

Rector's Annual Report for 2021  
February 13th, 2022

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom". It could be the motto for our Parish in these troubling times. It signals wonderfully what we have endeavoured to do together as a Parish in the face of covid (no longer always capitalised) and its fears and in terms of the restrictions that have curtailed worship in various ways. We have pressed on carefully but in a principled way with the protocols we have established and which have been welcomed by you. This has allowed us to continue with worship for the most of the year until the suspension of services by the Bishop, over and above the mandates of Public Health, which resulted in the cancellation of Christmas and most of Epiphany season. It is the first time, I think, in the history of the Parish that there have been no Christmas services. We have lately learned, too, that you can't count on the weather, especially in this winter unlike any other, it seems. A "bleak, midwinter" indeed!

Yet in the face of the things that lie beyond our control, we have pressed on with the Christ Church Connections email message every week and with recordings of the 8am communion service or, when services were completely curtailed, with an audio file of the Services of Matins and Ante-Communion. Homilies and meditations, on my poor part, have attempted to provide some food for the soul in these times of spiritual famine and eucharistic fast. The upside of these things, perhaps, is that it has allowed for deeper reflection on the wisdom of the Scriptures and to the ways in which Scripture in its own voice speaks to our souls even in the midst of the storms and tempests of our disordered world. In other words, as a Parish we have not been simply in survival mode but are growing spiritually in maturity and understanding about who we are in the Body of Christ. Such things have also been an important part of our spiritual outreach to "the friends of Christ Church" further afield whose prayers and support have been most encouraging. We have also persevered with the Christ Church Book Club throughout the course of the year.

For all of these spiritual labours may God be praised. It has meant looking beyond the inconveniences and frustrations that so often beset us. It has been about keeping our minds on the things of God. We have learned to appreciate better the things which truly matter, and so, like Mary, "have chosen the good portion", I hope, "which shall not be taken away". It is about "let[ting] the word of Christ dwell" in our hearts and minds "richly in all wisdom", words which we heard on the Fifth Sunday after Epiphany last week which happened to coincide with the first time that we were able to return to worship since the last Sunday in Advent, 2021.

Christian life is a *vita mixta* to be sure, a mixture of the practical and the theoretical, of the active and the contemplative. The challenge is to keep them in balance and to recognize their interrelation. The practical and active aspects of our embodied lives exist for the contemplative and the theoretical but without the practical and the active the contemplative and theoretical are equally incomplete. What is made known to us about

God and ourselves is to be made visible in our lives. Such is the witness and mission of our Parish. It remains our constant challenge and belongs to the nature of our labours in the vineyard of the Lord.

Despite the ups and downs, the on-again, off-again character of our uncertain times, there were a number of highlights in this past year such as the brass-polishing and clean-up day in the Fall and the equally hands-on participation of all who helped to fill and wrap the shoeboxes for the Missions to Seafarers. That form of outreach is complemented by our continuing endeavours to help out the less fortunate in our own community as well. Another aspect of our community outreach is the use of the Hall by the Girl Guides on Mondays and Wednesdays depending on the mandates of Public Health and by the Four Seasons Orchestra on Saturday mornings. Quick-As-A-Wink Theatre has continued to use the hall for their summer youth camps.

Looking ahead, Musique Royale has approached us about the possibility of providing a venue for concerts in 2022, which is something I think we would warmly welcome, as we have in the past. We are in the process of getting estimates about solar panels for the Hall and/or Church in an effort to reduce our electricity bill, the largest material expenditure that we face. We hope to press on with a number of projects which have been put on hold, such as the window sills and plexiglass covering on the windows of the nave.

The Parish Council, under the leadership of our wardens, Alex Jurgens and Scott Gilbreath, the excellent work in the treasury by Kathy Cameron, the expertise and advice of Rod Kershaw, the efficiency of Judy Gilbreath as secretary, and the consistent labours of Jen and David Appleby and Scotty Cameron, has kept the Parish in good business order. We continue to be thankful for the legal and financial expertise of Mr. Trevor Hughes and to the Christ Church Foundation for its role in providing some stability for the life of the Parish.

We are delighted to have Owen Stephens back with us at the organ and it was wonderful that at least for a few months in the Fall we were allowed to sing! My thanks to the choir for their faithfulness and to our intrepid bell-ringers, Blythe and Bronwyn Appleby, especially for their inspired undertaking to have the Christ Church bells ring out on Christmas Day! Such things speak to a sense of commitment and mission. My thanks to Marilyn Curry for undertaking the altar and linen duties of the Sanctuary and to Jen and Blythe, Scotty and Kathy for helping to keep Church and Hall in shape.

Others have laboured and we have entered into their labours. Nowhere is that more clearly shown than with Eric Nott and Barbara Hughes, our honorary wardens, both of whom died this past fall. We honour their memory and give thanks for their labours during some of the most difficult times in the history and life of the Parish. It was my privilege to officiate at Barbara's committal in late December. Arrangements for Eric's funeral/committal are in process. Their witness serves as an example to us all. It is good to be reminded of the long view of institutions and of the constant struggle to be faithful

to our founding principles. It is really all about learning to live from what has been given to us; in short, "let[ting] the word of Christ dwell in [us] richly in all wisdom".

I have really only all of you to thank for your patience and forbearance, for your dedication and commitment, for your prayers and support, and, above all, for your love of Christ in his Church. It is, most profoundly, about priest and people together as grounded in the love of God in Christ.

In Christ,

Fr. David Curry