Christmas at Derby Cathedral 2026

100 YEARS OF Derby Cathedral

Derby Cathedral warmly welcomes everyone to join us for our Christmas services



All services are **free to attend**, and there is something for all ages, with no need to book in advance (unless otherwise stated). **We look forward to welcoming you and sharing the joy of Christmas together.**

Derby Cathedral Christmas 8pp A5 V6.indd 1 05/10/2026 13:03

Our Christmas Services

ADVENT

Advent Carol Service

Sunday 29th November, 17:15

Advent is an atmospheric time, and some of the most exquisite music we have in the Church tradition was written to help us celebrate. Advent is looking for hope in darkness; waiting for the light of Christ to come at Christmas. Join us for this candlelit service to hear music and readings for Advent.

The Cathedral begins in darkness, and ends in dazzling light, mirroring our own experience of this season.

CHRISTMAS

Carols by Candlelight

Derby Cathedral Choir

Saturday 5th December, 19:00



Tickets: www.ticketsource.com/derbycathedralmusic

Our lead into Christmas begins with this ticketed concert. The Cathedral Choir offers Ceremony of Carols by Benjamin Britten, and other festive favourites.

This work takes you into a different world; it's the perfect way to draw closer to the heart of Christmas. The second half is more familiar ground, perhaps, with popular Christmas songs and well-known carols.

Derby Cathedral Christmas 8pp A5 V6.indd 2 05/10/2026 13:03



Christmas Around the World

Sunday 20th December, 14:30

The Christmas story crosses boundaries. Jesus is born in Bethlehem, not his hometown, and has to travel back. Then, as a baby, he moves on to Egypt, before travelling back to Nazareth. The story of Jesus has carried across every national border in the last two thousand years.

We are very fortunate to have people in our community from diverse places, and this service explores Christmas music and traditions from those countries and cultures.

Sing Christmas

Tuesday 22nd December, 12:45

Sing Christmas is our informal, family-friendly, Christmas Carol service. Come along to sing your favourite carols and make memories with family and friends.

The Cathedral will be decorated in its festive finery, and there will be refreshments from midday.

Will this be the most Christmassy thing you do this year? Probably. Unless you come to our other services too...which would be lovely.

Cathedral Carol Services

Wednesday 23rd (BSL) and Thursday 24th December, 18:00

The story of Jesus' birth at Christmas time makes this one of the most extraordinary times of the year for Christians.

The Cathedral Carol Service is our traditional service of readings and carols for Christmas, telling this story. It is so popular that we do it twice! Join us on either date to hear the traditional Christmas readings alongside our world-class Cathedral Choir, and please sing along.

Doors for the service will open at 17:00.

As the service is not ticketed, you are advised to arrive early to get a seat.



Family Nativity Service

Thursday 24th December, 15:00

During our interactive and family friendly Nativity Service, we tell the story of Mary and Joseph walking to Bethlehem, finding no room at the inn, and Jesus being born in an incredible way anyway. We will meet those who travelled far and wide to see Jesus – and you are welcome to dress as a shepherd, a donkey, an angel, or any character, to join in. This service will also feature music sung by our Cathedral Junior Choir (ages 5–9). It is a wonderful way to make magical memories.

Midnight Mass

Thursday 24th December, 23:00

All our Christmas services lead us to the most important moment of the Christmas celebration, when we come together to celebrate the birth of Jesus with Midnight Mass. At this service we hear about the hope Jesus brings into the world, and participate in the joy of those who have waited for it.

This is where our Christmas festivities begin in full, with candles, a choir, and incense aplenty. It is a beautiful service, not to be missed.

Doors will open at 22:00.

Christmas Day

Friday 25th December

Holy Communion (Said) 08:30

A quiet meditative service to begin Christmas Day.

Cathedral Eucharist 10:45

We will be here and all are very welcome. This is the morning we celebrate the light and peace of Christ coming into the world. Whether you come regularly or not, please do join us for a lovely, festive, service.

(Please note that the Cathedral will close after this service to allow our team a well-earned afternoon off)

Derby Cathedral Christmas 8pp A5 V6.indd 4 05/10/2026 13:03

Boxing Day

Saturday 26th December, 13:00

Feast of St Stephen Eucharist at the Bridge Chapel

Join us on Boxing Day for the Feast of St Stephen Eucharist, as we continue the joy of Christmas and give thanks for the first Christian martyr whose witness inspires our faith today.

(Please note that the Cathedral is closed on this day)

EPIPHANY

Cathedral Eucharist & Epiphany Carol Service

Sunday 3rd January, 10:45 & 17:15

Christmas does not end on Boxing Day. We keep celebrating for some time afterwards. The journey continues at Epiphany, when we remember the arrival of the Magi, and their gifts of Gold, Frankincense, and Myrrh.

