

## Events and training

More details for all these events at [gloucester.anglican.org/events](http://gloucester.anglican.org/events)

### **Nativi-tea at the Monk's kitchen Gloucester Cathedral, GL1 2LX, 2 December to 24 December**

A festive twist on their classic afternoon tea, featuring homemade mince pies, fudge, mulled wine, scones with jam and clotted cream, and sandwiches.

<https://gloucestercathedral.org.uk/whats-on/nativi-tea-at-the-monk-s-kitchen-24>

### **Once upon a STAR: The Christmas story Gloucester Cathedral, GL1 2LX, 6 December to 5 January**

A festive family trail to discover the story of the first Christmas. Follow the path toward the star, meeting key figures from that holy night along the way.

<https://gloucestercathedral.org.uk/whats-on/follow-the-star-to-bethlehem-trail>

### **Have your say**

Visit Facebook [f/Diocese.of.Gloucester](https://www.facebook.com/Diocese.of.Gloucester), email Katherine at [kclamp@glosdioc.org.uk](mailto:kclamp@glosdioc.org.uk), follow us on Twitter [@glosdioc](https://twitter.com/glosdioc), view videos on YouTube [Diocese of Gloucester](https://www.youtube.com/DioceseofGloucester) or visit our website [gloucester.anglican.org](http://gloucester.anglican.org)

### **Beer and carols at Trinity Cheltenham 100-102 Winchcombe Street, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL52 2NW, 8 December, 5.30pm to 8pm**

A festive night of live carol singing, beer and German bratwurst. <https://trinitycheltenham.com/christmas>

### **Faithful generations Cathedral Green, Gloucester Cathedral, 1 February 2025, 12pm to 4pm**

Book now for this fun and creative afternoon where grandparents and grandchildren can explore Christian faith and spirituality together. There will be prayer spaces, story, activities, dance, interactive worship and more.

<https://gloucester.anglican.org/event/faithful-generations-event/>

## From Thornbury with love: Christmas messages and aid head to Ukraine

Thornbury Benefice has joined forces with the local community and is continuing its support for people living in war-torn areas of Ukraine, providing essential supplies and Christmas messages with the cross-community 'Van collection for Ukraine' appeal.



Its twelfth supply-filled minibus departs this month, ensuring that practical aid, and a reminder of the Thornbury community's support, arrives just in time for Christmas.

The bus contains essentials that are hard to find in Ukraine, including candles, warm socks and vitamins, and local Ukrainians have written 100 Christmas cards with handwritten messages in Ukrainian.

"For the people here, it's a way they can show their support," said Jacquie Rinaldi, a volunteer with the Ukrainian initiative. "People living in Ukraine face extended power outages and need items like candles to survive. Men on the front line have poor diets, living on packet noodles, and they need vitamins and medicine.

"We tuck the Christmas cards in with the supplies so families in Ukraine find these notes as they go through the boxes. It's a reminder they're not forgotten."

This year's journey faces additional challenges due to the rising costs of petrol and insurance. For the first time, they appealed for cash donations and raised over £600.

“Our Ukrainian guests have become our friends and neighbours. We get to support them through Christmas, a time when they’d usually be surrounded by family.”

Key to this effort is Thornbury’s partnership with @BristolAid4Ukraine, a charity founded by Ukrainian Vera Staddon-Postavska and her husband, John. Their organisation arranged safe passage for the minibus, filled with donated supplies from Thornbury and South Glos to leave from Bristol to Staddon-Postavska’s home community in Ukraine.

“We chose to support the minibus so it could be fully loaded on the way in and not return empty. Those with the paperwork in place, who are either injured or need to get out, can come back.”

The Ukrainian Initiative began in early 2022 when a group of local volunteers recognised the need for support as refugees arrived in Thornbury.

“Thornbury isn’t like Bristol or Gloucester – it’s a small town. We weren’t prepared at first, but the effort has evolved into a truly community-driven initiative. Many local groups and churches contribute to the cause. The Methodist church now serves as a twice-weekly meeting space where Ukrainians can gather, share meals, and pick up essential supplies. The URC has donated a social room where Ukrainians meet every Friday, always joined by a recently formed Ukrainian ukulele band for practice.”

The community continues to grow, with over 70 Ukrainian people still awaiting much needed hosts in Thornbury.

For those interested in supporting the initiative, donations can be made by contacting Jacquie Rinaldi at [jacquie.rinaldi@gmail.com](mailto:jacquie.rinaldi@gmail.com).



## Calm and bright: Churches open to all for advent and Christmas

This year, churches across the diocese will be welcoming people to celebrate advent and Christmas with them. Whether you go to church every week, or you haven't been in 10 years, it's a place where you are welcome and valued.

Whatever you're planning to do, there will be a space for you with us, because no one should be alone at Christmas.

We asked some people about their favourite things to do over the festive season. Maybe you'll get some inspiration for a new Christmas tradition for yourself.

Emma Mignaud, Head at Primrose Hill C of E Primary Academy in Lydney said, “My favourite thing about the period of advent is seeing all the infant children standing on stage in their costumes performing the nativity to their families. There are always a few tear-jerking moments when the children start to sing or perform a dance routine. Nothing feels more like Christmas than the nativity performance.”

For football fan Aaron from Cheltenham, it's about singing and living tradition: “Carol Services! Christmas to me represents tradition, a chain of celebration running back hundreds of years. Nowhere do I get this feeling more than when experiencing carols, often the same ones sung by countless generations before me. It like a little bit of history reminding everyone about the ancientness of Christmas.”

Katherine from Lydney said: "Midnight mass is a special moment for me. There is something magical about the midnight toll of the church bells as Christmas Eve turns into Christmas Day. The slightly tipsy smiles from some of the congregation, the delighted whispers of 'Happy Christmas', the gentle glow of candlelight and the resounding chorus of O Come All Ye Faithful fills me with such joy and thankfulness."

If you're looking for somewhere to find calm, or a bright place to celebrate this Christmas, then visit [www.achurchnearyou.com](http://www.achurchnearyou.com) to find a service or an event close to your home. From December, [achurchnearyou.com/Christmas](http://achurchnearyou.com/Christmas) will go live, where you will be able to search for specific Christmassy events, dates and occasions in your area.