



St Leonard's Church
cnr Strickland & Mitchell Sts
Denmark

Anglican Parish of Denmark-Walpole

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St. George's Church
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Wardens: Alison Kershaw 9848 2606, Sally Prickett 0428 747 262. Judy Ross 0455 509 317
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We endeavour to be an expression of God's love in the community

Wednesday, 8 April 2020

Dear Parishioners,

Greetings on this very different Holy Week and approach to Easter.

Easter is the most important feast in the Christian calendar. In many ways our faith hangs on the events of these few days, especially Jesus' death and resurrection.

I have always felt the importance of making the spiritual journey from the triumphant entry on Palm Sunday, with songs of 'Hosanna' and the waving of palm leaves, the important teaching delivered in that Upper Room, through betrayal, humiliation, torture and death, to, finally, the joy of an empty tomb on Easter morning. For me, if I haven't walked that full journey, Easter somehow has lost some of its power.

I had been looking forward to sharing that journey with you this year, but alas, in the physical sense, that is not possible. I hope that some of you have found Keith Slater's *Simple Table Services* helpful or have managed to look at one or more of the readings in the gospels which I shared with you last week.

Have those of you online managed to explore any of the streaming services from the diocesan website? I tuned in last week to the Palm Sunday service from Bunbury Cathedral, which I enjoyed. Bishop Ian shared a beautiful prayer from the South African Prayer Book, which is used there as "An Act of Spiritual Communion", at times when people are not able to physically join together at the Communion Table.

Perhaps this is something we could all do together on a Sunday at about 10.15 am, which would be about the time we would normally be gathering at the altar rail.

Jesus, may all that is you
flow into me;

May your body and blood
be my food and drink;
May your passion and death
be my strength and life;
Jesus, with you by my side,
enough has been given;

May the shelter I seek
be the shadow of your cross;
Let me not run
from the love which you offer;

Hold me safe
from the forces of evil
And on each of my dyings
shed your light and your love;
Keep calling to me until the day comes when,
with your saints,
I may praise you forever. Amen.

I hope that touches your soul, as it did for me.

So, looking forward with positivity, rather than dwelling on what we can't do, let's look at what can be done, what is being done, and pray that when we come out of this, we will be changed and better people for it.

Something I intend to do this Sunday, along with Alison Kershaw, we are meeting at St Leonard's at 5.45 am to participate in a Service of Light, to light the new Pascal Candle for St Leonard's. If you are awake at that

time, please join us in prayer from where you are. We are also going to have a go at recording it, and if successful, we will put something up on the website, and include a photo in next week's Pastoral Letter.

One of the reflections which came across my Facebook feed this week, which I found helpful came from someone called the Rev Dr Emily C. Heath:

The first Easter didn't happen at a church. It happened outside of an empty tomb, while all the disciples were sequestered in a home, grief-stricken and wondering what was going on. So, we're all going to be keeping things pretty Biblical this Easter.

Times are strange but I have found over the last few days on my thoughts have turned to "when this is all over" and we are able to worship together again. Oh what a celebration we will have! I came across this:

I pray we don't go back to normal

1. I pray that the next time a friend grabs me and pulls me in for a hug, I actually take the time to appreciate the gift of their embrace.
2. I pray that when school resumes and people are dropping kids off, they take the time to thank the staff for the amazing gift that they give to our community.
3. I pray that the next time I'm sitting in a crowded restaurant I take the time to look around at the smiling faces, loud voices and thank God for the gift of community.
4. I pray that the next time I'm standing in church listening to the voices of praise and worship that I take a moment to thank God for the gift of congregation.

I certainly hope that you miss me as much as I miss you!!!

A couple of final comments for those who are online:

There are some terrific resources and links to parishes who are streaming services, at bunburyanglican.org/online-resources.html

In the bishop's latest newsletter, he points out that an App for *Epray* daily services is now available, free, to everyone. It is available for both Apple and Android smart phones and tablets. The new Android version that is coming will no longer ask for an app code, but if it still does, you can bypass this by using the code 9999.

Finally, please **do not** use the email: rector@denmarkanglican.org.au Certainly not if you are trying to get me! You can use the denmarkanglican@gmail.com but preferably fr.sall4@gmail.com

Please, those of you who are not on email and are getting hard copies of my weekly offerings, remember to pick them up from the church porch on a Friday (although this week it is Thursday) and if you are unable to do this, eg you are strictly self-isolating, please let me know and we can make some other arrangements.

Stay safe everyone. God's blessings be upon you as you journey through the last few days of Holy Week, to that wonderful explosion of joy that is the Day of Resurrection!

May you find in Christ Jesus, our risen Lord, a companion for your journey, a sure ground for your hopes, the peace that passes understanding and the joy that life is eternal.

With my prayers and good wishes, your priest and your friend.

