



# Alstonville Anglicans

Palm Sunday

Bulletin for Thurs 2nd April - 5th April 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.



**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.**

## Masks

### Re-usable/Washable Face Masks

Our Sew Helpful group is being so helpful and creating re-usable/washable face masks. If you would like one to wear when you go shopping or to the doctor or wherever you would feel more comfortable with a mask, please contact Robyn Delaney - [rbdelaney37@gmail.com](mailto:rbdelaney37@gmail.com) or 6628 5317.

## In the Loop

- I am very grateful for the way that you have responded to the current crisis.
- Thank you to all of you for caring for each other, phoning where possible and praying.
- Thank you also for stretching out of your comfort zones to learn new technology in order to remain connected.
- I too am having to upgrade my skills and you have been very patient with me as I learn all this new stuff to connect meaningfully with you. It's getting better and better each week.



I intend to offer a weekly bulletin with updates and resources to people that have indicated they are associated with our church. The bulletins are sent through a software program. If you do not wish to receive these bulletins and want to be removed from our database please send us an email to this effect so that we don't cause bother.

## Good Governance

(admin, finance, safe ministry, and property)

## Live stream quality:

- We are aware that there are some issues with the quality of our uploads.

- We are in the process of improving our Internet capabilities through Telstra which is the main cause of some of our live streaming difficulties.
- We are grateful to Graham Ireland and Robyn Hannah for time invested in connecting a cable to the church. However, this will not be improved until we can connect to the NBN and this is on hold until Telstra send out technicians again.
- In the meantime, I intend to use mobile data until the Internet speed can be improved.

Some of you have kindly offered ideas and software platforms to improve what we are offering, and I am following up with each of these so thank you for your feedback.

### **Office:**

- The office staff have gone beyond the call of duty in providing amazing support for our benefit. I am proud that they have responded so admirably under challenging circumstances.
- As per government regulations the office is officially closed to the public, including parishioners, and volunteers.
- We recognise that there are some cases where coming to the office is unavoidable (e.g. fetching bulletins to hand deliver to those without Internet).

For the protection of the staff and for your own health we ask that you do everything you can to minimise contact physically with the parish office. The office staff are more than happy to answer phone enquiries and assist you with alternate ways to achieve your tasks.

### **Finances**

- The wardens are in dialogue with the Diocese in terms of safeguarding the finances of the parish and I thank them for their work.
- The wardens have also written a letter which you can find in this edition.
- Where possible it is best to avoid physically giving money. Lockdown measures allow you to leave your home for shopping so as a measure of last resort you may drop of your financial gifts into the sealed post box.

Annette Dent in AFGD (66424480) can assist with Parish Provider and other enquiries about direct deposits.

## **Worship and Spirituality**

This week we livestreamed the 8am service. We are aware that it was glitchy and laggy; this is because of the WiFi. We are implementing a cable to improve this quality. (Yes I am aware it was lopsided...oops...sorry🙏).

We used Google Meet for Sundays@6. This week we will use zoom. Material and reading for Sundays@6 is below and on the website/

Spiritual Communion:

I'll be offering spiritual communion at both services. St. Thomas Aquinas defined spiritual communion as "an ardent desire to receive Jesus in the Holy Sacrament and a loving embrace as though we had already received Him." The liturgy I am using is from the South African Anglican Prayer Book.

- In this bulletin you will find the liturgy for Sunday 8am and a resource for 6pm.
- Resources are updated on the web page too.
- I am enjoying the Virtual Hermitage and the time of prayer is anchoring my day.

The back page is a printed devotion for those without access to the Internet

## **Messy Church**

There is a video about Easter on the website.

## **Pastoral Care**

- The best thing you can do for our community is to love and care for yourself with outstanding nutrition, rest, hydration and all those other good things our GPs tell us that some of us ignore.
- Take time to meditate and exercise.

Continue where possible to phone and care for each other. Let me, Geoff or one of lay ministers know if there is someone that is of significant concern to you.

Sunday@8

## Liturgy for Palm Sunday 5th April 2020



### OPENING SONG

#### **We Walk His Way (Ewe, Thina)**

(Ewe, Thina)

Sizowa nyathela amadimoni

(Ewe, Thina)

Unarmed, he faces forces of demons and death (Sizowa nyathela amadimoni)

He breaks the bonds of hell dying on the cross

We Walk His Way

The tree freedom blooms by his empty grave

We Walk His Way

(Ewe, Thina)

We Walk His Way: Shorter Songs for Worship ©2008 GIA Publications, Inc.  
Artist: John L. Bell. Choir: Wild Goose Collective. Composer: John L. Bell

## WELCOME

This morning begins the Great Week of the Christian Year. During Lent we have been preparing by works of love and self-sacrifice for the celebration of the Lord's death and resurrection. With Christians throughout the world, we come together this week to call to mind, and to express in word and action, the centre of the Easter mystery: our Lord's Passover from death to life.

