



St Mary's Grapevine

BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF ST MARY'S ANGLICAN CHURCH, SUNBURY
FEBRUARY 2016

Gavin's Grab

Well, we have made a great start to the year. During January we heard from 4 of our number in the mornings preaching on different passages and topics. I have heard many positive comments about the sermons delivered by Wendy, Spencer, Annette and Klara. If you missed them they are on our website. I trust those who took part in the Prayer Walk services were also encouraged by praying for our world and our community as we walked around. In the evenings the visioning ideas and the series on the Holy Spirit have been great.

As we are back in the swing of things I thought I'd bring you up to date on a few Parish matters.

1 Comings and Goings

It's been great to welcome Matt Browne (together with Erin and Annabella) to our 5pm congregation as a Ridley Student and of course we have more recently welcomed Cath Fisher (together with Keil) to our morning and Wednesday congregations as an Assistant Minister. Cath will be initially working for 2 days/week and commencing with us formally on Sunday 3 April. We look forward to what God will do in and through their ministry and time with us.

We have also applied to the Archbishop for a licence for Keil, at his request. This will enable Keil to officiate as a priest from time to time in assisting us and also in other parts of the Diocese as required. Welcome Keil!

In addition to Cath, Matt and their families, at a New Friend's lunch in early February, we also welcomed over 20 people who have recently joined St Mary's and who are now worshipping regularly with us in the different congregations. Welcome!!!

At the same time we have sadly farewelled some significant members of our congregations:- Tom Riley (5pm), Sarah Graf (8.30am and 5pm) and Joan Speldewinde (8.30am). We wish them all God's richest blessings as they serve Jesus in different roles, in different ways and in different parts of the world.

2 Update on New Building

There is nothing new to report here. The Architects are currently drawing up an initial proposal for us, which will be presented to Parish Council and available for everyone to view and comment on. We'll let everyone know when we receive the initial draft plan as we'll have some open forums for review and comment.

Gavin's Grab continued....

3 Coffee Cup Pledges – Assistant Minister

Thank you so much to everyone who made a pledge which has enabled us to invite Cath Fisher to join us as an Assistant Minister at St Mary's. Cath has advised the Wardens and me, post her appointment, that she does not require a salary this year as the Australian Defence Force is providing her with a salary until later this year, as part of her departure conditions. Of course we will be covering her other allowances such as vehicle, phone, etc.

Therefore, if you would still like to honour your pledge (as I will) the funds will be able to be set aside for Cath's future salary from later this year or even for another staff member, as we determine. God works in mysterious ways and we continue to give all the thanks to him.

