

Café Church report April 2026

Background

Café Church is an all-age, informal church gathering with some structure, but no set rules, providing the space for anyone to come along and enjoy refreshments, company, activities, and Christian worship together. Café Church has been running for four years, as of Easter 2026.

Location

Church Hall, Smallfield

Time

3pm, every second Sunday in the month, excluding Easter, August and December. Café Church at Easter happens on Good Friday. There is a break for the summer in August. The second Sunday in December accommodates the Smallfield carol service.

Format

Tables are set up café style and refreshments are served. As people arrive, they are welcomed, encouraged to take a seat, have a chat, share some refreshment, and do some activities.

If possible, craft activities are included on the café tables, unless they are particularly messy, then they're set up separately.

Somewhere between 3.30-3.45pm, everyone gathers to sing some songs and listen to a short bible message.

Café Church meetings

Since the last report was submitted in April 2025, Café Church has met every month except August (summer holiday) and December (carol service).

Themes, activities and bible readings were as follows:

Date	Theme	Activities	Songs
18 April 2025	Good Friday John 19: 17-18 and 28-30	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Colouring and activity sheets• Easter gardens• 3D hanging eggs• Stained glass crosses• Paper plate flowers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hosanna• Lord I lift your name on high
11 May 2025	The good shepherd John 10: 11-14	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Colouring and activity sheets• Cotton wool sheep pictures• Wool-wrapped sheep	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Lord's my Shepherd (<i>Townend</i>)• The Lord is my Shepherd; I'll walk with him always
8 June 2025	Pentecost Acts 2: 1-11	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Colouring and activity sheets• Straw-blown flame paintings• Tissue paper butterflies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wind, wind blow on me• Spirit burning (<i>London's burning tune</i>)

13 July 2025	Abraham and Sarah Genesis 12: 1-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colouring and activity sheets • Abraham and Sarah tent collage • Footprint potato painting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Lord is my Shepherd; I'll walk with him always • Will you come and follow me?
14 September 2025	Creation Genesis 1 & 2: 1-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colouring and activity sheets • Creation bead bracelets • Creation wheel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If I were a butterfly • All around me Lord
12 October 2025	Harvest Matthew 13: 31-33	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colouring and activity sheets • Folded Autumn paper leaves • Paper strip pumpkins • Saving seeds for next year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank you Lord for this fine day • We eat the plants that grow from the seed (<i>English country garden</i>)
9 November 2025	Remembrance John 15: 9-17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colouring and activity sheets • Doves of peace paintings • Folded paper poppy wreath 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let there be peace on earth • Jesus put this song into our hearts
11 January 2026	Plough Sunday Matthew 3: 13-17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colouring and activity sheets • Seed bombs • Paper dove 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We eat the plants that grow from the seed (<i>English country garden</i>) • I am a new creation
8 February 2026	Christingle Psalm 136: 1-9 & 26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colouring and activity sheets • Christingle making • Winter lanterns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sing Christingle • This little light of mine
8 March 2026	Springtime John 4: 4-26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colouring and activity sheets • Seed planting • Water bubble paintings • Card and string wells 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you seen the raindrops? • I am feeding on the living bread
3 April 2026	Good Friday Interactive story based on John 18 and Luke 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colouring and activity sheets • Easter gardens • Torn tissue paper Easter eggs • Rolled magazine crosses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hosanna • Lord I lift your name on high

Key notes, observations and learning

- Café Church provides a relaxed, friendly atmosphere for informal worship.
- Numbers have grown over the year with attendance consistently above 20 and a few new families.
- Continued promotion of Café Church to baptism families and wedding couples has been helpful encouraging new families.
- Further promotion has been done via Facebook, posters, flyers and Burstow and Outwood Parish magazines. We've also started a WhatsApp group for reminders every month.
- Feedback is generally positive – people enjoy Café Church and the opportunity to come together.
- Preferred activities continue to be word puzzles, colouring sheets and crafts using beads, wire, paper and wool that can be done easily at café tables. However, the children love painting activities too.
- This year everyone has also enjoyed saving and planting seeds. A suggestion made recently was to consider whether Café Church might use the raised beds in the Rectory garden to grow some vegetables/flowers. It's a great idea, which it would be lovely to progress in future if possible, but it would depend on volunteers to have the time to organise and maintain it.
- As there have been some families with very young children, Alan and Rachel have been bringing over some toys, which has been well received.
- The music is always much appreciated and people enjoy the different mix of songs.
- Volunteers are essential to enable Café Church to run smoothly and huge thanks go to all involved. There has been great support from volunteers helping in the kitchen, setting up, tidying away and playing the music. Café Church wouldn't be able to run without the efforts of the volunteers who give up their time to help.
- An important aspect of the Café Church planning originally was to ensure the format was easily replicable every month, so that it doesn't necessarily rely on just one or two people. While this is generally the case, new volunteers are always welcome.
- We have continued to attend the Tandridge Greenhouse meetings organised by the Southwark Diocese. It's a gathering of people from local churches all involved in setting up Fresh Expressions in their churches. Local teams gather together two or three times a year to learn, pray, plan, find mutual support and to swap ideas. Liz Faulkner attended in October 2025 and Liz was joined by Helen Longhurst in March 2026.

Future Café Church dates 2026

- 10 May
- 14 June
- 12 July
- 13 September
- 11 October
- 8 November

Please continue to pray for Café Church.