



Alstonville  
Anglicans

**Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2024**

**Welcome**

MANNA  
AND  
MERCY

at Alstonville  
Anglicans

**March 2, 9, 16**  
**9am- 1pm**

## **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](http://www.anglicans.live)**

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

## 3<sup>rd</sup> March – 10<sup>th</sup> March

3 <sup>rd</sup> March		<b>Sunday</b> Holy Communion
	9am	
	3.3pm	Op Shop Meeting
4 <sup>th</sup> March		<b>Monday</b>
	9am-12pm	Parish Office
	9am-3pm	Op Shop
	10am	Anam Cara
	10am	Deadline for bulletin items
	1pm	Sew Helpful
	6pm	Spirit Ability
5 <sup>th</sup> March		<b>Tuesday</b>
	9am-12pm	Parish Office <b>Closed</b>
6 <sup>th</sup> March		<b>Wednesday</b>
	9am-12pm	Parish Office
	9am	Anam Cara
	9am-3pm	Op Shop
	3.30pm	Property Committee
7 <sup>th</sup> March		<b>Thursday</b>
	9am-12pm	Parish Office
	9am-3pm	Op Shop
	9.30am	Play Place
	6pm	Anam Cara
8 <sup>th</sup> March		<b>Friday</b>
	9am-12pm	Parish Office
	10am	Holy Communion
9 <sup>th</sup> March		<b>Saturday</b>
	9am-1pm	Manna & Mercy
10 <sup>th</sup> March		<b>Sunday</b>
	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](http://www.welcomeBooklet_v3.pdf)

## **AGM 2024**

Thank you to those that attended the AGM on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> February.  
Thank you to those who have taken up roles in the Parish for 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



# Spirit Ability

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

Monday 4th March 6-8pm  
The evening will include a meal and sharing time.

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

## **Baptism**

We warmly welcome Suade Mewing who comes today with her family and friends to be baptised.

## **Confirmation**

Bishop Murray will be visiting the Parish on Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> 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

## **Mothering Sunday**

Please bring a plate to share for the morning tea. RSVP 6628 0231

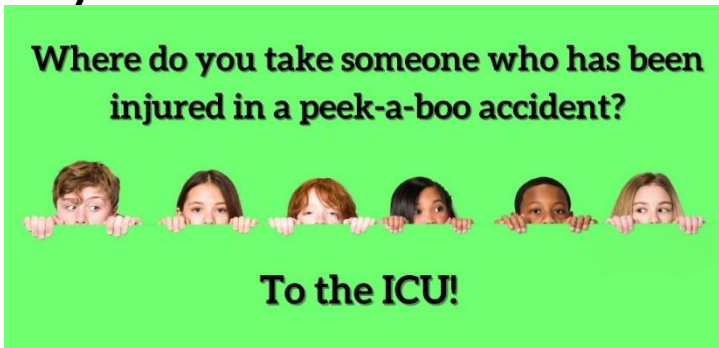
An orange poster for Mothering Sunday. At the top, the words "Mothering Sunday" are written in a white, cursive font, arching over a white line-art illustration of a woman holding a baby. Below the illustration, the text "March 10 @ 10am" is written in a bold, white, sans-serif font. Underneath that, "Morning tea and children's activities." is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font. At the bottom right, the text "Alstonville Anglicans", "RSVP 6628 0231", and "anglicans.live" is written in a small, white, sans-serif font.

*Mothering Sunday*

**March 10 @ 10am**  
Morning tea and children's activities.

Alstonville Anglicans  
RSVP 6628 0231  
anglicans.live

## **To Make you Smile**

A green poster with a white question at the top: "Where do you take someone who has been injured in a peek-a-boo accident?". Below the question is a row of six children's faces peeking over a white horizontal line. At the bottom, the text "To the ICU!" is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

**Where do you take someone who has been injured in a peek-a-boo accident?**

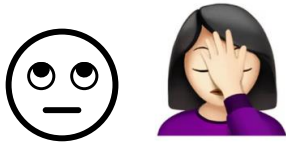
**To the ICU!**

## Sermon Notes Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> February

### Desiree Snyman Mark 8:31-38

#### Introduction

True story: a clergy colleague acquaintance was in a jewellery store choosing a diamond ring for his soon to be betrothed. (Also, a priest, I might add). A young person came in asking for a gold cross. She was clear though, she didn't want an ordinary cross, please could she have a gold cross with the cute little man on it... Only emojis can give a worthy response:



The question for us today is what does the cross mean? We are in the second week of Lent. In the Lenten desert stands a cross, what does it mean?