Christ entered in triumph into the Holy City to complete his work as Messiah: to suffer, to die and to rise to new life.

Today we commit ourselves to walk the way of the cross, so that, sharing his sufferings, we may be united with him in his risen life.

## OPENING PRAYER

Let us pray

Merciful God, as we enter this holy week and gather at your house of prayer, turn our hearts again to Jerusalem, to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, that, united with Christ and all the faithful, we may one day enter in triumph the city not made with hands, the new Jerusalem, eternal in the heavens, where, with you and the Holy Spirit, Christ lives in glory forever.

**Amen.**

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## READINGS AND REFLECTION

### Psalm 31.9-18

- 9** Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am in trouble:  
my eye wastes away for grief, my throat also and my inward parts.
- 10** For my life wears out in sorrow, and my years with sighing:  
my strength fails me in my affliction, and my bones are consumed.
- 11** I am become the scorn of all my enemies:  
and my neighbours wag their heads in derision.
- 12** I am a thing of horror to my friends:  
and those that see me in the street shrink from me.
- 13** I am forgotten like one dead and out of mind:  
I have become like a broken vessel.

**14** For I hear the whispering of many:  
and fear is on every side;

**15** While they plot together against me:  
and scheme to take away my life.

**16** But in you, Lord, have I put my trust:  
I have said 'You are my God.'

**17** All my days are in your hand:  
O deliver me from the power of my enemies and from my  
persecutors.

**18** Make your face to shine upon your servant:  
and save me for your mercy's sake.

The Passion Gospel

## **NT Reading: Philippians 2.5-11**

In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death - even death on a cross!

Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

### **THE PRAYERS**

Let us pray to the Father,  
who loved the world so much that he sent his only  
Son  
to give us life.

Simon from Cyrene was forced to carry the cross for  
your Son.

Give us grace to lift heavy loads from those we meet  
and to stand with those condemned to die.

Lord, hear us.

**O Lord hear my prayer.**



Your Son watched the soldiers gamble to share his clothes.  
Transform the hearts of those who make a profit from their  
victims,  
and those whose hearts are hardened by their work.  
Lord, hear us.

**O Lord hear my prayer.**

The thief, who was crucified with Jesus,  
was promised a place in your kingdom.  
Give pardon and hope, healing and peace  
to all who look death in the face.  
Lord, hear us.

**O Lord hear my prayer.**

From the cross Jesus entrusted Mary his mother  
and John his disciple to each other's care.  
Help us also to care for one another  
and fill our homes with the spirit of your love.  
Lord, hear us.

**O Lord hear my prayer.**

In Mary and John your Son created a new family at the cross.  
Fill our relationships,  
and those of new families today,  
with mutual care and responsibility,  
and give us a secure hope for the future.  
Lord, hear us.

**O Lord hear my prayer.**

The centurion was astonished to see your glory in the  
crucified Messiah.  
Open the eyes of those who do not know you  
to see in your Son the meaning of life and death.  
Lord, hear us.

**O Lord hear my prayer.**



Joseph of Arimathaea came to take your Son's body away.  
Give hope and faith to the dying and bereaved,  
and gentleness to those who minister to them.  
Lord, hear us.

**O Lord hear my prayer.**

Simon and Joseph, Mary and John  
became part of your Church in Jerusalem.  
Bring into your Church today a varied company of people,  
to walk with Christ in the way of his passion  
and to find their salvation in the victory of his cross.

**Lord of the Church,  
hear our prayer,  
and make us one in heart and mind  
to serve you in Christ our Lord.  
Amen.**



## **Spiritual Communion**

(When I was an Anglican Priest in South Africa, the Prayer Book had provision for "Spiritual Communion." From time to time people were unable to receive bread and wine due to illness or medical treatment and in this situation we prayed for "Spiritual Communion." The Animi Christi, a prayer from St Ignatius, guided this practice.

