



# Alstonville Anglicans

**Fourth Sunday of Lent**

**Sunday 27th March 2022**



## **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.

# Liturgy for 27<sup>th</sup> March

## Sentence of the Day

God has reconciled us to himself through Christ, and given us the ministry of reconciliation. 2 Corinthians 5.18

## Collect

God of compassion,  
you are slow to anger, and full of mercy,  
welcoming sinners who return to you with penitent hearts:  
receive in your loving embrace all who come home to you,  
and seat them at your bountiful table,  
that, with all your children,  
they may feast with delight on all that satisfies  
the hungry heart.

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Saviour,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

## Readings Luke 15: 1-3, 11b-32

<sup>1</sup> Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him. <sup>2</sup> And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, "This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them."

<sup>3</sup> So he told them this parable:

<sup>11</sup>"There was a man who had two sons. <sup>12</sup> The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.' So he divided his property between them. <sup>13</sup>

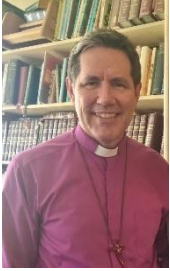
A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. <sup>14</sup> When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. <sup>15</sup> So he went and hired himself out to one of the

citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. <sup>16</sup> He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. <sup>17</sup> But when he came to himself he said, 'How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! <sup>18</sup> I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; <sup>19</sup> I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands." ' <sup>20</sup> So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. <sup>21</sup> Then the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'<sup>22</sup> But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. <sup>23</sup> And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; <sup>24</sup> for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!' And they began to celebrate. <sup>25</sup> "Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. <sup>26</sup> He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. <sup>27</sup> He replied, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.' <sup>28</sup> Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. <sup>29</sup> But he answered his father, 'Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. <sup>30</sup> But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!' <sup>31</sup> Then the father said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. <sup>32</sup> But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.' "

# Messages

## Worship & Spirituality

### Bishop's Visit



We warmly welcome Bishop Murray who will be celebrating worship with us at the 9am service and at Messy Church at 4pm.



Messy Church  
Lent

40 Days!

Sunday 27th March  
4pm



Alstonville  
Anglicans  
6 The Avenue  
[anglicans.live](http://anglicans.live)



# Join us for Easter

Here is your itinerary for your

**personal,**

**authentic**

**and timeless**

**Easter Experience**

with Alstonville Anglicans

**from 14 April – 17 April**

6-8 the Avenue Alstonville.

anglicans.live



The Easter Experience begins with

## **Maundy Thursday 6pm 14 April**

We gather at **6pm** on **14 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 14 April  
to 8am Friday 15 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 in 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 14 April and 8am Friday 15 April to be with Jesus in the silence of the night.

As a gift of prayer, participants are invited to receive a stone to hold during silent meditation and before leaving place the stone near the Altar as a symbol of self-offering. 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 and our website).
- On arriving at the Church, sign-in and sanitise.
- Choose a pebble to pray with.
- Enjoy the silence with others for an hour (or more).
- When you are ready to leave, place the stone near the altar, 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. You are welcome so please 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 on  
Good Friday 15 April.**



**The Good Friday Service is  
at 10am on 15 April**

On Friday the 15 April at 10am we meet for worship. 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 Dawn Service on 17 April 6am**

The climax of our easter journey is the dawn service held on the 17 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 17 April**

The Easter Service at 9am and 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:

- 14 April Maundy Thursday Service 6pm
- 14 April All-night vigil 7pm – 8am 15 April
- 15 April Good Friday Morning Prayer 8am

- 15 April Good Friday Service 10am
- 17 April Easter Dawn Service 6am (arrive at 5.30am and gather around the Easter fire)
- 17 April Easter Eucharist 9am



## Community Engagement

### **An Update from our Op Shop**

February seemed a normal sort of month apart from the fact that we did 43 Pickups and 14 deliveries. This caused a congestion of goods in the shop battling for space and organisation of goods.

The Van also required attention to the motor requiring a coolant hose and water pump.

Income for February was \$10,790

March has changed our operation to another level with the event of major flooding on the North Coast. This unprecedented event has had a major impact on the op shop. Income this month will be severely affected because we are giving away goods to all flood affected people.

Currently we have assisted approximately 50 families with goods including nearly 200 pieces of furniture, hundreds of clothing items, shoes, linen, crockery, etc, etc.

We have donated goods to the Evacuation Centres at Lismore, Goonellabah, Alstonville, Lennox head. Bedding, Linen, disability equipment, food, toiletries, toys. Van loads have been taken to Wardell, Woodburn, Broadwater and Coraki.

