



Alstonville Anglicans

Lent 5

Bulletin for Thurs 26th March - 29th March 2020

We acknowledge and pay respect to the traditional custodians of the land, on which we worship, work and meet, the Bundjalung people. We recognise the significant role the past and future Elders play in the life of the region. We are mindful that within and without the beautiful sandstone church, the Land always was and always will be Bundjalung Land.



Ezekiel 37:1-14

Ezekiel and the bones!

John 11:1-45

Healing of Lazarus

The Gospel of John is divided into two parts: book one concludes at the end of chapter 12. In book one of John's Gospel

Jesus "performs" seven "signs" thus book one is often called "the book of signs". The seven signs are

Changing water into wine at a wedding in Cana

Healing an official's son

Healing a paralysed man

Feasting on bread and fish in a wilderness place

Walking on water

Healing the man born blind

Raising Lazarus

The number seven is a theme in Scripture symbolising wholeness and enlightenment. Our first encounter with seven is in Genesis where a parable describes God creating the universe in seven days. On the seventh day God rested.

Please note a hearing loop is installed on the right hand side of St Barts.

Please turn off your mobile phone during worship. Toilets are located in the front of the Hall.

First Aid Kits are located in the Church & the Hall.

The seventh day of creation, rest, correlates with the seventh sign in John's Gospel; Lazarus "resting" in a tomb. Jesus calls "Lazarus come out!" Like Lazarus we too are raised to a new life in a new creation on the eighth day. The eighth day is realising that we are always in God, that there is no "gap" between us and God. Jesus says to us "Come out!" Come out of the dark ignorance where we think that there is any death or separation between us and God.

Pastoral Care

Please let the office or a member of the Pastoral Care team know if you are sick or in hospital.

COVID-19 Response

This is a stressful and challenging time for Australia and the global community.

The spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in Australia is causing profound disruption to our lives and to the ministry of our Church communities. This disruption is likely to intensify before the situation begins to improve.

It is important that we take steps to protect and care for our people, many of whom are in the demographic groups most vulnerable to the virus.

In order to express Christ's concern for all people, especially the elderly and vulnerable, **we have decided to suspend all services, activities, and meetings effective immediately.** This is in line with directives from the Grafton Diocese and the Province of the Anglican Church in New South Wales and the ACT.

While the physical health of our communities is paramount, we remain committed to our call to share the Good Life.

Historically, in times of social need, the Church has always made a significant contribution to protecting and caring for others. The current situation is no different. While there may be many routine things that we cannot do in the coming months, with creativity and planning we will have a key role to play. It is not time for the church to retreat from ministry, but to step up. It is not a time to forget our call to care and compassion, but to live it out as fully as possible.

We shall be communicating with you as to how we continue to care for each other. We shall also be developing multiple ways to provide spiritual nourishment. We shall make every effort to care for our church community and the wider public, especially those who are isolated and vulnerable.

We call on all Christians to pray for health workers and those seeking to develop a vaccine, and to pray that the spread of this disease may slow.

John 11:1-45

¹ Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. ² Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. ³ So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, "Lord, he whom you love is ill." ⁴ But when Jesus heard it, he said, "This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it." ⁵ Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, ⁶ after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was. ⁷ Then after this he said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again." ⁸ The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?" ⁹ Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble, because they see the light of this world. ¹⁰ But those who walk at night stumble, because the light is not in them." ¹¹ After saying this, he told them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him." ¹² The disciples said to him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right." ¹³ Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. ¹⁴ Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. ¹⁵ For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." ¹⁶ Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him." ¹⁷ When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. ¹⁸ Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, ¹⁹ and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. ²⁰ When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. ²¹ Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²² But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him." ²³ Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." ²⁴ Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." ²⁵ Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, ²⁶ and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" ²⁷ She said to him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world."

²⁸ When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary, and told her privately, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you." ²⁹ And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. ³⁰ Now Jesus had not yet come to the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. ³¹ The Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there. ³² When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." ³³ When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. ³⁴ He said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." ³⁵ Jesus began to weep. ³⁶ So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" ³⁷ But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?" ³⁸ Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. ³⁹ Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days." ⁴⁰ Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?" ⁴¹ So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and said, "Father, I thank you for having heard me. ⁴² I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me." ⁴³ When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" ⁴⁴ The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go." ⁴⁵ Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him.

Bible Readings

29th March 8.00am Ezekiel 37:1-14

John 11:1-45

5th April 8.00am Philippians 2:5-11

Matthew 26:14-27:66

My Brothers and Sisters

I address you as brothers and sisters for that is in fact what you are. At the peace the priest tells the people: "My brothers and sisters we are the body of Christ" We do well to remember our connection with each other. As we are one body, if one of us is anxious, we are all anxious. If some have peace, we all rejoice with them.

I am concerned for all of you. There is a corporate anxiety that is affecting us all. Continue to hold yourselves and others with gentleness and compassion. It is understandable that people have questions and worries. This is perfectly normal. The purpose of this letter is to do my best to answer some of these questions.

