



Our cathedral choir sing at last year's carol services

# Join us to sing joyful story of Christ's birth

JOIN our congregations this Christmas to sing about the joyful story of Jesus's birth, and to hear what that means for us all today.

Our churches will host a myriad of Christmas activities and services as we once again remember Christ's birth. These include re-enactments of the Nativity, candlelit carol services and Christmas tree festivals.

The focus of the national Church of England's Christmas campaign this year is 'Follow the Star: Join the Song', which includes a brand new version of the carol *The First Nowell* by composer Bob Chilcott. Choristers from **Portsmouth Cathedral** will sing that version during identical carol services taking place on December 21, 22 and 23, each starting at 7pm.

Our cathedral choir will also perform it during a live broadcast of Midnight Mass, on BBC1 from 11.45pm on Christmas Eve. Our churches, choirs and church schools are also invited to use this new melody - find resources on [www.churchofengland.org/christmas](http://www.churchofengland.org/christmas).

Amateur actors from **Havant**

**Passion Play** will re-enact the Nativity story for visitors to Staunton Country Park in Havant ahead of Christmas. They'll tell the story of Jesus's birth - using farm animals, authentic costumes and a sparkling script - at various points between December 16-23.

Visitors to **Hart Plain Church** will also experience a Live Nativity on December 9. Worshippers will dress up as wise men, shepherds and angels and tell the story with sheep, goats, donkeys, chickens and turkeys. There are two sessions that day, from 10am-11.30am and from 12.30pm-2pm.

The **Brighstone Christmas Tree Festival** is now in its 27th year and will run from December 7-10 in 10 venues across West Wight, including St Mary's Church, Brighstone, Mottistone Church and All Saints Church, Calbourne.

It will feature more than 150 Christmas trees beautifully decorated by community groups. There's also a nativity pageant

at Brighstone Methodist Church, a night-time tractor ride, live musical performances and craft markets. Find out more on [www.brighstonechristmastree.com](http://www.brighstonechristmastree.com).

St Mary's Church, Alverstoke, will host the **Alverstoke Christmas Tree Festival** from December 8-10. You can see 75 specially-decorated trees adorning the church, plus musical performances and refreshments.

Our parishes and church schools are also being encouraged to make Christmas brighter

for those in need by donating towards two separate appeals. You can donate toys to needy children via Homestart in Portsmouth; and you can donate gift vouchers to help the homeless, asylum seekers and vulnerable families buy their own Christmas gifts via our annual 'Comfort and Joy' appeal.

Download resources, read more about these appeals, and discover what's happening around our diocese at [www.portsmouth.anglican.org/christmas](http://www.portsmouth.anglican.org/christmas)

