

The Rector's Weekly Message:

Sunday the 31st of October 2021

Being Cautious:

This week I have received both hand and electronically written letters from a few parishioners: Add to this the several telephone calls. All were expressing how they would not be attending Church in person just yet. The reasons vary, from the need to protect themselves to allow them to attend an interstate family celebration; to those who are very cautious about mixing with the non-vaccinated. Add to this, the members of our parish who are not vaccinated for medical reasons will also not attend St John's until there is a medical solution for them.

The above communications display wisdom, and albeit we would all love to be together, this will take time. It is reasonable to be cautious. The pandemic is seemingly being controlled. The government's concern that there would be an explosion in numbers once we open up, with October predicted to be a horror month which may have placed the Hospital under tremendous stress, did not come to fruition; for which we can all say, thanks be to God!

I encourage every member to listen to your medical professional and make a wise decision for when you will be able to return to Church. If you have any flu-like symptoms, I also ask, please stay home until these symptoms are appropriately addressed.

Being cautious does not equate to being fearful. Fear can be crippling: No one should have to live a life in fear, even the fear of catching the Coronavirus. I must stress that your medical professional, General Practitioner, knows you best and will be able to assist you when it is right for you to start to transition back into community life.

Finally, be assured that the leadership team are putting into place various church practices that will assist to make attending St John's as safe as we can. Yet everyone must make their own wise decision to return to Church when they are comfortable doing so.

Wedding Service:

Bethany & Regan were married at St John's on the 24th. It was an enjoyable Service, where this young couple honoured each other and God through their vows. Bethany & Regan's wedding was the first wedding that I have taken at St. John's. Would you continue to pray for them as they grow together as husband and wife?

One of the joys of conducting Marriage Services is that all the guests are witnesses to the vows. For those already married, it can be an occasion for all to reflect the vows they made. Those who are widows or widowers can have an opportunity to reflect on their spouse privately and deeply. This reflection can no way remove the sense of loss, but it can assist in recalling great memories from the past.

As members of the Church, we are also reminded that we all make up the Bride of Christ: It can be a time to take stock and see how we are honouring our 'vow' to honour and serve the Lord!

Guild of Church Music:

Last Sunday, the Guild for Church Music did hold their Annual Festival Service. This Service was not held at St John's as in previous years; it was correctly held through zoom. The Officiant was the Reverend Dr Daniel Dires, Rector of Christ Church St Lawrence, Sydney. Dr Daniel holds the position of Warden of the Guild of Church Musicians in Australia. The Organist was Callum Close, from St Luke's Mossman.

A portion from the Epistle text chosen for this occasion was from Colossians chapter Three:

¹⁵ And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. ¹⁶ Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. ¹⁷ And whatever you do, in Word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Could you spend some time in your prayers giving thanks to the LORD for all the various musicians, choirs, singers, and authors of Hymns who have enriched our worship of the LORD? Give thanks to God for the continuing work of Nicola as the deputy Music Director and Organist.

Thursday Eucharist:

It was an absolute joy to celebrate and share Holy Communion with those who attended the first in-person Service on Thursday. I pray that it was an encouragement to those present as we drew closer to the LORD, remembering the cost of his Son's sacrificial death, made at Golgotha.

Now that it has been recommenced, the weekly Thursday Eucharist will be prioritised in the Parish Diary. I pray that this Service will be edifying as we seek to worship our God and heavenly Father.

The Beatitudes:

The Wednesday Evening Bible Study also gathered in person at the Rectory. Not all could be in attendance due to study and work commitments. We commenced a new study on the Beatitudes, Developing a Spiritual Character, by the late John Stott. It was good to be back in person. The first study looked at the Jesus teaching through the Beatitudes; then focused on the first,

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" Matthew 5:3

Jesus gave the Beatitudes - eight marks of *all* Christian people. The following words are from the study:

The standards of the Sermon on the Mount are neither readily attainable by everyone nor totally unattainable by anyone. Jesus spoke this Sermon to those who were already his disciples and thereby citizens of God's kingdom and the children of God's family. It describes the kind of people Christians are (or should be).

I hope the above regarding the Beatitudes stirs interest, as I would be more than pleased to run *other* Bible Studies to meet the need of the parish.

We desire a Priest:

During the week, I was approached by an Archdeacon of another Diocese. He wanted to know if I knew of men who could minister as an assistant minister in a parish with a high view of Word and Sacrament. This style of Priest is in short supply. Consequently, this is the second such discussion I have had with another Diocesan leader seeking to find a young priest for training. The terms high Church, low Church, Anglo-Catholic or Evangelical all portray preconceived ideas, which are often different from their original meaning. I like the term Anglican. I also prescribe that an Anglican Priest is a man of Word and Sacrament. The expression of worship flows out of the Church in which he is called to minister.

There is no shortage of people trained for ministry who concentrate purely on the Word, and many are exceptional preachers. Yet, there is a real shortage of men whose focus is on Word and Sacrament. The latter need to be nurtured and trained and eventually released to serve God in parish ministry. Would you consider adding to your prayers that the LORD will raise people for this ministry and raise places where these priests can have their practical training?

The Peace of the LORD be with you.

Fr Robert H

From our Diocesan leaders:

The Archbishop writes:

I know that many of you will be re-opening for services this weekend or next. Be assured of my prayers as God's people gather together after such an extended interruption. We continue to pray for the 'freedom' to lift our voices together in praise and thanksgiving. Thankfully, we are permitted to have up to 10 singers contribute to our gatherings.

As we are assured that the Archbishop is praying for us, I can affirm that Bishop Chris is also praying for us here at Gordon and all the other parishes within the Northern Region. Would you please uphold our leaders, which have been given to us by God?