The public have been generous with donations. Keeping up with these and prioritizing deliveries and pick ups has been eased with a number of the volunteers offering extra help, by coming in on many more days than their allotted ones.

No doubt the need will be ongoing for many months if not years as people get rehoused or back into their homes. I think we are the only op shop that deals in furniture that has not been inundated with water and one of only five that deals with clothing and household goods.

Just now (Friday 11/2) we have taken five van loads from the Alstonville evacuation centre as they begin to wind up. This has created a need for creative thinking of where to put these goods until they can be ready for retail or donation.

Phil Cowie  
Manager

## **2022 AREA BREAKFAST**



Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> March 7.30am – 9.30am.

\$15 per person

All funds raised go to AREA to support  
Bruce's work.

Please RSVP to John Noble: 0414 285 132

# Anglicare North Coast 2022 Northern NSW Flood Appeal

We will use our emergency relief processes to provide direct and efficient support to affected households.



**Donate Now- Please reference your deposit 'Lismore 2022'**

**Use the QR code**

or navigate to **[www.anglicarenorthcoast.org.au](http://www.anglicarenorthcoast.org.au)**

and click on 'donate here'

**Or** use the following details to deposit from your bank account.

Bank account: Anglicare North Coast BSB: 705077

A/C: 00041320

## Community-On-the-Verge



Help yourself to what is ripe and ready for picking. If you are keen to be involved as the garden evolves, please contact Alan Larsen on 0409 655 123 or Barbara Fewtrell 0429 385 713.

## Reminder: End of Daylight Savings



Daylight Savings ends on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> April at 3am. Our clocks will go back 1 hour at that time.

## Mother's Day Fete Planning Meeting



Monday 28<sup>th</sup> March 4.30pm in the Ministry Centre.

## Good Governance

### COVID Update

- Masks not required but encouraged especially when singing.
- Social distancing is still advised as is adequate ventilation.
- Hand sanitiser will remain available but is not compulsory.
- Morning tea will continue to be served outside at the present time.
- The Covid Committee appreciates everybody's understanding, tolerance, and compliance.

### Sign Up for Planned Giving

Forms for signing up for Planned Giving are now available from the website and in the church foyer and parish office.

### Mission Giving

Our missions for 2022 will be CMS and ABM. \$3000 to each.

## Empowering Leadership

### Wardens & Parish Councillors for 2022

**Rector's Warden:** Bruce Sharp

**Warden:** Jenny Noble

**Parish Councillors:**

Des Fitzpatrick

Kay Fry

Charlie Handley

Graham Ireland

Amanda Middleton

Mark Stuckey

Robyn Hannah

Margaret Brown



## **Other Appointments:**

**Treasurer:** Anne Bryce

**Social Committee Coordinator:** Amanda Middleton

Thank you for your willingness to serve our Parish.

## **Leaders Orientation and Meet and Greet**

Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> March 10.30am in the Ministry Centre. Bring and share lunch to follow.

## **Sermon Notes for 20th March 2022**

### **Luke 13:1-9 3<sup>rd</sup> SUNDAY in LENT**

I want to talk about suffering today. I want to be clear that the suffering caused by the abuse of people, domestic abuse of women, the horrific abuse of children, is totally unacceptable and the injustice of that is to be challenged in every way possible by every means possible and with every breath that we have. Suffering caused by abuse is unacceptable and we are all responsible to do everything we can to stop it. When I talk of suffering today I refer to what we do with the mysterious suffering that can't be explained.

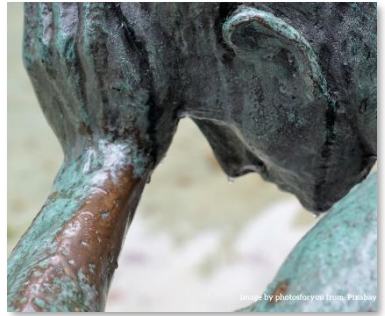
Many faithful Christ followers remember the day God failed.

2 Corinthians 7.14 states: If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, pray, seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land."

Except, for some, God was deaf. Earnest, humble prayers were cried. The face of God was sought. Yet God did not answer. God did not hear from heaven. There was no healing in the land. Forgiveness from sin seemed far away.

