



Alstonville  
Anglicans

## Sunday 6th December 2020 Advent 2 Welcome back

- Sunday@9am Anglican Service in the Ministry Centre
- Sunday@10am online via webpage [www.anglicans.live](http://www.anglicans.live)
- Wednesday 9am & Thursday 6pm at St Bartholomew's
- Friday 10am Anglican Service in the Ministry Centre

**Well done  
Messy Church  
artists!**

**2nd  
in the  
Quota Christmas  
Tree competition**



## Sharing the Good Life

We acknowledge the Bundjalung people,  
Traditional custodians of the Land.  
Our doors are open: LGBTQIA+ welcome here.  
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# Thought for the week

*Our Advent focus is 'The Way of Love', Practices for Jesus-Centred Life. We encourage you to take time out of your busyness to reflect on how 'The Way of Love' is taking shape in you.*

## 'The Way of Love'

### **Second Week of Advent: Journeying with Family and Friends**

As we continue our Advent walk, we invite you to see the Way of Love as a journey that can expand to include family and friends. Mary said "yes" to the call to birth Jesus, God's Word, into the world and immediately went in haste to share her good news with her cousin, Elizabeth—a four-day journey into the Judean hills. Isn't that what happens when we hear good news? We are driven to go and tell others. The Way of Love is good news that demands to be shared. Allow the power of Christ's love to transform our lives and the world.

## Worship and Spirituality

### **The Way of Love**

#### **Sunday, December 6**

##### **WORSHIP**

What part of gathering for worship fills your heart with hope?

#### **Monday, December 7**

##### **GO**

Read or watch your local news. Where is reconciliation needed? Pray for healing.

#### **Tuesday, December 8**

##### **LEARN**

Read Luke 1:45. Consider how your faith is a blessing. Share your faith story with a friend.

## **Wednesday, December 9**

### **PRAY**

Offer a prayer of thanks for each person you encounter – both stranger and friend – silently or aloud.

Take time to listen closely to someone you may not ordinarily take seriously or someone with a different perspective than you. Pray that you hear this person as God does.

## **Thursday, December 10**

### **BLESS**

Call or write a family member with whom you desire a closer relationship. Share with them how they are a blessing.

## **Friday, December 11**

### **TURN**

Reflect: Where have I fallen short this week? How can I make amends? Give thanks for the gift of fresh starts that we have through God's grace.

## **Saturday, December 12**

### **REST**

Set aside 30 minutes to rest, pause, and breathe deeply with a friend or family member. Give thanks for the restorative power of love in relationship.

For more Advent resources related to the Way of Love, visit [episcopalchurch.org/wayoflove](http://episcopalchurch.org/wayoflove). There, you'll find links to the full Advent curriculum *Journeying the Way of Love*, as well as *Living the Way of Love in Community*, a nine-session curriculum for use anytime.



**THE WAY OF LOVE**  
*Practices for Jesus-Centered Life*

# Liturgy for 6th December

## Sentence of the Day

Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. For the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together.  
Luke 3.4; Isaiah 40.5a

## Opening Song

### **1. The bright wind is blowing,**

the bright wind of heaven,  
and where it is going to,  
no-one can say;  
but where it is passing  
our hearts are awaking  
to grope from the darkness  
and reach for the day.

2. The bright wind is blowing,  
the bright wind of heaven,  
and many old thoughts  
will be winnowed away;  
the husk that is blown  
is the chaff of our hating,  
the seed that is left  
is the hope for our day.

3. The bright wind is blowing,  
the bright wind of heaven,  
the love that it kindles  
will never betray;  
the fire that it fans  
is the warmth of our caring,  
so lean on the wind  
it will show us the way.

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# Readings

## Mark 1:1-8

<sup>1</sup> The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. <sup>2</sup> As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, "See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; <sup>3</sup> the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,' " <sup>4</sup> John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. <sup>5</sup> And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. <sup>6</sup> Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. <sup>7</sup> He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. <sup>8</sup> I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

## Closing Song

### **1. On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry**

announces that the Lord is nigh;  
come then and hearken, for he brings  
glad tidings from the King of kings.

