

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 8525008



SERVICES FOR DECEMBER



Sunday 2nd:

10:00am Advent 1 Family Communion.

Refreshments - Karen Boyer

Sunday 9th:

10am Advent 2 Family Communion

Refreshments - Adrienne Calderwood

Sunday 16th:

10am Advent 3 Family Communion

Refreshments - Majella Heaton

Sunday 23rd:

10am Advent 4 Family Communion

Refreshments - Trish Smithson

Monday 24th:

NOTE: NO SERVICES OR MIDNIGHT MASS

Tuesday 25th:

9:30am Christmas Day Communion

Dec 30th to Jan 27th:

NO SERVICES. Services resume Sun 3rd Feb 2019



Children/Youth: Kids activity packs with a choccy treat, and youth: 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 1st Feb

Hall Building Fund / Seismic

Strengthening In the light of St Mary's church now labelled a considerable risk during a seismic event, Vestry has decided that funds raised for the Hall shall now instead be set aside for strengthening of our existing church building. Please consider giving to this, & now mark any Hall donations as "Seismic Strengthening Fund".

Services during the holidays

DEC 30 - JANUARY 2019: 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 3rd Feb 2019.



The Christmas Tree

I have been looking into the history of Christmas trees. Does it really matter whether it was originally a pagan tradition? I don't think so. The celebration and what we celebrate is what is important. Here an interesting find, before Christmas trees there were Paradise trees in Europe.

From the eleventh Century, religious plays called "Mystery Plays" including the popular Paradise Play depicting the story of the creation of Adam and Eve, their sin and banishment from Eden. An evergreen tree was the logical choice for a lush garden tree on this winter festival, and it was decorated with apples symbolizing the forbidden fruit. It ended with the promise of the coming Saviour and his incarnation, so gradually flat wafers symbolizing the forgiveness of sins in communion were added to the paradise tree, making it now not just the tree of knowledge but also the tree of life. This resulted in a very old European custom of decorating a fir tree in the home with apples and small white wafers representing the Holy Eucharist at Christmas time. These wafers were later replaced by little pieces of pastry cut in the shapes of stars, angels, hearts, flowers, and bells. In some areas the custom was still to hang the tree upside down.

In addition to the paradise tree, many German Christians set up a Christmas Pyramid called a Lichstock - an open wooden frame with shelves for figurines of the Nativity covered with evergreen branches and decorated with candy, pastry, candles, and a star.

The star of course was the star of Bethlehem, the candles represented the light of Christ coming into the world, the evergreens were the symbol of eternal life, and the candy, fruits, and pastries, the goodness of our life in Christ, the fruits of the spirit, etc. By the seventeenth century the Lichstock and the "Paradise Tree" became merged into the modern Christmas tree.



By HikingArtist

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: meets 9th & 23rd Dec after church.

This Month in Christian History:

Dec 18th 1904: Indian mystic Sundar Singh is converted to Christianity. He later donned the robe of a Sadu (Hindu holy man) in an endeavour to present Christianity in a Hindu form. Singh disappeared in April 1929 while undertaking a strenuous mission in Tibet.



Parish Bank Account:

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