

St Mary Magdalene's Anglican Church

Moore Street, Adelaide



An open, welcoming and inclusive community
in the heart of the City of Adelaide

Keeping Community Spiritual Resources & Reflections

Thursday 23 July 2020

Dear friends,

The relaxation of Covid-19 restrictions makes it possible to once again worship on Sunday. The church is also open for private prayer and public worship on Tuesday and Thursday from 11.30 am to 1 pm, and Mass is offered at 12.10 pm after the Angelus at 12 noon.

The decision to return to worship in community, even for private prayer, is not a straightforward matter, so we will continue to produce these newsletters for now.

In these Thursday newsletters, we offer ideas and opportunities for nourishing our personal and communal spiritual lives.

1. From Fr Graeme – Sunday Worship

Following the Parish Council meeting on Tuesday evening, I need to bring some important matters to the attention of all parishioners. I am sorry to be taking up space in our weekly "spirituality" newsletter, but this is a special matter, warranting special attention.

For some months now, a prodigious volume of work has been undertaken in order to help keep our community together in a time of physical separation by providing material which could help parishioners continue to take an interest in the Parish itself and the continuing challenges it faces. Another and equally important aim was to try to keep our spiritual lives vibrant. Those who have put such great effort into this work deserve our thanks for all that they have tackled for our mutual benefit. The blog and the twice weekly newsletters have been part of what the Parish can offer since March, and they have been very appreciatively received.

This work has continued, in modified form, since we resumed Sunday worship at the end of June and throughout July, during which we have offered a single Sung Mass at 10 am.

While we have been celebrating the one Mass on Sundays, we need also to acknowledge the efforts of the choir to adapt to a "blended" style of worship with greater musical demands. Under the direction of Chris Bright, the music sung has been of a high order and embraced by most of the congregations. This has been something of a departure from the normal round of music at St Mary Magdalene's, and we are enormously grateful both for the effort from our musicians, and for the willingness of both of our Sunday congregations to accommodate the changes that have largely been imposed upon us.

Parish Council discussed the attendances at our July 10 am Masses as compared with 9 am and 10.30 am prior to the Covid-19 lockdown. **After a long discussion, the Council decided that we should continue the single 10 am Mass on Sunday mornings for the time being.**

In reaching this decision, Parish Council considered many factors. During July, we have been delighted to see most of those whom we consider 'regular' members of our community on one or more occasions. We are mindful also that there are some of our number whom we have not seen. Some have indicated that until such time as the threat from Covid-19 is extinguished, they do not plan to resume corporate worship. For some, the offering of a combined service, or a single Sunday service, is not to their liking.

Another important aspect of this discussion related to the Covid 19 pandemic as it is at present in Australia. Although we have no active cases in South Australia at present, the fact remains that the virus could break out again in our part of Australia any time, and we know that churches in Victoria have been dramatically affected by the reimposition of lockdowns in that State, just as a semblance of normality was returning. Parish Council felt it to be important that we not need to chop and change our worship arrangements according to the presence of Covid-19. Instead the Council favoured continuing our present arrangements which are more easily aligned to Covid-19 demands.

Because of the continuing threat from Covid-19, Parish Council has asked that the newsletters and blog posts continue. The focus of the blog will change to highlight Fr Philip Carter's offerings by way of meditations and spiritual guidance. Because the majority of our community has returned to Sunday worship at the church, it was thought that the provision of a Sunday Mass resource was difficult to continue, given the tremendous amount of work involved in putting it together. However, Sunday worship will continue to be supported in blog posts in a more concise manner, with the popular elements of those posts—the recordings by members of our community of readings and prayers—supplemented with visual imagery and recorded music. We hope to have a special focus on a particular Sunday celebration in each month, with a greater selection of recorded content from within our community.

It is vitally important that parishioners feel able to contribute their views about all these and other matters. Members of Parish Council will be actively consulting throughout the community, and parishioners will be invited to complete a questionnaire fairly soon about various matters. All views expressed will be valued and considered by the Council.

At the conclusion of this process, the Annual Meeting of the Parish will be held on Sunday 30 August after the 10 am Mass. At this meeting we shall elect a new Parish Council and other officers, and in particular a People's Churchwarden to replace Mark Gerschwitz who needed to resign a few weeks ago. There is a candidate ready to stand for election which is very encouraging.

