



Alstonville
Anglicans

Sunday 24th 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

24th March – 31st March

24 th March		Palm Sunday
	9am	Holy Communion
25 th March		Monday
	9am-12pm	Parish Office
	9am-3pm	Op Shop
	10am	Anam Cara
	10am	Deadline for bulletin items
	4pm	Fete Meeting
26 th March		Tuesday
	9am-12pm	Parish Office Closed
27 th March		Wednesday
	9am-12pm	Parish Office
	9am	Anam Cara
	9am-3pm	Op Shop
	6pm	Parish Council Meeting
28 th March		Thursday
	9am-12pm	Parish Office
	9am-3pm	Op Shop
	9.30am	Play Place
	6pm	Maundy Thursday
	7pm	Easter Vigil
29 th March		Good Friday
	10am	Good Friday Service
30 th March		Easter Saturday
31 st March		Easter Sunday
	6am	Dawn Service
	9am	Holy Communion

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. [././././welcomeBooklet_v3.pdf](#)



Spirit Ability

Providing Spiritual and emotional support to people living with a disability, their carers, families and supporters.

Monday 1st April 6-8pm
The evening will include a meal and sharing time

Alstonville Anglican Hall
6-8 The Avenue, Alstonville
0428 404 783

AREA

Our annual AREA breakfast is listed for Saturday 1st June (please note amended date). 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.

Fete

Plants for the Fete

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

Sew Helpful Craft

Sew Helpful would like some help in replenishing their supplies for the fete. Any items you would like to make would be most welcome but some items we need are: baby jackets, bunny rugs, scarves, microwave bowl holders, coat hangers – adult size, teapot cosies.

Thank you for your help.

Sew Helpful Craft

Sew Helpful meet 1st & 3rd Monday of each month in the Parish Hall from 1pm to 3pm If you would like to join us, please bring your current project or just come for a char and afternoon tea.



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 at **anglicans.live**

Sermon Notes Sunday 17th March Bruce Fleming - John 12:20-33

In the gospel narrative, we are just coming off an exciting event – Jesus' entry into Jerusalem during the festive pilgrimage season leading up to the annual Passover festival. A clear division of interest has developed. There is a popular supportive, welcome and eager anticipation that Jesus may develop his ministry, or his claims, in a new and very public way. And there is a hostile, judicious, elite, concerned about the balance of power in spirit / political matters, and over who should be the guardians of their sacred stories. How often this division occurs in history - between the moral and political agendas of an elite (who control public opinion, the media, the police forces, the law courts, and the armies), and the daily concerns of the person in the street.

Messiahs are popular and the Jewish one was going to be the best. Messiahs win / they rule / they defeat evil / they restore truth and justice. Many people



were joining the dots on that and ticking them when it came to Jesus.

Even some Greek Pilgrims in Jerusalem for the Passover, already learning from Jewish scripture, were up to date with the recent talk and wished to "see" Jesus. "See, meet, believe in, follow" - difficult to know what they specifically wanted, but it was centred on an interest in Jesus.

This set off a train of thought in Jesus' mind and he spoke aloud: "The hour has come. Now is the time." So often in the gospel narratives we are told, the time was *not* right, it was *not* the time: "For his hour had not come." Jesus avoided bringing things to a head, he avoided disclosure, he kept a tight control of his agenda to prevent it being sabotaged or exploited by other agendas - terrorism, zealotry, popularism, power, the pietists, whoever. Do you know that there are good times for Christians to shut up? *Because it is not the right time!* But now? With the Greeks showing interest, at festival time, with an international audience of seekers and inquirers as hungry for the truth as the ones who waved palm leaves in the street? Yes, the time had come to fulfil the mission.

And immediately Jesus' thoughts turned darker. His soul was troubled, anxious, fearful. Because if it was the time when the Messiah glorified God, and God glorified the Messiah, then it was to be a very difficult time.

Glorify means something like "honour" (and not bright golden shining halos). It is to treat something in accordance with its true status, as its nature or character deserves; to give someone or something its due. To honour a tiger is to admire its stripes while avoiding its claws, to borrow an insight from G.K Chesterton. It is to be in a right relationship with the thing. Jesus is going to glorify God's name, honour God, and in the process be honoured by God. Jesus repeatedly said that his mission, his purpose, his delight, his "bread" was to do the will of his Father, to honour God.

To honour God, he cannot behave in a way that would betray God. Do not take the Lord's name in vain. Do not do something in the name of God that is contrary to the very nature and will of God. If God's nature is to love, to provide, to restore, to heal, to liberate, or to cleanse, the horror that is our human lostness, unmoored from God's spirit within us, then Jesus must do the same.

