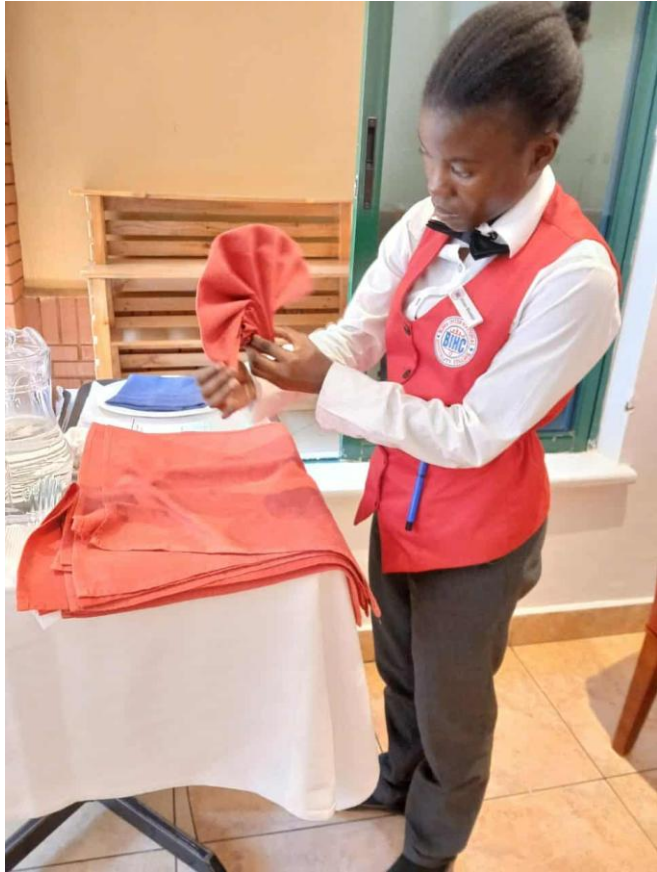
Karen and Vivian will be joining us for the Carol Service on 21 December.

Here is an update on what they have been doing.

Vivian

Some words from Vivian. 'My past week was exceptionally demanding, commencing with the completion of Continuous Assessment Tests (CATs) across all units. A highlight was the successful execution of a high-volume cocktail service on Wednesday, where our team of 16 students (group 2) expertly served 250 guests, demonstrating significant competence and efficiency in a professional setting. The other part of this week required focused commitment to external projects and independent study. The week ended on Saturday with two practical examinations: a Service practical and a Culinary Arts practical, where we focused on the preparation and presentation of Fruit Skewers'.

Vivian spent time at the Giraffe Centre with other students as part of their environmental and sustainability project. College is very busy but she has settled well and has made some good friends. She has found a church in Nairobi she likes to attend too. We thank God that she is invested not only in her academics but also in her spiritual life too. friends. She has found a church in Nairobi she likes to attend too. We thank God that she is invested not only in her academics but also in her spiritual life too.



Karen

My Chaplaincy work continues to keep me very busy at the hospital each week. I thought you might like to hear of a testimony from a young man I recently ministered too. He had severe burns on his chest and face, which he received whilst walking to his place of work. Some youths set upon him dousing him with petrol and setting him alight. When I asked him about his faith, he told me his faith in God has risen because his life was spared. The young man inspired me with his strength and his insightfulness, letting go of hatred and bitterness towards his attackers.

My studies for a certificate in Contemporary Chaplaincy is going well. It's broadening my mind and how I approach my work. It's online and self paced which requires me to be very disciplined and organised.

The pictures are of the Thika Chaplaincy Team I serve with. We prayed together and thanked the hospital for their warm reception to us throughout 2025. We presented gifts in the Chapel to Chaplain Catherine representing the hospital chaplaincy department.

As Chaplains we currently preparing for 'Christmas Comfort' at Nairobi Remand Prison which houses approximately 4,200 men. This is taking place on Wednesday 10 December. We will spend the morning in fellowship with the prisoners and officers, taking gifts such as soap, toothpaste, shower shoes, bibles etc.