The Parish Council is anxious to reassure the community that the decision to retain a single Sunday Mass for the time being is not necessarily intended to be ongoing, but is rather a pragmatic and realistic response to the extraordinary circumstances that have gripped the world and the church in these past few months, and the reality that our numbers are, and will remain, lower in the short to medium term. On a more positive side, it is also an affirmation of the sincerity and charity that has characterised our worship in recent weeks. There are many church communities that are in really dire straits at the present time: we pray for them, as we pray and give thanks for our own community, whose resilience and fortitude is little short of inspirational.

Fr Graeme Kaines
Locum Priest

2. Daily Prayer

Most Christian denominations have forms for prayer in the morning and the evening, and at other times of the day. Morning and Evening Prayer in the Anglican church's *A Prayer Book for Australia*, are available in either a fixed form (pages 3 – 33) or a different form for each day of the week (pages 383 – 424). The Bible readings for each day can be found in *The Australian Lectionary*, and for reference the readings for the coming week are:

	Morning Prayer	Evening Prayer
Thursday 23 July	Ps 54, 55.1-12 Amos 8.4-14 John 7.32-53	Ps 55.13-28 Ezekiel 34.17-31 Romans 2.25 – 3.8
Friday 24 July	Ps 56, 57 Amos 9.1-6 John 8.1-11	Ps 60, 61 Ezekiel 35 Romans 3.9-20
Saturday 25 July St James, Apostle & Martyr	Ps 29 2 Kings 1.9-15 Luke 9.46-56	Ps 7 Jeremiah 26.1-16 Mark 1.14-20
Sunday 26 July The Patronal Festival	Ps 32 1 Samuel 16.14-23 Luke 7.36 – 8.3	Ps 30 Hosea 14 Mark 15.40 – 16.8
Monday 27 July	Ps 68.1-20 Hosea 1 John 8.31-47	Ps 68.21-35 Ezekiel 36.16-38 Romans 4.1-12
Tuesday 28 July	Ps 71 Hosea 2.1-13 John 8.48-59	Ps 119.65-88 Ezekiel 37.1-14 Romans 4.13-25
Wednesday 29 July Mary and Martha of Bethany	Ps 69.1-16 Hosea 2.14 – 3.5 John 9.1-17	Ps 69.17 – 38 Ezekiel 37.15-28 Romans 5.1-11
Thursday 30 July William Wilberforce	Ps 72 Hosea 4.1-9 John 9.18-38	Ps 73 Ezekiel 38.14-23; 39.21-29 Romans 5.12-21

Online Resources

There is a complete online version of Daily Prayer from *A Prayer Book for Australia* for each day available at Australian Daily Prayer <https://dailyprayer.ampers.x10.mx/>. There is also a free app for mobile devices from the App Store or Google Play.

The Church of England provides an online version of its orders for Daily Prayer at <https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/join-us-service-daily-prayer>. This is also available as a free app (App Store or Google Play).

The Divine Office of the Catholic Church is available online at www.ibreviary.com and is also available as a free app (App Store or Google Play).

Times of Prayer

Many people find it helpful to make a particular time daily for prayer and reflection. One option might be to join your prayer with those of the wider world at some special times during the day. Volunteers are attending at St Mary Magdalene's most days to ring the church bell while praying the Angelus at 9 am, 12 noon and 6 pm.

3. Sunday and Weekday Mass

Step 3 of the relaxation of Covid-19 measures commenced on Monday 29 June, with the number of people in church buildings (among other places) now uncapped, but still based on the size of the building and a 2 sqm per person rule. All the now-customary cleaning, health and hygiene requirements, and physical distancing will continue to apply.

Sunday worship has recommenced, and for the time being there will be a single Sung Mass for the whole community at 10 am.

There are a number of implications associated with resuming Sunday worship. These are listed in detail on the web page and elsewhere, but in summary, there will be no physical contact, Communion will continue to be received in one kind only, and the offering of money to support the work of the church will be made individually, not collected.

All those who contribute to our worship week by week, and especially those who made such a great effort during the enforced shut-down, and continue to put in substantial extra work to maintain our fellowship, are working together to ensure that these celebrations will be representative of our whole community.

4. Reflections and Meditations

Fr Graeme and others within our community will continue to prepare Reflections for Sundays and Holy Days for posting on the web page.

