

17 September 2020

Dear Friends

Welcome to our latest weekly newsletter.

I am thankful to Susanna Denham for the music, Helen Farley for the flowers, and Elizabeth Cooper 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 – **19 September 2020**
- Sunday at 9am – **20 September 2020** – livestreamed
- Wednesday at 9am – **23 September 2020**
- Morning Prayer – livestreamed daily at 8am – Tuesday to Saturday
- Evening Prayer – livestreamed daily at 5pm – Tuesday to Saturday

It is still important – though not mandatory – that we wear masks when we come to St John's. Even though there are hints that the effects of COVID-19 are lessening, it 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.

During the week, we held our monthly Parish Council Meeting over Zoom on Tuesday afternoon. Also, on Tuesday, the annual air-conditioning maintenance was carried out at both the church and the rectory along with some plumbing maintenance at the Rectory.

We also celebrate with Kara, Nina and Elia Denham-Giacometti, and Don and Susanna, as they were reunited with their husband, father, and son-in-law Giacco during the week after being separated by distance for 6 months. Giacco has spent the last 6 months in New Zealand while Kara and the girls have been here in Raymond Terrace waiting for permission from governments to reunite. Giacco has spent the last 14 days in quarantine and the family are now together again.

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 "**A Sacrificial Mother**", I was directed to John 19:26 – "*When JESUS therefore saw His mother ... He said to His mother, 'Woman, behold your son!'*"

She was the twenty-fifth child in the English family of a religious dissenter; she had little education and lived in a male-dominated age; she married an older man and bore him nineteen children – nine of who died. Her house burned down, her barn fell down, her health failed. And her pastor husband was either poor, jailed, or sick much of the time. But Susanna Wesley raised two sons, named John and Charles, who changed the world. Fortunately, Susanna Wesley wasn't a woman who thought the task of mothering to be beneath her. And fortunately, a young Jewish woman named Mary didn't consider anything more meaningful than being the mother of the Son of GOD. From the beginning, she knew she was irreplaceable in the life of her child, and her sacrificial love remained strong to the end as she watched Him die for her and the world's sins. JESUS' efforts to care for Mary indicate just how much she meant to Him (John 19:27). It is in the heart of

mothers to sacrifice and the need of mothers to be remembered. Motherhood is best defended by children who appreciate their mother's love.

[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 continued and sustained reduction in the spread of the coronavirus around our nation.
- May we all continue to diligently 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**

There is a free, Monday to Friday reflection available online called **THE DAILY NUDGE** – written by a Sydney pastor and commentator, Karl Faase – whose organisation is behind the JESUS the GAME CHANGER series we did a couple of years ago. On 15 September, this reflection was headed **Treasure and Focus**. Have you ever noticed that when you buy a certain make of car in a particular colour, those cars seem to be everywhere? It's a simple example of where we place our focus. The things that are on our hearts determine what we look for and what we see. This can be benign, but it can be very negative as well. We can focus on what we don't have or the negative characteristics of those closest to us. Some people can get lured by an unhelpful focus on practically anything. The problem here is twofold – it's both our hearts and our focus. The Bible has some helpful advice on this. It tells us that to break this cycle we need to be careful where we place our focus. We are told that whatever is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, and excellent, Philippians 4:8, to focus our attention there. By changing our focus, we can take steps toward changing our heart. Ultimately, only GOD will completely change our hearts but by dealing with our focus, we can put ourselves in the space where GOD can change us.

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 8 headings – the first of which is Church. If you click on Church, another menu appears. The 7th topic on this menu is **SUPPORT**. 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