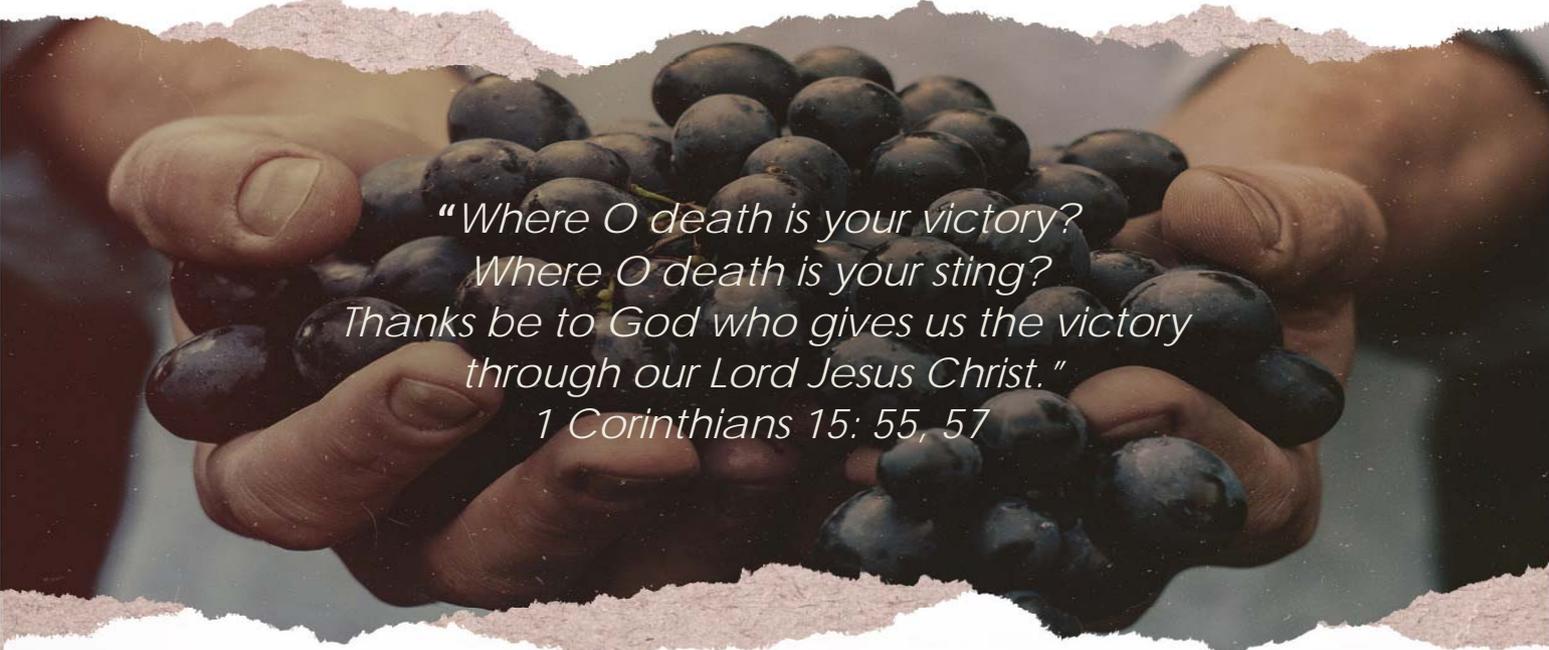
4 Communication in the Parish

As we proceed with our building plans and other activities in this growing Parish, there is a need to develop good communication plans and channels.

We will continue to provide weekly information on important matters in our Pew Sheet (available at each service and on-line), through our website and Facebook Page and in regular e-mails that are sent out. The Grapevine will also be produced on a bi-monthly basis, even if there is no significant news.

Parish Council discussed the issue of communication at its February meeting and decided that in addition to all the above, Parish Council Members will be specifically touching base with leaders of specific ministries and will also be available to discuss any matters with those who attend the various congregations.

Those leaders of specific ministries can expect to be contacted by a Parish Councillor shortly (if it hasn't occurred already). The Parish Councillors available specifically with each congregation are:- 8.30am (Peter Schou), 10.30am (Geoff Klouth), 5pm (Michael Williams) and Wednesday 10am (Phill Stacy). If you have any questions, concerns or feedback of any kind please don't hesitate to contact these Parish Councillors.



*"Where O death is your victory?
Where O death is your sting?
Thanks be to God who gives us the victory
through our Lord Jesus Christ."
1 Corinthians 15: 55, 57*

5 Staff Reviews

You may be interested to know that we conduct annual reviews of the staff team. Late last year the Wardens and I completed reviews with Ros Armstrong and Narelle Riley and then in January we completed a review with Kim Beales.

These reviews look back over the past year and reflect on their work and ministry and then look forward with any relevant changes to Position Descriptions and together we set goals for the coming year.

The Wardens will be shortly completing a review with me and my role, which I am looking forward to.

6 Conclusion

I take this opportunity to wish each and every one of you God's peace and joy this Easter as together we remember and celebrate God's love poured out for us through the suffering and death of Jesus Christ and of the victory won for us in his powerful resurrection.

In Christ, *Gavin*



The Fireman

By Gavin Ward

We often hear fire engines in Sunbury, especially during the fire season. Every time I hear a fire engine, (or any emergency service siren for that matter) it prompts me to pray for that particular situation and to give thanks to God for our Emergency Service Organisations and to ask God's protection for them. Recently the Sunbury Ministers met and determined to organise an event for some time this year to acknowledge and thank all those in our emergency services.

Thinking of fire engines also reminded me of a story I read recently written by the Rev Bruce Stewart for 'The Buloke Times'.

A 26 year old mother stared down at her 6 year old son who was dying of leukemia. She was grief stricken and like any parent, she wanted her son to grow up and fulfil his dreams. Now that was no longer possible but she could still aim at one coming true. She took her son's hand and asked, "Billy, did you ever think about what you wanted to be once you grew up? Did you ever dream and wish what you would do with your life?"

"Mum, I always wanted to be a fireman when I grew up." Mum smiled and said: "Let's see if we can make your wish come true."

Later that day Mum went into the local fire station where she met fireman Bob. She explained her son's final wish and asked if it might be possible to give her six-year old son a ride around the block on a fire engine.

Fireman Bob said, "Look, we can do better than that. If you'll have your son ready at seven o'clock Wednesday morning, we'll make him an honorary fireman for the whole day. He can come down to the fire station, eat with us and go out on all the fire calls. And if you'll give me his sizes, we'll get a real fire uniform for him, with a real fire hat, a yellow protective coat like we wear and rubber boots."

