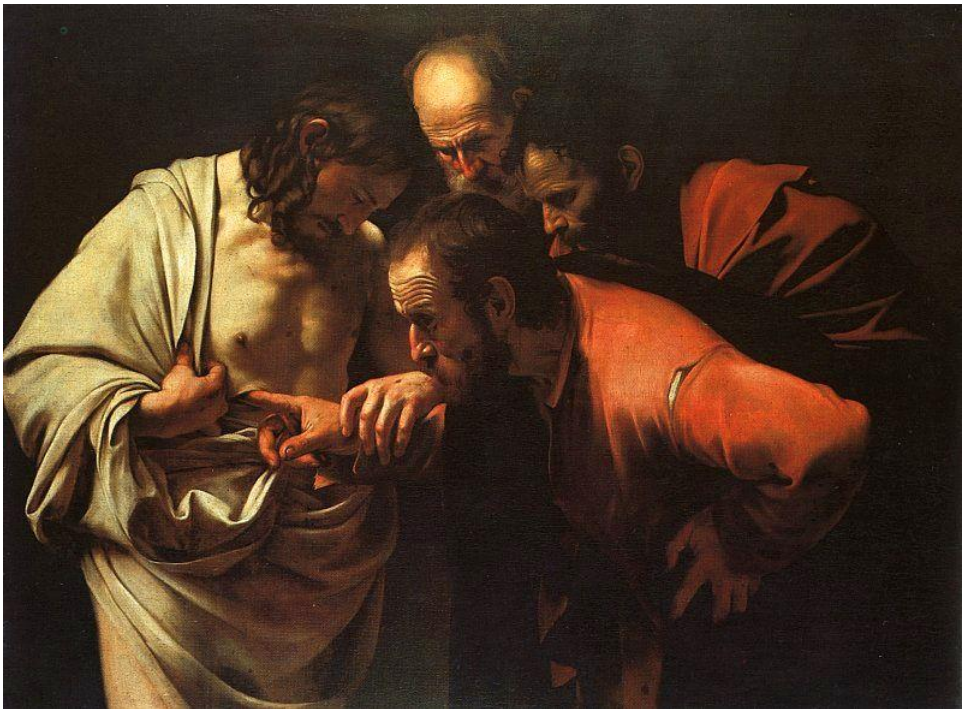




Alstonville
Anglicans

2nd Sunday of Easter

7th April 2021



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Sharing the Good Life

We acknowledge the Bundjalung people,
Traditional custodians of the Land.
Our doors are open: LGBTQIA+ welcome here.
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Liturgy for 7th April

Sentence of the Day

'Peace be with you,' says the Lord. 'As the Father has sent me, so I send you.' John 20.21

Collect

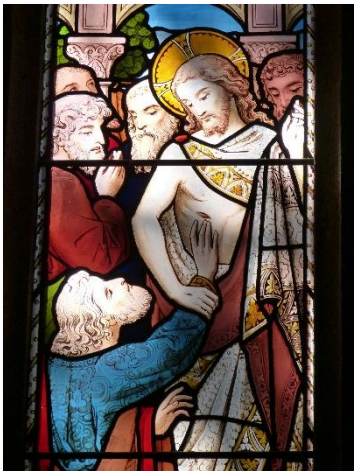
Risen Christ,
whose absence leaves us in despair
but whose presence is overwhelming:
breathe on us with your abundant life,
that where we cannot see
we may have courage to believe
that we may be raised with you. **Amen.**

Readings

John 20:19–31

¹⁹ When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." ²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. ²¹ Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." ²² When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." ²⁴ But

Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵ So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe." ²⁶ A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." ²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." ²⁸ Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" ²⁹ Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe." ³⁰ Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples,



which are not written in this book. ³¹ But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

Messages

Worship and Spirituality portfolio

Thank you

Thank you so much for coming to celebrate Easter. This time last year the church was empty. I felt bereft without community to celebrate Easter. Thank you for coming. Your presence and participation matter more deeply than you can ever realise.

There were so many of you who helped make the magic happen. My gratitude to all the lay ministers, flower guild, and lovely volunteers who helped the organisation run so smoothly.

Desiree



Save

the date!



Messy Church 25 April 4pm

Join the peace train to explore the meaning of peace in our time. Meet at 4pm in the Ministry Centre for Anzac Creativity and Community. Our celebration time includes a short walk to Elizabeth Brown Park and a Picnic Evening Meal "Peace" style.

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W orship

T eaching

F ellowship

Messy Life? 18 April



This is an intergenerational approach to teaching and worship. People of all ages are accommodated.

When is it?

This new service launches on 18 April

We will meet on the 1st and 3rd Sundays at 5pm beginning 18 April.

Each session will include confident teaching and group discussion. We will begin and end with worship.

Who is it for?

Those seeking confirmation, new membership and first communion preparation are asked to sign up. This service is for any and all who seek to deepen their faith through teaching, discussion and worship.