2. Then cleansed be every heart from sin;  
make straight the way for God within;  
prepare we in our hearts a home  
where such a mighty guest may come.

3. For you are our salvation, Lord  
our refuge and our great reward;

without your grace we waste away  
like flowers that wither and decay.

4. To heal the sick stretch out your hand,  
and bid the fallen sinner stand;  
shine forth, and let your light restore  
earth's own true loveliness once more.

5. To him who left the throne of heaven  
to free us all, let praise be given;  
and praise be to the Father done,  
and Holy Spirit, Three in One.

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## Reflection

A reflection on Mark 13:24-37

### Watchfully Waiting

Last week Doug shared a "litmus test" he had found helpful. It was to ask ourselves "Am I the same today as I was yesterday?" I think it's probably even more helpful to go a bit further and to ask, "Do I want to be the same tomorrow as I am today?"

When our son Keiran woke up on his 5<sup>th</sup> birthday, he was very distressed and said "I haven't grown any bigger!"

In 2007 when I was leaving Macksville after being Rector there for 7 years, I said to the congregation "you don't have to tell me the answer but think about what have you learned or changed during my time with you?"

Now, as Advent begins, we are encouraged do a very personal spiritual stocktake; "am I the same this Advent as I was last Advent? Has there been any spiritual growth in the last twelve months?"

Advent is thought of as being the beginning of the new Church Year (we are now in the new Lectionary for Year B). However, you can't have a beginning without an end, so Advent is as much an ending as it is a beginning. Remember the Slim Dusty song "Looking forward - looking back". If we were to do that, we would probably see that there's a strong connection between the old and the new church years.

Recently, in Year A, we have been hearing the theme of inevitable judgement. What has been done with the talents given out? Are the guests dressed properly for the wedding dinner? Do the lamp bearers have some spare oil ready for the lanterns? A time will come to separate the goats and the sheep. Now, in beginning of Year B, there is the same sort of theme of judgement. When Jesus comes again the powers in the heavens will be shaken and angels will be sent out to gather his "elect" (the chosen ones) "from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven".

Traditionally, Advent is a time of waiting. Yet it is an active type of waiting; not thumb twiddling. So we have the idea of "watchfulness".

There are two kinds of Advent waiting. There's the waiting for Christmas which is all tied up with the story of baby Jesus in the manger and angels and shepherds. We think of Christmas being very cozy and sweet. And then there's the second kind of waiting; a watchful type of waiting for Jesus triumphant appearance in glory. (Jesus return is mentioned over 300 times in the New Testament). This isn't waiting for a baby to come on 25<sup>th</sup> December; this is waiting for our King who says he will return in glory anytime.

We know that people find waiting for Christmas the easier of these two. Generally, we like to hear Dean Martin singing "I'm dreaming of a white Christmas" and to become all excited that "Santa Claus is coming to Town".

But today, we have to think about the other type of Advent waiting. In the opening verses of our reading from Mark chapter 13 we hear: "But in those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken".

That's unsettling! Yet, a few verses later, there's the incredible promise which is at the very heart of Advent: "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away" (13:31).

As we start all the Christmas activities such as visiting the Christmas trees in Uniting Church, going to parties and family dinners, card sending and present buying, there's this amazing promise that outdoes all the glitzy and commercial cultural focus of our time; "God's words will not pass away!".

This message of "the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory" will not pass away.

These "coming in the clouds with great power and glory" things are the "looking forward" part of Advent. But, remember that there's also a "looking back" part of Advent. We remember the God who came to us as Jesus; not just the babe in the manger, but also the King on the cross.

We remember (have you thought about the possibility that word means to put flesh (members) back on again) that we are the Body of Christ.