Soul of Christ, sanctify me;  
Body of Christ, save me;  
Blood of Christ, inebriate me;  
Water from the side of Christ, wash me;  
Passion of Christ, strengthen me;  
O good Jesus hear me;  
Within your wounds hide me;  
separated from you, let me never be;  
From the evil one protect me;  
At the hour of my death, call me;  
And close to you bid me; That with your saints,  
I may be praising you forever and ever.  
Amen.

## **PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

One: Where Christ walks,  
Many: We will follow.  
One: Where Christ stumbles,  
Many: We will stop.  
One: Where Christ cries,  
Many: We will listen.  
One: Where Christ suffers,  
Many: We will hurt.

One: When Christ dies,  
Many: We will bow our heads in sorrow.  
One: When Christ rises again in glory,  
Many: We will share his endless joy.  
One: There is no other way.  
Many: His is the only way.

*"Stages on the Way", Iona Community Wild Goose Worship Group*

## **BLESSING**

## Readings Sundays@6

On Palm Sunday, we read the Passion texts from the Gospel. The Central question to meditate on for the duration of Holy Week is "Why did Jesus die?" The answers that we give to this question will be pivotal in shaping our spirituality: how we pray, how we experience and understand God's love and how we interact with the world. Here are answers that the church has given in the past.

### **JESUS DIED AS A RANSOM FOR OUR SINS.**

Mk 10:45 and Mt 20:28 Jesus calls his death a ransom for many. Ransom is the price paid in order to release someone from captivity. We know about this language because of the spate of kidnappings in the Middle East and the demand for ransom from captors. The price of the ransom Jesus paid with his blood. Humanity is freed from sin and the effects of sin, especially death (Rom 6:17). A ransom for sins: To whom is the money paid?

### **RANSOM TO THE DEVIL**

For the first 1100 years of the Church's existence, the belief was that the ransom was paid to the Devil. The idea was that the devil has the right to humanity because of sin and Jesus pays the ransom to the devil by dying.

### **RANSOM PAID TO GOD (ANSELM'S VICARIOUS SATISFACTION)**

In the 11<sup>th</sup> C, Anselm later argued that the ransom was paid to God. The idea here is that sin can only be forgiven when something is done to satisfy God's justice, to pay the debt, because sin offends God entirely. How can this be done? It is impossible for humanity to pay this debt because of their inherent sinfulness.

The only thing that can fit the bill is the death of Jesus who was both God and man, and innocent of sin. Jesus dies and the ransom or debt is paid to God.

The idea contradicts the picture of a loving forgiving God portrayed by Jesus. To say that someone has to suffer to reconcile me to an angry father forgets, says Stanley Hauerwas, that it is not an angry father that has given you Her son to receive your violence in the first place. In other words, to say that God "gets blood" and now is able to love me is a ridiculous thought.

### **JESUS DIED TO BEAR THE PUNISHMENT FOR OUR SINS (PROTESTANT'S VICARIOUS PUNISHMENT)**

Closely related to the idea that Jesus had to die to pay the ransom for our sins is the idea that Jesus is punished on our behalf (vicarious punishment). The idea here is that sin must be punished. God's love for humanity is revealed by the fact that God gives God's own son to be bear the punishment in our place. This was the way that Luther for example understood the phrase: "My God why have you forsaken me?" The quote illustrates that Jesus suffered from being separated from his Parent and experienced the full effects of sin.

This idea also contradicts the picture of a loving God presented by Jesus because it suggests the idea that God's wrath has to be presented on humanity before God will forgive humanity, or worse still that God was unwilling to visit God's wrath on us and so gave it all to Jesus instead: what kind of a Father is that?

In summary) Both ideas that Jesus had to die to pay a ransom to the devil or God, or to endure punishment on our behalf contradict the New Testament picture of a loving God who forgives out of love. Why did Jesus die?

**I suggest we look at the Historical Reasons around the death of Jesus:**

**JESUS DIED RATHER THAN BREAK HIS UNITY WITH SINFUL HUMANITY**

Jesus died rather than withdraw the love that he felt for sinners. The historical circumstances surrounding the death of Jesus are recorded in the Luke's Gospel and deserve attention when answering the question: why did Jesus die? The reasons given for his death are political in nature.

- 1) Obscuring the payment of taxes to Caesar
- 2) Says he is the king
- 3) Subverting the nation

Both Herod and Pilate acquitted Jesus on all charges, yet the Jews demanded his death. The one fact remained was that he was crucified as a messianic leader against Rome. The religious conflict with the Jewish leadership and the political threat to Rome are recorded in the Gospel accounts of his death and are two elements in his death.

