



Alstonville
Anglicans

Sunday 20th December 2020 Advent 4 Welcome back

- Sunday@9am Anglican Service in the Ministry Centre
- Sunday@10am online via webpage www.anglicans.live
- Wednesday 9am & Thursday 6pm at St Bartholomew's
- Friday 10am Anglican Service in the Ministry Centre



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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Thought for the week

Our Advent focus is 'The Way of Love', Practices for Jesus-Centred Life. We encourage you to take time out of your busyness to reflect on how 'The Way of Love' is taking shape in you.

'The Way of Love'

Fourth Week of Advent: Journeying in the World

As we come closer to the joy and promise of the Incarnation, we invite you to continue journeying the Way of Love. Consider this week which of the seven practices captured your imagination this Advent. Which challenged you or brought the most joy? Where did you find blessings or cross boundaries? Where is God calling you to witness to salvation being birthed into the world today?

Worship and Spirituality

The Way of Love

Sunday, December 20

WORSHIP

Linger before leaving worship today. Ask God to prepare and send you on a journey into the world to witness to God's love.

Monday, December 21

GO

Go out into your neighborhood today. Where do you see God at work? What attributes of God's love are visible? Ask God to show you how you can celebrate and join in that love.

Tuesday, December 22

LEARN

Read Luke 2:8-10. When has God surprised you? Share with a friend.

Wednesday, December 23

PRAY

Set aside a time today to pray for others. Include three minutes of intentional silence, asking God to speak to you.

Tuesday, December 24

BLESS

If you are gathering with others today, take turns naming a way the person on your right or left has blessed you.

Wednesday, December 25

TURN

Read Luke 1-2. Give thanks for the birth of the Christ-child. Pray that you may follow Christ Jesus on his Way of Love with your whole heart, mind, body, and spirit

For more Advent resources related to the Way of Love, visit episcopalchurch.org/wayoflove. There, you'll find links to the full Advent curriculum *Journeying the Way of Love*, as well as *Living the Way of Love in Community*, a nine-session curriculum for use anytime.



Liturgy for 20th December

Sentence of the Day

This child will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High. He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end. Luke 1.32–33

Opening Song

1. The angel Gabriel from heaven came,
his wings as drifted snow,
his eyes aflame;

'All hail,' said he, 'thou lowly maiden Mary,
most highly favoured lady,
Gloria!

2. 'for known a blessed Mother
thou shalt be,
all generations laud and honour thee,
thy Son shall be Immanuel,
by seers foretold;
most highly favoured lady.'
Gloria!

3. Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head,
'To me be as it pleaseth God,
'she said,
'my soul shall laud and magnify
his holy name':
most highly favoured lady,
Gloria!

4. of her, Immanuel,
the Christ was born
in Bethlehem, all on a Christmas morn,
and Christian folk
throughout the world
will ever say
'most highly favoured lady'.
Gloria!

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Readings

Luke 1:26-38

²⁶ In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you."
²⁹ But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰ The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹ And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³² He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³ He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." ³⁴ Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" ³⁵ The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. ³⁶ And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. ³⁷ For nothing will be impossible with God." ³⁸ Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

Closing Song

1. My soul gives glory to the Lord,
in God my Saviour I rejoice.
My lowliness he did regard,
exalting me by his own choice.
From this day all shall call me blest,
for he has done great things for me;
of all great names his is the best,
for it is holy; strong is he.

2. His mercy goes to all who fear,
from age to age and to all parts.
His arm of strength to all is near;
he scatters those who have proud hearts.
He casts the mighty from their throne,
and raises those of low degree;
he feeds the hungry as his own;
the rich depart in poverty.

3. He raised his servant Israel,
remembering his eternal grace,
as from of old he did foretell
to Abraham and all his race.
O Father, Son and Spirit blest,
in three-fold Name are you adored,
to you be every prayer addressed,
From age to age the only Lord.

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Reflection

A reflection on John 1:6-8, 19-28 Advent 3 13th December 2020

John 1

6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7 He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. 8 He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. 19 This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" 20 He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah."

21 And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not."

"Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No."

22 Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?"

23 He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' " as the prophet Isaiah said.

24 Now they had been sent from the Pharisees.

25 They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?"

26 John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, 27 the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal."

28 This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

One of the most annoying things about free to air television is the timing of adverts. It's usually when you are caught up in the climax of a Saturday night film when the momentum and emotion is ruined by a Coles advert: "Down, down, prices are down ..."

I have a similar sense of surprise when reading chapter 1 of John's Gospel. The prologue begins with a beautiful rhythm of lilting poetry with cosmic intonations, only to be interrupted by a rather terse description of John, the witness to the Light: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God ... There was a man sent from God, whose name was John." Can **you** hear the clash of cadence? The hymn moves abruptly from poetry to prose, it clangs like Samuel Barber's "Adagio for Strings" being interrupted by heavy metal grunge.

