



Alstonville Anglicans

First Sunday of Lent

Sunday 6th March 2022



https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Briton_Rivi%C3%A8re_-_The_Temptation_in_the_Wilderness.jpg

Sharing the Good Life

We acknowledge the Bundjalung people, traditional custodians of the Land.

Our doors are open: LGBTQIA+ welcome here.

Streaming licence: CCLI 102220

Alstonville Anglicans are committed to ensuring that all people who participate in our worship, programs and ministries have a safe and rewarding experience.

Liturgy for 6th March

Sentence of the Day

Worship the Lord your God and serve only him. Luke 4.8

Collect

O saving God,
who led your people through the wilderness
and brought them to the promised land:
so, guide us that, following our Saviour,
we may walk through the wilderness of this world
and be brought to the glory of the world which is to come.
through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Readings Luke 4:1-13

1 Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness,
2 where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those 3 The devil said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread.'
4 Jesus answered him, 'It is written, "One does not live by bread alone." '
5 Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world.
6 And the devil said to him, 'To you I will give their glory and all this authority; for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please.
7 If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours.'
8 Jesus answered him, 'It is written,
'Worship the Lord your God,

and serve only him.” ’

9 Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, ‘If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here,

10 for it is written,

“He will command his angels concerning you,
to protect you”,

11 and

“On their hands they will bear you up,

so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.” ’

12 Jesus answered him, ‘It is said, “Do not put the Lord your God to the test.” ’

13 When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time.

14 Then Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding country.

15 He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone.

Messages

Worship & Spirituality



World Day of Prayer **POSTPONED**

New details to be advised. For more information contact Nikki Wagner

nikki.wagner@lism.catholic.edu.au

Life Groups Lent 2022



STARTS THIS WEEK! DON'T MISS OUT

Let's be honest! The words spoken by Jesus at the Last Supper, the real reason why he died on Good Friday, and what the

resurrection means for 21st century Christians, is all a bit of a mystery isn't it? COME AND FIND OUT MORE!

Enquiries: Greg Ezzy M0412660742. If you are interested you can sign up by adding your name to the clip boards in the church or via the website: anglicans.live

Community Engagement

AREA Breakfast

Missing news about what Bruce Fleming is doing at Alstonville High School? Then hear him "preach" in our church shortly...BUT come and enjoy yourself at this year's A.R.E.A. Breakfast: **Saturday 26th March - here at Ministry Centre**

More details coming out soon. Thanks for your ongoing support.
John Noble

SRE teachers are urgently needed in our local schools

The steps to becoming an authorised SRE teacher are:

1. Complete application form and return to Maree at the Bishop's Registry.
2. Complete SRE essential training.

SRE Essential Training

Training will be delivered over Zoom on 26 and 27 March.
Registrations close 16 March.

Further details about SRE please contact Mark Stuckey on 0428 404 783.



LinC Luncheon

Wednesday 23rd March at 12 noon in the SDA room. RSVP 16th March to Viv Carson 0422 201 191
lincalstonville@gmail.com

Anglicare North Coast 2022 Northern NSW Flood Appeal

Photo: AAP Image/Jason O'Brien



Anglicare North Coast has opened a FLOOD APPEAL for tax deductible donations.

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



Donate Now- Please reference your deposit 'Lismore 2022'

Use the QR code

or navigate to **www.anglicarenorthcoast.org.au** and click on 'donate here'

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

Bank account: Anglicare North Coast BSB: 705077 A/C: 00041320

Community-On-the-Verge



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

Good Governance

COVID Update

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

Sign Up for Planned Giving

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

Sermon Notes

for 27th February 2022

Clouds and Glory: Sermon on Luke 9.28-36

Transfiguration

We glance at the story of the Transfiguration as the final chapter in the season of Epiphany. As you know epiphany means the manifestation of God. Throughout the weeks of epiphany, we are gradually transformed until we reach our full illumination with Christ in the Transfiguration. Imagine that the season of Epiphany is like a dimmer switch which gradually increases the light in a room from a dim ambiance to full wattage brightness. For Eastern Christians, the feast day of the Transfiguration, is significant. The emphasis on Christian practice in the Eastern Orthodox tradition culminates in the idea of *theopoiesis*, which means made into God, or divinised or transfigured. The story of Christ's transfiguration is for all of us, we are also changed into dazzling light. The usual date for Feast of Transfiguration is the 6th of August. The 6th of August is significant for another reason too, it was the day the Americans chose to drop the nuclear bomb on Hiroshima. Today's reading of the Transfiguration coincides with another moment in history, Russia's invasion of the Ukraine. Putin issued many threats in his declaration of war, the most unsettling was for the west. Putin said: "Anyone who tries to get in our way, let alone tries to threaten us and our people, should know that Russia's answer will be immediate, and it will lead to consequences of the sort that you have not faced ever in your history." (Time magazine, 24 February 2022, <https://time.com/6150787/putin-us-risk-ukraine-war/>). I felt fearful when I heard Putin's threat and wonder if you did too. I highlight here how history's timeline records that humanity's deadliest decisions occur in a liturgical time that honours human

potential to be totally transformed by love and light. Humankind makes decisions for death and destruction on a feast day that celebrates light, transcendence and transformation. How on earth do we hold these two opposites together?