Fr Philip Carter's meditations and spiritual reflections will in the future be presented on our blog, <https://stmarymagdalenesadelaide.org/>. To access the tab, simply go to the blog and select the "Spirit matters" tab on the top.

If you would like to receive an email update when there is a new posting on the blog, whether for a Sunday or weekday service, or for meditations and other supports for prayer, please subscribe to the blog using the box on the right-hand side of the page.

5. Our Parish Blog

Our parish blog, <https://stmarymagdalenesadelaide.org/> is an increasingly important element of our regular contact with the community. Alison McAllister reports here on current and future plans.

The blog has provided services for the parish during the COVID lockdown, and as promised, through to the end of July, when we celebrate our patron saint, Mary Magdalene. We will keep publishing services for the foreseeable future, but not every Sunday. The plan is to publish one service a month on a special feast day - for example in August we celebrate the Blessed Virgin Mary; in September, the Holy Cross; and in October, the Anniversary of the Dedication of the Church.

Service booklets as PDF files will still be available for Sunday services.

Fr Philip Carter's meditations are published on the blog, and we hope to issue these on Thursday each week. These offerings have received an enthusiastic response, and we will continue to publish these as a rich resource for the parish and as a gift to the broader community.

6. In the Church's Calendar

This week we we celebrate one of the Twelve Apostles, St James; along with two of the less prominent characters in the life of Christ, Mary and Martha of Bethany; and the social reformer William Wilberforce.

St James the Apostle, often called St James "the Great" in order to distinguish him from the author of the letter of James in the New Testament (James "the Less"), is traditionally understood to be the brother of John the Evangelist, and one of the fishermen called by Jesus from their work on the sea of Galilee.

James was one of the three disciples who had the privilege of witnessing the Transfiguration, the raising to life of the daughter of Jairus, and the agony in Gethsemani.

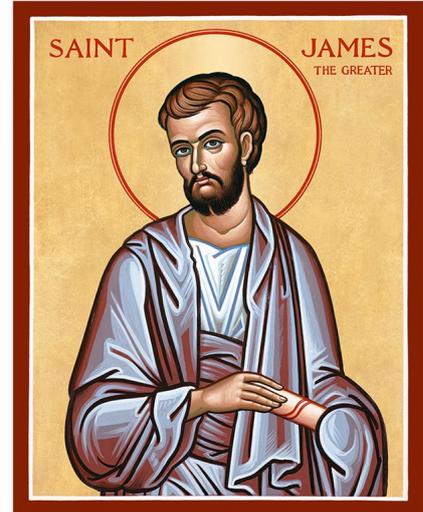
Many people find they can readily identify with James—and with John—for their intemperate and sometimes fickle behaviour. After all, it was their mother who confronted Jesus insisting that they have seats of honour in the kingdom. And it was they who sought to invoke disaster on the Samaritans who would not welcome Jesus.

The way the Gospels treat the apostles is a good reminder of what holiness is all about. There is very little about their virtues as static possessions, entitling them to heavenly reward. Rather, the great emphasis is on the Kingdom, on God's giving them the power to proclaim the Good News.

Mary and Martha of Bethany, and their brother Lazarus were evidently close friends of Jesus. Jesus came to their home simply as a welcomed guest. The sisters feel free to call on Jesus at their brother's death, even though a return to Judea at that time seems almost certain death.

The meeting of Mary and Martha with Jesus in Luke 10 is a difficult story about the relationship of faith and works. At dinner, Mary sits next to Jesus, listening to him speak, while Martha busies herself with serving the meal—and is none too pleased about being "put upon" to do all the work. Jesus ultimately gives Martha a gentle rebuke, "you are anxious and worried about many things. There is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part and it will not be taken from her".

Our faith proposes to us the liberating truth that faith and works are two blades on one pair of scissors. And the heart and soul of a eucharistic faith is that Christ, truly God and truly human, and prayer become incarnate in works of love just as the word became flesh. As Pope Francis puts it with simple elegance: "You pray for the hungry. Then you feed them. That's how prayer works."



William Wilberforce (1759-1833) was born into a wealthy family and during his University studies became interested in politics, being elected to Parliament aged just 21. He was evidently a dissolute young man, but changed his lifestyle completely when he embraced evangelical Christianity, rapidly gaining an interest in social reform, particularly the improvement of factory conditions in Britain.