We will take a fresh look at scripture through the interpretive lens of Jesus' life, death and resurrection and God's overall call for each of us to partner with God in mending this fractured world. The hope is that after we have done so, our interpretations and use of the scriptures will be truly liberating and life-enabling.

Community engagement



volunteers required to prepare morning tea at Play Place on Thursday mornings. If available, please contact Margaret Brown. margaretandken@bigpond.com



Save the date!

Mother's Day Fete

Saturday 8th May 2021

Memorial Service

to celebrate the life of Larry Rawstone

Friday 16th April 1.30pm

St Bartholomew's

Pastoral Care

Coming soon!

Family Crosses



Anthony Stone made these Family Crosses, thank you Anthony, they are beautiful!

Beginning in May, these family crosses are presented to one or two families at the Sunday and Friday services.

- The families are invited forward at the Final Blessing.
- The family takes the family cross home and lights the candles daily, remembering that they are loved and prayed for by the Alstonville family.
- The names of families receiving the family cross appear for two weeks in the bulletin so that the community may remember them in their prayers.
- After two weeks, the family returns the family cross so that it may be passed on to the next family.

The office will make contact with each family to receive permission to put their names in the bulletin.

Pastoral visits

Remember!

If you or anyone you know is ill or in hospital, please let the office of Lyn Watt our pastoral coordinator know. Also if you do visit anyone could you email Lyn? wattlg@bigpond.com.

Good Governance

Pool Table and Table Tennis

As an icebreaker for the Messy Life service, the Parish Council would like to place a pool table and a table tennis table in the Library area. The equipment will provide a gathering point for the confirmation students who are joining the Messy Life community.

Current Status of COVID Restrictions

Restrictions for Places of Worship were relaxed in NSW from 29th March.

1. Limit of 1 person / 2sqm ie. now 72 for St Bartholomew's and 20 at Tregagle.
2. Checking in is very important and is mandatory.
3. Ventilation is important ie. opening windows and doors and morning tea outside.
4. Hand sanitization is mandatory.
5. 1.5m rule of separation is advised.
6. Singing is ok with no restrictions.

Ministry and leadership

Opportunities

At Alstonville Anglicans, we consider all the baptised as ministers. Thus, everything that builds the community in love is ministry. The ministry at the altar and working in the kitchen are one and the same thing, the preparation of holy things for holy people. Below are opportunities for people to put their hand up for the work of God where their abilities match the needs of the church.

Catering coordinator

We have a great team of willing helpers who are looking for a coordinator. The catering team is ad hoc and only called together from time to time as needs arise. A job description is available for those interested.

Play Place Morning Tea Minister (Volunteer)

See below.

Technician

Many are appreciating the opportunity to watch services online when they cannot attend in person. For this ministry to continue, the team under Robyn must expand. If you have some computer knowledge and willingness to learn the Livestream process, please have a chat to Robyn.

Sermon notes on John 20

for Easter Sunday 4th April

An opening story

Once upon a time, a gardener took an ugly looking onion and planted it in the autumn soil, along with its brothers, sisters and cousins.

With winter, the rain came down.

With the rain, the soil became a cold wet blanket of mud and the basal plate anchored the bulb into the earth. The water from the earth seeped into the bulb through its outer tunic, and the white meaty leaves, the scales, began to swell. The bulb shed its outer layer as the scales beneath were washed in the rain that melted into the earth.

Now the bulb was vulnerable. With no protection from its tunic, the water in the earth and the minerals in the soil drenched the bulb. Sometimes the bulb felt as if it were floating. Sometimes it felt as if it were drowning.

Following its own inner instinct, the bud at the soul centre of the bulb began to stretch and a green arm reached through the soil. At times, the growth was pleasant, often it was painful, and at intervals it was lonely in its journey to reach beyond the comfort of its meaty scales to pierce through the upper soil.

The pain of stretching through the earth was worth it though. The green arm reaching out beyond the womb of the bulb stretched towards the sun that warmed and encouraged its growth.

Soon yellow butterfly wings were born from the growing green bud. In freedom these yellow-winged petals floated in the wind, turning the daffodil's new face to gaze at the fullness of the sun.

Gazing down the daffodil realised that its cousins and siblings were in different stages of growth. Alongside the daffodil some plants were green slithers stretching towards the sun. Other daffodils were yet to birth from the womb of the bulb. The daffodil was ecstatic floating on the breeze and bathing in the sun it wanted to reach down into the ground to share its excitement with its fellow onion bulbs. But the yellow butterfly wings couldn't penetrate the layer of the soil. The bulb wasn't worried though it had complete trust, and total faith and hope that its family would join it in the sun and the refreshing breeze of the new creation.

Resurrection and transformation

The point of the illustration is to open our eyes to see the many echoes of the Resurrection in the world around us. One of the reasons I am convinced about the Resurrection is that I sense Resurrection as a theme in the universe. For example, bulbs die in the soil and daffodils rise. The caterpillar dies in the cocoon and from the chrysalis a butterfly emerges.

Resurrection implies a transformation so complete, that one form of life is utterly transformed into a new form of life altogether.