Clouds and glory

It seems that the Scriptures may be ahead of me on this one, the glory and transfiguration of Christ is intricately linked with death, crucifixion, and the mechanics of empire. Cloud and glory go together. The heights of human transformation in the transfiguration are closely associated with the clouds of utter human failure. That clouds and glory go together is evident in three ways. First, failure follows the mountain top experience of transfiguration. We would have thought that having seen the goal of human evolution the disciples might have been better equipped to respond to the world. No, they fail in faith, fail in prayer, and fail in healing. Second, the story of transfiguration is utterly linked not only to the baptism but also to crucifixion of Jesus. The words "This is my Beloved Son" connect the baptism, transfiguration, and transfiguration of Jesus. These three stories are three pivots around which the gospel moves. Third, it turns out that God dwells not in the dazzling clouds of light but in the clouds of darkness.

Perhaps if we step vividly into the story, it's resonance may also vibrate within us.

28 About eight days after Jesus said this,

The 8 days may refer to the Feast of Booths which celebrates how God looked after the Hebrew people in the wilderness when they escaped Pharaoh's Egypt. The Feast of Booths is a joyful celebration where families live in tents and lean-tos made of palm branches.

he took Peter, John, and James with him and went up onto a mountain to pray Finding peace on the Mountain to pray makes sense to us. There is a primal instinct in us humans about mountains being sacred. Spiritual leaders ascend a mountain to commune with the Divine; Moses ascended Mt Sinai and Elijah nestled in Mt Horeb. Jesus is about to non-violently challenge the mechanics of empire and so withdraws to the mountain to gain strength. The mountain top is an obvious illusion to Exodus and Mt Sinai when God married the Hebrew people in a covenant (see Exodus 19.16). "I am going to come to you in a dense cloud," God says to Moses, "in order that the people may hear when I speak with you and so trust you ever after" (19:9). As the Hebrew slaves people gathered at the foot of Mt Sinai God enclosed them in a thick cloud, with the sound of trumpets, thunder, and lightening.

As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning.

Like Moses on Mt Sinai, and like the burning bush Moses encountered while caring for sheep in the desert, it is as if Jesus becomes all flame. Peter, James, and John witness something other worldly; not only is Jesus all flame but he is joined in the light by Moses and Elijah. In case we missed that this transfiguration is a new Exodus, Luke makes it plain: **"They spoke about his Exodus which he was about to bring to fulfilment at Jerusalem."**

³² Peter and his companions were very sleepy, but when they became fully awake, they saw his glory and the two men standing with him

On the night of Jesus' arrest Jesus will ask Peter, James, and John to pray with him, they will fall asleep. Similarly, at this key moment in the life of Jesus the three disciples are sleepy too. Just as Peter attempts to grasp the moment a dark cloud descends and covers them. They can see nothing but hear the

words that are said also at Jesus' baptism and the crucifixion: this is my beloved, my son, listen. One moment there was dazzling light that blinds and the next moment there was dazzling darkness that blinds even more.

A dazzling dark cloud of unknowing

is this dark cloud of unknowing that blinds you, terrifies you and leaves you speechless that is the important symbol for us. Notice that the three disciples worked out for themselves that they had to shut up, previously Jesus had to keep saying, "Be quiet; tell no one." It is from this cloud of unknowing that God speaks. God is encountered in the dazzling darkness of the cloud that swallows them up. The Gospel is that God Dwells in the Darkness.

The cloud of dazzling darkness reminds me of a time when I walked Table Mountain. Table Mountain is an iconic feature of South Africa, as is the Tablecloth of cloud that covers it in Spring. When that tablecloth cloud descends, you can see nothing. The signposts are hidden, and other senses are heightened as you walk slower, much slower, for who knows where the edge is. The tourist map you were given is useless and you are left to find your own way when you can hardly see your hand in front of you. Walking within that cloud of unknowing is invigorating though; probably because your senses are so focused on your breathing and taking one slow step after another. You are too caught up in the moment to worry about distractions such as taking selfies and landscape photos. It is this experience that I think of when disciples, saints, mystics, and ordinary people who love Jesus find themselves in the dark cloud of unknowing. The dark cloud is an inevitable event if you follow Christ.

According to those who have devoted their entire lives to prayer, the dark cloud is where God takes us a part and remakes us,

where we die and are resurrected in love. Holy Darkness, Blessed Night is what St John of the Cross will teach us from his dark cloud. Within this dark cloud of unknowing, everything is swallowed up. All the second-hand faith that has lovingly been given to us by parents, preachers and Sunday School teachers fails us, they are like the useless tourist maps when walking on Table Mountain when the cloud has descended. The usual rules of religion do not work. The means of grace that once sustained us, leave us empty.

Here is the thing, while I might be surprised at human destruction on the feast day of human transfiguration, the Scriptures anticipate this. The words said at the transfiguration are the same words said at the crucifixion, forever binding the two into a sacred dance. According to our scriptures, cloud and glory go together.