#### What does lent mean ...

The Lenten journey is about going into the wilderness, physically, psychically, psychologically, spiritually. The wilderness happens to us. Life takes us into the desert all the time. Feeling dry, and burnt out, disordered and that the habits that once supported your flourishing are now meaningless? Possibly a desert. Feeling like you have lost your faith, your confidence in God, your health, your family, a friend? A wilderness. Lent consecrates the desert as a space where the sacred is found.

What do we find in the desert? The symbol of the wilderness is powerful. At first the bitter heat, dehydration, unrelenting sun, stinging and shifting sand may cause you to think that the wilderness is a barren place. In the first week of Lent, we are with Jesus in the wilderness, and we discover a desert rose, and that the desert is a space where ache turns wounds and longing into lilies. Says Thomas Merton: There is no wilderness so terrible, so beautiful, so arid, and so fruitful as the wilderness of compassion. It is the only desert that shall truly flourish like the lily.

This week we are in the desert, and what do we find? A cross. What really is the cross?

#### What the cross does not mean ...

Let's start by saying what the cross does not mean. The cross does not justify human suffering and structural oppression. In other words, when a woman (and in a smaller number of cases, a man) endures domestic violence and says that this is the cross she or he must bear, we say that is a defilement of its meaning. When black people are enslaved by white people, this is not a cross to bear, but a structural evil to resist. To suggest otherwise is an abuse of the text because in this text Jesus has revealed that his messiahship means confrontation not rehabilitation of the Imperial State.

There is a tendency in the traditions of spirituality to make the Cross an over-individualised narcissistic focus on the self. In an over-spiritualised perspective, the cross is removed from its political, military, and historical contours. The cross represents the death of the small selves that allow space for an authentic self to emerge. While there is a cruciform structure to reality (construction, deconstruction reconstruction, or birth death resurrection), this does not mean that we use a politically charged text like Mark's gospel and over-spiritualise its meaning as a narcissistic self-focus of an individual's journey and spiritualise the death of the ego. By making the cross all about the individual completely misses the point of "take up your cross". I would warn against an over-spiritualising, an over-individualistic tendency. Having glanced at what the cross does not mean, we now consider the meaning of the cross from the perspective of Mark 8.

### **What does the text about the cross mean?**

Let us step for a moment into what the text itself says: "Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." What does this mean? To read the gospels effectively people need a good understanding of the Hebrew scriptures. The image that is evoked is from the book of Daniel. Daniel summons a courtroom scene. On the one hand we have the beasts which represent like the oppressive regimes and structures of society that literally swallow humanity. The beasts represent empires such as Rome, Assyria, Persia, Greece, and Egypt. On the other side of the courtroom, we have the one who is supremely human. Daniel describes one like the Son of Man. Turns out that the Christian path is not about learning how to be spiritual but how to be a decent human. Having looked at some aspects of Mark 8, let us look behind the text to the historical meaning of the cross.

### **Historically what does the cross mean?**

Jesus turns around and says that to follow him we take up the cross. Historically, what does it mean to take up your cross? The first thing is that Jesus is saying is that He stands against Empire. The second thing Jesus is asking us to do is to overcome fear. The threat to punish by death and shame is the bottom line of the state's control of people. It is fear that keeps the dominant order intact. By resisting fear and pursuing kingdom values despite death, followers of Jesus negate the power of the state.

In the first century CE, the very worst way that a person could die is crucifixion. No Roman citizen was ever crucified. Crucifixion was reserved for seditionists, those who rose against Rome, and slaves. That was it. Although we've domesticated the Christian faith by making the cross an element of worship, the early audience of Mark's Gospel probably witnessed several crucifixions. For example, following the demise of Herod in 4 BCE, Judea experienced a messianic uprising referred to as the Varus War. Once Jerusalem was captured, Varus authorized the crucifixion of 2,000 Jewish insurgents as a means of instilling fear in the populace and asserting control. During Crucifixion people would be tied or nailed to the cross and left there to die over several days. Jesus states "take up your cross" – he is hitting a nerve.