Three days later Fireman Bob picked up Billy, dressed him in his fire uniform and escorted him from his hospital bed to the waiting fire truck. Billy got to sit on the back of the truck and help steer it back to the fire station. How excited he was.

There were three fire call outs and Billy got to go to all three. He rode in the different fire engines, in the paramedic's van and even in the fire chief's car. He was also videotaped for the local news program. What a special day this was.

One night's Billy's vital signs began to drop dramatically. The attending nurse remembered the day Billy had spent as a fireman so she called the Fire Chief and asked if it would be possible to send a fireman in uniform to the hospital to be with Billy.

The Chief replied "We can do better than that. We'll be there in five minutes. Will you please do me a favour? When you hear the sirens screaming and see the lights flashing, will you please announce over the PA system that there is not a fire? It's just the fire department coming to see one of its finest members one more time. And will you please open the window of his room?"

About five minutes later a hook and ladder truck arrived at the hospital and extended its ladder up to Billy's third floor open window. Sixteen fire fighters climbed up the ladder into Billy's room. With his mother's permission, they hugged him and held him and told him how much they loved him. With his dying breath, Billy looked up at the fire chief and said, "Chief, am I really a fireman now?"

"Billy, you are, and the Head Chief Jesus Christ is holding your hand." The fire chief said. With those words, Billy smiled and said, "I know. He's been holding my hand all day and the angels have been singing." He closed his eyes one last time and entered into the presence of Jesus. - Rev Bruce Stewart.

That's a lovely story and reminds me of the comments made to me recently by someone who was going in for serious surgery. The person said they put out their hand as they were being wheeled towards the theatre and placed themselves into Jesus' hands. They told me they had peace knowing that if they woke up in Jesus' presence he would be holding their hand and if they woke up in hospital, he would still be holding their hand.

We can have this sure and certain hope because of what Jesus achieved in and through the cross. As we read in 1 Corinthians 15:54 "death has been swallowed up in victory" (1 Corinthians 15:54).

Let's give thanks to God for the hope we have in Jesus and live each day of our lives holding the hands of Jesus.

Gavin

A thought from Kim

The questions we ask are important, and can influence the nature of our life together. In my ministry at 5pm, and across the church, I'm asking a few key questions, and would love to hear your response.

- What might it look like for us to be a church that excels in making new disciples of Jesus?
- What might we be able to do to spread the word of God really broadly in Sunbury and beyond?

I would like to encourage you to pray, dream, imagine and explore what this might look like. To pass on your ideas, you can email me at kimdbeales@gmail.com or be in touch with one of our mission action teams. I have been working on a number of initiatives, two of which I describe below.

An introduction to the Christian faith

In 2016, I have felt strongly led to write and develop a 6-week introduction to the Christian faith. My plan is to present a series of 6-7 sermons at 5pm, commencing in May, and to then present the material on a weeknight for the whole church later in the year. In May, we are planning on holding a great banquet, in which we can invite people to a feast/party, and inspire people to investigate the Christian faith. Each night will combine food, a message and an opportunity for discussion and prayer. My current plan is to develop the material and run the course for a second time in October. It would be great if you could begin praying for this process, and consider whom you might be able to invite.

After school club for primary kids

With CRE no longer in schools, and also a cohort of children moving through our playgroups into primary school, it would be great to start up a faith based kids club on a weeknight. I would love to see us start a new initiative in 2016, and for a kids club to play a strategic role in our outreach to families and discipleship of children. If you are interested in this initiative, please be in touch with me.

5 random facts you didn't know about Matt Browne..... before you read this column!

Narelle Riley recently sat down for a 5 minute chat with Matt Brown, to see if she could find out something you might not have asked him yet!

1. Matt is studying a double degree at Ridley College: Bachelor of Theology and a Bachelor of Ministry
2. Matt met his wife Erin at Ridley College and they've been married for 6 months, currently living in Niddrie
3. Matt collects rare coins, and sold one of his favorite coins to fund his studies at Ridley
4. Matt loves AFL (another Bombers supporter joins the St Mary's staff team!) and has a preference for the traditional format of Test cricket and One Day cricket over the Big Bash
5. His favorite bible verse is Revelation 20:10 *"And the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulphur, where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night for ever and ever."*

Below:- Annabella, Erin & Matt Browne



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Home Groups

By Ros Armstrong

"Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved."
Acts 2:46-47

When Jesus came, he drew around him a group of disciples, including a core group of twelve men. They lived together and learnt together from Jesus himself, in what he said and did. They probably also learnt from each other, particularly their mistakes!

