



# St Mary's Grapevine

NEWSLETTER OF ST MARY'S ANGLICAN CHURCH SUNBURY - DECEMBER 2015

## Gavin's Grab

*Rev. Gavin Ward's 2015 Christmas message*

Star Wars has hit our big screen again after a few years. Many people will be flocking to see the latest movie in this franchise over the next few weeks. Star Wars is based on a cosmic battle between forces of the dark side and the good folk of the alliance.

This battle between good and evil is played out in many movies, books and television shows in all sorts of genres and in all ages. That's because it's reflecting the reality of a cosmic battle between good and evil, which we often seen played out on earth:- between countries, between cultural groups within countries, on our streets and in our homes. This year we have seen the escalation of terrorist related violence in our world and locally of domestic violence in our homes.

How God's heart must ache at the pain caused.

God saw the pain of the suffering of people as they became victims of this battle and as they got caught up in these battles. God saw the pain inflicted by some people on others through words and actions. God felt the pain of rejection as people rejected him.

However God did not sit on his hands about all of this...but did something about it.

That's what we celebrate at Christmas.....God's action in sending his Son into the world, to suffer the consequences of our rejecting God so that the door for reconciliation with him may be open again.

John 3:16-17 reminds us "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son, that whoever believes in Him shall

not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his son into the world, but to save the world through him."

May you know the joy and peace associated with this reconciliation with God. May we all be people of peace in our own lives and, in God's strength, bring His peace and hope into this world, particularly to those we love and with whom we interact regularly.

I wish you and your family God's peace this Christmas and I look forward to serving Him with you in 2016.

### Contact Us:-

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# Warden's Wrap

*A Christmas message from Church Wardens  
Wendy Caramarco, Noel Sprague,  
Geoff Klouth, & Max Langshaw (emeritus)*

Season's Greetings from the Wardens! Luke describes for us the events of the birth of Jesus, our Messiah and Lord. Take another look at the Gospels and imagine the stress that Joseph and Mary would have been under. Travelling to Bethlehem with a very pregnant wife because of a government decision, arriving to find the only available accommodation was a stable.

Then in that time that Mum and Dad are getting to know their new baby some unannounced visitors arrive to see the new baby, then go and tell more people about it. Talk about stress. Yet despite this the Bible tells us that, "Mary quietly treasured these things in her heart and thought about them often" Luke 2:19.

What an amazing young woman.

As we run around this Christmas time feeling the stress of first world problems like shopping and getting everything done before Christmas Day let's take a moment to step off the hamster wheel and praise God for His gift of new life and salvation.

Let's take a quiet moment to thank Him for the peace and security we have that allows us to freely worship. Let's take the time to think of those who will be alone and for those who find Christmas a difficult time of year. Let's quietly treasure all the blessings that God provides us and let's rejoice in praise and worship.

From all the Wardens both past and present, (hope you will continue to provide us with your selfies Mark), we hope that you have a great Christmas, a safe Christmas and a happy 2016.

## Notice of Annual General Meeting

The continuation of the St Mary's AGM will be held on **Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> January at 9.45am** in the Parish Hall

## Building Blocks

*St Mary's Ten year Vision- New worship Centre- Report from the Building Committee*

In November the Parish Council met with David and Jacqui Wagner from Atelier Wagner, appointed architects for our new worship centre. This is the first step of consultation and the beginning of design for our new worship centre. There will be many more to follow and once we have a preliminary design early in the new year, we will be seeking further input from all parish user groups and parishioners to ensure we have the design we need to enable another 150 years of worship in Sunbury.

This is a huge undertaking and we are doing this in the full knowledge that God's hands are upholding and supporting us as we progress his work of bringing his love and word to all in Sunbury and surrounding districts. We have the support of the Diocese and will need to satisfy design and funding requirements in order to complete this project.

In addition the Hume City Council and our local councilors have been consulted and engaged providing in principal support for this project. There is much to do in 2016 and we do so with much prayer of which we ask your continual on-going support.

Next year once we have an approved design we plan to relaunch the building fund with a focus on seeking commitments for funding this new step of faith. We acknowledge and thank all who have continued to support the building fund through direct giving and the envelope system and can assure you that these funds are being allocated towards our future building.

It is an exciting time to be a part of St Mary's as we fulfill our commitment of loving Jesus and sharing God's love with all.

Noel, Phil, Alan, Ben & Peter

# Refugees Weekend

*Kim Beales writes for us about the Refugee weekend that occurred in November, and its ongoing impact*

On Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> November, a group of 20 refugees travelled from Dandenong to Sunbury to spend the weekend with us. Our guests were connected through Pioneers' language centre in Dandenong, and came from Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, Egypt, and Malaysia. The purpose of the weekend was to enable people from St Mary's and St Andrew's a context in which to meet a refugee or asylum seeker, and to extend hospitality and a warm welcome to them. Around 15 homes were opened, and it was a wonderful experience not only for the hosts and our guests, but also for the church and wider community.