In terms of the **religious conflict**, Jesus attitude to sinners brought him into conflict with the religious authorities who accused him of being a friend to sinners (Mt 11:19); sinners were traditionally God's enemies whom the coming Messiah was expected to destroy (Is 60:1-3). Moreover, Jesus also displayed a freedom concerning the law. The conflict became clear: either Jesus was right or the Pharisees were right; at his trial, the accusation of blasphemy is central.

The other area of conflict was **political** with respect to his claim to be a **messiah**, which raised hopes for a political liberation from Rome and this would have alienated religious leaders who benefited from Roman rule such as the High Priests and Sanhedrin.

Marcus Borg argues that in addition to historical reason I have outlined, there is a second meaning. He writes:

"The second equally early and central meaning of Good Friday and Easter is that death and resurrection are an archetypal metaphor of transformation. "Archetypal" means something so deeply imprinted in the human psyche that it seems to be from the beginning. Dying and rising is one of those archetypes, found in perhaps every religion and culture that we know about.

Jesus's death and resurrection incarnated that archetype. This is one of the meanings the cross had for Paul. About himself, he said "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me" (Galatians 2.19b-20a). The old Paul had died; a new Paul had been born whose life was now "in Christ," one of his most frequent phrases. Paul speaks of dying and rising with Christ as the foundation of Christian identity and life (Romans 6). So also in the gospels: following Jesus to Jerusalem, the place of death and resurrection, of dying and rising, is a major theme.

Thus, in earliest Christianity, the cross of Jesus (always also including his resurrection) was utterly central. Central as revelation of God's passion and Jesus's passion for the transformation of this world; and as revelation of the way, the path, of personal transformation.

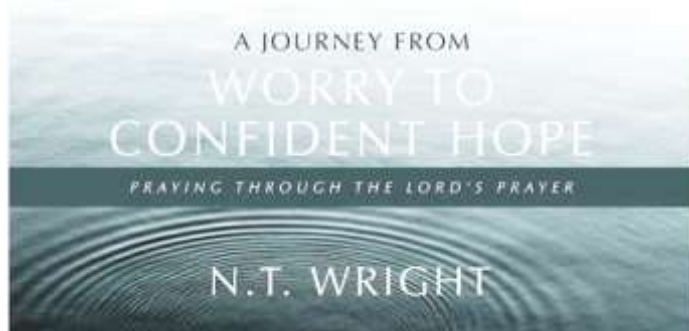
[https://day1.org/articles/5d9b820ef71918cdf2003785/marcus\\_borg\\_the\\_real\\_meanings\\_of\\_the\\_cross](https://day1.org/articles/5d9b820ef71918cdf2003785/marcus_borg_the_real_meanings_of_the_cross)

## Questions for Sundays@6:

<p>What is lost by letting go of the payment understanding? What is gained by recovering the more ancient and central political and archetypal understandings - that Good Friday and Easter are about personal transformation and God's and Jesus's passion for the transformation of this world?</p>
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**I invite you into this conversation.**

## Daily devotions



The following are guided devotions written by NT Wright and made available on [mybible.com](http://mybible.com) and based on The Lord's Prayer.

"When you are praying, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

"Pray then in this way:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.  
Your kingdom come.  
Your will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our debts,  
as we also have forgiven our debtors.  
And do not bring us to the time of trial,  
but rescue us from the evil one."

Matthew 6:7-13; New Revised Standard Version

## Day 1: Teach us to pray

We often do not know what to pray or how to pray, especially when times are tough. The Lord's Prayer is Jesus' own prayer of hope as well as a prayer of confidence. When the worries of life close in, these well-known words serve as a compass to guide us in truth and teach us to pray with confident expectation.

As Jesus taught his disciples to pray, he was also summing up what his ministry was all about. We see his agenda for the Kingdom of God that has come to earth as in heaven, which serves as an anchor and a pattern for our own lives.

Jesus modelled a very Jewish way of praying that went much deeper than merely reciting certain words or familiar phrases. When we pray the Lord's Prayer, we are recalling the events from his life and ministry, and in effect, are declaring that we too want to be part of Jesus' mission. The focus begins to turn from our worries towards his work in the world. We are reoriented towards his will as the main view on the horizon.

With this Jesus-shaped prayer, we draw near to our Father God, the one who cares, provides, protects, and remains deeply interested in our concerns and his purposes for us and his church. We are assured that God is neither an unapproachable bureaucrat nor a whimsical genie in a bottle. Rather, he is the Creator God—the Father of it all from the beginning—who desires both our love and respect in worship, and who longs to dwell in our midst.

