

28 April 2020

Dear Friends

Welcome to another weekly newsletter. I hope this finds you all at peace with our current situation.

I was very encouraged by our Holy Communion service last weekend – for those who were able to tune in, we could sing some hymns and follow the service on the screen.

Correspondence received from the Diocese this week has again been mainly from the Bishop to clergy. There is still no definitive word on when we may be able to meet together again at St John's. As you probably all know, visiting restrictions have been eased – where Home Communion with the bread only is now possible – but care must still be taken with physical distancing rules still in place.

I continue to be thankful to Lynn for producing, and Marea and Axel who help her deliver, the Pew Sheet each week to those who are not on email. If any of you are able to view our daily transmissions of Morning and Evening Prayer or Mass on Sunday mornings and can share these with those who don't have computers or internet access, could I encourage you to do so please. It is a great way of building community.

I have spoken with the Activities Officer at Opal Raymond Terrace Gardens – Oban – about live-streaming a service to some of the residents. Kathie, the Activities Officer, is in the process of trying to arrange a Skype meeting with Peggy Davies and Jeanne Mullaney, and a facetime call with Joyce Wood.

For those who may be interested, I would like to investigate the possibility of starting up some Zoom Bible Study Groups. Zoom is becoming more widely used, Zoom Bible Study groups have been trialled in other parishes and seems to be working well. A connection to the NBN is important but I can see that the use of such technology as part of the ministries we offer going forward will become necessary. When current restrictions are either eased or removed, I can see live-streaming of Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer and at least 1 Holy Communion Service through the week still making up our "suite" of services being offered.

I am studying a Daily Devotional called "*The Divine Romance – 365 Days Meditating on the Song of Songs*". On Monday, under the subject of "Searching", the authors highlighted a portion of chapter 3:2 – ***So I must rise in search of him***. One of the biggest hindrances to our relationship with the LORD is distraction and busyness. When our thoughts are inundated with mental *to-do* lists, worries, or fears, we'll have a hard time sensing GOD's nearness. When we live fixated on what's happening around us, instead of directing our attention to the One who lives in us, we'll begin to feel dry, irritable and moody. These are tell-tale signs that it's time to change our focus. GOD loves spending time with us. He is always available to us. It's up to us to rise from our complacency and search for Him. For our lives to truly change, GOD must become the centre of them – the first and foremost motivation of our souls. As we cultivate our relationship with Him, we'll become so saturated with His love that turning to Him often will become effortless.

Father may Your presence be our daily inspiration. We've allowed other things to steal our affections; but no more. May we shake off our laziness and ask that you strengthen us. Fill us with grace to seek you above all else. Amen

If you would like to explore what's available in studying the bible more or praying more, please do not hesitate to contact me by phone or by text message – 0401 061 789, Facebook Messenger, or email – frsteve@bigpond.com

Prayer points for this week:

- Warden, Parish Council and Rector as we meet in the coming week
- People who have been diagnosed with COVID-19

- People who are working on the front-line such as doctors, hospital and aged-care staff, nurses, pharmacists, police, fire fighters, emergency service personnel, grocery store employees, retail workers and truck drivers
- People who have become unemployed because of COVID-19
- People who are struggling because of having to live in lockdown
- People who are on our prayer list and those who mourn

Thank you for continuing to support our parish financially. It is important that we all continue to support the Church through our giving. If you have internet access, you might like to consider making a direct deposit into our parish account. Thank you to those who already use this method. The parish account details are as follows:

BSB 705-077 and the Account Number is 00041040 – and our account is with the Anglican Savings and Development Fund. If you don't have internet access or prefer not to give electronically, give our Treasurer Edith a call and she can work with you on the best way to do this.

If you would prefer to make a **DONATION**, it may be done as follows:

At the top of the webpage there are 7 headings – the first of which is Church. If you click on Church, another menu appears. The 7th topic on this menu is DONATE. If you click on that, there are some steps to follow on that page in order to donate.

May GOD richly bless you as you journey with Him this week.

Fr Steve