

03 December 2020

Dear Friends

Welcome to our latest weekly newsletter.

I am thankful to Keren Louis for the music Heather Buckingham the flowers, Lorraine Phillips for the prayers and assisting at the altar, Edith Hoy and Marea Niland for advancing the slides and Lynn Mulley for the Pew Sheet. Services at St John's coming up will be as follows:

Holy Communion

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

I am looking forward to baptising Faith and Alana Foster at 11:30am this Sunday, 6 December. Tuesday – 8 December – Service at Opal Raymond Terrace Gardens

OUR CHRISTMAS SERVICES FOR THIS YEAR WILL BE AS FOLLOWS:

SUNDAY 20 DECEMBER	6PM – LESSONS AND CAROLS
WEDNESDAY 23 DECEMBER	9AM – USUAL MID-WEEK EUCHARIST 6PM – BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE
THURSDAY 24 DECEMBER	6PM – HOLY EUCHARIST AND CHILDREN'S SERVICE 11:30PM – MIDNIGHT EUCHARIST – THE BIRTH OF OUR LORD
FRIDAY 25 DECEMBER	9AM – CHRISTMAS DAY EUCHARIST
SATURDAY 26 DECEMBER	6PM – ST STEPHEN'S DAY – USUAL SATURDAY EUCHARIST
SUNDAY 27 DECEMBER	9AM – USUAL SUNDAY EUCHARIST

We are progressing towards having refreshments after our Sunday 9am service. There is a fact sheet – **Fact Sheet COVID safe Preparation of Refreshments** – which gives us all the health regulations to follow: The area that is used for the service of refreshments must be set up in accordance with the **Fact Sheet: Preparing the Church Building**.

- ✓ There must be no mingling during this time and social distancing must be maintained. If seating is provided this should be set up in advance to ensure 1.5m distance is maintained.
- ✓ The area where the refreshments will be prepared should be cleaned in line with the Fact Sheet: Cleaning before and after use and should be set up to ensure social distancing is maintained between the person serving and those receiving refreshments.
- ✓ The person/s responsible for serving refreshments must be well, comply with all Conditions of Entry and ensure that that they use hand sanitizer before and after preparing food.
- ✓ Disposable gloves should also be provided for the Volunteer to wear during preparation. Once preparation is complete these gloves should be disposed of in a closed lid bin.
- ✓ The person/s responsible for serving refreshments must wear a mask in line with the **Fact Sheet – Wearing of Masks**.
- ✓ Single use cups, tea, coffee, sugar, milk and pre-packaged biscuits should be used. No shared items are permitted. **OR** you can bring your own mug and take it home for washing up.
- ✓ These items should not be handed directly to the person. They should be prepared and placed on the table in front of the person for collection.
- ✓ Where possible reduce crowding while persons are waiting for refreshments and ensure social distancing is maintained. Place markings on the floor to ensure that this distance is maintained.
- ✓ A closed lid bin should be provided with all persons directed to dispose of their rubbish before leaving.
- ✓ There is a cap of 30 minutes time onsite for refreshments. This time is in addition to the current cap of 90 minutes that is in place for services.
- ✓ At the conclusion, all persons should be asked to depart site in line with **Fact Sheet: Safe Entry and Exit of the Church Building**
- ✓ Any preparation or handling of refreshments must follow standard food safety practices some basic reminders have been included below:
 - Observe temperature control requirements.
 - Check food packaging for the use by date, any food past this date must not be consumed. Ensure that the utensils and kitchen areas are kept clean.

It was decided at our recent Parish Meeting that from the first Sunday in February 2021 that we would return to 2 services on a Sunday – 8am and 10am. The return to singing at our worship services has not progressed beyond 5 people all facing in the one direction, singing. We await further advice from NSW Health and the Bishop

Under the heading “**Asking for Directions**”, I was directed to Proverbs 16:20 – “*Whoever gives heed to instruction prospers, and blessed is he who trusts in the LORD.*”

An old sailor repeatedly got lost at sea, so his friends gave him a compass and urged him to use it. The next time he went out in his boat, he followed their advice and took the compass with him, but he still got lost. Finally, he was rescued by his friends. Disgusted and impatient with him, they asked, “Why didn’t you use that compass we gave you? You could have saved us a lot of trouble!” the sailor responded, “I didn’t dare to! I wanted to go north, but as hard as I tried to make the needle aim in that direction, it just kept pointing southeast.” The old sailor was so certain he knew which direction was north that he stubbornly tried to force his own personal persuasion on his compass. Unable to do so, he tossed it aside as worthless and failed to benefit from the guidance it offered.

GOD’s Word is our compass. We need to use it on a daily basis to check in, to make sure that we are going in the right direction. Stubbornness and busyness can take us off course, but GOD’s Word is right there waiting for our return. We should never be afraid to ask GOD for directions.

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

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 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
- Instability in the United States to come to an end.
- Children to be brought for baptism and their families
- For politicians and their advisors, to be guided to get the appropriate balance between Public Health needs and the needs of the economy
- Those who travel on our roads
- **People who are on our parish prayer list and those who mourn**

Under the heading: “**Altogether Lovely**”, I was directed to Song of Songs 5:16 – “*Most sweet are His kisses, even His whispers of love. He is delightful in every way and perfect from every viewpoint.*”

The goodness and beauty of the LORD is found all around us. Seek the light of His face in every sunrise, hear His decrees of breakthrough crashing upon the waves, and reflect upon His wisdom as the stars shine firmly in place. We will find His comfort, joy and love surrounding us everywhere we look. Life with the LORD is meant to be captivating and delightful. It stirs our hearts with mystery yet settles every rattling confusion. His love is beyond comprehension. His mercy is above the heavens. Everything about Him is fascinating, beautiful, and gracious. The majestic LORD of all creation loves us perfectly because He knows exactly what we need. He is altogether lovely.

JESUS, you’ve created a life for me that reflects your goodness and compassion. Help me to remain focused on the beauty of life and not become distracted by the darkness that tries to intimidate me. You are my delight, and today, I will count my many blessings, for you are at the centre of them all. Amen

The Divine Romance – 365 Days meditating on the Song of Songs – Brian Simmons and Gretchen Rodriguez

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

Fr Steve