

10 September 2020

Dear Friends

Welcome to our latest weekly newsletter.

I am thankful to Susanna Denham for the music, Heather Buckingham for the flowers, and Don Denham 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 – **12 September 2020**
- Sunday at 9am – **13 September 2020** – livestreamed
- Wednesday at 9am – **16 September 2020**
- Morning Prayer – livestreamed daily at 8am – Tuesday to Saturday
- Evening Prayer – livestreamed daily at 5pm – Tuesday to Saturday

We celebrate this week with Axel who had his 15th birthday on Thursday and Garry and Julie Roth whose daughter Leanne was married to Glen Richards on Saturday 12 September.

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. It is also important that we strictly adhere to maximum numbers within each space of our Church Building – the main part of the Church – 20 people, the Chapel – 6 people, and the Parish Ministry Centre – 34. At a funeral, for example, we need to have a "COVID Marshall" to ensure that these numbers are NOT exceeded – otherwise there could be hefty fines.

On Friday we held a funeral for the late **Gary Donkin**. We mourn with Trisch Lasorsa from our Sunday 9am congregation whose mother-in-law died last week.

On Friday 11 September, Karen Phillips – Lorraine and Lance's daughter – through her involvement with the Raymond Terrace Community Church – and who has completed all the appropriate training, joined our SRE team to give Scripture lessons at Raymond Terrace Public School.

During this month of September, we are again holding our **Seasons of Creation** services. It began 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 are:

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 and SRE at Raymond Terrace Public School

Under the heading "**The Poor Rich Man**", I was directed to Matthew 6:21 – "*For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*"

A certain man lived in a cottage on a hill. Every week he rode his camel to a little stream. And every week, as the camel stopped to drink, it nosed up the pebbles in order to make a deeper place for drinking. Again and again, the man picked up the bright stones the animal uncovered and took them home with him. One day a traveller told the man of the easy comfort and riches that certain men in the city enjoyed; the traveller filled the man's heart with discontent. So, he sold his cottage and wandered the earth looking for money. Finally, he died in rags and poverty, and was buried. The man who bought the cottage found the stones and preserved them. One day a merchant came to his home and discovered that these well-preserved stones were diamonds. The owner of the diamonds immediately became a millionaire. The first man had great wealth but being ignorant of it, sold it and travelled the world looking for it. The second man simply made use of what he had. All people have eternal life at their disposal. Some respond to the treasure like the first man, and some like the second.

[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 between and within countries 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 in hot spots and clusters within our nation 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 **“YOU HAVE BECOME A FEAST”** the bible in the Song of Songs tells us “I delight in gathering my sacred space, all the fruits of my life I have gathered from within you, my paradise garden. **Come, all my friends – feast upon my bride, all you revellers of my palace”** *Song of Songs 5:1*

The world needs His touch, His love, His compassion, and His power – all of which reside within you. We don't need to have every Bible verse memorised or be authorised by an organisation to share His love and truth. WE are His truth. As a vessel of the Holy Spirit, we have become a banqueting table for others to feast from. When JESUS brings people across our path, He's doing it because He knows we have something they need. We have Him. We are the answer to someone's prayer because He is in us. We need to step out and take a risk today. When we leave the house, we need to expect to encounter people GOD wants us to talk with, pray for, or simply give a kind word to. We look like Him because we are one with Him. We must let His kindness be seen in our lives.

LORD, help us to pay more attention to you as you stand in the midst of others and beckon us to share your kindness. Show us the value each person has – even if we don't agree with everything they do or say. Let us be vessels of dignity, respect and honour – who reveal your heart to others.

[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