Here is our confident hope: Jesus inaugurated the Kingdom of God on earth as it is in heaven. One day 'thy kingdom come' will arrive in all of its fullness. The day of the Lord will be when all things in creation are fully and finally put right. But, until that day, we know that evil, sin, and destructive powers are still forces that must be reckoned with in our daily lives.

Our worries prompt us to pray for provision, deliverance, and safety in the middle of it all. It all begins with the hopefulness of drawing near to God in prayer as 'our Father' and ends with the confidence of his kingdom, power, and glory forever.



We pray the Lord's Prayer in faith, knowing that we are not helpless. Real and lasting change is possible by the Spirit's power. We declare that the work that Jesus has begun in our lives and in the world will continue, even when things are gloomy or uncertain. May we find rest and renewal today as we draw closer to our Lord and his prayer.

Question to consider: On what specific events from Jesus' life and ministry might you reflect when praying the Lord's Prayer? How does this help with the things you worry about? Living it out: Pray the Lord's Prayer throughout the day today as the Spirit leads. Make note or journal any new insights.

## Day Two: 'Our Father'

'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name' might be thought of as a 'temple prayer'. Throughout Israel's history, the central symbol of Jewish life and worship was the temple in Jerusalem. In the temple, nothing unclean (nothing to do with sin or death) was permitted. Today, as we approach God as 'Our Father' we are reminded of our gracious and royal inheritance through Jesus the King. Because of who he is and what he has done, we may freely enter God's presence as his fully forgiven and purified followers.

In the Old Testament, the notion of addressing God as father is rare. However, we do find the idea of Israel as God's son and God's children (Deuteronomy 14:1, Hosea 11:1). In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus teaches that our prayers ought to be distinguished from a jumble of heaped up words to a faceless and nameless god. Instead, we are personally related to the One true God whom Jesus himself

approached as Father. In and through the King, Jesus, the temple-prayers of God's children may be offered with genuine devotion and trust. We can proclaim our dependence and our confident hope in God our Father, who cares for and watches over us. 'May your name be honoured' contains a temple-resonance and reminds us that we are addressing the one true King and Creator God.

Yet, there is also a familiar intimacy that comes from actually knowing who we are talking to! Indeed, invoking God as our Father is to call upon the name of the one who promised to deliver Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob from all that enslaved them and prevented them from being who they were intended to be.

Just as Jesus was with his disciples teaching them to pray, he continues to teach us through the gift of the Holy Spirit. Those who belong to and follow the King of Kings have now become part of God's new family. As such, we too pray, 'Abba, Father', the way that Jesus prayed. We are encouraged to call upon 'our Father' because this is now our prayer. In fact, we are the temple-space in which God comes to dwell by his Spirit in the midst of his people. The Lord's Prayer provides a pattern for God's children to offer genuine praise to the Father. As we bring our petitions, burdens and worries to him, with thanksgiving and hope, we are also praying that our good and faithful Father hears and responds to those who call upon his holy name.

**Question to consider:** Reflect on the idea of the Lord's Prayer as a temple prayer. How does this impact your understanding of praying to 'our Father'?

**Living it out** In what context might the Lord's Prayer have a practical impact on your interactions with others in your family, workplace, or community today? What praises or concerns can you bring before God our Father today?

## Day Three: May Your Kingdom Come

The Lord's prayer is a prayer that we might be part of Jesus' Kingdom-victory movement. As we pray, 'May your Kingdom come', we remember that the ultimate victory was won at the cross. Indeed, this is why Jesus' resurrection happened! The power of death was defeated and could not hold him in the grave. Yet, we continue to pray for kingdom-moments on earth now, as in heaven, wherever sin and death are trying to choke the life out of us, out of those we love, or out of people in God's world.

Though Jesus is King of the whole world, his authority is regularly challenged by other forces, such as the human will, and by darker forces to which people offer their attention and adoration. These forces can be economic, social, cultural, or a variety of other 'things that are not God', which are best described as 'the idols'.

When we pray for God's Kingdom to come, we are praying that the forces, the idols, will be driven back by the power and the victory of God's love. We are praying that the new creation—the age to come—might powerfully rush in so that we experience the victory of 'kingdom of heaven moments' in our contemporary context.

Every time we pray this prayer, we are invoking God's new age. We are affirming that we believe we are already called to be part of God's whole new world: his Kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. The prayer for 'God's Kingdom to come' expresses trust that God will fully and finally defeat the idols and put all things right at last. It is a hopeful prayer for the success of Jesus' own Kingdom ministry.

