



Alstonville
Anglicans

Fourth Sunday in Lent

14 March 2021

**Welcome,
so good to see you.**



Sharing the Good Life

We acknowledge the Bundjalung people,
Traditional custodians of the Land.
Our doors are open: LGBTQIA+ welcome here.
Streaming licence: One License

Thought for the week on John 2

“Free Fall”

I have often said that there should be a warning on the cover of every Bible: Danger – read with care. The Bible, some have said, is like a two-edged sword; in the right community it is the skilled surgeon’s knife that brings healing. In the wrong community, the Bible is a blunt axe that wounds relentlessly. When Moses raised the bronze serpent in the wilderness, the people were offered a mirror to see themselves as they truly were (see John 3.14). The Bible is a hall of mirrors, reflecting back your true motives and shining a light into the further reaches of your soul. If you come at the Bible with hate and division in your heart, the bible as a hall of mirrors reflects this back and the distortion can destroy you. If you come to Scripture through the character of the Christ, healing unity is possible. Nowhere is this more apparent than what is done with John’s Gospel in chapter 3. Some would use John 3.16 to condemn the world who do not believe (as they do): Any who do not accept Jesus as saviour and Lord are condemned to hell. Others hold that being on the way of love with the Christ has little to do with belief, that God did not send Jesus to condemn the world (John .17). For this reason, they celebrate the democracy of God’s love that embraces all. It is into the bliss of this unconditional love that we are invited to surrender, as Denise Levertov’s poem seduces:

As swimmers dare
to lie face to the sky
and water bears them,
as hawks rest upon air
and air sustains them,
so would I learn to attain

freefall, and float
into Creator Spirit's deep embrace,
knowing no effort earns
that all-surrounding grace.

(The Avowal 1983 –The Stream and the Sapphire)

Liturgy for 14th March

Sentence of the Day

The Son of Man must be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. John 3.14–15

Collect

Everlasting God
in whom we live and move and have our being,
you have made us for yourself,
and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in you:
give us purity of heart and strength of purpose,
that no selfish passion may hinder us
from knowing your will,
no weakness prevent us from doing it;
that in your light we may see light,
and in your service find perfect freedom;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Readings

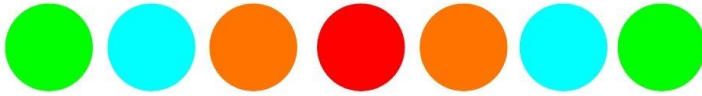
John 3:14-21

¹⁴ And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵ that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. ¹⁶ "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. ¹⁷ "Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. ¹⁸ Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. ¹⁹ And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. ²⁰ For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. ²¹ But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God."



Messages

Worship and Spirituality portfolio



Alstonville

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sharing the Good Life

Join us for Easter

Here is your itinerary for your

personal,

authentic

and timeless

Easter Experience

with Alstonville Anglicans

from 1 April – 4 April

6-8 the Avenue Alstonville.

anglicans.live



The Easter Experience begins with

Maundy Thursday 6pm 1 April

We gather in the Ministry Centre at 6pm on 1 April for a meditative Eucharist. There are many symbols to guide our worship through Maundy Thursday

- including the commandment to love,
- love in action through the act of foot-washing,
- and the Institution of the Eucharist, a feast of bread and wine where we remember Jesus is in us and with us.



**Maundy Thursday
All-night Vigil
from 7pm Thursday 1 April
to 8am Friday 2 April**

The all-night vigil is in the **Church Sanctuary** and begins on the evening of Maundy Thursday 7pm and continues through the night until Friday morning 8am. The vigil is an act of **silent prayer** when we are symbolically with Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane, near the mount of Olives. Jesus said to his disciples “Watch and Pray.” So, we watch. And pray. In silence. With Jesus.

For some, swimming silence is easy. Others need some guidance – this is okay. The silence is supported by meditative music, a visual display and some cue cards to help you step into silent prayer.

All members of the community are invited to sign-up for an hour between 7pm Thursday 1 April and 8am Friday 2 April to be with Jesus in the silence of the night.

