

03 September 2020

Dear Friends

Welcome to our latest weekly newsletter.

I am thankful to Susanna Denham for the music, Caroline Coppins for the flowers, and Denise Brown 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 – **5 September 2020**
- Sunday at 9am – **6 September 2020** – livestreamed
- Wednesday at 9am – **9 September 2020**
- Morning Prayer – livestreamed daily at 8am – Tuesday to Saturday
- Evening Prayer – livestreamed daily at 5pm – Tuesday to Saturday

It was lovely to celebrate with Caroline and Murray the Baptism of their granddaughter Ava on Saturday and her first birthday on Sunday – and to hear a heart-felt message of thanks for our prayers and support during Ava's journey for the many months following her birth including through the added burden of the pandemic.

Please continue to pray for Heather as she recovers from being struck by a car on the pedestrian crossing in William Street near Market Place, the Mutual Bank and Terry White Chemist – thankfully, no broken bones. Continue to pray that the police may locate the driver. The latest news is good in that there is no need for surgery and the lump on Heather's thigh will gradually go down over the coming months.

It is still important – though not mandatory – that we wear masks when we come to St John's. 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 Thursday we held a funeral for the late **Barbara Annette Rose** and on Saturday I had the privilege of baptising **Alexander Joseph Hamilton**.

During the week, GOD answered our prayers for an additional SRE teacher for Raymond Terrace Public School. Karen Phillips – Lorraine and Lance's daughter – through her involvement with the Raymond Terrace Community Church has completed all the appropriate training and has offered to teach the class not receiving Scripture teaching at the moment. Karen will begin teaching on Friday, 11 September.

During the month of September, we will again be holding our **Seasons of Creation** services. It will begin on Sunday 6 September. The fifth and final Sunday is usually a Blessing of the Animals service. This year, I invite you to take a photo of your pet/s and email it to me at frsteve@bigpond.com so that we can pray a virtual blessing on them on Sunday 4 October. I ask your permission to display these photographs on the Parish Website, Facebook, and Instagram pages. Please let me know when you send your photos in, please. The 5 topics for the five weeks will be:

6 September – The Greatest Commandment – FOREST Sunday

13 September – Protecting The Commons – LAND Sunday

20 September – There Is Enough For Our Need, Not Our Greed – WILDERNESS Sunday

27 September – The Gift of Water – RIVER Sunday

4 October – The Feast Of St Francis – Blessing Of The Animals – Creation Spirituality

This coming week we have:

- Our usual services on Wednesday
- SRE at Raymond Terrace Public School
- A Baptism on Saturday 5 September at 11am

Under the heading "**Pray Everywhere**", I was directed to Genesis 39: 20-21 – "*And [Joseph] was there in prison ... But the LORD was with Joseph and showed him mercy, and He gave him [favour] in the sight of the keeper of the prison.*"

A famous preacher tells how, when he was a child, his mother paid a neighbourhood girl to walk the eight blocks to school with him and back each day. He finally convinced his mother to let him walk to school and back alone. Years later at a family party, he bragged about his independence as a child – how he had walked to school alone. "Did you think you were alone?" his mother asked. "Those first few years, I walked behind you to and from school. You never saw me, but I was there every day just in case you needed me."

That preacher's mother might have taken a lesson from the experience of Joseph in Egypt. When Joseph was thrown into prison, being falsely accused by Potiphar's wife, the Bible says that GOD was with him during his 2-year imprisonment.

When we find ourselves imprisoned spiritually or emotionally by our circumstances, we need to remember that GOD is with us. Though it is dark in prison, pray anyway, every day, for GOD is near you and is listening to your prayers. You cannot be in a place where GOD isn't.

The day you stop believing GOD is with you is the day you stop believing 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

Prayer points for this week:

- A reduction in the spread of the coronavirus around the world
- May we all continue to 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 – ANSWERED!!!**
- 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

Under the heading of “**KNOCK**” the bible in the Song of Songs tells us “The melody of the man I love awakened me. **I heard his knock at my heart's door** as he pleaded with me” *Song of Songs 5:2*

The LORD is standing at the door of our hearts, knocking. He's beckoning us and inviting us to something we've never experienced before. JESUS constantly calls us from glory to glory. There is always more of His character to become acquainted with, more of His love to encounter, and more wisdom and grace to lead us. Our life's calling will propel us straight into His hands, when we respond to His proposal. Though the timing doesn't always feel right, we can trust Him when He draws us away from what is comfortable and predictable. If we will open to Him, He will take us through a door that leads to new revelations of JESUS in our lives. He will never knock before it is time.

LORD, I hear you knocking on the door of my heart, and I open to you with joyful anticipation. I'm not sure what the future looks like, but when you take me by the hand, I have no fear. I will run with you wherever You lead. When you call, I will not resist. 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