

13 August 2020

Dear Friends

Welcome to our latest weekly newsletter.

I am thankful to Susanna Denham for the music and the flowers, and Trisch Lasorsa for the intercessions for Mass at the weekend. Thanks also to Lynn Mulley who continues faithfully in her ministry of giving us a Pew Sheet every week. St John's is now registered as a COVID-safe site. Services at St John's this week will be as follows:

Holy Communion

- Saturday at 6pm – **15 August 2020**
- Sunday at 9am – **16 August 2020** – livestreamed
- Wednesday at 9am – **19 August 2020**
- Morning Prayer – livestreamed daily at 8am – Tuesday to Saturday
- Evening Prayer – livestreamed daily at 5pm – Tuesday to Saturday

Last Saturday morning I had the privilege of baptising baby Elliot Brewer. Just over 30 people came and witnessed this significant event in Elliot's life where he became a member of GOD's family

The main news this week continues to centre around the use of masks. Bishop Peter has strongly recommended that masks be worn at Church. There will be signs at all the entrance points explaining this: "Our concern is for the health and well-being of all people who come to our Church. Together we can help make our community and our church COVID-19 safe. **"The Bishop of Newcastle joins with the NSW Government in strongly encouraging all people attending places of worship to wear face masks."** Thank you for your understanding as we implement COVID-Safe worship practices."

COVID-19 is still casting its shadow over us and we must all continue our diligence in following the health regulations issued by the relevant authorities. Wearing masks is just one of these – hand hygiene and sanitising and keeping physical distance from each other is still important, too. There are signs up around the Church building and regular hand sanitising stations to assist.

On Tuesday, we were due to take Holy Communion to our friends at Opal but due to heightened coronavirus concerns in the community, this was not able to happen. Hopefully, next month.

For those who attend our Church site, please look on the notice board and read our Evacuation Policy.

On Sunday 23 August, Bishop Sonia will be visiting us. She will meet with Parish Council after the service for a short time.

This coming week we have:

- Our usual services on Wednesday
- SRE at Raymond Terrace Public School

Under the heading "**Tighten Your Resolve**", I was directed to Romans 14:13 – "*Resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in the way of another*"

J. Wilbur Chapman, a powerful evangelist of an earlier era, formulated what he called "my rule for Christian living." He said, "The rule that governs my life is this: Anything that dims my vision of CHRIST, or takes away my taste for Bible Study, or cramps my prayer life, or makes Christian work difficult, is wrong for me, and I must, as a Christian, turn away from it."

We can also add: "Anything that hurts my testimony or stunts the growth of another Christian is likewise wrong."

There are many issues, habits, and convictions that differ among Christians. The apostle Paul deals with these "grey areas" in Romans 14 and 1 Corinthians 10, and he warns us against allowing our Christian liberty to become a stumbling block to ourselves or to others. If we practice our Christian liberty in such a way as to tempt others to violate their consciences or to engage in activities that may for them be doubtful, we are not exercising our freedom in a wise or loving way. Which begs the question: "Is there an area in our life that needs to be tightened? Is there an activity that needs changing?"

[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

Prayer points for this week:

- A reduction in the spread of the coronavirus around the world
- May we all obey the directions of the health department and use caution in all our dealings
- Peace in our world and increasing respect for and between people
- Children to be brought for baptism and their families
- **Those GOD is calling to the ministry of SRE teaching to come forward**
- For politicians and their advisors, be guided to get the appropriate balance between Public Health needs and the needs of the economy
- The people of Victoria and those in hot spots and clusters in other states as we seek to control the spread of coronavirus.
- A reduction in the incidences of cyber-crime
- People who are on our parish 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.

Under the heading of “**Arise**” the bible in the Song of Songs tells us “The one I love calls me: The Bridegroom-King **Arise, my dearest. Hurry, my darling. Come along with me**” *Song of Songs 2:10*

JESUS wants to breathe resurrection life into us and all that we do. This flow of power and glory is a gift that resides within us. He asks us to pour out of our fullness into the lives of others. With excitement shining from His face, He does more than extend the hand of friendship – He beckons us to run with Him. His love imparts courage to leave the places of comfort.

We are the beautiful ones in which He delights. Listen as He calls us His dearest and His darling. We are glorious and magnificent, simply because we are His. He's so excited to share this journey with us. His fiery love has power to break off every desire for the world and its artificial pleasures. We need to let His love consume every other ambition and passion. JESUS has come to make us as victorious and powerful as He is.

JESUS, extend Your hand to us and strengthen us by Your grace. We hear you beckoning us, but we are hesitant. We want to run to You, and we believe that You live inside of us – but we need courage. We place our confidence in you alone. Fill us with compassion, faith, and boldness – and we will do what you ask.
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