

Christmas Tree Festival at St Andrew's and St George's West

From 8 to 24 December, you will be able to step into a forest of Christmas trees in the elegant Georgian interior of St Andrew's and St George's West Church in George Street.

Over 40 Christmas trees, sponsored and decorated by businesses, charities and groups from across the city, aim to provide a haven of peace. You can take part by adding a star to a tree for a baby born in 2018, children can make a decoration and hang it on the Children's Tree, you can remember someone dear to you on the Tree of Remembrance, and there are interactive trees for Amnesty and for prayer. There will be live Christmas music at various times, and always a chance to sit and capture the peace which is the heart of Christmas.

This is the ninth festival, and the theme is New Life!

It is open from 10am until 6pm until Christmas Eve with late opening on Thursdays. The church will be shut from 2pm on Friday 15 December to prepare for the 6pm carol service. "Carols at Six" is an annual part of the Festival, and also supports the chosen charities. This year it stars Andrea Baker, international mezzo, alongside the Church Choir and the Cantilena Orchestra. Favourite carols combine with new music and professional performance.



Mezzo soprano Andrea Baker who is also appearing at the Rose Theatre in Sing Sistah Sing!

“New life!” is echoed in the Festival’s sponsored charities this year. Birthlink provides support after adoption, Blood Bikes provide free courier service for blood products in the NHS and The Welcoming supports refugees in Edinburgh.

Rev John Chalmers, locum minister of the church, said : “You will remember that the Christmas story ends with Mary, Joseph and the new born baby fleeing for their lives. The place where God is with us is the place where God’s vulnerable people are given refuge and hope. That is why we are privileged to be able to open our church to everyone, and to do something however small towards helping children who have lost homes or family, babies and mothers who need health care, and people who need to find a new place to live.”



Photo John Preece