The team has asked me to wish you all at Christ Church a very blessed festive season.



URC SOUTHERN SYNOD – ONLINE RETREAT FOR ADVENT



URC Spirituality is running an online Advent Retreat - **Waiting for the light** from 2nd December 2025 07:30 to 6th December 2025 21:00.

Venue: Online
Ticket: Free

There will be three sessions each day:

7.30-8.00am: a portion of a psalm, leading into silence

12.00-13.00pm: a shared [slow reading](#)* of one of the readings of the day (lectio divina) followed by a little sharing

7.30-9.00pm: sessions led by a variety of people, to include Neil Thorogood, Andrew Brown and Jacob Bali

For previous online retreats some people have attended all the sessions, weaving the rhythm of the retreat into their week, and others have dipped in as they are able. Sessions will be sufficiently self-contained for this to work as a “retreat in daily life” for whatever sessions people can make.

All the sessions will be on the same Zoom link.

Please book at:

https://urc-spirituality.org.uk/urcsp_event/advent-online-retreat-2/

after which you will be sent the zoom link for all the sessions.

* <https://urc-spirituality.org.uk/waysofpraying/slow-reading-of-scripture/>

CHRIST CHURCH WALKS

Our **October walk** to Telscombe Tye was cancelled due to high winds and heavy rain, which would have made this exposed downland and coastal route very difficult. We will re-schedule it for another date in 2026.



The **November walk** at Falmer was held on a cold and overcast day. The walk began from the Lower Lodges car park (near the A27) and walked up through Stanmer Park into the woods and downland above the University of Sussex campus. The colour provided by autumn leaves had largely gone, but the fallen leaves provided a cushion from the mud on the footpaths.

Large scale building works are still continuing at the northern end of the campus, as the university seeks to provide more on-site student accommodation. We then turned back down to the village of Stanmer, where we had a tea stop, before walking down through the park and back to the cars.

