

# Saint Mary's Newsletter: October 2026

**Vicar:** David Smithson 027 4213200 Fridays

07 8492761 Afterhours

**Lay Minister:** Charles Clark 021 02691764

**Peoples Warden:** Sally-Ann Riddell 022 1077562

**Vicars Warden:** John Heaton 021 702871



## SERVICES FOR OCTOBER

### Sunday 4<sup>th</sup>:

10am Holy Communion and Pet Blessing Service

**Refreshments & Intercessions:** Karen

### Sunday 11<sup>th</sup>:

10am Holy Communion Service

**Refreshments & Intercessions:** Kay

### Sunday 18<sup>th</sup>:

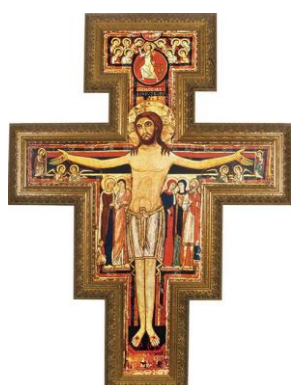
10am Holy Communion Service

**Refreshments & Intercessions:** Melanie

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

10am Holy Communion Service

**Refreshments & Intercessions:** Majella



## 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 frivolous 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 4<sup>th</sup> 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 4<sup>th</sup> Oct) we are having our Annual Pet Blessing Service Sun 4<sup>th</sup> Oct. Bring along your cat, dog, fish, bird...!

## The Fatigue of Political and Social Justice Activism in Anglicanism

Social justice, while concerned with important moral questions, is not the gospel. The gospel is the good news that Jesus Christ died for our sins, was buried, rose again, and offers forgiveness and reconciliation with God to all who repent and believe (1 Corinthians 15:3–4; Romans 1:16). Jesus commissioned His Church to "*make disciples of all nations*" (Matthew 28:19–20) and declared that "*repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations*" (Luke 24:47). Paul wrote, "*We preach Christ crucified*" (1 Corinthians 1:23) and, "*I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified*" (1 Corinthians 2:2). Nowhere does the New Testament define the Church's mission as advancing social or political reform. Issues such as racism, hatred, poverty, economic inequality, immigration, and environmental stewardship are moral issues because they concern human conduct and obedience to God's commands. Christians should reject hatred, oppose partiality, and love their neighbours (Matthew 22:39; James 2:1–9). Yet these are ethical consequences of the gospel, not the gospel itself. The apostles confronted every form of sin by preaching repentance and faith in Christ, trusting that transformed hearts would produce transformed lives. They did not organize the Church around reforming the political or social structures of the Roman Empire. Churches that make social justice the defining emphasis of their public witness risk confusing the fruit of the gospel with the gospel itself. This tendency can be seen in the Episcopal Church, the Church of England, the Anglican Church of Canada, and several other Anglican provinces – including New Zealand - whose public witness often gives greater prominence to racism, inclusion, climate change, and other social concerns than to sin, repentance, justification, and salvation through Christ. While these concerns are morally significant, they should never replace or overshadow the Church's unique mission. The Church's commission is not to champion the political causes of any age, however worthy, but to proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. Governments, charities, and civic institutions may pursue social reform, but only the Church has been entrusted with the message that "*there is no salvation in no one else*" (Acts 4:12). Political and social activism is not the calling of the Church. The Church's task is to worship God, proclaim salvation in Christ, and make disciples. God's people are to embody Christian virtues, bear witness to biblical truth, and pursue good works (Matthew 5:16). Social justice may be a consequence of lives transformed by the gospel, but it is not the gospel. When social justice becomes the Church's central message, the cross, repentance, forgiveness, and eternal life are displaced from the centre of its proclamation, and the biblical gospel is diminished. Social justice may be a consequence of lives transformed by the gospel, but it is not the gospel. When social justice becomes the Church's central message, the cross, repentance, forgiveness, and eternal life are displaced from the centre of its proclamation, and the biblical gospel is diminished.

**Bishop Robert Todd Giffin**

## This Month in Christian History:

**3 Oct 1852:** In the chapel at New York City's University of New York, an Anglican priest, the Reverend Thomas Gaullaudett held the first ever church service for deaf worshippers.



## Parish Giving

Please consider giving to the parish via Automatic Payment. 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**