The transformation of love that Resurrection brings about is different to change. Change is how a form of life adjusts in response to external influences. We change as we age,

hair changes from one colour to a universalising grey. We change in response to other stimuli such as exercise: the body strengthens and the mind calms.

Transformation through Resurrection on the other hand, implies that one form of life dies completely, and that the new form of life that emerges is an entirely different substance altogether.

It is for this reason that the Resurrection can be hard to understand. How can a butterfly explain to a caterpillar crawling on the ground in sluggish heaviness, the joy of floating in the air? Do you see? The form of life that is the butterfly is so utterly different from the form of life that is a caterpillar that a caterpillar could never imagine dancing from one flower stem to another.

Likewise, a daffodil's face bathes in the golden rays of the sun and cannot bend into the earth again and explain to the onion bulb that there is a world beyond the darkness of the earth.

In the life of Jesus, the Resurrected Christ, like the daffodil and the butterfly, is so different to what went before it becomes an entirely different form of life altogether. This is one of the reasons that Mary doesn't recognise the Risen Christ.

Resurrection and the Gospel of John 20

The journey of the Gospel of John is towards a New Creation, a new and transformed Genesis.

The structure of John's Gospel is along the seven days of creation in Genesis 1 and 2. Here are brief points of connection.



In Genesis, on the sixth day of creation, God creates humankind in God's image. In John's Gospel

on the sixth day, Pilate says pointedly, "look here is The Man". The image of God in John's Gospel is broken by love. On the seventh day in Genesis God rested. On the Seventh day in John's Gospel Jesus breathed his last declaring "it is finished" and he rested in the tomb.

The Eighth Day

Now, on the first day of the new week, the Eighth Day, Mary embraces Jesus in the New Garden of the New Eden in the New Creation. Jesus and Mary represent for us the wholeness of humanity, transformed by love, through the Resurrection.

It is such a powerful and intimate scene, conveying the depths of self-surrendering love. Jesus says "Mary" and she replies "Rabbani". Even through the hard clinical outline of the text, the emotion behind the words comes through.

The Eighth day is the symbol for the New Heaven and the New Earth – the New Creation. It is for this reason that traditional baptismal fonts are octagons, the eight sides represent the eighth day. Moreover, the octagon is a union between the circle, representing the divine, and the square representing earth.

Moments before Mary and Jesus meet in the New Creation, Mary leans into the tomb and two winged angels, seated on either end of the place where Jesus lay, greet her. The early Jewish audiences of the Gospel of John would have been awestruck at the scene described. What John is alluding to is the Ark of the Covenant enwombed in the holy of holies within the tabernacle.

The Ark of the Covenant, plated in gold, was a box containing the ten commandments, and according to some traditions, a pot of manna and Aron's rod.



James Tissot, Public Doman, Via Wikimedia.

The ark had an angel on either end. In between the two angels was the seat of mercy. It was said that God spoke to Moses from the seat of Mercy.

Now God speaks to Mary from the seat of mercy in the tomb within the Garden of Resurrection. The heart of the New Creation is God in our midst. The Great Theme in

Scripture is God immersing Godself in the midst of us. The theme of God with us, began in John 1, reaches full maturity in John 20. Herein lies the Great Good News, that God in Christ is ALWAYS with us.

Implications for our faith in daily life

The Great Good News of the Resurrection has significant implications for our daily faith.

When I was growing up the Christian story went something like this: humans were created by God but messed up badly. As a result of messing up badly we deserved (eternal) death. Jesus was sent to die in our place, the wrath of God was satisfied, therefore when we die we can go to heaven. This is a total lie reflecting Greek ideas more than Biblical teaching.

Nowhere in any of the Gospels does do the writers describe souls going to heaven. **Always**, the scriptures talk about God coming “down” to be with us, to be in the midst of us. In John 1, the Word becomes flesh and tabernacles among us – **God comes to us**. In Revelation 21, the New Creation symbolised as the New Jerusalem, **descends** from heaven to earth as a gift from God – **God comes to us**.

What this means is that Resurrection is not some pie in the sky when you die notion. The Resurrection is very much a present reality that we live into moment by moment. In every act of authentic love, we are breathing the air of Resurrected life. In every moment that we give ourselves to the Passion of the kingdom of God, which is love transforming life into the New Creation, we are at that moment joining in the Alleluia chorus of Resurrection faith.

ANGLICAN PARISH OF ALSTONVILLE

Ministers all the baptised!

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priest@anglicans.live

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	The Reverend Geoff Vidal	0447 645 456
	The Reverend Doug Bannerman	0418 182 450
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The Anglican Op Shop

1 The Avenue, Alstonville

Tel: 6628 8777

Dates 11th April to 18th April

11 th April	Sunday 9am Holy Communion 10am Holy Communion St Peter & St Paul's
12 th April	Monday 10am Anam Cara Praying for You
13 th April	Wednesday 9am Anam Cara
14 th April	Thursday 6pm Anam Cara
16 th April	Friday 10am Holy Communion
18 th April	Sunday 9am Holy Communion