



Alstonville
Anglicans

Sunday 17th March 2024

Welcome



Sharing the Good Life

We acknowledge the Bundjalung people, traditional custodians of the Land.

Our doors are open: LGBTQIA+ welcome here.

Streaming licence: CCLI 102220

Alstonville Anglicans are committed to ensuring that all people who participate in our worship, programs and ministries have a safe and rewarding experience.

Tel: 66280231 www.anglicans.live

Bank account: BSB 705 077 / Acc:00032931

17th March – 24th March

17 th March		Sunday Holy Communion
	9am	
18 th March		Monday
	9am-12pm	Parish Office
	9am-3pm	Op Shop
	10am	Anam Cara
	10am	Deadline for bulletin items
	4pm	Fete Meeting
19 th March		Tuesday
	9am-12pm	Parish Office Closed
20 th March		Wednesday
	9am-12pm	Parish Office
	9am	Anam Cara
	9am-3pm	Op Shop
	6pm	Parish Council Meeting
21 st March		Thursday
	9am-12pm	Parish Office
	9am-3pm	Op Shop
	9.30am	Play Place
	6pm	Anam Cara
22 nd March		Friday
	9am-12pm	Parish Office
	10am	Holy Communion
23 rd March		Saturday
24 th March		Sunday
	9am	Holy Communion
		Palm Sunday

This bulletin contains current announcements and the week's calendar and the sermon notes from the previous Sunday. Use our welcome booklet for info and contact details for regular activities. Keep it as a reference tool. We welcome any feedback on the booklet. http://www.welcomeBooklet_v3.pdf

Parish Leaders 2024

Wardens

Bruce Sharp
Jenny Noble
Graham Ireland

Parish Councillors

Robyn Delaney
Helen Quaife
Robyn Hannah
Des Fitzpatrick (Secretary)
Amanda Middleton (Chair)
Kaye Fry

Parish Nominators

Susan Fitzpatrick
Kaye Fry

Treasurer

Anne Bryce

AREA

A 'heads up' on what is happening:

1. Bruce Fleming reports a happy start to the Alstonville High School program during February.
2. Bruce will be preaching here at St Barts on Sunday 17th March.
3. Our annual AREA breakfast is listed for Saturday 18th May. More specific details soon.

Thank you for your on-going support.

John Noble

Confirmation

Bishop Murray will be visiting the Parish on Sunday 6th October. If you are interested in being confirmed please complete the application form and speak to Rev Desiree. Forms are available in the Parish Office and via the website.

Plants for the Fete

We need plants to be potted up for the fete. Appropriate labelling is helpful. Enquiries Barbara Fewtrell 0429385713

Fete Meeting

Monday 18th March 4pm in the Ministry Centre.

Contact Details

If you are new to the Parish or if your contact details have changed please complete the contact card available in the church and return it to the Parish office. Thank you.

A graphic for an Easter Experience. On the left, a green sprout grows from a cracked white egg on a wooden surface. The right side is a green background with white text. The text reads: "Easter Experience", "Maundy Thursday 6pm", "Good Friday 10am", "Easter Sunday 6am & 9am", and "anglicans.live" at the bottom left.

Easter Experience

Maundy Thursday 6pm
Good Friday 10am
Easter Sunday 6am
& 9am

anglicans.live

Maundy Thursday All Night Vigil

This vigil will commence at 7pm following the Maundy Thursday Meditative Eucharist at 6pm and continue until 8am on Friday 29 March. You are invited to sign up to sit in silence for an hour.
anglicans.live

To Make you Smile

Every morning I lead my cow through the vineyard.



You could say 'I herd it through the grapevine'.

Sermon Notes Sunday 10th March

Desiree Snyman - John 3:14-21



We have a fascination with snakes, don't we? Harry Potter is able to speak Parsel tongue and can listen to snakes. Harry Potter's arch nemesis is Lord Voldemort who has a pet snake, Nagini, the largest, blackest python ever seen. Nagini contains a splinter of Voldemort's soul.

In earlier myths, Medusa has a head full of snakes and if she glares at you, you turn to stone. In India, Patanjali the wise author of the sutras, is said to have a human body with a snake's tail instead of legs. In some depictions of Buddha, he meditates under the protection of a seven headed hooded snake. Egyptian Pharaohs wore a fiery snake on their headpiece, a symbol of renewal. Hermes' caduceus shows two snakes wrapping around a staff, often with wings on top. Legend says Hermes made it by throwing his staff at two fighting snakes, which then stopped and coiled around it. It became a symbol for solving problems peacefully and later, for business too.