Music will be led by the Cathedral Voluntary Choir, with congregational carols for the Epiphany season – please join us.

CANDLEMAS

Cathedral Eucharist & Evensong for Candlemas

Sunday 31st January, 10:45 & 17:15

Our Christmas journey ends, not on Twelfth Night, but on Candlemas.

This is a lesser-known day in the Church, a hidden gem, if you like. It is a time to look back at what has been and to set our eyes towards Easter. Please join us at either of our services.

Organ Meditation – La Nativité du Seigneur

Sunday 31st January, 18:30

Following Evensong, the Cathedral's Director of Music, Mr Alexander Binns, concludes the Christmas season by playing Olivier Messiaen's nine-movement atmospheric meditation for the organ, which depicts aspects of the birth of Christ alongside biblical references.

This is a devotional performance with free admission.



Christmas Appeal

This Christmas, everyone deserves a place of sanctuary

SCAN HERE TO DONATE

In the Christmas story we read of the importance of sanctuary. Firstly, in how Mary and Joseph found a place of shelter for the birth of Jesus, and then later as they fled to Egypt for refuge.

Our Cathedral is a place that is open to all; where anyone can find a warm welcome, a place to belong, and an opportunity to flourish. This Christmas we are sharing our own stories of sanctuary; where people have found a safe and welcoming place at our Cathedral.

Registered with FUNDRAISING REGULATOR

Will you help us to give sanctuary this Christmas by supporting our Christmas Appeal?

Funds raised will enable us to:

- Provide a warm, safe space for those in need
- Help keep our doors open to all
- Grow our community outreach and social justice work

HOPE – for refugees and asylum seekers

Church of Sanctuary

Derby Cathedral is proud to have been the first Cathedral of Sanctuary in England, as we create a safe and welcoming space for everyone, supporting refugees and those seeking asylum.

Here is the start of one such story…

"I was welcomed at Derby Cathedral in 2013 when I was an asylum seeker. I was lonely and at my lowest morale with nothing to hope or to live for. When I started attending services at Derby Cathedral, I was astonished by the welcome that I received, and I felt like I had always been part of this community. With great support from Derby Cathedral, I was granted Refugee Status, and I consider myself as a full member of this community. I continue to be a member of the Cathedral serving team and..."

Scan here to read our stories of sanctuary in full.



PEACE – for our visitors

Derby Cathedral, a place for everyone to come for peace, reflection, sanctuary and light during times where life feels difficult. As a regular to the Cathedral shared with us recently:

"Life has a way of bringing new storms. Right now, my wife is battling cancer. It is a heavy, heartbreaking road. Yet, every single time I walk through the doors of this cathedral, the noise of the world fades. The fear loses its grip. A profound, undeniable peace washes over me. For me, this cathedral is a sanctuary because it is the place where my lifetime of gratitude meets God's grace, offering me peace when the storms of life rage the hardest."

JOY – through the Cathedral's activity

Derby Cathedral has many groups that meet throughout the week, including our choirs, embroiderers, flower arrangers and bell ringers. They are places of belonging, where members find their own sense of sanctuary.

Christmas is also a time when our choirs can create joy for so many others.

Here is what being part of a Cathedral Choir at Christmas means to some of our girl choristers:

"My favourite part of Christmas is singing some of my favourite music in an incredible Cathedral, alongside some of my closest friends."

"Christmas is a wonderful time to bring us altogether as one big family."

LOVE – in our community café

Our Community Café meets in the Cathedral every Tuesday morning.

As our volunteer leaders Eirene and Richard told us: *"Together with our wonderful team of committed volunteers, we provide a safe space for people to meet with one another for free hot drinks, soup and snacks, as well as newspapers, games and most importantly, a listening ear."*

Some recent comments from some of our visitors:

"I have been coming here for a long time. I enjoy the friendship here, debating and meeting with other people and exchanging stories of our different experiences in life."

"We come in regularly to light a candle for those we have lost. We can sit and have a chat with others afterwards. It makes you feel wanted and a part of something."



Tree of Light



You can once again spread the glow of love and kindness by writing a message to be displayed on the Tree of Light. This could be a message remembering a loved one, a Christmas greeting, or a prayer. Children are also welcome to decorate our tree with a message, poem or a drawing!

The Tree of Light will be in the Cathedral from 1st December until 6th January, with a suggested donation of £3 for a message.

Morley Hayes is proud to sponsor the *Tree of Light*



New Nativity Scene at Derby Cathedral

To celebrate our 100th Christmas as a Cathedral, the Friends of Derby Cathedral have gifted us a brand new nativity scene. Carved by a local Derbyshire craftsman, the crib set's wooden figures will stand at almost one metre tall and are a welcome addition to our Christmas season, for children and adults alike.

SCAN HERE TO DONATE

Thank you – your generosity will help us to give sanctuary this Christmas