



**Weekly Newsletter**  
**Sunday 21 February 2016**

**"Being the Gospel to all  
People"**

A very warm welcome is  
extended  
to all visitors to St Johns

Morning tea is offered after the service today, so please stay and enjoy.

**Today's Theme: "There is only one thing that is necessary"**

**Focus Scripture:** Psalm 27:1-4

**Readings:** Luke 10:38-41 and Luke 11:1-4.



**Background:** 'A spiritual fitness programme'

One way to think of Lent, then, might be as a spiritual fitness program. No single dimension is enough, for what is required is a whole-life effort to be more loving, more trusting, more courageous, more humble, yes, but also lighter, more hopeful, more filled with joy, even here in Lent. If, for example, we're carrying a grudge, our load will be lighter if we let it go - a very different kind of thing to give up. If we are preoccupied with material things - food, our car, our house, for example, including worry about all three - we could set our minds to other things: giving an extraordinarily generous gift to another, or seeing things from another's perspective (which really takes will-power, and is a great spiritual practice).

**Ps 63:1-8** A psalm of David. When he was in the Desert of Judah.

1 O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water. 2 I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory. 3 Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you. 4 I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands. 5 My soul will be satisfied as with the richest of foods; with singing lips my mouth will praise you. 6 On my bed I remember you; I think of you through the watches of the night. 7 Because you are my help, I sing in the shadow of your wings. 8 My soul clings to you; your right hand upholds me.

## NEXT WEEK: Sunday 28 February 2016

### Next week's theme: 'Praise God Completely'

**Focus Scripture:** Psalm 63:1-8

**Other Readings:** Isaiah 55:1-9; 1 Corinthians 10:1-13; Luke 13:1-9

**Prayer points:** Please pray for: Little Cubs Kindy for more children (thanks because they have had 3 new enrolments, but need at least 12 more children. Brenda Ryan with ongoing health issues. Additional members for our rosters. Additional volunteers for Mainly Music on a Wednesday morning.

### Lenten Thoughts: 'Living Simply'



After Church on 2 Sundays 13 March (plus one) we are holding a discussion / study from 'Living Simply'. The Author M Sheard, will lead our discussion on 13 March.

This will be followed by a light lunch. You will need a study book and for catering purposes please let Jeannine in the office, Lorraine, Liz or Mavis know if you are staying for lunch.

If you would like to join us for these study discussions, please take home a study booklet and bring it with you on both the 28<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>.

**Fire Alarm Practice:** We are required to practice our exit procedures in the event of a fire while we are in the building – (probably in worship). We are supposed to do this at least once a year but we are not good at remembering to do it. So sometime in the next 4 weeks, on a Sunday morning we will have a fire Alarm practice. Lorraine

**Real life** with John Cowan and Newstalk ZB 730pm Sunday nights, John Cowan's guest this Sunday night (21st February) will be Nadine Chalmers-Ross.

Nadine joined TVNZ in 2009 as a business reporter and fill-in presenter on the 6am Business show before taking up a full time presenting role in January 2011. She then presented *Breakfast's* business news and began co-hosting the show alongside Rawdon Christie when Alison Pugh went on maternity leave in September 2015.

### JOINT COORDINATOR, GRIEF AND LOSS *Seasons and Horizons Programmes Howick*

Do you have empathy and an interest in working with children and adults who are coping with loss and grief? We are seeking a suitable person to fill this part-time role to work alongside our current Coordinator for SEASONS in Howick and surrounding areas.

Should you be interested in this role based in Howick, please send your CV and any queries to [griefandlossvacancy@gmail.com](mailto:griefandlossvacancy@gmail.com) . Applications close on Friday 4 March.

More information is on the column in the foyer.

## REFLECTIONS

This week's readings paint a picture of contrasts. On the one hand, there is the assurance of God's mercy and protection. Abraham receives promises from God of covenant relationships and descendants as numerous as the stars, and the psalmist affirms God's mercy and protection and the joy of living in God's presence and love. In the letter to the Philippians, Paul also indicates that those who follow faithfully are not headed for destruction, like godless people, but for glory. On the other hand the Gospel reading this week shows the persecution Jesus faced as he faithfully followed God's call. A striking feature of this reading is Jesus' refusal to be daunted by the threats against his life, and his determination to continue his mission in spite of the suffering he will face, like the prophets before him. So, the Lectionary, while it assures us that close, protective relationship with God is available to us, also reminds us that the call to live out God's mission does not mean a life free of pain and struggle. The protection we find in God, then, is not a guarantee that no harm will come to us, but a promise that, whatever we may face, we are ultimately destined for glory, and God's strength will sustain us and keep us faithful to the end. In a world of expediency the call to embrace the tough and challenging path of the Gospel can seem out of place, but, if we will trust it and embrace it, we will discover the life that endures through the worst times and that empowers us in the best times.