Later on this morning (in the Thanksgiving Prayer at Holy Communion) we will say together, "Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again." So, we'll be proclaiming that Jesus is coming again. But do we really believe it?

Even if we haven't prayed "Come, Lord Jesus!" many others have. This prayer may well be answered at any time. So, it's important to pay attention to Jesus warning to "keep alert".

Mark seems to be very conscious of time (kairos in Greek). He began his writing (in Chapter 1, verse 15) saying "the time is fulfilled and the Kingdom of God has come near". Now, in Chapter 13, verse 33 in today's reading, he writes "Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come."

We don't very often behave as if we really believe that Jesus is coming again. And yet, if he is coming again, when? It isn't logical for us to say "at a time unknown Jesus is coming again but it won't be today".

Meanwhile, the fact is that we are not the same person who heard this message to be prepared and who celebrated Advent last year. And we are not the same person who will celebrate Advent next year. Our circumstances have changed in the last twelve months and will change again in the year to come. The joys and sorrows and hope we bring to this year's Advent are not the same joys and sorrows and hope we brought to Advent last year and are not the same joys and sorrows and hope we will bring to Advent next year.

For many people, life in this world is actually not very pleasant. But even those fortunate enough to have a life filled with joy and blessing should not be satisfied to the point of complacency. There is more! There is something better!

So, we wait for these better (or even much better) times to come. Those who think very deeply about Jesus' first appearance on Earth; Christ's first Advent, (Jesus birth in Bethlehem and teaching in Galilee and death in Jerusalem), are the ones who are better prepared to be thinking of, and to be watchfully waiting for, his next Advent.

It is the way we wait which is the key. Waiting certainly doesn't and shouldn't mean stagnating.

So friends, do we wait passively or passionately? If we are passionate about Jesus promised return the spinoff of that is that there is plenty of motivation to be alert and to keep watch.

If we are alert, keeping watch, then we'll be ready to join in with whatever we see God doing in this world around us. The more watchful we are, the better prepared we will be to jump in and work with God in the things God is doing in the world right now.

## Worship & Spirituality



### **Messy Church**

Congratulations to the Messy Church families. Second place in the Quota Christmas Tree competition.

**Messy Church Meeting Wednesday  
9<sup>th</sup> December 4pm.**

### **St Peter & St Paul's**

The next service will be Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> December 2020.





We are praying for you.

## Every Monday 10am

Join us in St Bartholomew's or submit your prayer requests online

## Baptism

Today we welcome Ruby Pagotto into our church family. Ruby and her family are members of our Messy Church congregation. The Baptism is at 3.00pm.



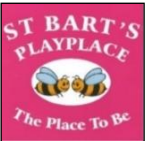
## Anam Cara

Anam Cara means soul friend. Guided Meditation is offered Wednesdays 9am and non-guided silence on

**Thursdays at 6pm**, following an abbreviated compline (prayer at the end of the day).



# Community Engagement



## Play Place Christmas Celebration

Come and join the Play Place Christmas Celebration. Friday December 11<sup>th</sup> 5.30pm. Fun and games and a sausage sizzle.



## Sew helpful

Come along on Mondays from 1.00pm to 3.00pm. Not everyone brings a craft project! You can learn a new skill, work on a project, or just enjoy the company. All welcome!

## Alstonville Anglicans Twilight Christmas Fair

A huge thank you to all who have worked so hard to make the Fair a success.

# Finance

## Alstonville Anglicans - Offertory Options

We give thanks to God for all people making offertories to the vision of God's Kingdom here on earth.

Your offertory can be made using the following options:

- Direct transfer to our bank account  
BSB 705 077 / Acc: 00032931
- Parish Provider - Direct debit through Anglican Funds - Forms available from the office
- Cheque to Alstonville Anglicans (PO Box 451, Alstonville 2477 or Offertory Plate)
- Offertory envelopes
- Cash

Thank you for your support.

### ANGLICAN PARISH OF ALSTONVILLE

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