The dark cloud of unknowing is not a test or something we have to get through. No. In the Hebrew Scriptures and in the Gospel, the dark cloud is where God dwells. To be invited into the cloud is a privilege. Those who come out may not have many words, we may even doubt their sanity, and they may be forever changed. Their message is similar – they would never choose the experience, but now that it has happened, they would never give it back.

“Today you have heard a story you can take with you when you go. It tells you that no one has to go up the mountain alone. It tells you that sometimes things get scary before they get holy. Above all, it tells you that there is someone standing in the centre of the cloud with you, shining so brightly that you may never be able to wrap your mind around him, but who is worth listening to all the same--because he is God's beloved, and you are his, and whatever comes next, you are up to it.”
BBT. March 02, 2014. Day One

Lent and Teshuva

Lent is the period of 40 days in which we ready ourselves for the mystery of Easter. Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent. Symbolically, we journey with Jesus in the wilderness. Lent begins on Ash Wednesday. Ashes are crossed onto the forehead with the words "remember you are dust and to dust you shall return" or "Repent and believe the Good News". As we journey into lent with prayer, fasting, alms giving and other disciplines, we take with us a word and a song. The word is Teshuvah. The song is "Anthem" by Leonard Cohen.

Teshuvah, a word often translated as "repentance," is more accurately understood as turning back (shuv) to God. Teshuvah means return, repair and renewal. Teshuvah means to [Re]turn to the self you have always been meant to become. A good explanation of teshuvah is from Kalonymous Kalmah Shapira the grand rabbi of Piaseczno, Poland, written while he was imprisoned in the Warsaw Ghetto in 1941:



Teshuvah is a creative act,
not a simple return
We return to who we were meant
to be
but have not yet become
Growth and possibility
Dormant, a sculpture lies hidden
in a brute block of stone
That is why the process of
teshuvah,
as painful and
even as humiliating
as it can be

is in fact
a very joyous,
hopeful act.

Psalm 51 is sometimes called "Perek Teshuvah" – the great Chapter of Repentance. After King David was confronted with the truth of his crimes and the prospect of judgment, he returned to God for cleansing and forgiveness. David's teshuvah reveals that we also can return to God on the basis of His abundant compassion – God's *rachamim*. *Rachamim* means compassion but a better translation says that it is the wombishness of God. From the very core of creation flows compassion, reminding us that we are loved. *Rachamim and Teshuvah*, go together. Here is a teshuvah from Cohen: The birds they sang at the break of day. Start again, I heard them say. Start again.

Anthem By Leonard Cohen

The birds they sang
At the break of day
Start again
I heard them say
Don't dwell on what has
passed away
Or what is yet to be
Ah, the wars they will be
fought again
The holy dove, she will be
caught again
Bought and sold, and bought
again
The dove is never free

I can't run no more
With that lawless crowd
While the killers in high
places
Say their prayers out loud
But they've summoned,
they've summoned up
A thundercloud
They're going to hear from
me

*Ring the bells that still can
ring...*

*Forget your perfect offering
There is a crack, a crack in
everything
That's how the light gets in*

You can add up the parts
But you won't have the sum

*Ring the bells that still can
ring
Forget your perfect offering
There is a crack, a crack in
everything
That's how the light gets in*

You can strike up the march
There is no drum
Every heart, every heart
To love will come
But like a refugee

We asked for signs
The signs were sent
The birth betrayed
The marriage spent
Yeah, and the widowhood
Of every government
Signs for all to see

*Ring the bells that still can
ring...
Forget your perfect offering
There is a crack, a crack in
everything
That's how the light gets in*

As we begin lent, we may ask:

- Where am I in this moment?
- Whom have I become?
- What has been my impact on others, on the earth?
- What changes do I need to make?

Regular Reminders

Worship & Spirituality

Church Open

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

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

Anam Cara



Anam Cara Praying for you Monday mornings 10am

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

Community Engagement

Play Place



Play Place 9.30-11.30am Thursdays during school terms.

Sew Helpful



Sew Helpful 1st & 3rd Mondays 1pm

Pastoral Care

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

Prayers

Please remember Nancy in your prayers this week.

Alstonville Anglicans

Ministers all the baptised!

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

Associates The Reverend John Kidson 0411 394 213

The Reverend Geoff Vidal 0447 645 456
The Reverend Doug Bannerman 0418 182 450
The Reverend Greg Ezzy 0412 660 742

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

Dates 27th February to 6th March

6th March Sunday 9am Holy Communion
7th March Parish Office 9am – 12pm
Op Shop 9am – 3pm
10am Anam Cara praying for Community
8th March Tuesday Parish Office Closed (Please refrain from
accessing the office at this time)
9th March Parish Office 9am – 12pm
Anam Cara 9am
Op Shop 9am – 3pm
10th Mar Parish Office 9am – 12pm
Op Shop 9am – 3pm
Play Place 9.30am
Anam Cara 6pm
11th Mar Parish Office 9am – 12pm
Friday 10am Holy Communion
12th Mar Sunday 9am Holy Communion