

# A Note from the Rector

Friday the 30<sup>th</sup> of July 2021

## Time has flown fast

Twenty-three weeks have passed since you welcomed me as your 'new' Rector. Melinda and I both enjoy being part of St John's family. There have been many joys in our family over this short time. The birth of our first granddaughter, Dorothy, is a high point. Celebrating Billy turning one, our first grandson happened just before going into lockdown.

Melinda and I both had various plans that we were working to see come to fruition, but these are all on hold at the moment. The Gingerbread House event for women, which Melinda has a vision for, is on hold until the Public Health Orders are changed and allow us all to return to Church.

Many of the ideas which I had a desire to put into place are also on hold. Twenty-Three weeks ago, none of us would have envisaged that we would be entering into another lockdown. We had not even heard of the Delta variant of the Coronavirus. Ministry still progresses, albeit not the way we planned.



I thought I would share a little about one of the joys that Melinda and I experienced. The accompanying photo is that of Hobbiton in New Zealand. Melinda & I and another couple had a great time on a cruise to New Zealand two years ago. The cruise holds some great memories for us all. New Zealand is a magnificent place. One of the funny stories was from one of the Coach drivers, who took us to Hobbiton from the cruise-ship. He apologised for the traffic – we didn't even notice, the traffic was only for five minutes, nothing like we can experience here on the Pacific Highway. Hobbiton tour was fantastic and one of the very many highlights of the cruise. We were hesitant at first about going on the cruise – yet we are glad we did. Sometimes the waves of the sea were crashing against the ship. Then there were times where

the sea was as smooth as glass. This cruise was before the infamous issues that came from the Ruby Princess. One day I dare say the cruise-ships will return to our waters, and the cruise-industry will rebound, with covid-safe practices.

## Coping during the current lockdown:

How are you coping with the Public Health Orders especially staying at home? This lockdown is taking its toll on many people. If you are finding the current lockdown harder to endure, you are not alone in that experience. There has also been an increase in tensions in various workplaces. There is no doubt we are all designed to be in a community and having the ability to enjoy our communities removed is affecting people negatively. How are you

coping at the moment? I included a little about Melinda and myself for two reasons. Firstly, so you can get to know a little more about us.

Secondly, to hopefully remind everyone to look back over the good times that you have experienced. Memories, especially good memories, can be a catalyst for resilience during times of difficulties such as the present lockdown. At this time, all of us are having our plans thwarted due to the delta variant. We all have experienced the goodness of God in our lives. God is good. God has been good to us. God continues to be good to us. He has not stopped being our God and Heavenly Father, and He still sees you and I as his children. When we take time to reminisce about past joys, we can also see the hand of the heavenly Father in action. Hence, I encourage you to make time to look back at the various joyous events in your life and give thanks to God. Also pray, that you may have the opportunity to experience new joys in the coming future.

During the next few weeks, I am continuing with a "Chat with the Rector". Everyone is invited to participate if you would like.

Topic: Zoom Chat with Fr Robert.

Time: 7pm on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of August

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87882612754>

## Vaccinations:

The Premier and other leaders are asking us all to make receiving a vaccination a high priority amongst all. Of course, every individual who has concerns are encouraged to discuss these concerns with their local doctor.

There is no doubt that vaccinations are one way for the mitigation of COVID-virus. The article that I forward this week from **Chase Klun** hopefully would have clarified *a Christian* approach to the whole area of vaccinations. Thank you to those who expressed their appreciation to me for making his article available.

Thank you to everyone who are mitigating the opportunity to spread the Coronavirus, from receiving vaccinations, observing social distancing, hygiene rules, wearing masks, and staying at home.

## Sunday Service:

Our guest preacher is Edward Happer, who is Melinda and my youngest son. He is a student at Moore College. I invited Edward to preach before the current lockdown. The 1<sup>st</sup> of August is an allocated day when we pray for Theological Colleges and theological students. One of the joys we have all experienced is that all Rectors and other assistant ministers we have known have all received training at a Theological College. I have always acknowledged the importance of Theological Colleges as a servant to the Bride of Christ. I am appreciative to Father Rob Sutherland, for he has been an excellent encourager of Edward.

The steps of many ordained clergy are the formal training through a prescribed theological college, then years as a curate or an assistant minister. The latter is the practical training where the deacon and priest learn and develop various ministry skills that prepare them to serve God through serving the people of God.

Live Streaming of the Service at 9:30, will continue using the recently installed camera system. Thank you for all the encouraging words for JK regarding last Sunday Live Streaming. As the weeks' progress, I am sure the outstanding work of JK will further develop, and we will experience more creativity with the cameras.

Once the Public Health Orders have been lifted, JK will be seeking others to be trained on how to operate the new audio/visual equipment. Would you please pray for JK as this audio/visual ministry develops?

## **Bible Studies:**

Bishop Michael is continuing the study of the Book of Revelation. This Bible Study is by zoom and is open to anyone who would like to attend. You can listen and or participate as much as you like in the discussions lead by Bishop Michael. There is no doubt that Bishop Michael is a gifted teacher. The following link will allow you to enter into the Thursday evenings Bible Studies at 7:30pm.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87673589872>

Meeting ID: 876 7358 9872

The Wednesday Evening Young Adults Bible Study (plus Rector) completed a nine-week study on the 1<sup>st</sup> Epistle of John. The feedback has been encouraging – and most of the studies moved from being in person to zoom meetings. Using zoom in this format was a learning curve. This Wednesday evening, the Young Adults will be embarking on a six-week study on the Gospel of Mark – the focus will be explaining Christianity through Mark's eyes. Would you mind praying for the members of this group?

Are you interested in joining a daytime Bible Study? It would be required to be on zoom. If there is enough interest, I would be delighted to run another six-week study. If this is something you would like to do, don't hesitate to get in touch with me through email, phone, or the Parish Office.

## **Biblical Reflection Psalm 81:**

I have read that sometimes this Psalm has been given the title: *God's appeal to stubborn Israel*. The first verses seem like it is the beginning of a Psalm, which is a call to praise: Verse One & Two:

*Sing aloud to God our strength; shout for joy to the God of Jacob.*

*<sup>2</sup> Raise a song, sound the tambourine, the sweet lyre with the harp.*

Yet the Psalm is a call from the LORD to his people. A call for them not to forget the LORD and all he had done for them. The LORD is speaking through the Psalmist. He reminds them how he has shown his mighty arm:

Verse Seven & Ten:

*In distress you called, and I rescued you;*

*I am the LORD your God, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt.*

Yet the people forgot and hence rejected the LORD. They failed to remember who brought them out of the land of slavery and how God made them His people. It is a sad Psalm as it has the LORD saying:

*But my people did not listen to my voice; Israel would not submit to me. (11)*

The LORD allowed his discipline to flow:

*So, I gave them over to their stubborn hearts to follow their own counsels. (12)*

All the people of God can learn from this Psalm. This Psalm teaches the importance of walking humbly with the LORD. To walk humbly requires us all to listen to him. Through listening to the LORD, we can make decisions that honour him.