From the Rectory **December 2026**

Last time I wrote this 'From the Rectory' article for July, it was raining heavily before we had a long hot summer. It is raining again as I write and getting seasonably colder. I am pleased to report that the Findon Church refurbishment has finally been finished and we are now as watertight as an 11th Century church can be. It will take three years for excess water to be lost and the church to dry as much as a building with solid walls and no damp course can be, but it should stop any deterioration. There are other things in the pipeline but I will leave these aside as I need to mention Christmas. Even though we are still in Vacancy, and hoping to get a new priest some time in the New Year, all services are still running, with lots of retired priests helping to cover and bringing new thoughts and ideas to our services. I am eternally grateful for all of their help.

You should, by the time of reading, have had a Christmas card delivered to your house from our Church, covering Findon, Clapham and Patching services. Please do open and read it and see what is on offer. We start with the Living Nativity on Tuesday 8th December.. It starts at 6pm at the Village Hall, and progresses to the Gun Inn, where school children from the local primary school re-enact the 'No room at the Inn', with sheep and a donkey, then retire to the Stable area for carols, mulled wine and mince pies, available to purchase. Not to be missed.

On Sunday 13th at 5pm in our Church, there will be a carol concert organised by the Friends of St John the Baptist. There will be a professional choir the 'Mistletones', singing all the classics for us, with an opportunity to sing along with some of them. It is £10/head and all proceeds will go for the fund to help keep our church in the best possible condition. It includes mince pies and mulled wine, is lit by over 150 candles and will look fantastic and very festive. There is an advert for it in the Findon News, and tickets are available from Peckham's Butchers. Not to be missed either.

We have the Nine Lessons and Carols service at 4pm on the 20th December, which I find deeply moving, hearing the Christmas story read aloud. For children, we have the Christingle service on Christmas eve at 3pm, with our tree decorated, and a joyful festive service; it is a delight. It was started in 1747 in Germany, and came here in 1968 and appears in many churches in Advent, the time leading up to Christmas. It represents the birth of Christ bringing light to the World.

In Findon we have Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve, starting at 11.30pm, running over Midnight, and is my personal favourite service of the year. There will be Church bells rung before the service, then a lovely quiet moment to contemplate after all the hustle and bustle of the build up, reminding us all of the true meaning of Christmas. Then leaving the service and hearing the peace and quiet we all too often lack. There are services at 8am and 10am Christmas morning, so there are plenty of opportunities to attend. Please don't forget Clapham and Patching as well!

I would like to wish all of you a very merry and joyful Christmas, and may you have peace and harmony, and remember the true meaning of Christ's Mass, and the birth of God's son Jesus as His gift to the World.

Simon Knights

Churchwarden St John the Baptist Findon