

Saint Mary's Newsletter: October

Vicar: David Smithson 027 4213200 Fridays

07 8492761 Afterhours

Peoples Warden: Sally-Ann Riddell 07 8243850

Vicars Warden: John Heaton 07 8243996



SERVICES FOR OCTOBER

Sunday 6th:

10am Pet Blessing Service

Refreshments: Judy Cole

Readings: Judy Cole

Intercessions: Karen Boyer

Sunday 13th:

10am Family Communion Service

Refreshments: Muriel Riddell

Readings:

Intercessions:

Sunday 20th:

10am Family Communion Service

Refreshments: Melanie Holdsworth

Readings: Melanie Holdsworth

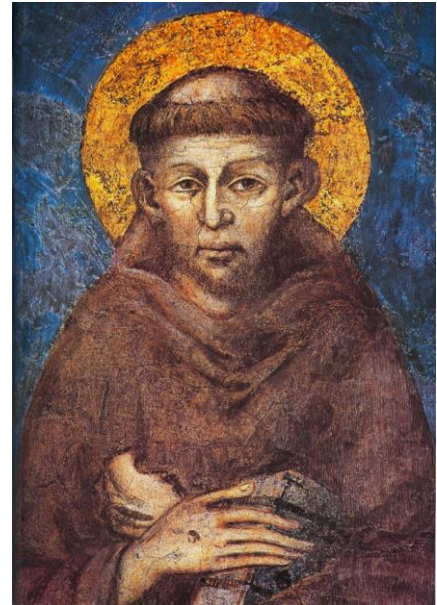
Intercessions: Melanie Holdsworth

Sunday 27th:

NO SERVICE – LABOUR WEEKEND



Who was Saint Francis?



Saint Francis was born in Assisi, Italy, in 1181 into a wealthy family. His brush with battles and captivity lead him to query his frivoulous lifestyle. He searched for God, who answered Francis' cry, asking him to spiritually rebuild the Church which had fallen into spiritual decay. Francis loved God's Creation and animals. He passed away 3rd Oct 1226 aged 44 years. Francis had a huge following of friars and to this day, they are found throughout the world, often working with the poor.



Pet Blessing Service In honour of St Francis (whose day is on the 3rd Oct) we are having our Annual Pet Blessing Service Sun 6th Oct. Bring along your cat, dog, fish, bird...!

Does a Christian have to attend every service a church has?

Of course, with some churches—the big ones with three or four services every Sunday and another on Saturday—it's neither feasible nor expected that a member attend *every* service. But attending the services most churches offer places no real burden on one's schedule. Many people grew up in households that required church attendance: "When the doors were open, we were there!" Such testimonies are rarer today, as church attendance in general is declining.

Does a Christian *have* to attend *every* service their church provides? The simple answer is "no." There is no New Testament command for believers to maintain perfect attendance at church. Attending every church service does not make a person "holier" than the one who misses a service here and there. Our relationship with God is not based on rule-following or punching a time clock at church; it's based on our position in Christ (1 Corinthians 1:2). The question that matters in eternity is not "How many times was I in church" but "Did I truly know Jesus Christ?" (Matthew 7:21–23).

However, there is a problem with having a nonchalant attitude toward church attendance. We should not be ambivalent in the matter. God's plan in this age involves the church, which Jesus promised to build (Matthew 16:18), and we should be supporting God's plan enthusiastically.

"Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching" (Hebrews 10:24–25). It's interesting that, even in the early church, there were those who made a "habit" of not fellowshiping with other believers. Their example is not to be followed. The church is where our spiritual gifts best edify the Body of Christ (Ephesians 4:11–12), and it is difficult to "spur" each other to love and good works if we are not attending church. How can we encourage one another if we're never around one another?

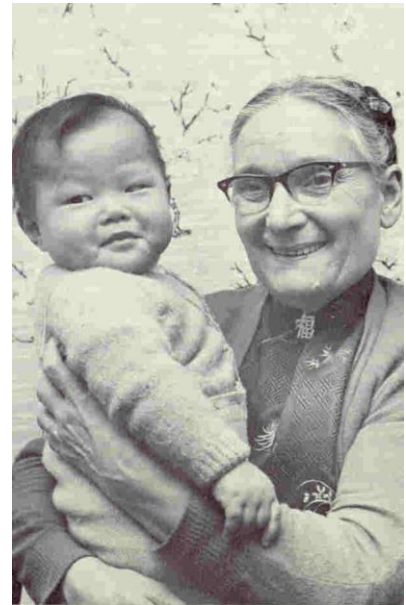
Christians should be *committed* to their local church, *involved* in their local church, and *supportive* of their local church. This requires regular church attendance. A believer will naturally love his brothers and sisters in Christ (1 John 4:21), and that love will manifest itself in a desire to fellowship, not avoidance. When the church is praising the Lord, all believers should want to join in the praise; when the church is praying for others, all believers should want to join in the prayer; when the church is studying the Word, all believers should want to join in the learning.

We live in a world of distractions. So many things call us away from our commitments, our involvement, and our support of the local church: sports activities, work schedules, community projects, etc.—the list is never-ending. There are valid reasons for missing a church service, and we must avoid legalism in such matters. At the same time, we should make sure absences are the exception, not the rule. Each believer should examine their own heart to determine their motives for missing church. It could be that a rearrangement of priorities is in order?



This Month in Christian History:

15th Oct 1932: Gladys Aylward sails from Liverpool, England, for Asia in an effort to bring the gospel to China. In 1958 her biography, *The Small Woman*, was made into an award winning film: *Inn of the Sixth Happiness*.



CHEQUES TO ST MARY'S:

If you are writing a cheque towards the parish, please ensure it is made out to: "Gordonton Anglican Church"

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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