

# ST OSWALD'S



# THE COMPASS

## CHRISTMAS 2024

DO YOU HAVE A NATIVITY SCENE IN YOUR HOME? At the rectory, we have one, and it is 28 years old. I still remember how Beverley and I were looking for one, a day before Christmas, two days after our marriage. Over the years, we've lost a few characters, two shepherds, one wise man and a goat.

Thank God, the wooden stable, baby Jesus, Mary and Joseph and the angel are all still intact! It was a few years ago I think, when we tried looking for the lost nativity characters at various shops, but couldn't find anything similar. Joel, our youngest son, said it was okay - he and his two brothers would be the shepherds, and his mommy and daddy could be the Magi.

Of all the Christmas decorations in the rectory, the 28-year-old Nativity Scene still takes central place in the sitting room. I guess, if you are into Nativity Scenes, it also says something about the family to whom the Nativity Scene belongs.

It is also true, that in many Church buildings across the world, at this time of the year, you will see various depictions of the Nativity Scene. What makes it more interesting, is how congregations adapt it slightly for their own context, yet the nativity characters, all remain the same. What do you see and feel, when you gaze at the Nativity Scene in the sanctuary this year?



Whatever our depiction of a Nativity Scene, the story of Christmas is always about the baby Jesus, who has been born in the humblest of surroundings, who grew up and became the one who died for us. It is all about celebrating the one on whom our own particular faith journey depends.

As the Advent Candles reminded us, the Christmas Story brings us Hope, Peace, Joy, Love, and brings light to a darkened world. In the Old Testament, the Book of Isaiah chapter 9, we read the words, *“For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.”* We also read in the New Testament, Luke chapter 2, the message of Angels as they declared, *“For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.”*

In an extremely busy and fast paced and broken world, it can be easy to caught up in all the festivities and forget about the baby – born in humble surroundings and who is the Saviour of the world. As you gaze therefore at the Nativity Scene, and consider what Christmas feels like for you, take a few moments to stop and ponder the greatest gift, which has been given to the world – the gift of Jesus. God loves each of us so much that he gave his Son for each one of us. Do you know, it is said that, “when Jesus was born, he was born with you and me in mind!”

It is my prayer that each one of you will experience the Christmas Story for what it truly is, and experience the Joy of Christ for yourself.

May Christ who was born in simplicity and humble beginnings, fill you and your family with Hope, Peace, Joy and Love!

*with Love,*  
*Selwyn*



## FROM THE CHURCH WARDENS

In 2024 we continued with our 110<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations until August. A marvellous Youth weekend was held in May. All Parish Youth took part in a variety of events with worship and music. There were also many treats with food and cake.



In June, the Parish enjoyed a wonderful Great Gatsby Dance. It was a very big, successful event which was very well-attended.

The Open Weekend was the culmination of the events for the year. As part of this, we held a beautiful Flower Festival in the church. There was also an exhibition in the hall of many photos and posters, as well as a timeline highlighting the many milestones of the Parish over the years. In addition, a presentation by Stephen Winter, (the son of past Rector, Revd Tom Winter) on the history of the church and the early days of Milnerton proved very informative and enjoyable. The dance / video presentations by the Youth and the Sunday School were enthusiastic and much enjoyed by all. A tea room was open all weekend and provided a welcome sit-down for all parishioners.

The Celebration Year ended with a Festival Evensong led by Bishop Raphael. At this service, the new Past Rectors & Priests-in Charge Board in the church was also unveiled and blessed by the Bishop. The service was followed by tea and special Anniversary cakes which were enjoyed by all in the hall.

The year continued thereafter as normal, with a well-supported Mini Bazaar taking place in October. St Francis also held a very successful Bazaar in November.

Finally, as Advent arrived, we all enjoyed a wonderful Nativity Service with the Sunday School children.

We thank all those who have contributed and those who have worked so hard to make this such good year. We thank God for leading and guiding us through the year and would like to welcome all new members into our church and encourage you all to participate in parish life.

Love and blessings,

**Andree & Nadine**





## FINANCES

Firstly, a big thank you to God and our fellow parishioners for your financial support over this past year. There has been a decrease in pledging over the year as compared to 2023. We do encourage you to examine your pledge and where possible, to increase it. As you all know, costs continue to rise for everything. We have 8 properties for which we have to pay municipal charges, insurance, security etc. There were also increases in both Diocesan and Parish assessments. During the year we had major expenses due to the burglary at the rectory as well the need to rewire the electricity box, undertake roof repairs and replace the garage doors. The security systems at the rectory, church and Maureen's house were upgraded and security doors installed in the church and rectory.

We however, continue to try and cut down on expenses wherever possible. We are so blessed to have generous parishioners who regularly give of their time to assist in many maintenance tasks on the properties.

Please remember your commitment to God and this parish – even if it is a small amount – every bit helps. Despite the decrease in income we have been blessed with some generous donations for various causes including the Organ project.

Once again, thank you to all those who pledge regularly and to those who have increased their pledges.

**Andree Lombard – Church Treasurer**

**WE WISH YOU ALL**



**A VERY BLESSED & HAPPY CHRISTMAS  
& A PEACEFUL 2025**