This tiny bit of the cosmos was gifted to us to enjoy, to wrestle with, to tame and nurture, by representing God with it. We **re - present God**, we image, reflect, mirror, God. Instead, humans tend to represent themselves and we

live in a world of alienated, competitive, and distorted people. Bruce has a daily agenda of representing himself and working out when and how that aligns with representing God and when it doesn't. We see people alienated from themselves psychologically, from others in micro communities we call families, or from others at macro levels of state politics, race, and economics. We distort. Jesus must not distort and that is where his deep anxiety lay. He must represent God to us. He is God with us. Jesus represents a giving, loving, sacrificial, non-coercive, invitational God who models what is to be done. What all humans must do to enter new truths, new hopes, new life. We must die.

I'm an avoider. My impulse is to avoid, deny, lie, cover-up, excuse, blame, self-justify, nearly every single time. I will not die. I will not give up, I will not let go of or kill that side of me, without a struggle. But we must. Jesus modelled that process for us. Paul seemed to understand the cross as Jesus in some sense representing us (as covenantal faithfulness) before God.

I don't know if you are familiar with a famous children's book, "We're Going on a Bear Hunt." The children encounter many obstacles, and the refrain of the book is "We can't go over it, we can't go around it, we can't go under it. Uh-Oh. We'll have to go through it."

Jesus is going on a bear hunt. His mission? To destroy the way power and corruption works in the hearts of humans. To do this, he says that he must be "lifted-up" in a public and physical death that becomes a sign to many, including all the international visitors to Jerusalem. This would be a sign, a language, for all with the courage to believe, and the strength to follow, that God is with us and for us through the death of Jesus.

And it is this deep knowledge that troubled Jesus - of just how difficult that physical and spiritual death would be, that he has yet to face. He was deeply distressed by what lay ahead. He was fearful that he would not be up to it.

But Jesus was thinking of something else as well. He used this same phrase, "lifted-up", to Nicodemus earlier in John 3. He was referring to a story in Numbers when dangerous snakes in the desert were sent as a "judgement" on their ingratitude and social disharmony. Terrified and dying, Moses was instructed to make a bronze image of a snake on a pole and invited the people to look upon it and be healed.

The way ancient cultures interpreted natural disasters, misfortune, even poverty, as divine curses, may partly explain this odd tale. Were the "snakes"

a metaphor for a self-destructive, toxic culture developing? I think the point is far more significant and is perhaps Jesus' point of reference. In the very midst of the thing that oppresses you, judges you or condemns you, in the very midst of the thing which binds you in fear, hopelessness, self-loathing, or shame, there, right there, is where God is found. God is there, with us, lifted up, a beacon of love and mercy. Face the thing destroying you, whether your sin or your fear. The things that bite you, intimidate you, poison you, horrify you. Look at them. Name them. This is what God is doing through the cross. In naming those things, exposing them, shining a light on them, we see God's mercy stronger, and we are released from their grip and power over us.

Jesus on the cross is literally all our fears and every type of human sin. Physical pain. Physical death. Emotional Pain. Rejection. Injustice. Loss of reputation. Betrayal. Social media ganging up on you. Slander. Abuse. Loss of social respect, power, career, friendships. Maligned, doubted, falsely accused. All our fears. All our human sins. All the things that distress, devalue, dehumanize, and destroy us. No, not even Jesus wanted to go through it, but for his love for humanity, and his desire to honour God.

But, says Jesus, I let you in on a wonderful secret that is so real, so full of promise, it is as true as the laws of nature, as the DNA in a wheat seed. These are spiritual realities as real as those that govern nature, as real as the soil at your feet, and the leaves blowing in the trees above you. As a seed dies, and falls into the ground, and seems to be lost to the earth, such a tiny, dry ugly little husk of a thing, something astonishing happens. A new life emerges. And the thing that is birthed, that grows, is richer, more beautiful, and more lasting than the thing that died. Your patience and generosity are more beautiful and lasting than your bitterness and resentment, your ego and selfishness.

And it spreads, and it multiplies, and it bears new fruit. The spiritual DNA present in the life-giving life of Christ is as real and powerful as the DNA that transforms a humble gum nut into towering eucalypt.

Follow me, says Jesus. Do not be an avoider. Do not be afraid of these deaths you must go through. And as you surrender your fears, and the scared, ashamed, lonely parts of you



are given up, sacrificed, left behind, as you look at God's mercy for the world lifted up, may you hear, as clear as Jesus and the crowds heard a voice like thunder from the sky, (whether literal or metaphorical), that you are honoured. It is through these moments that the forces that try to rule and distort this world are defeated and overcome in the power of God's spirit to love and transform.

In this world you will have trouble, but fear not, for I have overcome the world.

Sentence of the Day

At the name of Jesus, every knee shall bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Philippians 2.10-11

Collect

Everlasting God,
in your tender love for the human race
you sent your Son to take our nature,
and to suffer death upon the cross:
in your mercy enable us to share in his obedience to your will
and in the glorious victory of his resurrection;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Mark 15:1-39



Denial of Peter