A highlight for me was the initial greeting at Southern Cross. The Dandenong and Sunbury trains connected perfectly, and there was a great sense of excitement as we met at the platform and headed off together for Sunbury. A number of hosts had gathered to greet us at Sunbury station. We then shared morning tea together in the St Mary's hall. It was an opportunity for hosts to meet their guests, who were each given a welcome pack with information about Sunbury, and some stationery. We then headed off for a picnic at hanging rock. A number of guests marveled at the views and the open space, and throughout the weekend our guests expressed immense gratitude for the welcome they received.



On Saturday night, over 200 people filled the memorial hall for the bushdance. There was music, dancing, conversation, festivity, and an amazing banquet of delicious curries and casseroles. It was a great night of celebration, and many people were contributing behind the scenes, cooking and serving meals, setting up tables, and engaging in conversation. Many of our guests have been separated from their families for years. One of our guests who daily experiences great concern and longing for his family back in Afghanistan, described a feeling of forgetfulness that night, just for a time, as he found himself caught up in the joy of the occasion.

*"When you are running for your life there are no borders... you just run."*



Together with the heights of celebration, there were some poignant moments. On Sunday morning we were privileged to hear from two of our guests, one from Iran and the other from Afghanistan. A young Afghan girl spoke very powerfully at St Andrew's and St Mary's, and many shared her tears. She said,

*"We don't need your sympathy... we need your empathy. We need you to put yourselves in our shoes... If your family is under threat of being killed everyday, would you wait in some so-called queue? No you would grab your children, grab your husband, grab your wife and you would flee. When you are running for your life there are no borders... you just run."*

Continued...

# Refugees Weekend

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## Reflections

A group recently met to share stories about the weekend. We heard a wonderful story from Hilary Williams. Her guest from Afghanistan had expressed that despite being given permission to work, she was finding it very difficult to get a job. Having listened to her, Hilary asked her whether she might be able to do a practical task such as ironing, and put out a notice in her community. A week later, Hilary received a beautiful text message. She had discussed the idea with her case-worker, and now had a job at a dry cleaners, working with an iron press. She showed great appreciation and thanks at having received the suggestion.

This story reminded me of the significance of friendship and conversation. Opportunity emerges in the context of relationship, and our speech matters immensely. What we speak about is able to transform reality. When we dream up ways of showing welcome and kindness, and when we converse with people, new realities come into being. Perhaps the weekend will generate a new kind of speech, not merely driven by media or political concerns, but emerging from first hand experience and the exchange of real stories. Jesus taught us that by faith, we can throw mountains into the sea. Whatever the complexity of the world's refugee crisis, we have a contribution to make here in Sunbury, as we pray and act in faith.

Already many people have expressed a desire to do a weekend like this again. My own sense is that the next step for us as a church is to be intentional about hospitality on a smaller level. A few ideas emerged as we shared stories at our debrief session. Perhaps a number of people could open their homes for a simple meal, or perhaps we could meet our guests again for a picnic at the botanical gardens. Over a period of years it would be wonderful if we can develop friendships with refugees who live in our region, so that refugees and those seeking asylum are a part of our life together.

Before departing, one of our guests, who had stayed with Gavin, thanked him for his hospitality. He thanked Gavin, the church, and he thanked Jesus. Surely the love of Christ was shown in a beautiful way throughout this weekend, and for this we can give thanks.

# Service Times

Please note the following adjustments to service times over the holiday period

Sunday 27 <sup>th</sup> December-	Combined Service at 9.30am
Wednesday 30 <sup>th</sup> January-	No Wednesday Service
Sunday 3 <sup>rd</sup> January-	8.30am & 10.30am Services resume regular schedule
Wednesday 6 <sup>th</sup> January-	10.00am Service
Sunday 10 <sup>th</sup> January-	5.00pm beach service at Torquay (see events page)
Sunday 17 <sup>th</sup> January-	5.00pm regular services resume at St Andrews



**Christmas Services**  
at St Mary's Anglican Church  
7 O' Shanassy St, Sunbury - 9744 1347

**Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> December\***  
7:00pm Carols and Lessons Service

**Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> December**  
7:00pm Christmas Eve Family Service  
11:00pm Christmas Eve Communion Service

**Friday 25<sup>th</sup> December**  
9:30am Christmas Day Communion Service

[www.stmarysanglican.org.au](http://www.stmarysanglican.org.au)

## Reporters Needed!

Do you like writing? Do you like chatting to people? Can you use a computer and meet a deadline? If you answered yes to any or all of these questions then we have just the volunteer position for you! Come and be a Grapevine reporter and report on Parish events, or interview families and community store volunteers for future columns! Please speak to Narelle in the Parish office or email [admin@stmarysanglican.org.au](mailto:admin@stmarysanglican.org.au) if you are interested!

# It's a date!

*Pop these dates in your diary and keep an eye on the Pew Sheet and FaceBook for more details.*

## 5pm Community Beach Trip

**When:-** Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> January

**Where:-** Torquay

**Details:-** Join the 5pm Community for a day trip to Torquay, culminating in our first worship service together on the beach with the sand between our toes! Meet in the car park at Masters, Vineyard Rd Sunbury at 9.00am. BYO everything you'll need for a day at the beach!

