

Ideas for:

Welcome

We know that lots of churches will be gathering virtually this year, and those who are able to meet in person will have social distancing measures in place – these things can make a warm welcome seem a little more challenging.

Here are some ways you can make your service a space of welcome at this time when many are feeling particularly isolated:

- Write 'Happy Christmas' in different languages on your screen.
- Have a diverse range of different voices and faces contributing to your service, through readings, worship, lighting of candles etc.
- Services often share The Peace at Christmas; think of an alternative to shaking hands this year. Perhaps you could sign 'Peace be with you' in British Sign Language? Click [here](#) to learn how to sign The Peace in BSL with an instructional video from the Church of England.
- Encourage your congregation to send a hand-written card to someone else in church, maybe to someone new to your church family.
- Host a pre- or post-church video call to wish each other a Merry Christmas and have a catch up over a virtual coffee or mince pie!

Songs

Many traditional Christmas hymns have a message of welcome and invitation. You could include:

- O Come All Ye Faithful
Come and behold Him, born the King of Angels. O come, let us adore Him.
- Hark the Herald Angels
Sing Joyful, all ye nations, rise. Join the triumph of the skies; with the angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem."
- Joy to the World
Let Earth receive her King; let every heart prepare Him room.

Lots of carols and Christmas hymns also remind us of God's heart for the lonely and oppressed, and of our call to pursue justice and care for the vulnerable:

- O Holy Night
Truly He taught us to love one another; his law is Love and His gospel is Peace. Chains shall he break, for the slave is our brother, and in his name all oppression shall cease.
- Once in Royal David's City
With the poor, and mean, and lowly, lived on earth our Saviour holy.
- O Come, O Come Emmanuel
And ransom captive Israel, that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.