In practice, it can be helpful to have a specific reference point as we pray 'thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as in heaven'.

For example, we might pray for politicians, leaders, or world rulers who are susceptible to the abuse of power. Alternatively, we might lift up the needy and the poor, or hospitals and schools and the vast needs in the areas of healing and education. Our keen and prayerful attention can be focused on the marginalized, or those with special needs. As we pray, we come before our Father, asking for his Kingdom to come in all these places through the work of the Spirit in his church at work in the world.

### **Question to consider:**

The Lord's Prayer is a prayer for victory to be won over forces that oppose God's rule and his will. In what ways has power and kingship has been redefined around Jesus?

### **Living it out:**

Identify a specific area where brokenness is evident and pray for God's Kingdom to impact this area today.

## **Day Four: Give Us Today the Bread We Need Now**

The prayer for daily bread reflects a most basic human need. This elementary staple sits at the heart of the Lord's Prayer and affirms our shared dependence on the Father for the provision of regular sustenance. For people who do not suffer from hunger or the effects of famine, it can be easy to overlook the primary importance of seeking God for our daily meals. Yet, Jesus teaches us to pray this prayer, not only for those who go hungry in God's world, but also for ourselves.

For many, what often seems most urgent are the myriad things on our 'to do' lists, transporting kids to and from school or sports activities, meeting work goals, or even fighting crucial spiritual battles. However, the facts are, we cannot do any of these things on an empty stomach.

There is a general sense in which the prayer for daily bread is just that: Lord, please give us the bread we need now, for oday, and when tomorrow comes, then for tomorrow. For those who are impacted by unjust systems or structures, poverty, unemployment, or lack of access to clean water and daily bread, it is not assumed that ordinary life will automatically include the ordinary food that we all need. In this world of plenty, there are millions of people who starve—many of whom are children.

We must be praying for daily bread for ourselves, and particularly for those who need it and with whom we should share it. This is not a prayer that we just pray once. Rather, the Lord's Prayer encourages us to continue asking God for the basic things we need, and to continue confessing the ways in which we have messed up. As we listen for the 'little whisper' of the Holy Spirit, may we remember the people who are hungry for God, hungry for love, and hungry for bread.

This prayer is also particularly poignant because Jesus as the bread of life is the source of nourishment for his people. Indeed, the Lord's Supper is one of the ways that this prayer is specifically answered. In the Gospel of Luke—which differs slightly from Matthew's account—Jesus teaches his disciples to ask the Father to 'Give us each day our daily bread' (Luke 11:3; emphasis added). Thus, we might be encouraged to continue a regular pattern of prayer for the bread that we all need for today, each and every day, until he returns again.

### **Question to consider:**

Consider the crucial aspect of 'our daily bread'. What is the relationship between humanity's shared dependence on regular meals and Jesus as the bread of life?

### **Living it out:**

Practice giving thanks to God the Father for your daily bread before every meal today. Pray for yourself and also for others in the world who are hungry. Practically share with another in need.

## **Day Five:**

### **Forgive Us the Things We Owe**

One of the extraordinary things about Jesus' ambitions in his public career was his aim to form a new kind of family: a family of forgiveness. This, of course, is rooted in God's promises in Jeremiah 31, Ezekiel 34-36, and comes through supremely in Isaiah 40-55—the promise of comfort—when God fully and finally deals with the sins and idolatry of his people.

At the heart of the Lord's Prayer is the motivation to share with one another what we have received from God: the daily bread of forgiveness, which nourishes and sustains relationships.

Families in the first century were multi-generational and included servants and others who all shared a common life together. The family unit was the primary source of safety and provision. As such, the family bond was crucial. If debts were owed, they were sorted out. When things went wrong, they needed to be reconciled. However, the idea of interpersonal 'forgiveness' was something new.

'Debts' and forgiveness go rather closely together. Some translations of the Bible use trespasses rather than debts. However, both words need to be thought through. In Luke 4:19, Jesus declares he has been sent 'to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor', which calls to mind the year of Jubilee when debts were wiped off the record. At the heart of the Lord's Prayer is this idea of relief—as when you are seeking to be released from a debt that is owed.

Yet, it does not stop there. As we pray, 'Forgive us our trespasses/debts', we also are praying that we too might celebrate the year of our Lord's favor. We are praying that we will be empowered to forgive the debts of others, and release those who have cost us something by their offenses. In practice, we need to find ways today to make this a reality in the church, both in our own life and in the life of our community. We might also campaign that debts will be released and relieved wherever possible, for we are Jesus' new family of forgiveness.