As a gift of prayer, participants are invited to bring a bunch of flowers or greenery from their own gardens and place it near the Altar as a symbol of self-offering before being in silence for their rostered hour. At the end of their hour each participant is invited to light a candle before leaving.

What to do?

- Sign up for an hour of silent meditation on Maundy Thursday. (Sign-up sheet is on the church door).

- Bring flowers or greenery from your own or a neighbourhood garden.
- On arriving at the Church, sign-in and sanitise.
- Place your greenery or flowers in the growing garden of Gethsemane near the altar.
- Enjoy the silence with others for an hour (or more).
- When you are ready to leave, light a candle in the baptismal font and depart in peace.

FAQ

Why do we observe the all-night vigil on Maundy Thursday?

In the Scriptures Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane before he died the next day. He asked for help saying to his disciples “Watch and pray with me.” We symbolically spend time with Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane through silent prayer.

Where is the all-night vigil held?

In the church sanctuary, enter through the front door.

What do I wear?

Wear something warm if necessary. Come as ...you. Shoes optional. Slippers normal.

Can I come if I didn't sign up?

We need a minimum of two people for each hour, but we can have up to 40 people so feel free to come.

Am I allowed to talk?

This is a moment in your life where you are given freedom not to talk. Give yourself and others the freedom and gift of silence and notice what happens in you.

Can I bring my dog?

We have had a new carpet placed in the church and ideally, we prefer not to have pets shedding hair etc. However, we are aware that late at night people, especially those who live alone, may feel safer with their dog and this may help them come to church to enjoy the silence. If you feel it necessary to bring a dog for your personal safety, please take full responsibility for your pet not disturbing the silence of others. There is a carpet sweeper in the vestry for you to clean up any hair your four-legged child may have left behind.

Can I bring a friend or a partner?

The more the merrier, guide them in what is expected by offering them this information.

The all-night vigil ends with

Morning Prayer at 8am in the Church on Good Friday 2 April.





EASTER

**The Good Friday Service is
at 10am on 2nd April
in the Ministry Centre.**

On Friday the 2nd April at 10am we meet for worship in the Ministry Centre. The Good Friday service is a solemn occasion where we gather with Mary, the Mother of God, Mary of Magdala and some of Jesus' friends to be with Jesus at the Cross, the place of his death.



EASTER

**Easter Dawn Service
on 4th April 6am
in the Church**

The climax of our easter journey is the dawn service held on the 4th April 6am in the Church.

- At **5.30am** **gather outside the church door** for the lighting of the Easter Fire.
- At 6am the Fire is blessed, and the Paschal Candle is lit.
- We walk into the church prayerfully, led by the Paschal Candle.

The Paschal Candle symbolises our faith in the Resurrection of Christ. Through chant, we remember how the presence of God, sometimes called Shekinah, has been our faith ancestors and will always be with us. The Paschal Candle is decorated with bees, butterflies and other symbols of the risen life. The candle is signed with the Alpha and Omega, Greek letters that remind us that Christ is the beginning and end of time and that all time belongs to Christ.

The Dawn service includes the renewal of our baptismal promises and we are sprinkled with water to remember the grace of our baptism. The service concludes with



Easter Service (including families)
9am 4th April in the Ministry Centre

The Easter Service at 9am in the Ministry Centre includes the first Eucharist with the new Paschal Candle. Children are included in the worship of this service. The Scriptures, sermon and prayers will sustain us in our resurrected faith.

To summarise:

- 1 April Maundy Thursday Service
6pm in the Ministry Centre
- 1 April All-night vigil 7pm – 8am 2 April
in the Church
- 2 April Good Friday Morning Prayer
8am in the Church.
- 2 April Good Friday Service
10am in the Ministry Centre
- 4th April Easter Dawn Service
6am in the Church (arrive at 5.30am and gather
around the Easter fire)
- 4th April Easter Eucharist
9am in the ministry centre



Community engagement



Sew Helpful

Sew Helpful will now be meeting on the 2nd and 4th Mondays only.