The twelve became the core of the early church. The church, too, met together and learnt together, as we read in the book of Acts.

"Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved." *Acts 2:46-47*

Meeting together was important, in the temple, and also in homes. For us, in the church now, it is important we meet together, not just at church, but also at other times. A good way of doing this is to be part of a home group.

So what is a home group? On a simple level, it is a group which meets in a home. At St Mary's, these groups gather to study the bible, to pray together, and to encourage each other in our faith. They are places where you can make friends – often good friends – who share griefs and joys, tears and (lots of) laughter.

On our recent Home Group Sunday, those taking part told of how their home group helped them

grow in faith, held them accountable, and how their ideas were refined and challenged. It was 'me-time' in the midst of the busy-ness of life. Even though, at times, there was barely energy or desire to attend home group, by being with the people in their group, they were given strength for the week ahead.

So, if you want to join a home group, which one would you join? As you can see by the attached list, there is a mix of groups at St Mary's. Some meet during the day, or in the evening, on different days of the week, so there will hopefully be one at a time that suits – and if there isn't please let me know. Most groups meet weekly, but some meet fortnightly, so the commitment of time also varies.

There are men's groups, women's groups or mixed groups. There are groups with mainly young adults, retirees, families or mixed ages and circumstances. You can think about which you might feel more comfortable in, and you can try one for a few weeks and see how you fit in. You can let me know, or directly contact the group leader on the details given.

A log that falls out of a fire will cool and stop burning. If returned to the fire it will burn again. It is a helpful analogy for us as Christians. It is hard work to maintain our faith on our own. Meeting together to read God's word, pray, and worship keeps our faith burning strongly.

Home Groups at St Mary's

Monday

Edith's Home group – Meets at Edith's home at 9.30am. All welcome. (Most members are retired women)
Contact Edith Langshaw on 9744 2849

Tuesday

Parents' Home group – Meets at Parish House at 9.30am. Open to parents with children
Supervision of children available. Contact Kim Beales on 0431 531 322

Women's Home group – Meets fortnightly at Jill's home at 7.30pm. Open to all women
Contact Jill Gray on 0400 236 122

Wednesday

Young Adults Home Group – Meets at Ben & Emily's home at 7.30pm. Open to Young Adults.
Contact Ben Clements on 0406 047 926 or Emily Clements on 0439 202 609

Men's group – Meets monthly. Contact Kim Beales on 0431 531 322

Thursday

Irene's Home Group – Meets in the Parish House at 10.30am. All welcome
Contact Irene Curtis on 9744 4093

Mike & Gill's Home Group – Meets in the Parish house at 7.30pm. Open to anyone to attend
Contact Mike Lampard on 9740 9470 or Gill Garth on 9744 1915

Elsa & Bev's Home group – Meets at Elsa's home from 7.30pm. Open to everyone to attend
Contact Bev Cottell on 9744 2165 or Elsa Phillips 9740 8756

Men's Group – Meets fortnightly at Max's home at 7.30pm. Open to all men
Contact Max Langshaw on 9744 2849

Friday

Armstrong's home group – Meets in the Parish house at 7.30pm. Open to all
Contact Mark Armstrong on 9740 6815

Alison's Home group – Meets at Chris and Alison's home at 7.30pm. The family group that encourages kids to be involved with colouring sheets and bible quizzes. Contact Alison Rae on 9740 2983

Upcoming Events



5 th March-	Games Night in the Parish House- 8.00pm
8 th March-	Riddell Gardens Service- 10.30am
8 th March-	Parish Prayer Meeting- 7.30pm
13 th March-	Wedding of Gavin Ward & Sharon Venhoek- 3pm
13 th March-	5pm Service's Dinner out at a Curry Restaurant
17 th March-	Sing & Soup- 12.00pm
19 th March-	Sunfest on the Village Green- Plant Stall & Children's Stall
20 th March-	Sunfest on the Village Green- 8.30am & 5.00pm services only
23 rd March-	Wednesday Service to Goonawarra
24 th March-	Maundy Thursday Communion Service- 7.30pm
25 th March-	Good Friday- Service at 8.30am followed by Ecumenical service at 10.00am
27 th March-	Easter Day- Services at Dawn, 8.30am, 10.30am & 5.00pm
1 st April-	Friday Friendship Lunch-12.30pm
2 nd April-	Games Night in the Parish House
4 th April-	Parish Council Meeting- 7.30pm