

Saint Mary's Newsletter: February

Vicar: David Smithson 027 4213200 Fridays

07 8492761 Afterhours

Peoples Warden: Sally-Ann Riddell 07 8243850

Vicars Warden: Roger Jennings 07 8243712



SERVICES FOR FEBRUARY

Sunday 7th:

NO SERVICE

Sunday 12th:

10am Family Communion

Refreshments - Sally-Ann Riddell

Sunday 19th:

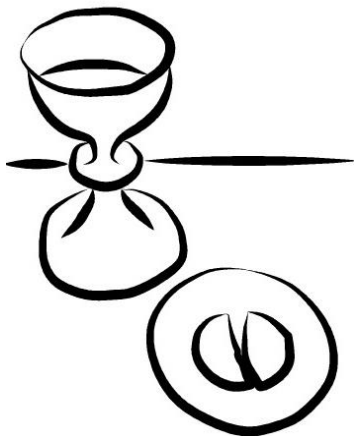
10am Praise Service & Children's church/Junior youth

Refreshments - Katy Cockerton

Sunday 26th:

10am Family Communion

Refreshments - Trish Smithson



Don't forget St Mary's Gordonton is on Facebook: Lots of info, thoughts, & updates. Like it!

Ash Weds: Weds 1st March at 7:30pm. The service marks the beginning of Lent and involves the burning of last year's palm Sun crosses and the marking of your forehead with ash to signify our mortality as well as repentance.

Refreshment Roster: Please see the roster on the table near the church entrance, and fill in the spaces / dates that you can provide after service morning tea.

Children's Church/Junior Youth: This month Children's church/Junior Youth is on 19th Feb

Youth Group (Year 9+): Combined churches youth Meet Fridays 7pm at Oaks Church Gordonton, and Weds 7pm is "Ignite" @ Horsham Downs Church.

Secular Humanism

"See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ." (Colossians 2:8)

Secular humanism is a subtle yet extremely injurious cancer eating away at the moral health of society. It is subtle in that it exalts human beings as capable of solving any problem and charting humankind's destiny. On the surface the philosophy sounds good as a means of building one's self esteem. But the exaltation of human abilities means the elimination of a Creator who is higher and sets standards for human behaviour. This cancer eats away at the principles of Christianity, traditional public education, and general morality. It provides the foundation for a variety of popular anti-biblical philosophies. At the centre of this fatal evolutionary belief is the teaching that there is no God or personal Creator (atheism), and that humans are the apex of all reality. Its subtly appeals to many by saying that all humans are innately good (ignoring the Fall of the human race) and have unlimited potential to evolve into perfect creatures. Humanism teaches total self-sufficiency, completely denying any need for Deity. The New Age movement has kindred elements with secular humanism. The movement maintains that humankind stands at the threshold of a "new age" toward which individuals now must evolve mentally and spiritually. New Age evangelists proclaim that the good within all people is actually the dormant god existing in each person. The New Age goal is to awaken the god who sleeps deep within each human. In order to realize this false spiritual state, a new consciousness is needed to usher in a worldwide transformation of individuals and society, as people come to realize that they themselves are gods and therefore divine. Interestingly, what is called "new" in the western world has influences from ancient eastern philosophy. Another falsehood of New Age is the monistic belief, taken from the Hindu religion that all matter, including human beings, are of the same origin. Thus "all is one." This pantheistic belief maintains that "all is god." New Agers also believe that through enlightenment and gaining a higher consciousness of one's inner deity, one is able to save both himself and the world from destruction. New Agers have also borrowed from the Hindu concept of reincarnation. By being born again over and over in cyclic births, New Age followers believe they are able to purge themselves of sin and bad karma. They also believe that since they share a divine oneness with all things, they can create whatever is visualized through the power of the mind. An announced purpose of the New Age Movement is prevention of the extinction of the human race, expected to occur either by nuclear holocaust or through depletion of the world's natural resources. Thus protecting the environment is a top priority for the New Age movement. New Agers support the establishment of a New World Order that will police the globe and bring the East and West together in harmony. Sadly, New Age thinking has permeated nearly every aspect of modern life. Large corporations send their decision-making managers to seminars on mind enhancement. Therapists employ techniques based on inner reflection and exploration of consciousness. Marketing experts emphasize human potential for its motivation power. Entertainers turn inward to discover an inner power that will catapult them to popularity. What was once an insignificant subculture of devotees has now moved into the mainstream of Western life. The church must resist every expression of this perversion of the truth. Scripture exposes the deception of this subtle dishonesty. "There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one" (Rom. 3:10-12). Unlike New Age, the Bible declares that truth is found, not by looking inward to self, but by looking upward, not by looking to men, but by looking to God (Jer. 17:5,9). Paul's rhetorical question says it best: "Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?" (1 Cor. 1:20). Indeed, "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). The church today must be vigilant, always alert to the godless philosophies that are seeking to creep into control everywhere around us. Sweet sounding statements spoken by secular humanists and New Agers can lull unsuspecting Christians into allowing a takeover of public schools, colleges, universities, political structures, and the whole fabric of society. But the total philosophy behind the innocent sounding ideas of individual rights and freedoms must be understood. We are not called to make everyone believe just the way we believe, but God expects us to stand for truth and resist Satan's efforts to seduce and draw unsuspecting innocents away from God's plan for every human being. It is good to protect the environment, but voting for a New Ager because he calls on us to protect the environment could be catastrophic. It is good to encourage personal creativity and initiative, but to vote for a secular humanist who doesn't believe there is a God to which human creativity and initiative are responsible could bring disaster. Informed, praying Christians can make their mark on society.

Christmas Fair

Less expenses (float, eftpos hire, advertising etc) the Christmas fair raised **\$4,836.93** which will go into the Building Fund towards a new church hall! ☺

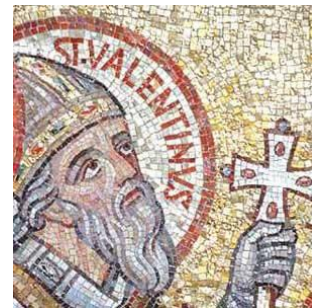
Parish Giving

Please consider giving to the parish via Automatic Payment. Did you know that St Mary's has to pay for our Vicar and all other costs of running a Parish, as well as giving a proportion to the Diocese? Please help us to be sustainable by giving via Automatic Payment. It is an easy way to give and is useful for the parish in running its budget. The Parish Bank Account is:

02 0410 0103053 00

This Month in Christian History:

February: Valentine was a priest during persecution by the Romans. At the time there was an edict forbidding marriage so to encourage more young men into the army. Valentine went against this by encouraging couples to marry in the Church. He was caught and then martyred 14 Feb 269.



Healing & Confession:

Should you require prayer for healing, please indicate to the vicar at the altar rail during Communion so anointing with oil can be given. The confidential act of Reconciliation/Confession (see page 750 of the Prayer Book) is also available on Friday's at the church 9am – 3pm