



Dear Church Family,

Happy New Year!

Following the accounts of Jesus' birth, the gospels launch into the life and ministry of John the Baptist. John had a single purpose in his life, to 'Prepare the way for the Lord'. Matthew, Mark and Luke all quote Isaiah 40 to describe this ministry of preparation for Jesus to come onto the scene. John's message included a call to repent of every way we have strayed away from obeying God and to level the ground. Very similar to 'creating space for God'. So as you start 2026, how is the Holy Spirit asking you to 'prepare the way of the Lord'?

We had a wonderful Christmas at St Chads, sharing the love of God and good news of Jesus with hundreds of people in our community and creating space for God. The Christmas season seems to end abruptly, 'normal' life resumes with a bang this week, but what can we take from what God gave us, into our daily routines in January?

The words 'Prepare the Way for the Lord' are ringing in my heart as I write this and think of the year ahead. Preparation is a crucial part of life. When painting and decorating, the time spent stretching out masking tape, putting down dust sheets and cleaning surfaces can take more time than the actual painting. Christmas seems to take huge amounts of preparation, one friend who had experienced health problems at the start of December commented, "I can't believe we managed to get ready for Christmas dinner in only two weeks." Preparation motivates us, because we care about the outcome, we are propelled forwards into the future and what would be hard work is worthwhile as we look forwards.

So how is God asking you to "Prepare the Way for the Lord" as we start 2026? In what ways will that include creating space for God? What might he be asking you to repent of and turn-around? What do you need to invest time into?

The theme of our preaching series from January to Easter is "Dwelling in God's Presence". We are going to go on a whistle stop tour through the whole of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, looking at God's desire to dwell with us. In one way, we could see the whole story of the Bible as God preparing a people to dwell with Him forever. It might take two weeks to prepare to host family for Christmas, but all of human history is a far greater degree of preparation.

What preparations do you need to make for this year, in order to dwell in the presence of God?

with love,
Richard



Prayer Events

As we step into a **new year**, we truly believe that **God is on the move**. We're already seeing encouraging and exciting things in our church and across our nation — and as we begin this year, we're believing for even more.

When God's people pray, **lives are changed**, families are restored, hope is renewed, and salvation comes. Prayer is where we align our hearts with God and make space for Him to move powerfully among us.

Our monthly prayer times are the **engine room of St Chads**. They are always encouraging, faith-filled gatherings, and the perfect way to start the year together.

Prayer dates:

Tues 13th Jan – 7.30pm (LifeCentre)

Weds 14th Jan – 1.30pm (Church Lounge)

As we begin this new year, do come and join us as we seek God together.

Alpha



Alpha is a 10-week course that explores the basics of the Christian faith in a welcoming, open, and friendly environment. There's plenty of time to share your thoughts and ask questions — or simply listen. There's no charge and no pressure — just good food, good conversation, and space to explore life's big questions together.

When: Tuesday evenings, starting 13th January, for 10 weeks

Time: 7:00 pm – 9:30 pm

Plus: A one-day workshop on Saturday 28th February

If you'd like to come along, have someone you'd like to invite or have any questions, get in touch at mail@kirstiegoddard.co.uk.

Clothes Swap

5th Feb



Thursday 5th February
7pm at the LifeCentre

An evening to share, connect, and refresh your wardrobe.

Join us for our **Clothes Swap Evening**. Bring along items from your wardrobe that you no longer wear and swap them for something new-to-you.

There's a **£1 entrance fee** on the door to help cover refreshments, so you can enjoy a drink while you browse, swap, and socialise.

How it works:

- Bring clean, good-quality clothes you're ready to part with
- Pay £1 on entry for refreshments
- Browse what others have brought
- Swap, try on, and take home your new favourites

Any leftover clothes will be given to charity.

All ladies welcome.



Throughout February, churches across the world unite with **International Justice Mission** and **24-7 Prayer** in a powerful movement of prayer - crying out to God for freedom and justice for those suffering under slavery, trafficking, and violence.

We invite you to join us on Tuesday 10th Februar, 8:00pm in church.

We will stand, **pray**, and **worship** together for 90 minutes, believing that God will move.

Tearfund Evening - POSTPONED

Please note that the **Tearfund evening** scheduled for **Monday 12th January** has **been postponed**.

As soon as a new date is confirmed, we'll let you know.

