

# The Rector's Weekly Message

Sunday the 19<sup>th</sup> of September 2021

## Encouragement from the Word of God:

Psalms 100 is sometimes referred to as the Psalm of Joy. Today I include a modern translation, purely so we may experience this Psalm in a slightly different light:

### Psalm 100 (NIRV)

Shout for joy to the LORD, everyone on earth.

<sup>2</sup> Worship the LORD with gladness.

Come to him with songs of joy.

<sup>3</sup> Know that the LORD is God.

He made us, and we belong to him.

We are his people.

We are the sheep belonging to his flock.

<sup>4</sup> Give thanks as you enter the gates of his temple.

Give praise as you enter its courtyards.

Give thanks to him and praise his name.

<sup>5</sup> The LORD is good. His faithful love continues forever.

It will last for all time to come

As you all know, the Bible is the inspired word of God. The Above Psalm is the work of a man, yet the LORD inspired him to write this Psalm for the edification of all God's people. As we come to worship the LORD through 'zoom', we can enter this time with gladness on our hearts.

The Psalmist reminds us all that we are drawing into the presence of the LORD God Almighty, creator of Heaven and Earth. So we enter with humility, humbly adoring the LORD God for all His goodness.

Is your heart warmed when you read, "we are his people"? What joy is ours, even during the lockdown, knowing our relationship with each other as brother and sister in the LORD, is built upon the faithful love of God. We are the sheep of His pasture: and turning to the words of Jesus:

***"I am the good shepherd. I know my sheep, and my sheep know me.*** (John 10:14)

We are secure in the love of God, which never can be taken away from us. We are part of the overall flock of God. We are the Children of God. As we all know, our position came through the great love of God:

***"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives his life for the sheep.*** (John 10:11)

The Cross of Christ secured you and I as members of His flock. Although the Psalm was written centuries before Christ, it finds its fulfilment in and through Him. God's faithful love has been and continues to be displayed in His Son Jesus. It is God who has redeemed us and brought us into his fold as sheep of His pasture.

### **Around the Parish:**

Helen and Robert have received the sad news that Helen's sister has passed away in her own home. With this tragic news and the ongoing medical treatment they are facing, Robert & Helen are both rightly grieving. Please continue to pray for Helen and Robert – *thank you*

Aged Care Facilities and hospitals *are not* permitting visitors, even the clergy. The clergy *may* be invited to these facilities if it is a matter of the end of life care. Invitations are at the discretion of the management of that facility and must not expose the facility to the coronavirus.

If you know of anyone who is not well or moved to an Aged Care Facility, please contact me directly. This process will ensure I don't find out about this issue much later on. Thank you.

### **A note of encouragement:**

This week the 'parish' received a handmade card from the Parish of Mt. Vincent and Weston, Kurri Kurri. Their mission committee decided to send greeting cards to a few Churches in Sydney to let them know that they are thinking and praying for us as a Church during the lockdown. There are two members of their Church who used to attend St. Johns. Their Rector; the Reverend Theresa, signed the card

It was a delight to receive encouragement gently reminding us all that we belong to the broader family of God. Would you also join me in giving a prayer of thanks to God for the Parish of Mt. Vincent and Weston, Kurri Kurri?

### **The Cemetery & Columbarium:**

As noted earlier, Meg has done a great deal of work in sorting and updating the records for the columbarium and cemetery. However, it is not entirely clear that St John's activity records over the past 20 years are complete, and there have been a couple of surprises. If you have purchased a plot since 2000, please let myself or Meg know. If you have a receipt, or even just the Row and Plot number, this would be extremely helpful. We want to ensure that our records are totally accurate.

### **What are you looking forward to?**

The Public Health Orders look to be changed in late October. The various news outlets and social media have conducted a good amount of discussions regarding the NSW roadmap to *recovery*. This coming week, I will be attending an organised Diocesan/regional meeting via zoom to discuss this roadmap's implication for reopening the Church doors.

We have all surrendered our freedoms to the State, to the wellbeing of society. Through the public's observance, Health Orders have mitigated the spread of the coronavirus, especially the Delta variant. It is possibly only four to six more weeks before another stage of the roadmap is introduced.

I have previously shared how I am looking forward to seeing people gathering at St John's and worshipping the LORD together. Various restrictions will remain when we first return to Church, such as no singing, wearing masks, social distancing, no morning teas etc. Yet, there will be joy! As we gather, we will enter into fellowship with the LORD and with each other as the Body of Christ. I hope you are looking forward to being able to gather as God's people.

### **Singalong:**

Friday the 24<sup>th</sup> will be the final 'singalong' with Dr Brett McKern. The singalongs have provided a time of fun for all involved. Brett has introduced each of the selected Hymns with their respective history. Of course, Brett has incorporated humour in his introductions. All who have been able to attend have genuinely enjoyed the opportunity of being able to come together for singing and fellowship, albeit through zoom. All the participants have appreciated Brett providing this opportunity to come together before Brett saying farewell to St. Johns.

Dr McKern resignation comes whilst we are in lockdown. The Warden's, Parish Council and I are keen to honour Brett and look for a future time that is agreeable that the Parish can publicly express our gratitude for Brett's ministry at St. Johns for the thirteen plus years. When a date is chosen, we will make this widely known.

### **Such glorious weather:**

The many fragrances that greet everyone who enters the Rectory grounds are enjoyable. The garden is in full bloom, and the areas that were given some tender loving care have indeed responded well. There is always a fine balance between keeping the gardens looking their best and not being overgrown. We all know when a garden is kept in good care, it produces a fine display – and it is so pleasing to see.

### **Repairs:**

A portion of the flat roof over the two Offices has been repaired. Over time corrosion had caused a part of the roof to corrode. The repair work will include the flashing to mitigate any water damage when it is raining. There are also repairs being carried out on the downpipes to ensure the rainwater can escape properly. The next step is to undertake to repair the damaged plaster ceiling. The completion of this work will make the utilisation of those two Offices more practical.

Electrical upgrades are also planned and are being undertaken. These upgrades include replacing the circuit breakers as some of these are tripping under a moderate load. It is a sign of their age.

Repairs are underway for some of the woodwork that the termites have ravaged. The termites have been eradicated. The repairs will be ongoing, and we will begin to see various improvements as the repairs are carried out.

I share the above news to remind everyone that The Church complex is being cared for through ongoing maintenance. Of course, the ongoing maintenance is an essential aspect of the stewardship of the resources provided through the LORD's providence.

Do you remember the old phrase? When the community looks at the Church and its facilities, it is an indication of how the Church people love God.

May the Peace of the LORD be with you.

Reverend Robert H.  
Rector