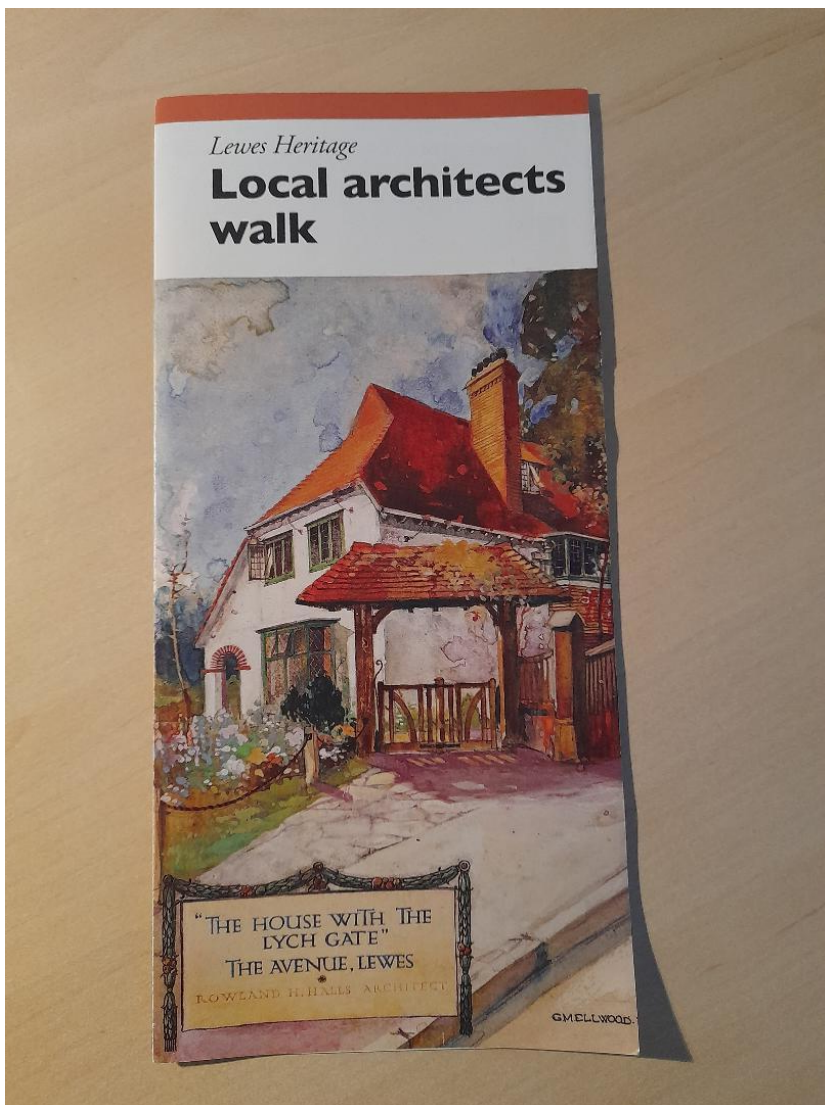


Alan and other walkers, plus Pip the dachshund, on the downs above Stanmer on our November walk . © Irene Gannon (behind the camera)

There is no December walk as the calendar is simply too crowded in the festive season

We have our **traditional walk on New Year's Day** with our usual downland route up to Mount Caburn and back. Meet 11 am at Cliffe Corner

The January walk on Sunday 18 will be the "Lewes Architects walk". This is a self-guided walk promoted by the Friends of Lewes, the town's local conservation and amenity charity. It is very local to us, focusing on the Wallands and Pells areas of Lewes and the work of Samuel Denman and Rowland Halls, two local architects in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, together with some more modern houses by local architects. Hopefully, this will be a good choice for a mid-winter walk, when conditions out in the countryside can be muddy and very exposed.



Our January walk

Churches Together in the Lewes Area
SENIORS'
CHRISTMAS DAY
PARTY

at CHRIST CHURCH

Prince Edwards Road, Lewes BN7 1BL



Thursday 25 December 2025

12.30 – 3.30 pm

Christmas Lunch, Carol Singing, Festive Fun

Call Gretel Scott: 01273 473904 or 07712 660337 or
email gretelscott@gretelscott.plus.com for details

CHRISTMAS CONCERTS IN THE LEWES AREA

We are now entering the season where the Christmas Music Concerts come thick and fast. Here is information on some concerts you can see in the Lewes area over the coming weeks:

- **Saturday December 6** at 7 pm. **East Sussex Bach Choir** at St John sub Castro Church singing works by Vivaldi, Britten and Pergolesi . Tickets £25 from www.eastsussexbachchoir.org
- **Sunday December 7** at 3 pm. **Christmas with the Ashdown Singers** at St.Thomas More Church, Seaford. Collection in aid of HOMELINK.
- **Sunday December 7** at 6.30 pm. **Ecumenical Advent service of Choral Evensong** at St Anne's Church
- **Saturday 13 December** at 6 pm. The Esterhazy Chamber Choir leads "**Carols by Candlelight**" at St. Anne's Church, Lewes. Free admission
- **Wednesday December 17** at 7 pm Carol Concert in aid of Friends of Lewes Victoria Hospital at St.Michael's Church, Lewes. **East Sussex Bach Choir**. Tickets £20 from www.eastsussexbachchoir.org
- **Friday December 19** at 7.30 pm **Lewes Concert Orchestra** at Lewes Town Hall. A Christmas Concert with seasonal favourites and much good cheer. Tickets Adults £15/Under 18 £5 available from www.lewesconcertorchestra.org.uk
- **Saturday December 20** at 6 pm **East Sussex Community Choir** provide a Christmas Cracker in aid of Dementia UK at Lewes Town Hall. Includes *Puccini Messa de Gloria* and a variety of Christmas music and audience carols
- **Saturday December 20** at 6 pm. **A Christmas Carol**. The classic Christmas tale: performed just down the road at St. Anne's Church. Readings by Alistair McGowan with musical interludes by Brighton Philharmonic Orchestra. Book online via www.brightonphil.org.uk/whats-on
- **Sunday December 21** at 7 pm **Bach Christmas Oratorio** at St Michael's Church, Lewes, sung by The Baroque Collective singers. More information on www.thebaroquecollective.org.uk
- **Saturday January 10** at 7.30 pm **Lewes Sings Gospel Winter Concert** at St John sub Castro Church, Lewes. Book tickets at <https://trinitylewes.churchsuite.com/events/j55hyrwp>