Asclepius was first a heroic doctor and later became the god of healing. People built many temples for him where the sick could go for treatment and worship. These temples were like early hospitals where priests used rituals and medical practices, often involving snakes, to help heal the sick. Asclepius is usually shown as an old man with a staff and a snake wrapped around it, called the 'Rod of Asclepius'. This symbol, with one snake, became linked with medicine and healing. It's different from the caduceus, which has two snakes and is linked with Hermes.

What is confusing is whether the snake is a positive or a negative symbol. For some cultures snakes represent death. Yet for other cultures snakes represent health, fertility, healing, and resurrection. So, is a snake death or life? Medicine or poison? Good or bad? We shall come to this at the end.

We read both the Scriptures with religious imagination and poetic insight. A flat literal reading of the text is over simplistic – the Hebrews complain, and God punishes them by sending poisonous snakes. They repent and God orders Moses to make a bronze snake which brings about healing. Moses' serpent-on-a-pole shows up again in the Old Testament, at 2 Kings 18:4: “[Hezekiah] removed the high places, broke down the pillars, and cut down the sacred pole. He broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made, for until those days the people of Israel had made offerings to it; it was called Nehushtan.”

When the Hebrews apologise and seek help from God, God does not take away the suffering. Instead, those bitten by a poisonous snake can gaze at a bronze snake “and live”. “Live” is much stronger than healing. Anthropologists call this sympathetic magic, where a like cures like. Yet sympathetic magic is at play in the development of vaccines and homeopathic remedies. A vaccine offers you a small amount of poison as protection against disease.

Some have suggested that the bronze snake on the stick is the closest the people at the time came to seeing a mirror. A symbolic reading of the text suggests that a group of people who are meant to be a community of support have become a den of vipers, sniping at each other, spitting poisonous words at one another, and generally killing the life of the group. In lifting up the bronze snake on the pole Moses asks that they look at themselves and into themselves. Moses holds up a mirror and asks the community to reflect and have the maturity to own the ways they destroy their own lives and the lives of those around them. In Carl Jung's language, the desert community are asked to accept the shadow aspect of their psyche in the journey towards integrated wholeness and a flourishing spiritual life.

I asked earlier if the symbol of the snake is negative or positive? The answer is both at the same time. The snake that poisons is also the snake that heals. That which kills us also gives life. This odd little story in Numbers 21 that we may have forgotten all together had not the Gospel of John referenced it provides powerful spiritual wisdom. The episode in Numbers 21 invites us to stand in the heart of the Lenten wilderness and hold together two opposites: good and bad, poison and



medicine, faith and doubt. Early stages of faith are dualistic in nature and separate the world into light and dark, holy and profane, salvation and sin. Doubt and faith. As our faith matures into higher stages of development, we develop

nondual consciousness. Nondual consciousness is the healing of opposites such that doubt is not the opposite of faith but the energy necessary to grow faith from one stage to a deeper stage. Transformative religious language is usually paradoxical in nature, inviting you to hold together two seemingly opposite realities as true. Virgin and mother. Divine and human. Immanent and transcendent. Three and one.

We stand in the tension between a killing snake and a saving snake. We are drawn away from dividing the world into good and bad, up and down, in and out, faith and doubt. In other words that which is good is also bad, that which is bad is also good. Doubt is the energy that takes your faith into the deeper level.

We seep into nondual awareness – a type of witnessing from the heart that no longer separates the world into opposites. The worst things can become the best things. I remember Richard Rohr was saying that the symbol of the cross is the healing of the opposites. Jesus is nailed to a cross. He dies on a cross uniting heaven and earth, between a “good” thief and a “bad” thief, a masculine body and a feminine soul. The necessity for nondual awareness is to see God in all things. Unless we see God in all things, we lose the capacity to see God at all.

Sentence of the Day

‘This is the covenant I will make with them,’ says the Lord God: ‘I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God and they shall be my people.’ Jeremiah 31.33

Collect

O God, our Redeemer,
in our weakness we have failed
to be your messengers of forgiveness and hope:
renew us by your Holy Spirit,
that we may follow your commands
and proclaim your reign of love;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

John 12:20-33

²⁰ Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. ²¹ They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, 'Sir, we wish to see Jesus.' ²² Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. ²³ Jesus answered them, 'The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴ Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. ²⁵ Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶ Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honour. ²⁷ 'Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say—"Father, save me from this hour"? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. ²⁸ Father, glorify your name.' Then a voice came from heaven, 'I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.' ²⁹ The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, 'An angel has spoken to him.' ³⁰ Jesus answered, 'This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. ³¹ Now is the judgement of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. ³² And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.' ³³ He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die.