

Dear All,

Well I must admit that a sort of quietness has descended over vicarage life in the last few days, so that I feel rather guilty when folk tell me it must be my busy time of the year! Not only is the café closed until early January, Christmas Day falling on a Sunday this year means that by *last* Sunday evening Carols and all that Jazz and the service of carols and the building the crib were done and dusted. So aside from the daily rhythm of course, and the hearing of confessions (and making my own!) we wait now for the great Celebration of the birth of our Redeemer.

A phrase from Psalm 48 just about sums it all up:

'We wait for thy loving kindness O God, in the midst of thy Temple...'

The building of the crib last Sunday which involved the transferring of the precious figures from one side of the church to the other by little hands was fun, moving, and somewhat precarious. One of the shepherds was just about as tall as the young pilgrim who carried him! But all arrived safely, though the manger is left empty 'waiting' for the night hours of Christmas Eve, when the image of the new born King will be carried in procession during the singing of 'Once in Royal David's City'. Year after year we do this, and I never fail to be moved.

On Saturday night we have informal carols from 11 as folk arrive for the **Midnight Mass** which will begin at 11.30 by candlelight. A glass of something and some Christmas cake will follow for the energetic at 'The Lamb'. On **Christmas Day** there will be a said mass at **8 am** according to the Book of Common Prayer, and at **10 am** mass with carols, at which Sister Cara, fresh from her pilgrimage to the Holy Land will preach the homily. Just to say there won't be refreshments after mass on Christmas Day. A few folk will be joining me and my houseguests, my family and Sister Cara for lunch, and there is always room for more. It's informal and timings are not exact, so there's no 'sit down' time, but we gather around 1.

After a great mass last Sunday morning when Fr Russell spoke so deeply about the part of Joseph in the drama of our Salvation, in the evening we 3D'd the story as we tried to build something of a tableau as we told the story of the birth of Christ. It must be said a bit of shyness crept in! We had one angel on stage, well at least for part of the time, one hiding in the pews, and one roaming the streets...

But steadfastly playing the part of our Lord was Dominik Drobik who appropriately undermined the claims

made in the otherwise lovely carol 'Away in a Manger' that 'no crying he makes'! He was

alive! Fortunately his mother and father were on hand offering comfort, as I suppose the originals were in the first stable.



'We wait for thy loving kindness O God, in the midst of thy temple.'



Fr Jack conducted the group of cantors who sang three carols at the crib service. He begged me for a costume...



The poor child who had just borne witness was overawed in the presence...



THANKYOU to all who participated. And there was a lovely atmosphere in the café afterwards!

Farewell Father Jack...

THE SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS (1st January) will be **Fr Jack's final Sunday** as curate of Christ Church. He will preside and preach at the 10 am Mass. We shall toast him afterwards with something suitable...

THE FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY, marking the arrival of the Wise Men Feast will be celebrated on **THURSDAY 5th at the 6.30 pm** Mass and will be followed by a drink and some food.

And finally, the Thursday lunch today had a festive feel about it... thanks to the team who put it together with so much love.



Lovely roasties!

Well, wherever *you* are, have a blessed, happy, and safe Christmas! With much love, **+ Lindsay**

NEW YEAR'S EVE 11.30 Watchnight service, ringing of the bell @ 12 & bubbly