

A message from the Rector

Second Sunday in Advent

The 5th of December 2021

Thanksgiving Offertory

Today, Sunday the 5th, we are having a retiring thanksgiving Offertory. What lies behind this Thanksgiving Offertory is in response to how we all could have the vaccinations and now the booster vaccination freely provided by our governments. This collection will be directed to one of our neighbouring countries with low vaccination rates. To me, the LORD has blest you and I greatly as Australians, and we desire to reflect our LORD's generosity to our neighbours.

The Rector's Health

Thank you for your prayers for me as your Rector. During the Services on the First Sunday of Advent, it was apparent that I was not well; I was in intense pain. I was very grateful for Fr Ernest, who continued the Second Service and then gave leadership to the Advent Carols Service. I had spent time preparing for the Advent Carol Service: What happened? A new medication brought on the intense pain. The difference I am currently experiencing is like chalk and cheese.

In June, I was diagnosed with Polymyalgia Rheumatica (PMR). PMR is an inflammatory disease that results in muscle ache and stiffness in different body parts. It commonly affects shoulders, arms, neck and hips. PMR can be treated with various forms of medication, and eventually, it goes into total remission. Through the correct medication, the pain is controlled.

My local doctor has organised for another medical opinion regarding the PMR treatment I am undertaking. This consult will be happening soon.

As you can all appreciate, sharing such personal information in a public sphere is not the norm. I chose to do so, you can be assured there is no need to place me out to pasture, and secondly and more importantly, to honour you all as men and women of prayer who can choose to pray for me in a more specific way.

It is beginning to look a bit like Christmas....

Have you noticed the various Christmas Decorations on display around Gordon and beyond? The Town Hall looks very festive. After thirty years, I had to retire my hand painted lifesize nativity scene. This nativity scene has been faithfully displayed in the front yards of the various rectories during those thirty years. St John's Rectory has become the latest backdrop for different Christmas festive signs, illuminated and static.

Over the years, I have placed a high priority on preparing for Christmas. These festive lights include Mary & Joseph travelling to Bethlehem and then the Holy family displayed in a nativity scene. All create interest in the importance of Christmas to the passerby. I have already had contact from St Paul's sharing comments from some of the residents living near their Rectory; when were the lights going up?

I could share many pages of the various encounters that came over the years of displaying Christmas lights. One of the more recent ones was how the young child asked her father, 'Who was the baby?' he asked me to explain it to her and the rest of the family. That year they turned up for the Christmas Eve Crib Service.

I am looking forward to seeing opportunities to connect with those who come to see the Christmas display of lights. Would you mind praying that the LORD blesses this year's display to catch the imagination of the young and not so young?

Christmas Services and the Coronavirus:

On the Fourth Sunday in Advent, the 19th of December, the final layer of Public Health Restriction will be rescinded. It is envisaged that the requirements to wear masks in Church will be removed. There will be singing without masks. The bulk of our services will return to some semblance of normality. Yet, it will be ok to wear masks if you are more comfortable doing so. A few of the members of St. John's are not quite ready to return to Church in person at the moment for health reasons. If you are in this category and would like to receive Holy Communion at home, please advise the Office or the Rector directly so suitable arrangements can be made. Please don't leave this to the last moment to let us know as the weeks before Christmas get very busy indeed.

Thanksgiving Service for Bernice Dalziel:

You are invited to pay your respects for a faithful member of St John's, Mrs Berince Dalzeil. The Thanksgiving Service will be at 11am on Monday the 13th of December at St. John's, followed by light refreshments in the Church Hall. Bernice celebrated her 100th birthday this year. Her husband, Peter, was called home in February 2008. Bernice was a quiet worker, especially in the gardens, both on the Church grounds and at home. Bernice was a meek, gentle and faithful woman of God.

Flowers in Church during Advent?

I have given my permission and encouragement to have flowers during this season. The displays are generally smaller, building up to beautify the Christmas Church. Advent is **not** a penitential Season like Lent – where there are no flowers and other ornaments in the Church. This distinction is typical in the Anglo-Catholic parishes in the Country, which is more akin to the Church in the UK. I am grateful for the team that has embraced this change.

Christmas celebrations will be advertised.

New Street banners have been ordered, which hopefully will draw the attention of the passing public to the welcoming they will receive as we celebrate the incarnation. In addition to the Street Banners, Christmas pamphlets have been ordered and will be distributed right through the 2072 postcode.

2021 is my first Christmas with you, and I will be keen to enter into how Christmas has been observed at St. Johns. All the Services will be the same in style as per previous years. I will be seeking to honour God as I honour St Johns' traditions.

Will you assist in promoting the Christmas Services to your friends, neighbours and family? Word of mouth is excellent: I pray that you will decide to extend an invitation to family or a friend to accompany you to one of the Christmas celebrations at St. Johns. For years, one lady I know would always ask her children, then her grandchildren, to accompany her to Church. This gesture created excellent and enduring memories for the family. It also cemented the importance of worshipping God. I also know other women and men whose families didn't accept their invitation. All we can do is ask. Promoting the Christmas celebrations is a task and responsibility we can all support.

Gingerbread Houses:

A fun night was had by eighteen ladies on Friday. Gingerbread Houses were creatively constructed. It was an enjoyable night, led by Melinda. The creativity and the finished houses were a credit to all. The night included a devotional regarding the meaning behind Christmas.; – which was emphasised by the song; Mary, did you know? Will the Gingerbread House be an activity that the parish will get behind for Advent 2022?

Thank you

Reece & Christine ran the sausage sizzle on election day. They were selling the 'democratic sausage sanga' plus cans of drink were available. They were both working the BBQ for many hours. Thank you both, and thanks for the initiative.