

# A Message from the A Message from the Rector

For the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of January 2022

## **COVID – Strikes:**

Before the Christmas celebrations, several parishioners were positively diagnosed with COVID. Each isolated themselves and are making a good recovery. Whilst the spread of the Omnicron variant is so prolific, there is also 'flu' doing the rounds. Symptoms are similar. We are asked not to soldier on; instead, we take time to care for ourselves, including isolation.

The latest Public Health Orders that come into effect today ***have no direct bearing on what happens at Church***. We can continue with congregational singing. Thank you for wearing your masks, as masks must be worn in indoor areas (other than places of residence).

## **Christmas Celebrations:**

Thank you to the many people involved with the recent Christmas Celebrations. As my first Christmas at St John's, I was looking forward to how Christmas is celebrated. Added to this expectation was the unknown effect the latest Covid-variant would have on these Christmas celebrations.

All the Services offered the opportunity to draw closer to God, as we remembered the great act of God's Love, the incarnation. All involved carried out their tasks with humility and dignity, honouring God in the process.

Numerically the numbers attending these Services were down. There are several reasons behind these lower numbers. We would be foolish to underestimate the fear of contracting COVID and spoiling the opportunity for family gatherings. The opportunity to travel and see friends and family was taken up by some regulars. The opportunity to 'escape' our everyday routines and go on a holiday for some too good to be missed.

The 2021 Christmas celebrations at St John's were enjoyable and sought to provide opportunities to draw closer to God. I thank God that they were able to achieve that aim. I like how the Church was decorated, which added to the joy of the Christmas Celebrations.

## **Guest Preacher:**

By change of circumstance, the Scripture Union Beach Mission being cancelled, I took the opportunity to ask Edward to preach at both Services on two Sundays in a row. He preached on the assigned passages. Edward has been selected as an ordinand for the Diocese. He has accepted the invitation to work as a catechist at St Jude's Randwick whilst continuing his studies at Moore College. Edward preached on Sunday the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the 9<sup>th</sup> of January 2022.

## **National Church Life Survey:**

You would have received information regarding the NCL Survey from Meg during this week. I do commend the survey as this will give us a very realistic snapshot of the Parish during

this pandemic. This information will help the Parish and Diocese in future planning. This planning will be more practical as we would not be 'guessing' or using outdated information about the Parish before the pandemic.

### **Infant Baptism:**

We have the joy of at least four baptisms planned. These Baptisms will all be conducted within the regular Sunday worship Service on alternate Sundays. I have spent time planning the liturgy to encompass the Baptismal Service and the Eucharist. The joy of seeing a baptism is ours. It is also an opportunity to see how we can encourage their families and friends as they have chosen to come to St John's to have their child baptised. During these Baptisms, God, the Father, is giving each of us all the opportunity to express our love for God in the encouragement of others.

### **Music Director & Organist:**

I received both expressions of interest and also applications for this important position. The task now is to work through the applications. The Wardens, myself, and an independent, talented Organist will carry out this process. I would value your prayers at this time, as we seek whom God may be raising for this position.

### **Sesquicentennial Committee:**

As you know, 2022 is the Sesquicentennial of the Parish. To assist the Parish, the Sesquicentennial committee will meet next week. I do have a practical question. Does anyone know where the *original* foundation is laid? There are a good number of inscribed 'stones'. Many of these 'stones' are marking the occasions of various extensions.

Once the Sesquicentennial Committee has commenced, I suggest they will be looking for assistance with ideas of how we can celebrate this milestone in our history as we live in the shadow of the Covid pandemic.

### **Op-Shop Sales:**

Thank you to all who are involved with this ministry. A small group comes at least twice weekly to sort and prepare the donations for the sales. The sorting means filling the skip bin, which is then collected at least twice a week. This small team would appreciate more helpers. The Op-Shop Sale days are well supported, and I ask you to consider supporting the team on these days.

### **Parish Bible Studies:**

We have been blessed with Bishop Micheal producing the weekly Shofar for the Parish, and I am grateful that this ministry will continue.

I rightly take the teaching role of the Priesthood seriously. I have been examining what study we may do for the season of Lent. I am also looking at how to hold these studies. I prefer in-person studies, but zoom has opened another avenue to conduct Bible Studies.

May the LORD grant you his Peace.

Fr Robert Happer  
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