

21 July 2020

Dear Friends

Welcome to our latest weekly newsletter.

I am thankful to Susanna Denham, Helen Farley and Elizabeth Cooper for the music, flowers, and the intercessions respectively for Mass at the weekend. Thanks also to Lynn Mulley who continues faithfully in her ministry of giving us a Pew Sheet every week. Services at St John's this week will be as follows:

Holy Communion

- Saturday at 6pm – **25 July 2020**
- Sunday at 9am – **26 July 2020** – livestreamed
- Wednesday at 9am – **29 July 2020**
- Morning Prayer – livestreamed daily at 8am – Tuesday to Saturday
- Evening Prayer – livestreamed daily at 5pm – Tuesday to Saturday

At 11:30am last Sunday, I had the privilege of baptising Thomas Laverick. 24 members of his family were present and socially distant in the main part of the Church and the chapel – including an enormously proud Wilma McNeill looking on from the chapel.

Parish Council met through the week by Zoom. Nothing major to come out of the meeting. We are maintaining our budget well. Thank you for the faith, love, and commitment of everybody during these strange times. They have brought many changes, and everybody is adapting well. Who said Anglicans can't change!

Under the heading "**The Spirit and the Word**", I was directed to Colossians 3:16 – "*Let the word of CHRIST dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the LORD.*"

Ephesians points to our being filled with the Spirit. Colossians points to our being filled with the Word of GOD, which dwells within us richly. Then, by psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, we partake in wisdom and teaching together. Combine the two passages and we see a melody and countermelody of being filled with GOD's Word and GOD's Spirit, responding with beautiful music in both cases.

We need both of these – the Spirit and the Word – to be Christians. Subtract either and it's simply not possible. One reshapes the heart and the other the mind; and together they make us whole persons moulded to the image of CHRIST. The Word of GOD provides the content; the Spirit of GOD applies it. He impresses the teachings of the Scriptures upon us, applies them to us and reminds us of them at need. Throughout time, many believers have been inspired to create hymns as they have read GOD's Word. Very often they've said they were convinced that GOD gave them the melody as well. How could powerful songs like "Amazing Grace" and "Joy To The World" have any other source but GOD?

[David Jeremiah – Morning and Evening Devotions – Thomas Nelson Publishers]

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

Good news at last on the resuming of our Emergency Relief Programme. Please refer to the Pew Sheet for all the details.

During the week, our neighbour Ross Osborne put up the Emergency Evacuation Point sign on the fence separating our 2 properties. This is where we will go in the event of an emergency at St John's.

Prayer points for this week:

- A reduction in the spread of the coronavirus
- May all people obey the directions of the health department and use caution in all our dealings
- Peace in our world
- Children to be brought for baptism and their families
- The people of Victoria as they enter another extended period of lockdown
- People who are on our parish prayer list and those who mourn

Under the heading of "**Milk and Honey**" the bible in the Song of Songs tells us "Your loving words are like honeycomb to me; **your tongue releases milk and honey**, for I find the Promised Land flowing within you. The fragrance of your worshipping love surrounds you with scented robes of white." *Song of Songs 4:11*

Fill ourselves with the sweet promises of GOD. Let them saturate the way we think, and they will drip from every word we say. Others will be fed by the nourishing truths that flow from our lips. The promised land was a land flowing with milk and honey – abundant and rich. This is who we are – abundant and richly filled with living truths. The very Spirit of GOD – the Promised Land, so to speak – is within us.

JESUS hears every word we say. Each sigh of our heart, every declaration of love, and every cry for help – nothing goes unnoticed. Every word matters to Him; and they should matter to us as well. If we begin to notice negative, complaining, doubt-filled words, it's time to flood ourselves with His truth. We need to be intentional about what we think about; it will be evident in our demeanour and speech.

JESUS, pour out your presence upon the dry, cracked, and thirsty ground of our souls. Drench us; flood every thought with the goodness of who you are. Consume our thoughts so they are filled with nothing but your truth. Touch our lips, so our words glorify you and spark hope and life to all who hear. AMEN

[Taken from *The Divine Romance*– 365 Days Meditating on the Song of Songs]

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

Fr Steve