



Alstonville
Anglicans

Third Sunday in Lent

7 March 2021

**Welcome,
so good to see you.**



Sharing the Good Life

We acknowledge the Bundjalung people,
Traditional custodians of the Land.
Our doors are open: LGBTQIA+ welcome here.
Streaming licence: One License

Thought for the week on John 2

"I can't breathe"

Here is what the story in John 2, the cleansing of the temple, is **not** about: the cleansing of the temple is **not** a spiritual vs material battle where Jesus is offended that money is in a spiritual place. This is **not** about impure vs pure, impure money taken out of the temple and the temple being then restored to pure prayer. No, if this were the case why does the Scripture specifically mention challenging the dove sellers and not the lamb sellers?

The temple represented not only the spiritual centre of Jewish life, but especially the commercial and political power of the religious rulers. The Galileans suffered under a multiple tax burden including temple tax. The preferred temple sacrifice was a lamb, although a provision was made for the poor in Leviticus 5.7: "Anyone who cannot afford a lamb is to bring two young pigeons/doves to the Lord..."

Jesus' protest is ignited by the way the poor are treated and economically exploited by being forced to buy expensive sacrifices. Jesus shuts down the financial system of the city temple during the annual peak of its commercial activity. Was it violent? No, the whipping cords were used to move the animals. If you want to define violence to include disorderly conduct, system disruption, vandalizing property, or blocking the flow of traffic, then sure, I suppose this was violent. The true violence however is the exploitation of the poor who finance the lifestyles of the rich.

The touchstones of John 2 and our current epoch are similar enough for me to wonder if like Jesus I too should be blocking traffic, disrupting systems as etc as part of protests such as the extinction rebellion, black lives matter, protesting aboriginal deaths in custody...

Liturgy for 7th March

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.**

Readings

John 2:13-22

¹³ The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁴ In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. ¹⁵ Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. ¹⁶ He told those who were selling the doves, "Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!" ¹⁷ His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me." ¹⁸ The Jews then said to him, "What sign can you show us for doing this?" ¹⁹ Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." ²⁰ The Jews then said, "This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?" ²¹ But he was speaking of the temple of his body. ²² After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

Messages

Worship and Spirituality portfolio



Dedication of Leaders – Sunday 7 March. This week in our 9:00am Service we acknowledge and dedicate those who make up the Leadership Team for 2021. Please keep the Team in your prayers.



SRE – Scripture in Schools
Prayers are asked as this ministry begins in our local schools. If you are interested in teaching scripture in school please contact
Merlene Hellyar:0428 116 744



World Day of Prayer

Many thanks to all you beautiful co-workers who made the day such a success. Michael Wolfe from Messy Church shared his experiences of Vanuatu and people were riveted.

Community engagement



Sew Helpful

Sew Helpful will now be meeting on the 2nd and 4th Mondays only.
Contact Carol: 0427326832



Repurposing Plastic: We have an opportunity to recycle plastic milk bottle tops and bread tags. These items sent to Adelaide where they are melted down and repurposed to assist people with disabilities. Items can be left at the collection point at the Op Shop. Contact person is John Noble.

Empowering Leadership

2021 Parish Council

Rector's Warden: Bruce Sharp

Warden: Jenny Noble

Parish Councillors: Phil Crandon, Des Fitzpatrick, Margaret Brown, Charlie Handley, Graham Ireland, Robyn Hannah, Carol Vidal, Amanda Middleton

Loving God, thank you for being our shield and strength. You are a God of compassion and faithfulness. Please protect, nourish and sustain our church leaders, the parish council, the ministry coordinators and the lay ministers through the work of your Holy Spirit. May they find rest and encouragement in your loving care. In Jesus' holy name. Amen.

Workshops about closure of church buildings

In March the Diocese will be hosting workshops in the Northern and Southern regions for those parishes where there will be worship centre closures under the restructure.

- 20th March 10 am at Lismore (St Andrew's Church Hall)

The workshops will address the pastoral, liturgical and practical arrangements related to a forthcoming closure as well as issues surrounding the disposal of furnishings and other items, including memorial items, and the sale of the buildings. We are sure that there will be a lot of questions about the process so there will be plenty of time for asking questions.

Please allow 3 hours for the workshop.

Please register your attendance as soon as possible to Mrs Maree Collett at pa@graftondiocese.org.au

We hope that these occasions will offer valuable insights and ways forward that will make this process run smoothly in your parish.