www.ashdownsingers.org.uk

Christmas with Ashdown Singers

Directed by Sam Barton

3 p.m.
Sunday 7th December 2025

St Thomas More Church,
Sutton Road, Seaford
BN25 1SS

Proceeds in aid of Homelink



<https://leweshomelink.org.uk>

“THE CONNEXION” TO END.....

..... AND A CHALLENGING ART EXHIBITION AT DITCHLING

Trigger warning : This article contains references to sexual abuse which some readers may find distressing or triggering

The Methodist Church’s quarterly magazine “**The Connexion**” is to cease **publication** after its Winter2025 edition (just out).

The magazine celebrates the church’s work in many different places around the UK and how its long held ethos of a wide ranging connexion between church members is being played out in the fast changing modern world. It often asks us “What does it mean to be a Methodist in the early 21st century? “ Since it commenced in 2015, we have stocked copies at the back of the church for everyone to read.

Like many other forms of the printed word, it has been overtaken by the digital world and the many different forms of communication it offers.

“The Connexion” has never been shy of confronting the difficult issues that face the church and wider British society. **The latest (and final) edition looks at whether it is possible to separate art from the artist that created it.**

It focuses on the work of the artist Eric Gill, a famous sculptor, typographer and printmaker. Gill and his work were celebrated in his life (1882-1940), but after his death he was revealed to be a prolific sexual abuser, including towards his own daughters. Much of his artistic work was done when Gill was living in Ditchling, East Sussex

One of Gill’s most famous works was “The Annunciation”, which was acquired by the Methodist Modern Art Collection (MMAC) before his crimes were revealed. Now that the crimes are widely known, should the art work be kept out of public view?

After consulting survivors of sexual abuse, the MMAC decided that the best course of action was to display the artwork and to accompany it with the testimony of those who have suffered abuse. The survivors wanted to use the artwork to “start conversations, acknowledge the victims, confront historical abuse, and discuss the intersections with faith “

With this in mind, MMAC approached **Ditchling Museum of Art and Craft** to see if they would co-curate an exhibition. Working with survivors, a new exhibition called “**It Takes a Village**” includes a section which explores the lives of Gill’s daughters, with the survivors selecting works and telling their stories, including the daughters’ own pictures from childhood and some of Gill’s portraits of them.

“It Takes a Village” looks at Ditchling’s wider artistic legacy, and a separate section looks at Gill and the survivors of his abuse, in case any visitors who have suffered abuse find it distressing or triggering

It Takes a Village” is at Ditchling Museum of Art + Craft until 15 March 2026



THOUGHT FROM THE LAYWORKER

As we enter the season of Advent and Christmas and move towards the beginning of another year, we are given another opportunity to look at the Christmas story afresh. The temptation is to feel that the story is so familiar that it has nothing new to tell us or teach us. This has been a year of many challenges, many times when we have perhaps been perplexed and confused by world events and our own inability to influence them. And yet, if we allow it, the simplicity and essence of the Christmas message has the power to touch us whatever our own personal circumstances. My prayer is that in the busyness of this season and all the preparations that have to be made, you will find a moment to reflect on God made man, what John Betjeman calls 'this most tremendous tale of all' in his poem 'Christmas':

*This most tremendous tale of all,
Seen in a stained-glass window's hue,
A Baby in an ox's stall ?
The Maker of the stars and sea
Become a Child on earth for me ?*

A prayer for Advent and the New Year:

*Loving God
You sent your messenger to Mary with news that was perplexing
yet full of promise. Help us to be open to your message of grace
and promise today. Help us to be messengers of your love to
others and to be compassionate agents of change in your world.
Amen.*

Happy Christmas and God Bless

Claire

Church Calendar for December 2025

- Wed 3 10 am - 12 noon Ukraine Café
 12.30 pm - 1.30 pm Prayer Meeting
- Fri 5 9.30 am - 11.30 am Christ Church Tots
- Sun 7 10.30 am Morning worship led by Gwyneth Watkinson
 3 pm HOMELINK Christmas Concert
 at St.Thomas More, Seaford
- Wed 10 10 am - 12 noon Ukraine Café
 12.30 pm - 1.30 pm Prayer Meeting
 7.30 pm Church Council (business meeting via Zoom)
- Fri 12 9.30 am - 11.30 am Christ Church Tots
- Sat 13 10 am – 12 noon Christ Tree Festival setting up
- Sun 14 9.30 am Prayer Meeting in the Quiet Room
 10.30 am Second Sunday Christingle service
 2.30 pm Carols on the Green
- Wed 17 10 am - 12 noon Ukraine Café
 12.30 pm - 1.30 pm Prayer Meeting
 4 pm - 6 pm Community Christmas Party
- Fri 19 9.30 am - 11.30 am Christ Church Tots
- Sun 21 10.30 am Carol Service
- Thu 25 10 am Family Service for Christmas Day
 led by Rev Barbara Evans-Routley
- Sun 28 10.30 am Morning worship with Holy Communion
 led by Rev Barbara Evans-Routley

Church Calendar for January 2026

- Thu 1 11 am New Years Day Walk
- Sun 4 10.30 am Morning worship led by Rev Dr Richard Goldring
- Wed 7 10 am - 12 noon Ukraine Café
12.30 pm - 1.30 pm Prayer Meeting
1.30 pm Bible Study
- Sun 11 9.30 am Prayer Meeting in the Quiet Room
10.30 am Second Sunday worship
- Wed 14 10 am - 12 noon Ukraine Café
12.30 pm - 1.30 pm Prayer Meeting
7.30 pm Church Council (discussion meeting at the church)
1.30 pm Bible Study
- Sun 18 10.30 am Morning worship led by Gwyneth Watkinson
1 pm Church Walk
- Wed 21 10 am - 12 noon Ukraine Café
12.30 pm - 1.30 pm Prayer Meeting
1.30 pm Bible Study
7.30 pm Thinktank
- Sun 25 10.30 am Covenant Service
led by Rev Barbara Evans-Routley
- Wed 28 10 am - 12 noon Ukraine Café
12.30 pm - 1.30 pm Prayer Meeting
1.30 pm Bible Study

Rotas for December 2025

	7	14	21	25	28
		Christingle	Carol Service	Christmas Day	
Welcoming	Brenda	Linda B	Janet	Linda F	Graham
Vestry	Lindsay	Lindsay	Lindsay	Lindsay	Lindsay
Coffee	Brenda & Pam	Glenda & Alan	Linda B & Janet		Judy & Ian
PowerPoint	Irene	Neil	Tom	Neil	Graham / Neil
Organ	Joy	Second Sunday	Norman	Norman	David

Rotas for January 2026

	4	11	18	25
				Covenant Service
Welcoming	Brenda	Graham	Brian	Janet
Vestry	Tom	Neil	Irene	Neil
Coffee	Judy & Ian	Brian & Joan	Glenda & Alan	Linda B & Janet
PowerPoint	Tom	Neil	Irene	Neil
Organ	Norman	Second Sunday	Joy	David

CHRIST CHURCH

(United Reformed and Methodist)
seeks to proclaim the Gospel and serve
the community around it.

The Minister, Layworker and Church
Council members would appreciate
information about those who need
pastoral care and will endeavour to
answer the questions of those who want
to know more about the Church's life and
witness here in Lewes.