I remember the day God failed me. I was 30. In our church and school community was a stunning family with a 6-year-old child that radiated goodness. He became sick very mysteriously, very suddenly and very

quickly. He was in a coma for weeks. We prayed for his healing. We fasted. We prayed and we prayed, and we prayed. And he died. If ever there was a prayer worth answering, this was certainly it. Yet God seemed silent. The day the young boy died faith died too. The day he died the idea of a safe universe died too; all were vulnerable to tragedy. Suffering, unbearable to witness, dissolved the parents, his sister, the school community, and the church. Why? Why did an innocent boy suffer and die? Why did the parents have to go through such unimaginable grief? Why did God not answer prayer? Why did God fail us?



The question put to Jesus in Luke 13.1-9 is universal and timeless: **How do we make sense of the intense suffering in our world?** In Luke 13 people approach Jesus about the brutality and injustice of Pilate that led to horrific deaths of Galilean Jews. Jesus adds his own example of Jerusalemite Jews who died in a random construction accident when a tower fell. Why did these people have to suffer and die?

The question about suffering in Luke 13.1 is poignant as we hear these Scriptures in the context of Russia's death dealing invasion of Ukraine. The collapse of the tower of Siloam is not far removed from the landslides and floods that killed innocent people. Like the questioners we too want assurance. We want meaning. We want an explanation. We want the reason for suffering.

There are no easy answers to life's tough questions. And Jesus does not explain away the suffering. Two things are made absolutely clear:

1. God does not cause suffering,
2. Suffering can be transformed.

God does **not** send or cause suffering. **Nor** is suffering a result of sin. Both the Jews and the Greek speakers held the view that suffering is the fruit of sin. Some people today still live with a cause-and-effect thinking. Jesus wants to break the equation: sin=suffering. The mindset Jesus

wants to interrogate is the belief that if there is suffering there must be sin; and if there is great suffering there

must be great sin. Note Jesus' emphatic and repeated "No!" to his own questions. Jesus absolutely insists that the people who died, whether Galilean or Jerusalemite, were **not** more deserving of death than others. In other parts of Scripture such as John 9:2-3, Jesus rejects the idea that a man was born blind because of his or his parents' sin.

Jesus then invites repentance. As I have explained before, repentance here does **not** mean asking forgiveness for sin. Instead, repentance from the Greek *metanoia* means

- to go beyond the mind you have;
- or to change your thinking;
- or rearrange the furniture of your mind;
- or in the words of Paul in Romans, "be transformed through the renewing of your mind"(12.2).

The *metanoia* Jesus invites is downright scary. If God does not cause suffering, if God does not send suffering as punishment for sin, then suffering just is. We have to give up our illusions of safety. We have to give up the idea that if I am good and do the right things suffering will pass me by. There is no insurance policy against suffering. Much suffering is unintentional and unavoidable. In some ways, some suffering is inevitable simply because we are living in an evolving world. If we can open ourselves to the mystery of suffering it is possible to use the energy of suffering to transform the world.

God does not cause suffering. God does not send suffering as punishment, but the energy of suffering can be harnessed to transform the world. Christ is our model for using the energy of suffering to transform the world. Some suffering is unavoidable. Instead of wasting that energy we can use it to make a positive difference in the world. Think of the energy of the sun or the wind. Human

evolution has found ways of harnessing the power of the sun and the wind to use



as fuel. Our suffering energy is potential energy. We can use it in productive ways or waste it. We can make it productive by channelling it. We direct it by our choice. How do we do this? **By our loving intention.** We can give it to Christ to use it for God's project of loving union, of bringing about the kingdom of God on earth. The suffering servant songs in Isaiah taught Jesus that suffering can be redemptive for others if it is directed by love. For the pain in suffering, Moltmann writes, "is the lack of love, and the wounds in wounds are the abandonment [of love]."



This is my interpretation of the parable of the fig tree. Suffering is a reality of being human. The suffering we undergo does produce energy. If we waste the energy of suffering, we are like the fig tree that is green all over but does not bear fruit. Deep prayer or contemplation which is total surrender to God can awaken us to the hidden presence of God in the midst of suffering and our suffering can be fruitful. Deep prayer which is total surrender to God is to give up control over pain and suffering.