Good Governance

COVID 19 & Church Services

Cleaning: Chairs need to be wiped over with detergent solution and dried after usage. Please lend a hand.

Singing: if wearing a mask singing is permitted.

Volunteers Needed Concierge: Members of the congregation are very much needed to provide a hand sanitising and welcoming face to the Op Shop. If you can spare 3 hours a week or fortnight on a Monday, Wednesday or Thursday between 9am and 3pm please call Paul Earner 0416280140.

Faithfulness in Service

As a follow up to the AGM where it was mentioned about ALL Alstonville Anglican church VOLUNTEERS are required by Diocese ordinances to have undertaken some training, we are offering to those who believe they would need to undertake this face to face course to demonstrate to the community that we provide a Safe Church environment.

FAITHFULNESS IN SERVICE TRAINING

this coming Saturday 13th MARCH

9AM until NOON (with a yummy Morning Tea included!!)

at our Ministry Centre with NO cost to participants

Please advise John NOBLE 0414285132 or via email jnoble2477@gmail.com by Tuesday 9th March that you are attending (to enable appropriate catering).

Op Shop



Our Op Shop is now open Monday, **Wednesday** and Thursday. Thank you to all the wonderful volunteers.

Sermon notes

28th February (Mark 8)

Learn: a practice on a way of love

Introduction

A miracle has happened in our time. On Thursday January 15, 2009, Flight 1549 took off from LaGuardia airport New York City bound for North Carolina. The plane was heading North over the Bronx. Two minutes after take-off the plane had a double strike: a flock of geese took out first one and then the other engine. They lost power.

Faced with disaster Chesley Sullenberger had to make some critical decisions – they had about two or three minutes to do so. The nearby airports were too far. The only option was to land on the Hudson River. It is not easy to land on water. Land too soon or too late you miss the water. Land too hard and the plane breaks into pieces.

A number of important actions had to be taken in those crucial two or three minutes. Amazingly, the Pilot makes a decision informs air traffic control and then ends communication so that there is no debate. How decisive! What leadership! The pilots had to turn off the engines. They had to set the right speed so that the plane could glide as long as possible. They had to get the nose of the plane down to keep speed, but then lift it up again before hitting the water. They had to disconnect the auto pilot. They had to glide the plane in a sharp left-hand turn. They then had to straighten the plane up so that it would be exactly level with the river.

All 155 people on board the plane were safe. Many describe this as a miracle.

The power of acquired habits

While the safe landing of Flight 1549 is brilliant it is moreover a spectacular demonstration of the power of acquired habits. On closer examination the landing of flight 1549 on the Hudson River is the result of a number of factors:

- The intensive training of the pilots
- Years of experience: Chesley Scullenberger was near retirement
- Confidence in the training and experience that has taken a life-time to achieve.
- Courage
- Restraint
- Cool judgement
- Being calm and centred
- and concern to do the right thing for others.

None of these factors come naturally. The miracle happens when a person makes a thousand small decisions which may in the early years have required effort and concentration. When the crunch comes these decisions have become second nature. It was second nature to the pilots to take the steps they took in order to land the plane safely. Many years of practice, study, training and experience were built to these "second nature" decisions. It is precisely this aspect of what becomes "second nature" that best describes the way of love.

What is a way of love?

Our theme this year is the way of love. A way of love is a way of life centred on Jesus and the regular disciplines or practices that make such a life possible. A way of love is a way of de-centring the self to make God the centre of our lives. The way of love becomes the way of our lives. In a way of love, we live from the True Self, the inner self. Living a life of love is a life worth living.

In the words of Michael Curry, a way of love is "not microwave religion." It takes time. It takes the consistent practice of disciplines such as turn, learn, worship, pray, rest, go, bless.

Last week Doug reflected on the discipline of rest as a practice in the way of love. We reflect on the practice of Learn through the lens of Matthew 8.

Why adopt “learn” as a discipline in a way of love?

Learn means to study Jesus and the resources that help us to study Jesus include the Bible and sacred texts that describe what following Jesus looks like. Why adopt learn as a habit? We are bombarded by information all the time. Gradually repeated patterns of information form and shape us. But what is the ultimate source of information for you and how you can live the best possible life? Clearly the pattern of Jesus as it is revealed to be in the Bible.

