

Voice from the vicarage 23rd December 2021

A Church with smiling eyes...

Dear All,

Keep calm and carry on...

Ever since I came to Brunswick I have sourced our church Christmas tree from the wood and coal merchant on Nicholson Street. He's a great chap and always gives the parish a very good deal, and me a couple of racing tips on the side! I sauntered down there last Friday to get a tree or too, only to find that he no longer 'does' them! Some row with the farmer...

But he gave me a tip for another place based at the nuns in Northcote, so generally loving nuns as I do, I ordered one sight unseen. I have to say, it was more expensive but it's a very handsome tree!

Duly delivered on Saturday, with a bit of help it was up and dressed ready for Sunday with far more lights than some might consider necessary (*in my opinion you can never have too many lights on a tree as long as they are white!*) I went to bed very satisfied.



At 7.30am or so I walked serenely into the church. My Sunday morning pride was followed by a fall. The tree! On the floor and lights all a tangle. And, to add to it all, sadly a cat had departed this life in front of the church overnight!

The 8am mass was celebrated with a fetching view of the floored tree, the deacon (with a bit of help from an 8 o'clocker) thankfully having done his stuff with the dear cat. Well, thanks be to God for Amy and John who raised the tree, and Robyn and Jo who untangled the lights helped no doubt by the prayers of 'Mary, undoer of knots': a title for Our Lady, much loved by the current Pope by the way.



They all kept calm and I carried on!

Working with what you've got!

I have to admit to have been somewhat disappointed with the turn out for the 'pop up' carol service and building of the Crib on Sunday @ 6. But there we are. 'Work with what you've got, and never look over the heads of those who are there looking for the ones who are not' was a good bit of advice I received from my wise old spiritual director years ago, and its advice I've given.

We had a lovely time, and there was a good bit of joy about the place. Both curates stepped in and rather overacted in my humble opinion. Ron on the other hand needed no acting skills to play a hands on outdoor man. Harmony was a demure Blessed Virgin and Harmony a good and directive, Archangel Gabriel. Hannah made a good host of angels, and Ezra, his cuddly toy and his father Luke magnificent kings, whose acts of homage to the crib a spiritual triumph. Jesse was grumpy at being called up to be a grumpy inn keeper but it was type cast and perfect. And the crib was built only now awaiting the arrival of the image of the Christ child currently in residence at the Lamb and Flag.

Literally as I write this the news has come through that **masks are the required dress code** from midnight to night indoors.

So I must ask you to bring your mask and wear it, unless you are 8 years old or under.

There will be some masks available in the church. Happily there is no return to any of the restrictions or segregations that we have just left, for which I for one continue to be grateful. I think to wear as mask, though inconvenient, is a small thing. It does mean one has to use one's eyes more to convey the meaning and messages that our whole face might ordinarily bring!

So let's be a Church with smiling eyes!

And continue to be respectful of one another.

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I'm writing this at my kitchen table where there is the lingering smell of roast potatoes! We've had some problems with the oven in 'The Lamb' which really adds to the pressure of preparing and serving. Irritatingly, twice repairers have failed to turn up. Food has been farmed out to a number of ovens. I got the tatties!

It was special Christmas do, with roast chicken, peas and gravy with mince pies and panforte, and lots of chocolate for desert. The guests I caught up with much



enjoyed it! Thanks to the team for all they do!

Ruth Andrew eyes a bowl of the famous Christ Church roasties....

And so to Christmas in earnest... There will be **community carols** from 11pm. I hear tell that the 'Brunswick Four' of online services fame are making a special appearance.

MIDNIGHT MASS begins at 11.30

The clergy and servers will collect the image of the Christ child and process from the 'Lamb' to the church where it will be laid in the manger and the Crib blessed during 'Once in Royal'. There will be a glass of something and a piece of cake.

CHRISTMAS DAY: 8 am Book of Common Prayer

10 am Sung Mass with Carols

SUNDAY 26th MASS with hymns @ 9 am

And finally, The LAMB will be closed until January 4th for a little break. The first six weeks seem to have gone well, and we are beginning to establish ourselves. Thanks to Albert Young who has been the mainstay. In the New Year some training for volunteers and working on some goals for the year ahead. By the way, your vicar is now a licensee.. Much love, +Lindsay