I said earlier that when that young boy died, faith died too. And it was the best thing that could ever happen. The faith that died was the faith in an all-powerful God. The God revealed in Jesus is an all-loving God that gives up power for love. The only power God has is the power of love, and love offers no controlling coercive power over. Bonhoeffer writes that "God lets himself be pushed out of the world on to the cross. He is weak and powerless in the world, and that is precisely the way, the only way, in which he is with us and helps us. The Bible directs man to God's powerlessness and suffering; only the suffering God can help. (Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison*, ed. Eberhard Bethge (New York: Macmillan, 1972), 360.) There is no God in heaven that has power or control over earth. God entered earth, God emptied Godself and took the form of a servant (Phil 2:6) and he was led to a

cross. Barbara Brown Taylor in "God in Pain" writes that "Christianity is the only world religion that confesses a God who suffers. It is not all that popular an idea, even among Christians. We prefer a God who prevents suffering, only that is not the God we have got. What the cross teaches us is that God's power is not the power to force human choices and end human pain. It is, instead, the power to pick up the shattered pieces and make something holy out of them— not from a distance but right close up."

The transformative energy of suffering can happen when we live contemplatively, that is to really know that we are in Christ and Christ is in us in this world. We know then that love is strong as death, and that love is the future fulness of our lives.

## Regular Reminders

### Worship & Spirituality

#### Church Open

The Church will be reopening for meditation during office hours, commencing Monday 28<sup>th</sup> February.

**Mothers Union:** third Monday of each month. Contact Pam on 0417 258 991 or Joyce 0407 690 874 [joyce@stephanies.com.au](mailto:joyce@stephanies.com.au)

#### Anam Cara



**Anam Cara Praying for you** Monday mornings 10am

**Anam Cara Wednesdays** 9am  
& **Thursdays** 6pm

## Community Engagement

### Play Place



Play Place 9.30-11.30am Thursdays during school terms.

### Sew Helpful



Sew Helpful 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Mondays 1pm

## Pastoral Care

If you or anyone you know is ill or in hospital, please let the office or Lynne Watt our Pastoral Care Coordinator know. Also, if you do visit anyone could you email Lynne? [wattlg@bigpond.com](mailto:wattlg@bigpond.com).

### Family Cross



The Family Cross is being given to Jan Schulte this week.

### Prayers

Please remember Jan and David and Cathy in your prayers this week.

## Alstonville Anglicans

Ministers all the baptised!

Rector The Reverend Dr Desiree Snyman 0402 764 969  
priest@anglicans.live

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

Parish Office: 8 The Avenue, Alstonville  
Telephone: 6628 0231  
Postal: PO Box 451, Alstonville NSW 2477  
e-mail: office@anglicans.live  
website: anglicans.live

**Bank account:** BSB 705 077 / Acc:00032931

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

## Dates 27th March to 3<sup>rd</sup> April

27<sup>th</sup> March Sunday 9am Holy Communion Bishop's Visit  
Leader Orientation, Meet and Greet and Lunch  
10.30am  
Sunday 4pm Messy Church

28<sup>th</sup> March Parish Office 9am – 12pm  
Op Shop 9am – 3pm  
10am Anam Cara praying for Community  
Fete Planning Meeting 4.30pm

29<sup>th</sup> March Tuesday Parish Office Closed (Please refrain from  
accessing the office at this time)

30<sup>th</sup> March Parish Office 9am – 12pm  
Anam Cara 9am  
Op Shop 9am – 3pm

31<sup>st</sup> March Parish Office 9am – 12pm  
Op Shop 9am – 3pm  
Play Place 9.30am  
Anam Cara 6pm

1<sup>st</sup> April Parish Office 9am – 12pm  
Friday 10am Holy Communion

3<sup>rd</sup> April Sunday 9am Holy Communion

# Values

What follows are the best words that we are able to offer, to describe what we love best about Alstonville Anglicans. When you come to us and when we go to you, this is what we are thinking and feeling.

## *Beloved:*

each person comes into the world as an original blessing from God. Thus, each person is a beloved person: significant, wanted and loved.

## *Belonging:*

anyone who wants to belong already belongs. We want to welcome each other as a gift, saying, "my greatest difference from you is my greatest gift to you". Community matters and is protected. We want to consciously enjoy each other hearing "the Christ in me sees the Christ in you."

## *Being:*

we are human beings not human doings. Our being present is important. The Spirit of God vibrates within us "like a pure diamond, blazing with the invisible light of heaven."

## *Believing:*

we are partners with God in living heaven on earth now. We want to be one call among many, offering a provocative but compassionate voice calling for a whole new way of thinking and believing that is loving, liberating and lifegiving.

## *Blessing:*

as beloved original blessings, we are blessed to be a blessing to others. God is always on God's way through us to creation, of which humans are a part. We believe everyone is called, that everyone has something beautiful to do for God. We want to be the sort of beloved community that creates space for people to express their calling.