The door that opens as we receive God's forgiveness enables an openness that swings in the direction of forgiving somebody else. If we insist on locking the door to other people who need our forgiveness (whether of sins or debts or anything else), then we are in effect slamming the door shut against God's forgiveness and saying, No I don't want to be a forgiveness person.

Jesus of Nazareth went about proclaiming and extending the 'forgiveness of sins' apart from the normal way of sacrifices at the temple. This was quite an extraordinary thing for him to do! Who did Jesus think he was? What was he doing? With Christian hindsight, we see that he was precisely inaugurating the New Covenant of God's Kingdom on earth as in heaven.

Today, when we are praying for the forgiveness of our sins, we are praying for the blessings of the New Covenant. We pray for reconciliation with God and for possibilities of forgiveness and reconciliation to emerge with one another. These opportunities come to us because of the work and faithfulness of Jesus the King, whose Kingdom is all about forgiveness.

### **Question to consider:**

Jesus is the head of a new kind of family: a family of forgiveness. What is the role between release from debts and trespasses in maintaining unity and holiness in the bond of love and peace?

### **Living it out:**

As you pray for God's forgiveness today, practice being a 'forgiveness person' through whom God's relief, release, and gladness will flow out into the life of another.

## **Day Six: Don't Bring Us into the Great Trial, But Rescue Us from Evil**

Have you ever noticed that often when you are trying to do something positive, suddenly it seems as though everything begins working against you? As we worship and work for the flourishing of God's Kingdom on earth as in heaven, evil—though defeated—aggressively resists and continues to revolt against God's rule.

This is one reason why we are frequently met with fierce opposition as we seek to do good things in the name of Jesus.

In the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus warns Peter, James, and John, 'Watch and pray so that you may not come into, *peirasmos*, the testing, the great time of tribulation. He is aware that all the dark powers of evil are converging towards him at this particular moment in history.

As a matter of his own vocation, Jesus knows this will mean going to the very heart of that darkness and taking it upon himself, solo.

One of the more immediate meanings of this clause in the Lord's prayer is that Jesus' disciples might pray that they will be rescued from that time of great trial. He urges them to remain alert and prayerful for deliverance from evil schemes of the evil one. It is easy to see why this pattern of prayer is crucial for Jesus' followers today.

The sentiment in the Lord's Prayer can be either to 'deliver us from evil', or from the 'evil one'. For Jesus and his first followers the difference between the two was not clear-cut, but rather a gray area. Our pattern might be to humbly pray, 'Don't let us crack under pressure from evil', or, 'Don't let those dark forces grab hold of us'. Evil is typically cunning and sly rather than flamboyant and obvious, which is why it is vital to remain vigilant in prayer.

In Luke 22:53, Jesus acknowledges his opponents, 'But, this is your hour when darkness reigns'. The dark powers were closing in on him, and it was his role to defeat them by dying under the weight of the world's sins. It is the reverberations from this great trial from which Jesus' followers continue to pray for deliverance.

When we lose sight of evil forces at work in the world, we may become overly confident in our own abilities to control certain situations, or naïvely assume we are strong enough to face any battle. We can also become so distracted by the enjoyment of good things that we overlook the darkness that yet opposes the Light of the world.

The Lord's Prayer reminds us to seek his Kingdom first and to continue to pray for protection and deliverance until evil is fully and finally extinguished. We remember that God has made a good world and evil has no legitimate place in it. Our prayers about temptation and deliverance from evil must always bring us back with awe and gratitude to the foot of the cross. It is because of what Jesus accomplished there that we now pray with confident hope no matter what we face today.



### Question to consider:

If we think we have named evil precisely, then we have assigned it an important place in God's world, which it should not have. Why is it crucial to pray for protection and deliverance and avoid the extremes of overly fearing or ignoring evil?

### Living it out:

Reflect or journal your thoughts on the differences between temptations, trials, and testing. How might the Lord's Prayer provide comfort and hope in these areas?

## Day Seven: The Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory

Many people are accustomed to closing the Lord's Prayer with, 'For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever and ever'. Yet, these words are not located in either Matthew or Luke's Gospel. Rather, this phrase can be found in the first-century text known as 'The Didache', or 'The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles'. However, even if the 'kingdom, and power and glory' do not go back to Jesus himself, they were seen by many in the early church as a natural way to conclude the prayer. Today, as we prioritize *Jesus-shaped* visions of power and glory, we are getting to the heart of the Lord's Prayer for his Kingdom on earth as in heaven, now and forever.