This is precisely what Paul meant in Romans 12. Listen to how two different translations depict the necessity of Learn as a spiritual discipline in a way of Love.

New International Version: Do not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is - his good, pleasing and perfect will.

New Living Translation: Don't copy the behaviour and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

We practice Learn in a way of love so that the pattern of Jesus can become my pattern. Michael Curry again: “We want to engage in the world on the Word's terms not the world's terms.” Without learn we unconsciously respond to events according to the patterns of the world which are “the survival of the fittest” or “me first” or “God helps those who helps themselves”. According to Jesus, God helps those who cannot help themselves. We adopt learn as a powerful habit because we

want the Word to master us. We read the Bible, but the Bible reads us too.

'Learn' and Mark 8

In Mark 8 we have a clear demonstration of what happens when we allow the pattern of the world to shape us, and not the pattern of Jesus. This is what Jesus means when he rebukes Peter: "your mind is on human things not divine things." What is going on in Peter's mind?

Imagine this: Peter is a Hebrew growing up under the oppression of the Romans, the oppression is brutal. Peter is also deeply spiritual, and his culture and tradition promise him that a time will come when a Messiah will end the oppression and reinstate the kingdom of David. For about a year or more Peter has been following Jesus and has witnessed the miracles, the teaching and how people are following him. Not once but twice huge crowds have gathered around Jesus. In the immediate run-up to the confrontation between Peter and Jesus, Jesus creates a Eucharist feast in the wilderness and the scripture is telling, 4000 people were fed not counting women and children. This is not chauvinism. Why mention the men and not the women? Could it be that what the disciples are seeing is an army that can violently overthrow the Romans? Is this what is on Peter's mind when he rebukes Jesus? Later Jesus organises a feast and this time there are 5000 people. In 8v27-30 Jesus asks his friends who do you say that I am? Peter replies: "You are the Messiah."

Jesus describes himself not as the Messiah but as the human one. He then describes how he will suffer and die. Instead of leading a war alongside the traditional leaders to re-establish the reign of David against the Romans, the human one will instead be murdered by a coalition of the traditional leadership and the oppressive regime Rome working together. The true humanity of Jesus, humanity defined by love is contrasted with the non-humane brutality of the Powers, the

religious, economic and political powers. This is too much for Peter.

Without the discipline of learn on the way of love Peter has allowed the patterns of the world, the myth of religious violence, to become his pattern. In contrast the pattern of Jesus is to die to death itself, to die to the myth of redemptive violence, to die to violence itself, to love enemies and see enemies as a gift from God.

The threat to put people to death is the ultimate power of the domination system and this is how the Powers remains in power. Die to that threat and the domination system loses its power. Resist this fear of death and pursue love regardless of the consequences and the domination system has no authority. This doesn't come naturally, it is a habit that is built up over time through an intentional study of Jesus, through the discipline of learn.

Will we learn from Jesus? Will we let his pattern of loving enemies, seeing enemies as gift, of resisting all violence be our pattern? Will we take up the cross?

To take up the cross does not mean private suffering, it means to agree to receive the full punishment for treason. Nelson Mandela took up the cross when he agreed to treason. Whatever our thoughts about Julian Assange it is clear that there are political consequences for his truth telling and he has taken up the cross. To take up the cross is to take political action against the powers for the sake of love. It is not easy, but it can become second nature. I end with a quote from Walter Wink.

"The slack decadence of culture-Christianity cannot produce athletes of the spirit. Those who are the bearers of tomorrow undergo what others might call disciplines ... to stay spiritually alive."

ANGLICAN PARISH OF ALSTONVILLE

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

Parish Office: 8 The Avenue, Alstonville
Telephone: 6628 0231
Postal: PO Box 451, Alstonville NSW 2477
e-mail: office@anglicans.live
website: anglicans.live

The Anglican Op Shop

1 The Avenue, Alstonville
Tel: 6628 8777

Dates 7th March to 14th March

7th March Holy Communion 9am

8th March Anam Cara Praying for You 10am
International Women's Day

10th March Anam Cara 9am
Lent Study 11am-12.30pm

11th March Lent Study 4-5.30pm
Anam Cara 6pm

13th March Faithfulness in Service Training 9am-12.00 noon

14th March Holy Communion 9am
St Peter & St Paul's Service 10am