About our church and church services

Closing the church

The NSW Government has decreed that places of public worship are not to be open to members of the public for private prayer. I know this is sad and that people might have sought comfort in the sanctuary, but we are obliged to keep the church closed. All hall hirers have also ceased using the premises. As you know, the Op Shop has also closed.

Church services

As you have heard from the Prime Minister, all church services have ceased. We anticipate this being in place until September but will continue to monitor the advice we are given. Below I describe how we might be church in the months ahead.

Outdoor services

Some have suggested outdoor worship adhering to social distancing rules. The national directives for all Anglicans is also specific about outdoor gatherings. People are not to congregate together in groups outdoors.

Weddings

Weddings can be conducted but limited to 5 persons only - the couple, the celebrant and two witness. Social distancing recommendations must be complied with.

Funerals

Funerals can be conducted but limited to 10 persons in attendance. Social distancing recommendations must be complied with.

Baptisms

Baptisms are in abeyance until restrictions are lifted. Emergency baptisms with the priest and immediate family are permitted.

Smaller meetings and life groups/bible studies

Parishes have been directed to suspend face to face meetings of parish council and church committees as gatherings should be kept to a minimum and include only a small number of attendees. If you haven't already done so my advice is to suspend all life groups/bible studies. Some groups may be able to meet using zoom (a type of software allowing a group of people to meet online using the internet - a bit like skype). I will be offering resources for private Bible Study. You may wish to share your responses with others over the phone or through email as appropriate.

Our Church Office

The church office is closed to the public. The office staff and I are still at the office to answer any queries. The advice is that the church is "an organization of compassion" so it is permissible for staff to work onsite or for a very small team to meet (e.g. for livestreaming a service). However, this may be contradicted by further government advice so Jo, Ann and I have been working hard for the last 10 days to prepare for remote work as we anticipate further restrictions.

Having addressed some of the practical concerns regarding our church I now offer direction of the way forward for us as the body of Christ.

In Spirit as in Truth

In John 4 Jesus meets a Samaritan woman at Jacob's well. She asks him for Living Water.

"Believe Me, woman," Jesus replied, "a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem."

Likewise, we can worship God no longer at this church or that temple.

Jesus says further: "Yet a time is coming and has now come when **the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth**, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks."

The time has come where people will worship God in Spirit and in Truth. Our care and ministry plan is to encourage people to find the Living Water deep within them and empower them with resources to worship in Spirit and in Truth.

The call to action is simply this: the time has come for God's people to worship God in Spirit and in Truth.

In the past we have gone to "God's house." Now God is "coming" to our house. In the past we have attended church as a way to "find" God or focus on God's presence. Worshipping God in Spirit and in Truth means four things:

1. **We are a Virtual Hermitage**
2. **We have online worship**
3. **We provide resources**
4. **We care**

Virtual Hermitage (launches 30 March 10 am)

What does this mean? A hermitage is where a hermit lives. A hermit is someone who chooses to retreat from society in order to live in solitude and prayer and to surrender to God more fully. Virtual means that although like the ancient hermits we live in our own "cells" or homes; we nevertheless also have a common life of on-line prayer.

How will a virtual hermitage work?

Here are two invitations for you to consider in joining our Virtual Hermitage:

1. **Consider creating a sacred space** in your home somewhere where you can pray, read the Bible or practice being calm. Consider placing a candle, or a cross or a flower there as a symbol of your intention. Your sacred space can be as big or small as you want it - a corner in a room will do.

2. Consider a **regular routine** or rule of life. For our virtual hermitage I am proposing that we start simple and small with the following:

Morning Prayer at 10am

A **Compline Examen** or 'Prayer before bed' at 8 pm.

I shall be praying at these times and invite you to join me. To make our sense of connection through prayer deeper, I aim to be online through Facebook Live at this time and you are welcome to join me.

For **Morning Prayer** at 10am I intend to use "Pray-as-you-go". This is an app that you can download through the app store on Apple and Android devices. (More about this later)

For **A Compline Examen** or 'Prayer before bed' at 8 pm I use a journal to jot down some reflections. (An outline is provided later).

Even though we may be confined to our homes alone, it is comforting to know that while we are praying others are joining in support.

Online worship (launches 29 March)

I intend to livestream a worship service on Sunday @ 8am. The staff and are making these available on the web page and on YouTube so you can watch at any time.

I also intend to offer a more interactive worship service through zoom on Sundays @ 6pm. Meditation services will continue through zoom.

The best way to access this is to

1. Join Facebook.
2. Search for Alstonville Anglicans and friend them (click the thumbs up)
3. You will either get a notification that we are online or you can go to the page.

Resources

The bulletin with resources for your spiritual journey will be available by Wednesday evenings. While this will be on the website, printed versions will be made available for those with limited Internet facilities. We shall also email the bulletin out.