Contact Carol: 0427326832



Repurposing Plastic: We have an opportunity to recycle plastic milk bottle tops and bread tags. These items sent to Adelaide where they are melted down and repurposed to assist people with disabilities. Items can be left at the collection point at the Op Shop. Contact person is John Noble.

Empowering Leadership

2021 Parish Council

Rector's Warden: Bruce Sharp

Warden: Jenny Noble

Parish Councillors: Phil Crandon, Des Fitzpatrick, Margaret Brown, Charlie Handley, Graham Ireland, Robyn Hannah, Carol Vidal, Amanda Middleton

Loving God, thank you for being our shield and strength. You are a God of compassion and faithfulness. Please protect, nourish and sustain our church leaders, the parish council, the ministry coordinators and the lay ministers through the work of your Holy Spirit. May they find rest and encouragement in your loving care. In Jesus' holy name. Amen.

Good Governance

COVID 19 & Church Services

Cleaning: Chairs need to be wiped over with detergent solution and dried after usage. Please lend a hand.

Singing: if wearing a mask singing is permitted.

Volunteers Needed Concierge: Members of the congregation are very much needed to provide a hand sanitising and welcoming face to the Op Shop. If you can spare 3 hours a week or fortnight on a Monday, Wednesday or Thursday between 9am and 3pm please call Paul Earner 0416280140.

Faithfulness in Service

At the AGM it was mentioned that ALL Alstonville Anglican church VOLUNTEERS are required by Diocesan ordinances to have undertaken some training. We are offering Faithfulness in Service training to those who need to undertake this face to face course. This is our demonstration to the community that we provide a Safe Church environment.

FAITHFULNESS IN SERVICE TRAINING

Saturday 20th MARCH

9am until 12pm (with a yummy Morning Tea included!!)
at our Ministry Centre with NO cost to participants

Please advise John NOBLE 0414285132 or via email jnoble2477@gmail.com by Tuesday 9th March that you are attending (to enable appropriate catering).

Op Shop



Our Op Shop is now open Monday, **Wednesday** and Thursday. Thank you to all the wonderful volunteers.

Sermon notes

7th March (John 2:13-22)

Worship: the way of love

The way of love is a set of spiritual practices that one undertakes for a Jesus centred life. The point of these spiritual practices is to de-centre the self, so that God continues as the central aspect of our lives. Through lent, we have explored the practices of turn, rest and learn. Using John 2, the cleansing of the temple, as our key text, we explore authentic worship as a practical discipline in walking the way of love.

There are a number of layers to the cleansing of the temple in John 2, we explore 2. The literary meaning of the cleansing of the temple as a parabolic action and empathy for the poor who are exploited in the cult of temple sacrifice.

To appreciate John 2:13-22 one must quite obviously read the text within the broader Gospel of John.

In John 1 the prologue offers a New Genesis, a New creation. The words "In the beginning..." (John 1.1) so clearly echo Genesis 1.1 that we know that the books of Genesis and perhaps Exodus have something to do with the Gospel of John.

(About Genesis 1)

For the Ancient Near Eastern listener, Genesis 1 is the story of creation, but the creation in seven days matches the construction of a temple in seven stages. The perfect creation

where heaven and earth indwell each other is symbolised by a temple. In accordance with ancient near eastern thought, the image of the deity is made second to last. On the sixth day God creates an image of Godself. On the seventh day the presence of God rushes into the temple to dwell in unity with humankind. The seventh day of rest in Genesis is the day in which deity rules in the temple. In the Psalms, the hymns describe God saying, "here is Zion my resting place" (psalm 132). Genesis offers an account of creation that describes a marriage between heaven and earth as the ideal creation. The ideal creation is the ultimate temple where God dwells with God's people.

(About John 1)

In the New Creation in John 1, the climax of the story is the Word of God made flesh who "tabernacles" among us. In John's Gospel, the ideal creation where heaven and earth are united is Jesus. The development John offers in his Gospel is that Jesus himself is the temple of the new heaven and new earth.

