

# Saint Mary's Newsletter: December

Vicar: David Smithson 027 4213200 Fridays

07 8492761 Afterhours

Peoples Warden: Sally-Ann Riddell 07 8243850

Vicars Warden: Roger Jennings 07 8243712



## SERVICES FOR DECEMBER



### Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup>:

10:00am Advent 1 Family Communion.  
Jesse Tree for kids

Refreshments - Katy Cockerton

### Sunday 10<sup>th</sup>:

10am Advent 2 Family Communion

Refreshments - Majella Heaton

### Sunday 17<sup>th</sup>:

10am Advent 3 Family Communion  
Children's Church and Junior Youth

Refreshments - Trish Smithson

### Sunday 24<sup>th</sup>:

11pm Midnight Mass/Advent 4 by  
candlelight. (No 10am service)

### Monday 25<sup>th</sup>:

9:30am Christmas Day Communion

### Dec 31<sup>st</sup> to Jan 28<sup>th</sup>:

NO SERVICES. Services resume Sun 4<sup>th</sup>  
Feb 2018



### **Gordonton Christmas in the Hall**

15 Dec at 7pm - invite your family,  
friends and neighbours for a time  
of Carol Singing, items from the  
school children and local groups  
followed by supper

### **Children's Church/Junior Youth:**

This month -Children's  
church/Junior Youth is on the 17<sup>th</sup>  
Dec.

**Youth Group (Year 9+):** Friday's  
7pm @ Oaks church, Gordonton, &  
Weds 7pm "Ignite" @ - Horsham  
Downs Church.

### **Parish Office Hours**

The Parish Office (normally open  
Fridays 9:00am to 3pm) will be  
closed during January, and will re-  
open Fri 2nd Feb

### **Services during the holidays**

**DEC 31 - JANUARY 2018:** Please note  
that there will be no services  
during the month of January. The  
vicar can be contacted for urgent  
situations. Services will resume  
Sun 4<sup>th</sup> Feb 2018.



## Is there a difference between joy and happiness?

There is no explicit difference between happiness and joy. Both involve the emotions, both are pleasurable feelings, and both are mentioned in Scripture in passages that equate the two.

A dictionary definition of *happiness* is “a state of well-being; a pleasurable or satisfying experience.” A definition of the word *rejoice*, related to the word *joy*, is “to feel great delight; to be glad.” Depending on the translation, the Bible uses the words *happy* and *happiness* about 30 times, while *joy* and *rejoice* appear over 300 times.

Jeremiah 31:13 says, “I will turn their mourning into gladness; / I will give them comfort and joy instead of sorrow.” Here, in the parallelism of Hebrew poetry, the words *gladness* and *joy* are used synonymously. And Proverbs 23:25 says, “Let your father and your mother be glad, / And let her rejoice who gave birth to you.” Being glad is the same thing as rejoicing in this verse. Unless we are willing to say that gladness and happiness are completely different things, then we must say that joy and happiness are linked.

It is common today to hear believers speak of a difference between joy and happiness. The teaching usually makes the following points: 1) Happiness is a feeling, but joy is not. 2) Happiness is fleeting, but joy is everlasting. 3) Happiness depends on circumstances or other people, but joy is a gift from God. 4) Happiness is worldly, but joy is divine. But there is no such distinction made in Scripture, and forcing a distinction between two words that are so obviously close in meaning is unnecessary.

If a person is joyful, then he or she is happy. There’s no such thing as glum joy. We cannot drain joy of emotion and still call it “joy.” When God’s Spirit gives us joy, then we are happy people. Christians should be joyful; happiness should characterize our everyday lives.

James 1:2 says, “Consider it all joy, my brothers, when you encounter various trials.” Christians can be happy, even in the midst of difficulties, because we know “the testing of our faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing” (verses 3–4). As we persevere through trials, with God’s help, our faith strengthens and matures. By God’s grace we can be happy despite our circumstances.

Joy is often presented as “true” contentment based on faith. Happiness, in contrast, is often thought of as “false” or “superficial” emotion dependent on circumstances. But this is a false dichotomy. There is nothing in the Bible that suggests we divorce joy from happiness. The two are equal.

Of course, there are different types of joy and happiness. There is a joy that comes from the world, such as “the fleeting pleasures of sin” spoken of in Hebrews 11:25. There is a joy that is part of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22). There is a temporary happiness and an eternal happiness, but we can call both “happiness.” We don’t need to split hairs between the meaning of *joy* and *happiness*. We just need to decide where our joy comes from. Are we happy in the Lord, or are we content with the happiness the world affords?

Solomon tried the world’s brand of happiness and found it to be lacking: “I said to myself, ‘Come now, I will test you with pleasure to find out what is good.’ But that also proved to be meaningless. ‘Laughter,’ I said, ‘is madness. And what does pleasure accomplish?’” (Ecclesiastes 2:1–2). The joy of the world is hollow, but the joy of the Lord is rich and abundant. The world’s happiness will fade with time, but God’s people will be happy forever.

“Those the LORD has rescued will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away” (Isaiah 35:10).

## A Prayer for this month:

*Lord, in this holy season of prayer and song and laughter, we praise you for the great wonders you have sent us: for shining star and angel's song, for infants cry in lowly manger. We praise you for the Word made flesh in a little Child. We behold his glory, and are bathed in His radiance.*



**Bible Study:** Salt & Light bible study meets 10th Dec after church.

## This Month in Christian History:

*Dec 29<sup>th</sup> 1170:* Thomas a Becket, archbishop of Canterbury from 1161, is murdered by four of King Henry II’s Norman knights. Once a close friend of Henry’s, as his archbishop, Becket had opposed the king over several critical tax and Church issues.



## Parish Bank Account:

02 0410 0103053 00 Thanks for your weekly A/P contributions to keep our Parish running!