

Saint Mary's Newsletter: March

Vicar: David Smithson 021 985530 Fridays

07 8492761 Afterhours

Peoples Warden: Sally-Ann Riddell 07 8243850

Vicars Warden: John Heaton 07 8243996



SERVICES FOR MARCH

Sunday 1st:

10am Lent 1 family communion Service

Refreshments: Muriel Riddell

Readings/prayers: Katy Cockerton

Sunday 8th:

10am Lent 2 family communion Service

Refreshments: Trish Smithson

Readings/prayers: Trish Smithson

Sunday 15th:

10am Lent 3 family St Patrick's Day communion Service

Refreshments: Majella Heaton

Readings/prayers: Majella Heaton

Sunday 22nd:

10am Lent 4 family communion Service

Refreshments: Melanie Holdsworth

Readings/Prayers: Melanie Holdsworth

Sunday 29th:

10am Lent 5 Fresh Expressions - followed by the AGM then a Parish Café Lunch



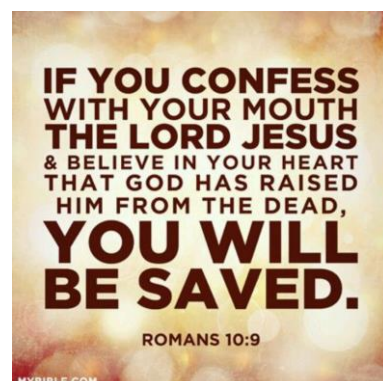
Fr Michael Kelly: Speaking at St John's Methodist Church, 20 Wellington St, Hamilton East, Weds 11th March at 7pm on "Persecution of Christians reaches genocide levels"

St Patrick's Day Service Sunday 15th March. Wear something green!



AGM: 29th March Immediately after the service. It is always brief, and when finished we will have a Parish Café Lunch together.

Youth Group (Year 9+): Combined churches youth Meet Fridays 7pm at Oaks Church Gordonton & Wednesdays 7pm "Ignite" at Horsham Downs Church.



What does the Bible say about thankfulness/gratitude?"

Thankfulness is a prominent Bible theme. First Thessalonians 5:16-18 says, "Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." Did you catch that? Give thanks in *all* circumstances. Thankfulness should be a way of life for us, naturally flowing from our hearts and mouths. Digging into the Scriptures a little more deeply, we understand why we should be thankful and also how to have gratitude in different circumstances.

Psalms 136:1 says, "Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. His love endures forever." Here we have two reasons to be thankful: God's constant goodness and His steadfast love. When we recognize the nature of our depravity and understand that, apart from God, there is only death (John 10:10; Romans 7:5), our natural response is to be grateful for the life He gives.

Psalms 30 gives praise to God for His deliverance. David writes, "I will exalt you, O Lord, for you lifted me out of the depths and did not let my enemies gloat over me. O Lord my God, I called to you for help, and you healed me. O Lord, you brought me up from the grave; you spared me from going down into the pit. . . . You turned my wailing into dancing; you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy, that my heart may sing to you and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give you thanks forever" (Psalm 30:1-12). Here David gives thanks to God following an obviously difficult circumstance. This psalm of thanksgiving not only praises God in the moment but remembers God's past faithfulness. It is a statement of God's character, which is so wonderful that praise is the only appropriate response.

We also have examples of being thankful in the midst of hard circumstances. Psalm 28, for example, depicts David's distress. It is a cry to God for mercy, protection, and justice. After David cries out to God, he writes, "Praise be to the Lord, for he has heard my cry for mercy. The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and I am helped. My heart leaps for joy, and I will give thanks to him in song" (Psalm 28:6-7). In the midst of hardship, David remembers who God is and, as a result of knowing and trusting God, gives thanks. Job had a similar attitude of praise, even in the face of death: "The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised" (Job 1:21).

There are examples of believers' thankfulness in the New Testament as well. Paul was heavily persecuted, yet he wrote, "Thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him" (2 Corinthians 2:14). The writer of Hebrews says, "Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe" (Hebrews 12:28). Peter gives a reason to be thankful for "grief and all kinds of trials," saying that, through the hardships, our faith "may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed" (1 Peter 1:6-7).

The people of God are thankful people, for they realize how much they have been given. One of the characteristics of the last days is a lack of thanksgiving, according to 2 Timothy 3:2. Wicked people will be "ungrateful."

We should be thankful because God is worthy of our thanksgiving. It is only right to credit Him for "every good and perfect gift" He gives (James 1:17). When we are thankful, our focus moves off selfish desires and off the pain of current circumstances. Expressing thankfulness helps us remember that God is in control. Thankfulness, then, is not only appropriate; it is actually healthy and beneficial to us. It reminds us of the bigger picture, that we belong to God, and that we have been blessed with every spiritual blessing (Ephesians 1:3). Truly, we have an abundant life (John 10:10), and gratefulness is fitting.

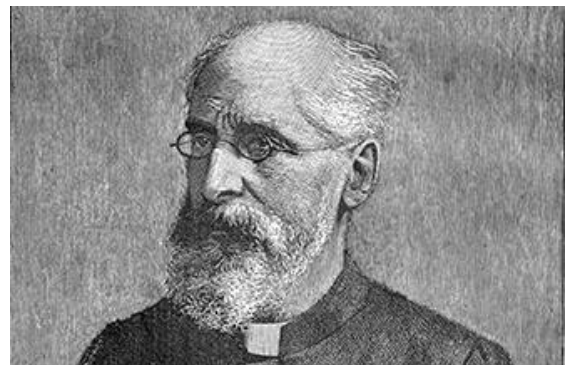
Parish Giving

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:

1825: Birth of Alfred Edersheim, Jewish-born Anglican Bible scholar; theologian, and writer. His most widely read title, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* (1883) is still in print.



Healing & Confession:

Should you require prayer for healing, please see the vicar. The confidential act of Reconciliation/Confession (see page 750 of the Prayer Book) is also available on most Friday's at the church 9am – 3pm. Please call beforehand

IF WE CONFESS OUR SINS,
HE IS FAITHFUL AND JUST AND
WILL FORGIVE US OUR SINS AND
PURIFY US FROM
ALL UNRIGHTEOUSNESS.

John 1:9