Crucifixion is a reasonable fear given Jesus' political challenge to empire. The power of what Jesus is saying is to look fear square in the eye and stand for equality, kindness, justice, and love regardless of the consequences. If people can continue Christ's work regardless of consequence, then empire has no power.

### **Contemporary examples of overcoming fear**

Perhaps you might permit a contemporary example, controversial and for some offensive even, but no insult is intended on my part in offering it as an example.

Julian Assange took on the USA military industrial complex and exposed some of their malpractices. This week in Parliament there was a motion to support bringing Julian Assange home. The Pentagon wants Julian, they want to see him punished because they want to evoke fear to stop anyone else from ever following his example. By brutally punishing Julian, the Pentagon hopes to make an example of him. that's the point of crucifixion, to create fear. Once you can look that fear in the eye it loses its power over you.

<https://www.theguardian.com/media/2024/feb/21/julian-assange-extradition-appeal-whats-the-likely-outcome-and-what-happens-next>

A contemporary example of overcoming fear is the story of Batman. A young hero who becomes Batman starts off with an intense fear of bats. It's only when he confronts that fear of bats, looking the fear straight in the eye to the point that he takes bats on as his own symbol that he reaches a point of heroic wholeness and can stand against injustice. In the Batman series, it is his fear of bats that caused the death of his parents. That's powerfully symbolic. The fears that we have of death, of torture, of shame, of humiliation, of poverty, of loneliness, can cause death for us and those around us. That's what Jesus means, he states that those who lose their life will gain it while those who cling to life will lose it.

When love and not fear has a hold on people that is when they become truly dangerous.

### **For each of us, what does the cross mean?**

The cross is not about us and it's not about individual journeys of salvation. The cross is not about personal perspectives whether we believe Jesus was human or divine or a mixture of both or whatever. The cross is not about your thoughts, your theology, your beliefs. Jesus is inviting us to give up putting ourselves at the centre of the story. To take up a cross is to put God first. No one does this better than the recovering community with their 12-step process. I offer two steps for you to consider for the period of Lent. First is that we admit to ourselves that we are powerless, that our lives are unmanageable. It takes us a lifetime to do that one step because it's so against our instincts. Who wants to admit defeat? Who wants that absolute humiliation of knowing yourself as powerless? For the recovering community this first principle has proved itself again and again. Peter rebukes Jesus for predicting Jesus' death. What Peter is resisting is the first step – to give up control.

The second step could also be an interpretation of Mark 8: "we came to admit that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity." That's what this text is inviting us to. That's what the cross in the wilderness means. The cross means we are powerless and that our lives are unmanageable without God. Surrendering our will to God can restore us to sanity. I invite you to consider the two steps as you journey with Jesus through the wilderness in Lent.

## Sentence of the Day

God spoke these words and said, 'I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; you shall have no other gods before me.' Exodus 20.1

## Collect

Lord our God,  
by your Holy Spirit  
write your commandments upon our hearts  
and grant us the wisdom and power of the cross,  
so that, cleansed from greed and selfishness,  
we may become a living temple of your love;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## John 2:13-22

### Experience the captivating world of Manna and Mercy




IAKEPHALAIOSASTHAI (EPH 1:19-20, HO 2:18)

We invite you to immerse yourself in the captivating world of creativity and spirituality with our unique 100-page hand-printed graphic novel that reimagines the Bible like never before.

This innovative narrative beautifully weaves together elements of imaginative storytelling, humour, and clarity to bring to life the powerful themes of food sharing and forgiveness. Through its engaging and thought-provoking approach, this graphic novel offers a fresh perspective on timeless teachings, transforming the traditional religious text into a vibrant source of wisdom and grace.

Embark on this unforgettable journey with us on March 2nd, 9th, and 16th, from 9 am to 1 pm, at Alstonville Anglicans. Secure your spot today and be part of a truly enriching experience that promises inspiration and enlightenment.

Book Now at [anglicans.live](http://anglicans.live)

  
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