

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 4th:

10am Family Communion Service

Refreshments: Sally-Ann Riddell

Sunday 11th:

10am Family Communion

Refreshments - Trish Smithson

Wednesday 14th:

7:30pm Ash Weds Service

Sunday 18th:

10am Praise Service

Refreshments - Majella Heaton

Sunday 25th:

10am Family Communion

Refreshments - Katy Cockerton



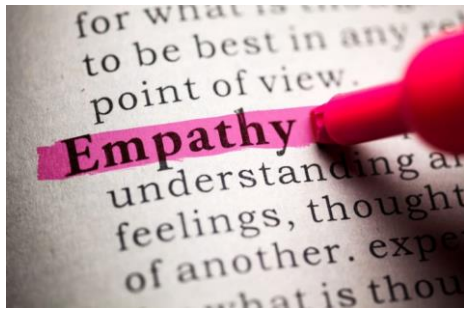
Don't forget St Mary's Gordonton is on Facebook: Lots of info, thoughts, & updates. Like it!

Ash Weds: Weds 14th Feb 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 symbolically signify our mortality as well as our 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 18th Feb

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



The Scriptures refer to the quality of empathy, which we see demonstrated in several biblical narratives. Empathy is the capacity to feel another person's feelings, thoughts, or attitudes vicariously. The apostle Peter counselled Christians to have "compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tender hearted, be courteous" ([1 Peter 3:8, NKJV](#)). The apostle Paul also encouraged empathy when he exhorted fellow Christians to "rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn" ([Romans 12:15](#)).

Empathy is related to sympathy but is narrower in focus and is generally considered more deeply personal. Compassion, sympathy, and empathy all have to do with having passion (feeling) for another person because of his or her suffering. True empathy is the feeling of actually participating in the suffering of another.

The apostle John asked, "If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person?" ([1 John 3:17](#)). Pity in this verse is related to empathy, and both require action. As Christians we are commanded to love our neighbour and to have intense love for fellow believers ([Matthew 22:39](#); [1 Peter 4:8](#)). Though we intend to love one another, we often miss opportunities to relieve others' pain. That could be because we are unaware of others' needs; or perhaps we are not practicing empathy. Empathy is the key that can unlock the door to our kindness and compassion.

There are several examples of empathy in action in the Bible. Jesus was always sensitive to the plight of others. Matthew tells us how Jesus, "when he saw the crowds he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd" ([Matthew 9:36](#)). On another occasion, Jesus observed a widow about to bury her only son. Sensing her pain (the NLT says that Jesus' "heart overflowed with compassion"), He approached the funeral procession and resurrected the young man ([Luke 7:11–16](#)). Having lived a human life, our Lord can and does empathize with all of our weaknesses (see [Hebrews 4:15](#)).

The word *compassion* describes the deep mercy of God. God is the very best at empathy: "He knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust" ([Psalm 103:14](#)). He personally feels the pain of His people: "You keep track of all my sorrows. You have collected all my tears in your bottle. You have recorded each one in your book" ([Psalm 56:8, NLT](#)). How comforting it is to know that God records all our tears and all our struggles! How good to remember God's invitation to cast all our cares upon Him, "because he cares for you" ([1 Peter 5:7](#))!

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:

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This Month in Christian History:

1933: The German Lutheran clergyman Dietrich Bonhoeffer gives a radio speech warning about the consequences of putting blind trust in any man (i.e. Hitler). His address is abruptly cut off at the warning.



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