This is as it should be. John's prologue, with its cosmic hymn to the Word, interlaced with references to John, represents the New Creation, a marriage of heaven and earth. The cosmic, divine Word dances out with the breath of God and is beheld by a witness, in this case an earthy and human John. God's story and John's story interweave, representing the union of the finite with the Infinite, the time-bound with the Timeless Eternal, the earthling with the cosmic Word.



John's Gospel is an obvious and deliberate reiteration of Genesis. In the beginning God made heaven and earth (Genesis 1). In the beginning was the Word (John 1). In John's Gospel however heaven and earth are joined together in the Word that is made flesh and dwells among us. It's as if John 1 is a fulfilment of the dream of Psalm 85: 'Grace and Truth are met together; justice and peace have kissed each other. Truth springs up from the ground; and justice looks down from heaven.' This is what John witnesses to, that heaven and earth are one, that the Infinite Divine has a home within you, **that you and God are one**. What that means is that like the Christ, you too are Word of God breathed into the flesh that you call your life and body.

It's as if we have two selves. We have a self that is born and will one day die. We also have an eternal self, a timeless self that has never been born and will never die. To discover our identity as children of God is to discover the eternal self. Brother John Martin from Saccidananda relates the following story to help us understand:

Once there was a poor man living in a small hut outside a village. Every day he went to the village to beg for his food. One day a holy man was passing that way. It was evening so he took shelter in the hut of the poor man. The next day, as he was leaving, he called the poor man and said: under your hut there are precious diamonds. Dig

and you will find. Saying this, the holy man left. As soon as the holy man left, the poor man dug in his house and found the precious diamonds. He stopped going to the village to beg and lived like a rich man. He was rich because of the diamonds but had been living like a beggar not knowing the diamonds under his hut.

We sometimes live like beggars not knowing the eternal self, the precious diamond within. The Eternal Self is the Word that made a Big Bang in the beginning and now vibrates in each one of us as the co-mingling of divinity and humanity. The New Creation that John 1 sings about is to realise and live out the marriage of heaven and earth, that the Divine Word takes shape within our own lives.

How does the breath of God's Word breath and love through you? Are you like Elijah? Are you like a prophet? John knew the particular shape he gave to the Word was not to be a Messiah, but to be a signpost pointing the way.

The whole point of Advent is being incubators to the Word, the Logos, the Wisdom, that God breathes into us. We are each of us the place where heaven and earth meet, the moment of union between divine and human energies. Barbara Brown Taylor explains:

Like John and all the other evangelists, we are breathers of the Logos. We are words about the Word before we ever say a word. However well or poorly things seem to be working out with that, there is something else at work here that has been pouring itself out for us forever, which the darkness does not overcome. Light from light. Fullness from which we have all received, grace upon grace. Christmas every day. Now it's your turn, divine child. You're the next step. So, what word will you be today? What divine energy will you bring to life? All creation waits eagerly to find out.

Worship & Spirituality

St Peter & St Paul's

The next service will be 24thth December 2020 6pm Carol Service.



Friday Service

No Friday service on 1st January. Normal Friday services will then continue through January.



Everyday with Jesus

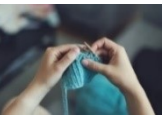
These books were ordered in November. We expect they will be available mid-January.

Community Engagement



Play Place

In recess until 2021.



Sew helpful

In recess until February 2021.

Alstonville Anglicans Twilight Christmas Fair

A huge thank you to all who have worked so hard to make the Fair a success. The Fair raised \$4300.

Finance

Alstonville Anglicans - Offertory Options

We give thanks to God for all people making offertories to the vision of God's Kingdom here on earth.

Your offertory can be made using the following options:

- Direct transfer to our bank account
BSB 705 077 / Acc: 00032931

- Parish Provider - Direct debit through Anglican Funds - Forms available from the office
- Cheque to Alstonville Anglicans (PO Box 451, Alstonville 2477 or Offertory Plate)
- Offertory envelopes
- Cash

Thank you for your support.

Good Governance

Christmas Office Closing Times

Wednesday 23rd December 12pm – Reopen Monday 4th January

Op Shop Closing Times

Friday 18th December 12pm – Reopen Monday 11th January

ANGLICAN PARISH OF ALSTONVILLE

Ministers	all the baptised!	
Rector	The Reverend Dr Desiree Snyman	0402 764 969
	priest@anglicans.live	
Associate	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

Parish Office: The Ministry Centre, 8 The Avenue, Alstonville

Telephone: 6628 0231

Postal: PO Box 451, Alstonville NSW 2477

e-mail: office@anglicans.live website: anglicans.live

The Anglican Op Shop 1 The Avenue, Alstonville Tel: 6628 8777

Tis the Season to be Jolly

Christmas Eve

5.00pm Family Service

11.30pm Midnight Mass

Christmas Day 9.00am

(6pm Christmas Eve - A Carol Service
St Peter & St Paul's Tregeagle)



Alstonville Anglicans
6 The Avenue Alstonville
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