(About John 2)

If we can embrace the overarching theme of John's Gospel as the New Creation with Jesus as the temple, the ultimate symbol of unity between heaven and earth, we can step into a different understanding of John 2.

John 2 begins with the wedding at Cana where Jesus performs the first of his signs. (Remember that John 1-12 is called the book of signs). The first sign is at a wedding. Jesus turn water into wine. As a dramatic precursor for what is to happen afterwards,



it is the water for the rites of purification that Jesus turns into wine. Cheeky.

The image of marriage is what is so very important. On offer is the marriage between heaven and earth made visible in Jesus. The ideal creation is one where earth and heaven wed. The temple is the sign that points to this ideal creation. In Jesus we have the meeting of heaven and earth. Later Jesus will teach us that this too is our identity, our destiny. Later Jesus will breathe out onto his disciples the Holy Spirit with the mandate, as the Father has sent me, so I send you. Through Jesus, we too will all be places where the world can see the marriage between the divine and human taking place.

(About John 2:13-22)

In cleansing the temple Jesus is relocating the vision of a heaven and earth unity in himself and not the Jerusalem Temple. It's a parable in action.

Notice that what Jesus attacks is the source of Temple sacrifice. The temple treasury where Roman coins are exchanged for temple coins is overturned. The sacrificial animals themselves, the cattle, the sheep and of course the doves, are set loose. Jesus is subverting the temple cult of sacrifice. Over and over again Jesus in John's Gospel is preparing us for the end of sacrificial religion. The temple is a place of sacrifice and God in Jesus puts an end to any kind of sacrificial approach to God. Jesus will not be a sacrifice for our sins – his action in John 2.13-22 indicates a break with sacrificial systems. Later in John 4 the Samaritan

woman will ask about the nature of true worship. Jesus will answer that true worship is not about temple sacrifice either in the Jewish temple or the Samaritan temple but true worshippers worship in spirit and truth.

The Jerusalem temple at its best was meant to be a sign of the marriage of heaven and earth as the ideal creation. Clearly it is not working that way. This temple must go. It is not about reform, as in "let's make the temple great again". The temple must totally be destroyed and raised in a new way in Jesus - Resurrection.

(About empathy for the poor)

Of particular concern in John 2.13-22 is the way in which sacrificial religion exploits the poor. Notice the attention paid to freeing the doves. In temple worship the ideal sacrifice is a sheep. The Leviticus code made allowances for the poor who could sacrifice two doves or pigeons if they could not afford a sheep. The anger Jesus expresses is how the poor are exploited to pay for the lifestyles of the rich. Already burdened by tax the poor are further exploited in exchanging Roman coin for temple coin and then paying exorbitant prices for doves and pigeons authorised by the temple elite.

In following the tradition of the prophets Jesus enacts Micah 6.8. Micah criticises worship that focuses on temple to the neglect of the poor. He asks with what shall we become before the Lord our God? Shall we offer the fruit of our loins for the sin of the soul? No. You have heard o Mortal one what the Lord



requires. To love mercy, to love justice and to walk humbly with our God.

As we focus on authentic worship as a practice on the way of love we remember that the true worship God requires is not perfection in temple worship but the love of Justice and Mercy and care for the poor.



ANGLICAN PARISH OF ALSTONVILLE

Ministers all the baptised!

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Associates The Reverend John Kidson 0411 394 213
The Reverend Geoff Vidal 0447 645 456
The Reverend Doug Bannerman 0418 182 450
The Reverend Greg Ezzy 0412 660 742

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The Anglican Op Shop

1 The Avenue, Alstonville
Tel: 6628 8777

Dates 14th March to 21st March

14th March Holy Communion 9am
Holy Communion 10am St Peter & St Paul's

15th March Anam Cara Praying for You 10am

17th March Anam Cara 9am
Lent Study 11am-12.30pm
St Patrick's Day

18th March Lent Study 4-5.30pm
Anam Cara 6pm
National Close the Gap Day

20th March Faithfulness in Service 9am – 12 noon

21st March Holy Communion 9am
Mothering Sunday