In Jesus' day, 'kingdom, power, and glory' would have made people think of the imperial centre of power, Rome, and Caesar ruling in absolute power. What comes to your mind when you hear this phrase?

When the early church prayed for the coming of God's kingdom, they were praying that God would show himself in power and glory. They were praying that Jesus would be seen and acknowledged as the true Lord of the world over against worldly rulers and human governments, which was (and is) quite counter-cultural!

Prayerfully considering God's purposes in Christ for the hungry, oppressed, and marginalized in the world is an important way that Jesus' followers might make his Kingdom their top priority today. When Jesus speaks to his disciples in Mark 10:42-43, he warns them that human rulers bent towards worldly power and glory become arrogant and self-centered. Jesus declared that he and his followers were going to 'do power' a different way: the 'Servant-way'. This is most clearly symbolized by the Son of Man coming to give his life as a ransom for many (v 45).

This redefinition of kingdom, power, and glory is woven into the story of Jesus throughout the Gospels. As we pray, we are invoking his Spirit-filled power to defeat injustice, corruption, and evil in the world. We pray with confident hope as we call upon God's power to block what is threatening us and his purposes in the world.

As we seek His Kingdom and priorities first, we affirm that we want to be part of power done differently. Thus, as we close the Lord's Prayer with the familiar words of 'kingdom, power, and glory', we are claiming Jesus Christ as King of Kings and Lord of Lords above all else. We are praying for God to be with us, for Christ to rule and to be active in his world, and to bring this prayer into reality on earth as it is in heaven. Like the Psalmist, we come to our Father and ask him to sort out our troubles, to come to our aid, and to let his Kingdom-power come to us both now and forever.

### **Question to consider:**

We should think of praying the Lord's Prayer as a whole life activity. How is praying for his 'kingdom, power, and glory' a way of claiming his victory over the darkness?

### **Living it out:**

Identify where you see worldly powers set against the Kingdom-way in your specific context today. Practice responding with 'power done a different way' by resisting a similar response. What does the 'Servant-way' look like for you today?

# Alstonville Anglicans

31 March 2020

Dear Parishioners

We are all aware of the extraordinary challenges that we are now facing, because of the coronavirus concerns. You will have been informed that our church may not be having face to face services for an extended period (some say up to 6 months !)

Understandably, with no church services, there cannot be the usual church plate collections. This will have a huge impact financially on our church and its ability to provide our ministry services to one another and the community, especially with the loss of income from the Op Shop due to its temporary closure at this time.

We know that many parishioners are trying to find an easier way to maintain their giving so that our church can continue. Therefore, here is some information to help each of you choose the best way that suits you:

**OPTION 1:** Use Direct Debit facilities through the **Parish Provider** program.

This is organised through our Grafton Diocese office who then provides funds back into our Alstonville account. **This is our preferred choice.** It also provides anonymity as we do not receive a record of who is giving what.

Steps to use this option :

- (1a) Please read the attached brochure, and complete all the information.
- (1b) Post it to the AFGD, PO Box 4 Grafton NSW 2460

OR

**OPTION 2:** Use EFT (Electronic Funds Transfer) from your bank account direct into our church account.

Steps to use this option:

- (2a) on your home computer, you simply log into your bank account, and can set up a regular deduction system, so that a set amount is transferred into our bank account - Alstonville Anglicans - BSB 705077 Account No. 40130
- (2b) indicate the amount you wish to give each time
- (2c) indicate the start date for the first amount, eg Thursday 2nd April

(2d) indicate how often you wish this deduction to occur,

eg weekly/fortnightly/monthly

(2e) importantly, in the Reference section, PLEASE enter your Surname, and an initial of your name (eg. Smith, J.)

OR

**OPTION 3:** Draw a cheque to Alstonville Anglicans for your weekly/fortnightly/monthly giving amount and post to Alstonville Anglicans, PO Box 451, Alstonville NSW 2477.

OR

**OPTION 4:** Continue to use the weekly giving envelopes, AND then place them in our locked letterbox(8 The Avenue), **BEFORE 12 noon on the 1st Friday each month.**

Your continuing support (financially and in prayer) is a major step in enabling our Church to continue.

**Paul Earner      Susan Fitzpatrick      Jenny Noble**  
**Wardens**

## 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	
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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**