

A Message from the Rector

Fr. Robert Happer

Sunday, the 13th of February:

Ash Wednesday Services:

Ash Wednesday is the 2nd of March. **Advance Notice:** I will be holding two services on Ash Wednesday. 8am there will be a Eucharist with the imposition of Ashes. At 7pm there will also be a Eucharist with the imposition of Ashes: Both Services will be reflective and will give all who attend the opportunity to commence Lent together as the body of Christ at St. Johns.

Working-bee in Lent:

On Saturday the 19th of March there will be a working-bee at the Church. This working-bee will be for the cleaning of the brass, silverware, and Church furniture. Last year this event was well attended, and the work carried out was evident, and much appreciated. St John's has been truly blest with our furnishing, and it is very honouring of those who gave them to keep them in good order. The working-bee will be from 9-12noon. Please mark your diaries and support this important work.

Young Adults Bible Study:

We will be recommencing on Wednesday the 23rd of February at the Rectory at 7:30pm. We have two of the beatitudes to complete. Any of the Young Adults of the parish are welcome to join. For further details please contact Fr Robert. 0401 950 724.

Parish Bible Studies:

We have been blessed with Bishop Michael producing the weekly Shofar for the Parish, and I am grateful that this ministry will continue. He also continues a weekly Bible Study. I rightly take the teaching role of the Priesthood seriously. I have been examining what study we may do for the season of Lent. The Bible Study that I am in the process of writing for St Johns is "Exploring the Sacraments". More details of this study will be forthcoming. I am also looking at how to hold these studies. I prefer in-person studies, but zoom has opened another avenue to conduct Bible Studies.

Children's Ministry:

Thank you to everyone who have been faithfully praying that the LORD will open the doors to children's ministry at St. John's. I am calling a meeting of interested people to come and share ideas of recommencing children's ministry at St John's. I am also looking to see who might be involved in this vital ministry. You may not know that I have also been trained in Youth & Children's ministry, albeit when I did my original theological training. The question that requires answering in all ministries: ***'What is God calling us to do?'***

The initial meeting for children's ministry will be on Sunday the **20th of February, at 2pm** in the Crypt/Lower hall. Would you please let me know if you are planning to attend?

Music Director & Organist:

Thank you to those who have made suggestions regarding the process of fulfilling the position of Music Director and Organist. I have heard all the suggestions, and I am pleased to say I have implemented **some** of the various recommendations. The wardens and I will be conducting the interviews of each of the candidates. A professional and experienced Organist will join the wardens and myself for the auditions of each of the candidates for Music Director & Organist. Five candidates will be interviewed. As a parish, we are so blest by the LORD for these candidates who applied for this position. I have asked all involved in this process to work hard at listening to what the LORD is directing. I wish to express my personal thanks to you and other members of St John's who are praying that the process goes well; it is a mark of your trust and maturity in Christ. I have been involved with the appointment of staff, including a music Director in my previous parishes. Asking someone to 'join the worshipping team' is different from the secular approach where a job is filled. Part of the tremendous responsibility is to listen to God throughout this whole process. If all goes well, I envisage that selecting a new Music Director & Organist will be completed by late February. The Wardens & I do express our gratitude and appreciation for your ongoing prayers at this time.

Sesquicentennial Committee:

I am grateful that we have had the first meeting of the Sesquicentennial committee: I have been waiting for confirmation of the date when the Most Rev Kanishka Raffel, the Archbishop of Sydney, could attend. We have received a date in September; the 18th of September. The Archbishop was not available in October. According to the foundation stone, the 18th of September coincides with the extension of the first Church. A letter of invitation has been sent to the Governor of NSW, Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC QC. It is envisaged that the Governor will reveal a plaque commemorating the LORD's blessing for this sesquicentennial year. Dates for the Parish Dinner and other interesting events will be published after the next meeting of the Sesquicentennial Committee.

Op-Shop Sales:

Thank you to all who are involved with this ministry. A faithful group comes twice weekly to sort and prepare the donations for the sales. The sorting means filling the skip bin, which is collected twice a week. The members of this team would appreciate more helpers. The Op-Shop Sale days are well supported, and I ask you to consider supporting the team on these days.

Cemetery

Connor and Rebekah have relocated to South Australia. Connor was contracted to maintain the lawns within the Cemetery. Contractors have been contacted, and the ongoing cost for maintaining the cemetery lawn is being discussed. The lovely wet weather has meant more care of the cemetery is required due to the unusual growth. The contractor has spent time in the cemetery; their brief remains the same – mow the lawns and do whipper snipping around the various graves and walk-ways. The graves' weeding is done by family and/or faithful members of St Johns.

Warden's & Rector planning meeting(s):

Six hours was spent working through the life of St John's and what I would like to accomplish by the end of my incumbency. Albeit my first twelve months have been characterised firstly by moving the Parish out of Covid restrictions, then back into those restrictions with the new outbreak. We are again steadily moving out of the restrictions caused by the Public Health Orders due to this pandemic. There is still great caution among

many congregational members. There are many ministry opportunities I would further like us as a parish to recommence or develop. Nevertheless, I hope we all hold to this reality: God is good, and he is the LORD, and hence we must always wait on his good & perfect timing.

One of the keen elements of which we were all unanimous in our thinking was to ensure we honour God and that commencing various ministries all sit within our Anglo-Catholic traditions.

Rector 'elect' for Swithun's Anglican Church Pymble.

The Rev Stuart Holman is the newly elected Rector for St Swithun's. His commencement service will be on the 15th of March. Please rejoice with the parishioners of St Swithun's and pray for them as they embrace Stuart's leadership and guidance. Please be mindful to keep Stuart and his wife Cate in your prayers as they settle into their new Parish.

A short break:

Melinda and I will have a short break, leaving on Monday and returning Friday. Melinda has been stretched at the hospital due to staff being away because of the pandemic. All of those working in the medical fields have endured far greater demands on them during this time. We are both looking forward to this short break.

I am thankful that Fr Ernest will celebrate the Eucharist on Thursday, the 17th of February whilst I have this short break.

May the LORD continue to grant you, His Peace.

Fr Robert Happer

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