

Quite a lot has happened since Helena wrote her article for the December/January edition of Findon News, back in November last year. We have celebrated Christmas and after the New Year, the feast of Epiphany.

In the run-up to Christmas, we enjoyed a range of community events across our three villages, including the ever-popular live nativity in Findon, but wasn't it cold?! Fortunately, this year the rain kept away from our 'Carols around the Coals' in both Patching and Clapham and we were able to enjoy the mulled wine and mince pies, and the carols too, of course! Our grateful thanks to all who organized these events.

Our Christmas Eve family service was well attended, and it was so nice to see the church full again after the privations of covid. This service has a very special moment when the children form a circle around the darkened church, and hold up a lighted Christingle as a sign of the light of Christ coming into the world. It is a sign of hope for us in a world where there is so much darkness and chaos. Later on Christmas Eve we returned to church to celebrate Midnight Mass but it seems that this is no longer as popular as it once was. However, we had a good turnout for our Christmas Morning services, with a number of visitors coming to join our celebrations, which is a great joy.

It will not be long now before we are in the season of Lent, which begins on Ash Wednesday, 22nd February. Lent is a time of reflection and preparation, so that we are ready to celebrate the premier Christian feast of Easter. There will be a 10am Eucharist on Ash Wednesday in Findon church when we are invited to receive a cross in ash on our foreheads. This symbolises our mortality and our need to come to God in sorrow for where we let him down and have not lived in his light.

This year, instead of holding our traditional Lent study Groups, we are going to do something different. There will be a service of Compline and a short reflection on a Wednesday evening at 7.30pm each week.

As Helena mentioned in her last article, she is now in Australia on a three-month sabbatical, visiting her daughter and family, and hopefully enjoying some rest and relaxation. She returns to the parish just before Easter, on the 2nd April. In the meantime, the work of the parish continues as usual, and our Church Office is open on Fridays and also on Monday mornings. Please continue to contact us by phone and email, and Wendy, our Parish Administrator, and I will pick up any messages as often as possible. We might not be as quick as Helena to respond though, as I do not live in the parish, so please bear with us.

With every blessing,

Colin