

24 November 2020

Dear Friends

Welcome to our latest weekly newsletter.

I am thankful to Susanna Denham for the music and the flowers, Don Denham 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 – **28 November 2020**
- Sunday at 9am – **29 November 2020**
- Wednesday at 9am – **2 December 2020**
- Morning Prayer – livestreamed daily at 8am – Tuesday to Saturday
- Evening Prayer – livestreamed daily at 5pm – Tuesday to Saturday

Bishop Peter called a meeting of Clergy on Wednesday 25 November at the NEX Club in Newcastle – the old Newcastle Workers Club Site – to talk about:

- Our life together following the decision of the Appellate Tribunal. Clergy who would like to bless the civil marriage of a same-sex couple are strongly encouraged to have a pastoral conversation with the Bishop before doing so. At a meeting of Diocesan Bishops, restraint was strongly encouraged until at least after GENERAL SYNOD met in 2021. The Church's stance on marriage has not changed.
- Sustaining parish ministry following the conclusion of Job keeper – hopefully, restrictions will be lifted of meeting sizes and hospitality ministries to allow our catering ladies to resume their ministry.
- The administration of wine as part of communion services – strict procedures for the use of single use cups have been produced along with strict measures for intincting (wafer dipped in wine). There are answers to questions still being determined in this space.

Last Sunday we held a Parish Meeting to discuss how we will move into the future and to talk about the updated COVID-19 requirements. It was decided 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 "**What's In A Name**", I was directed to Genesis 17:5 – "*No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations.*"

A married couple named their new son "Foolish One." The name stuck; and by the time Fool was a grown man, he had lived up to his name. Once, he was befriended by a stranger but incurred the stranger's wrath when he failed to acknowledge his kindness. His wife, who was wise, did the right thing and settled Fool's debt – the shock of which caused Fool to have a stroke. A fool from birth, in ten days, Nabal was dead.

That's right – Nabal of the Old Testament (1 Samuel 25) – bore a name that, in Hebrew, means "fool". Why would parents burden a child with such a negative name? Naming is such a powerful tool in the hand of a parent or any authority figure. When we name someone, we exercise a certain power over his or her life. The person believes us – why shouldn't they? – and thinks of themselves in those terms. Just think: which would a junior footballer rather hear from a parent in the stands: "Way to go champ!" or "Way to go chump!?" Regardless of your legal name, if you're a believer in CHRIST, you have a new name: CHRISTIAN, meaning "CHRIST one" or "little CHRIST". That's a name worthy of living up to. Names are word pictures. Paint them ever so carefully.

[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](mailto:frsteve@bigpond.com)

**Prayer points for this week:**

- A continued and sustained reduction in the spread of the coronavirus around our nation – especially now in South Australia.
- 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: “**His Kisses Are Sweet**”, 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.**”

JESUS’ kiss of sacred intimacy awakens us to life and catapults us on an eternal path of discovery. Nothing competes with His love. It is pure, empowering, and unique. Nothing is more pleasing or transformational than knowing Him. Every pleasure and temporary joy fades in comparison to the touch of the Holy Spirit upon our lives. Just pondering His love can overwhelm our hearts with bliss. We can experience His faithful kisses each day in many different ways. When He whispers our name, it sparks hope and faith. His kisses of peace soothe the most anxious mind. When darkness overshadows us, He orchestrates the dawn. Every gloomy thought is infused with truth when He pulls us close. We need to pay attention to His many blessings on our lives – they are the sweet kisses of a loving King.

*LORD, I’m coming close with expectancy enflaming my soul. Your kiss upon my life has both satisfied me and left me longing for more. Your love floods my veins and infuses every cell. I want all of you in every way. I must experience every aspect of your glorious love. 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