Resources for Messy Church and Play Place families will also be placed on our web page and Facebook pages, and included in the bulletin.

Care

More than ever, our compassion and support for each other is paramount. I warmly encourage you to continue to be the caring community that you are and to continue with expressing your support for others through phone calls, emails and the necessary.

In addition to the natural care that happens in the church, the ministry coordinators and I are busy dividing the parish into care groups. People in these groups are invited to remain in touch with each other at least weekly but more often if necessary.

Concluding Comments

Please take extra care of yourselves. You are precious to God and loved by your community. Perhaps like me you need to remind yourself to have good sleep hygiene, good nutrition, lots of water and bucket loads of gentleness and patience for yourself and others. I am trying to limit the time I spend on screens to the necessary. I am finding that technology, while a gift to connect me with others at this time, can also draw me into a negative spiral. Please also consider your contributions to God through the church. We are all under financial pressure but a great church community has been built here and we all want it to thrive into the future.

Resources for a Virtual Hermitage

Pray as you go

For morning prayer at 10am we use pray-as-you-go, available at <https://pray-as-you-go.org/> or download the app from Good Play or Apple App store



Pray as you go is a daily prayer session. A new prayer session is produced every day of the working week and one session for the week-end. It is not a 'Thought for the Day', a sermon or a bible-study, but rather a framework for your own prayer.

Lasting between ten and 13 minutes, it combines music, scripture and some questions for reflection. It is produced by Jesuit Media Initiatives, with material written by a number of Jesuits, both in Britain and further afield, and other experts in the spirituality of St Ignatius of Loyola. (<https://www.jesuit.org.uk/pray-you-go-appy-announce>).

from Good Play or Apple App store

Resources for your spiritual journey (daily Bible study)

Resources for your spiritual journey (daily Bible study)

The YouVersion Bible app offers a great resource. Download from any app store.

It looks like this

God's Word is with you.

Tens of millions of people are using the Bible App™ to make God's Word a part of their daily lives. Download the free app and access your bookmarks, notes, and reading plans from anywhere. Enjoy hundreds of versions, including audio, all on your mobile device.

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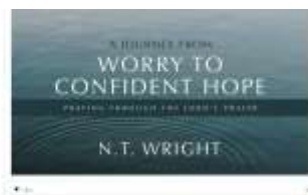
- iPhone/iPad
- Android
- BlackBerry
- Windows Phone
- Windows 8
- Java
- Symbian
- Mobile Web
- Kindle Fire

Go to Bible.com/app



<https://my.bible.com/moments>

I recommend NT Wright's Bible reading plan for anxiety. (I am making this available for our non-online friends).



Resources for Anam Cara (soul friends)

Daily meditations

Richard Rohr offers great daily meditations that you can sign up for free of charge.

<https://cac.org/category/daily-meditations/>

Resources for Play Place families

YouTube offers some good options, below is a link for toddler appropriate videos.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4HUCJliVbsw>.

Beyond technology, the Irish Times wrote an article providing some helpful advice on coping at home with young children during a covid19 shut down.

<https://www.irishtimes.com/life-and-style/health-family/parenting/coronavirus-how-to-keep-children-happy-learning-and-entertained-at-home-1.4202320>.

Resources for Messy Church families

Lucy Morris offers the following for prayer suggestions for families

<https://www.messychurch.org.uk/resource/sharing-fun-family-prayer-time?>

The Bible App for kids offers great videos and games.

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
	Life Groups Chaplain	
	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**

We give thanks to God for all people making offertories to the vision of God's Kingdom here on earth. If you would like to contribute electronically to the Parish Provider these are the details: **BSB: 705 077 / Acc: 32931**

THIS WEEK IN OUR PARISH

Sunday	29th March	8.00am 10.00am 4.00pm 6.00pm	Holy Communion St Barts (cancelled) Holy Communion, St Peter & St Pauls, Tregagle (cancelled) Families @4 (in recess) Sunday@6 St Bart's (cancelled)
Monday	30th March	10.00am 10.30am 1.00pm	Prayer Meeting St Bart's (cancelled) Life Group (in recess) Sew Helpful (cancelled)
Tuesday	31st March	1.30pm	Life Group at Carol Stone's home (cancelled)
Wednesday	1st April	9.00am 3.30pm	Meditation Group, St Bart's (cancelled) Lenten Discussion Group (cancelled) at Helen Nicholson's home
Thursday	2nd April	9.30am 7.00pm 6.00pm	Play Place (cancelled) Life Group Book Club (cancelled) Contemplative Church (cancelled)
Friday	3rd April	10.00am 2.00pm	Holy Communion, St Bart's (cancelled) Choir Practice, St Bart's (cancelled)
Sunday	5th April	8.00am 4.00pm 6.00pm	Holy Communion St Barts (cancelled) Families @4 (in recess) Sunday@6 (cancelled)