**Contact:-** Kim Beales  
0431 531 322  
kimdbeales@gmail.com

## CATCHup @ the BBL Cricket

**When:-** Monday 18<sup>th</sup> January

**Where:-** Etihad Stadium

**Details:-** Join the 5pm Community for a casual catch up at the Melbourne Renegades versus Adelaide Sixers BBL05 Cricket Game at Etihad Stadium. Meet outside Gate 5 at 6.45pm. Tickets can be purchased at the gate- adults approx \$20, Kids \$5

**Contact:-** Narelle Riley  
0408 406 424  
admin@stmarysanglican.org.au

## Sing & Soup

**When:-** Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> February

**Where:-** St Mary's Hall

**Details:-** It's back for 2016! Come along for a fun afternoon, singing some of your favorite songs and enjoying a delicious bowl of home made soup! You are encouraged to invite your friends and neighbours who are not already connected with St Mary's to come to this fun event, and get to know us. Lots of laughs are guaranteed! 12 noon in the hall!

**Contact:-** Parish Office  
9744 1347

[admin@stmarysanglican.org.au](mailto:admin@stmarysanglican.org.au)

## 5pm Community Camp

**When:-** 19<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> February

**Where:-** Ballarat

**Details:-** Following on from the success of last year's camp, the 5pm Community will be gathering at the Welcome Stranger Big 4 Park for a weekend camp. Book a cabin or BYO tent/caravan. We'll have shared lunches and dinners, some sessions together and lots of free time to enjoy the park facilities including mini-golf, pool and jumping pillow. Sunday will include a time of worship in the morning.

**Contact:-** Kim Beales  
0431 531 322

kimdbeales@gmail.com



## Friday Friendship Lunches

**When:-** Friday 26<sup>th</sup> February

**Where:-** St Mary's Hall

**Details:-** The first Friday Friendship lunch for 2016 will be held on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> February at 12.30pm in the Parish Hall and will continue on the last Friday of the month (with the exception of March which is Good Friday..... but never fear- there might be two in April instead to make up for it!) These lunches are open to everyone in the community to come along, and offers of assistance and donations are always appreciated!

**Contact:-** Kristine Green  
9744 3541

bluegreen130@hotmail.com

# Looking Ahead to 2016

*Gavin gives us a sneak peak at what we can look forward to in 2016 at St Mary's.*

There is much to look forward to in 2016 with the prospects of a new staff member joining us in March and the next steps in very early design proposals for our new building. In addition we have some great preaching series planned including:-

- Listening to Jesus' words during Lent from the Sermon on the Mount;
- A visit by Celebrate Messiah on Easter Day;
- A look through the early chapters of Romans;
- Looking back at some famous Sunday School Stories from the Old Testament;
- Examining what worship really is (in all aspects of life);
- A look at the book of Revelation;
- A study of the Lord's Prayer; and
- A look at the Second Coming of Jesus during Advent.

In addition, we will be reviewing our engagement with refugees and determine what our next steps will be. We also plan to highlight Domestic Violence at our services around White Ribbon day in November.

We have other activities planned associated with strengthening marriages and parenting, evangelism training together with some creative evangelistic activities through our Mission Action Teams.

We are also planning further Ridley Certificate Subjects for those interested in deepening their understanding of the Bible and Theology.

My thanks to everyone who has made a commitment towards the new staff member. I will keep you all updated on our progress to employ someone. Please continue to pray for the Wardens and I, that God will lead us to the person of His choosing for us.

We will also be welcoming Matthew Browne to our team in 2016 as a Ridley Student. Matt, together with his wife Erin, will be worshipping and serving God under Kim's leadership, chiefly at our 5pm congregation.

The Chibobo Mission Team for 2016 is slowly taking shape with confirmed members being: Annette and Kevin Swaffield, Emily Clements, Wendy Caramarco, Kirsteen McCullough, Stephen Smith, Megan Riley and myself.

Finally we plan to produce an issue of the Grapevine on a bi-monthly basis in 2016 to keep everyone updated on the steps we are taking as a Parish. If you would like to be involved in this, please see Narelle.

## Introducing Norma

*Each edition we attempt to learn a little more about one of our Community Store Volunteers (that's if we can get them to stop long enough for a chat!)*

Norma Metcalf has been volunteering in the St Mary's Community Store for 4 years. Most weeks she works 2 days, but is happy to come in whenever she is needed and has been known to put in 4 day weeks!

Although it would normally be considered rude to ask a lady's age, Norma was happy to tell us that she'll be 85 in March! She walks to the store for her shifts (then changes into her slippers!).

When asked why she volunteers at the Community store, Norma was very quick to reply that it was because she loves the company of the lovely ladies, they have a good laugh and she likes helping people!

Thank You for all you do Norma- and next year they promise they'll wait until you are out of the toilet before they take the annual volunteers photo at the lunch, to ensure you are in it!!!!