He was a prime mover in the long quest to abolish slavery, and for 18 years he regularly introduced anti-slavery motions in parliament, with legislation finally passed in 1807. The 1807 Act did not free those who were already slaves, and it was not until shortly before his death in 1833 that an act was passed giving freedom to all slaves in the British empire.

Wilberforce stands as a magnificent example of undaunted and faithful action alongside a total, radical faith in Christ.



8. **Mary and Martha of Bethany – from a Sermon by St Augustine**

Our Lord's words teach us that though we labor among the many distractions of this world, we should have but one goal. For we are but travellers on a journey without as yet a fixed abode; we are on our way, not yet in our native land; we are in a state of longing, not yet of enjoyment. But let us continue on our way, and continue without sloth or respite, so that we may ultimately arrive at our destination.

Martha and Mary were sisters, related not only by blood but also by religious aspirations. They stayed close to our Lord and both served him harmoniously when he was among them. Martha welcomed him as travellers are welcomed.

But in her case, the maidservant received her Lord, the invalid her Savior, the creature her Creator, to serve him bodily food while she was to be fed by the Spirit. For the Lord willed to put on the form of a slave, and under this form to be fed by his own servants, out of condescension and not out of need. For this was indeed condescension, to present himself to be fed; since he was in the flesh he would indeed be hungry and thirsty.

Thus was the Lord received as a guest who *came unto his own and his own received him not; but as many as received him, he gave them the power to become sons of God* [John 1:11], adopting those who were servants and making them his brothers, ransoming the captives and making them his co-heirs. No one of you should say: "Blessed are they who have deserved to receive Christ into their homes!" Do not grieve or complain that you were born in a time when you can no longer see God in the flesh. He did not in fact take this privilege from you. As he says: *Whatever you have done to the least of my brothers, you did to me* [Matthew 25:40].

But you, Martha, If I may say so, are blessed for your good service, and for your labors you seek the reward of peace. Now you are much occupied in nourishing the body, admittedly a holy one. But when you come to the heavenly homeland will you find a traveler to welcome, someone hungry to feed, or thirsty to whom you may give drink, someone ill whom you could visit, or quarrelling whom you could reconcile, or dead whom you could bury?

No, there will be none of these tasks there. What you will find there is what Mary chose. There we shall not feed others, we ourselves shall be fed. Thus what Mary chose in this life will be realized there in all its fullness; she was gathering fragments from that rich banquet, the Word of God. Do you wish to know what we will have there? The Lord himself tells us when he says of his servants, Amen, I say to you, he will make them recline and passing he will serve them.

Sermon 103, 1-2, 6

9. Intentions for Your Daily Prayers

We continue to pray throughout the week for the world and the church. These intentions may be helpful in your private or family prayers.

For the world. The leaders of the world as they seek to respond to the challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic. For medical researchers, that they may be granted knowledge and wisdom as they search for a vaccine and cure. For refugees and asylum seekers, that they may find places of safety and welcome.

For the church. For all those who are challenged to be church in a different and unfamiliar way. In the Anglican Cycle of Prayer, pray for the Dioceses of Northwest Texas (USA); Benin (Nigeria); and Bermuda (Bermuda). In our national church, pray for the Diocese of Tasmania; and within the Diocese, for the parish of Largs Bay.

For our local community. For the Collective as it considers alternative ways of serving the community while the Drop-In Centre is suspended, and for its guests as they seek other places to eat and rest. For the Magdalene Centre, as it deals with the need to change the way it delivers services in order to safeguard the health of customers, staff and volunteers.

For those in need. For all those who are sick in body, mind or spirit. For all those affected by the COVID-19 coronavirus and all who care for them. For those who are commended to our prayers, especially Paull, Valerie, Bishop David McCall, Sim, and John.

For those who have died. For all those who have died recently; those who have died as a result of COVID-19; and those whose anniversaries of death occur at about this time. For those who have worked and worshipped in this place before us. ✠ Rest eternal grant unto them, O Lord, and let light perpetual shine upon them.

For the saints. For the Blessed Virgin Mary, St Joseph, St Mary Magdalene, St James, St Mary and St Martha, William Wilberforce, and holy women and men of every time and place.

This newsletter will normally be distributed weekly on Thursday. Any appropriate items should be emailed to the Parish Office, omarymag@anglicaresa.com.au, by Tuesday evening at 5 pm.

