



Mornington & Mount Martha Anglican Church
MMMAnglican eNewsletter

- Parish Contacts -

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www.mmmanglican.org.au

Our buildings may be closed but our church is alive and well



Nurturing people in FAITH
Living as people of HOPE
Connecting as people of LOVE

www.mmmanglican.org.au

Struggling to make sense of things? 0419 581 792

- FROM OUR VICAR -

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me." What encouraging words for us as we live through this time of isolation and uncertainty. Jesus reminds us, in today's gospel reading, that he is here for us; he goes ahead, no matter what, to prepare a place for us, and he will guide us along the right paths, along the Way to the fullness of life he promised last week.

Is your heart troubled? Are you trusting in God? Is your belief firmly grounded in Christ? Jesus has made it possible for us to know the Father: not just to know that there is a Father, not just to know of the Father, but to have an intimate relationship *with* the Father. Let's take some time this week to really let that truth settle into us - not just into our minds but into our hearts and into our very depths - our soul.

I came across this quote from Billy Graham this week. It is a timely reminder to each of us

To know about Christ
is not enough.

To be convinced that he is the Saviour of the world
is not enough.

To affirm your faith in him
as we do in the Apostles' Creed,
is not enough.

you really don't actually believe in Christ
until you make a commitment of your life to him
and receive him as your Saviour.

Billy Graham quoted in Distilled Wisdom by A.A. Montapert

Staying Connected - in worship, in discipleship and pastorally

Did you know that our Facebook page can be accessed even if you are not subscribed to Facebook? This link will take you straight to our page, where you can stay connected and see what we are doing and watch the short reflection video clips being uploaded regularly.

<https://www.facebook.com/mmmanglican/>

Bishop Paul is providing a weekly Eucharistic Service online. You can [access these services here](#).

Each Sunday morning, a moderated version of our Connections Service is available on our Facebook page to participate in and share with others. Because of the limitations of technology and working within copyright laws, it will be in different sections, including a Kingdom Kids section. You will be able to participate in any or all of the sections and to share any of them with others. There is a sermon, prayers, confession and 'A Time To Connect' with some people sharing how they are growing closer to God during this time of isolation.

Join us for **Afternoon Tea at 2:00pm TODAY via Zoom**. You can access with this link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81595608944?pwd=RmptUFVzOEFQL2EoK2drZUtDaVV2QTog>

Meeting ID: 815 9560 8944 Password: 006282

(You shouldn't need the ID or password if you click straight in.) If you need help to set up or use Zoom, or if you would like a practice run before Sunday, please just ask. If you come in 5 minutes early, you can call me if you have any problems.

If you are interested in participating in a **weekly discussion group to reflect on the Gospel reading for the coming Sunday**, we will be offering a group **via Zoom starting next Week**. We will aim for a 7:00pm start and we will aim for 45 minutes but no more than an hour. If you are interested, please let me know and advise me of your preference between a Tuesday or Wednesday evening.

If you know of anyone who needs **pastoral support or contact**, please let me know. I am the first point of contact now for any pastoral matters. Please email me

vicar@mmmanglican.org.au or call on 5974 2451. If I cannot answer, please leave a message and I shall get back to you.

[Link to Facebook page with video clips:](#)

Each week, we are recording a couple of reflections for you to watch at home. Please 'Like' this page and 'share' it so that we can get the message out there. Facebook runs off an algorithm that responds to traffic. The more attention our site receives, the further it will be able to reach. This is a helpful outreach tool during this time.

You Know the Way

Lectionary Readings Year A

Acts 7:55-60

Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16

1 Peter 2:2-10

John 14:1-14

On this fifth Sunday of Easter, the setting of our Gospel is grim and sombre. Jesus has just finished a last supper with his disciples. He has washed their feet, given them a new commandment, predicted Peter's denial, foretold Judas's betrayal, and told his friends that he is about to leave them. "Where I am going," he tells them, "you cannot follow now."

Needless to say, the words sting, and fill the bewildered disciples with fear. What is Jesus talking about? How will they survive if he leaves them? Where will they go? What will happen to their cherished plans? Why is the ground shifting under their feet? Why is everything changing?

If you're like me, sheltering at home, obsessively reading the daily headlines, and fearing what life is going to look like for the next many months or years, you can relate to the disciples' questions. Why is the ground shifting under our feet? What's going to happen to our families, our towns, our nations, our world? Will the centre hold? Where is Jesus in all of this pain, fear, death, and loss, and how will we find him if he's gone to a place we "cannot follow now"?

Unsurprisingly, the anxious disciples respond to their predicament by demanding certainty. Thomas asks Jesus for a roadmap: "How can we know the way?" Philip asks for proof: "Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied." What they want — what we all want, if we're honest — is the religion of the GPS, the five point plan, the twelve steps, the ten commandments. "Do A, B, and C, and you will unerringly arrive at Destination D."

Jesus's response? "Do not let your hearts be troubled." "I am the way, the truth, and the life." "If you know me, you will know my Father also." No roadmap. No master plan. No PowerPoint presentation. Just himself. Just the messy, intimate, ever evolving, and often confusing business of relationship. Of trust, patience, and vulnerability.

If you had asked me a few years ago to describe what the Christian life is supposed to look like, I would have rattled off a list of black-and-white "truths" as readily as a kindergartner recites the alphabet. I would have insisted that I had Christianity more or less down, and that whatever gaps remained in my knowledge would be filled in along the way — the point of the Christian life being to grow in stone cold certainty about God, Jesus, the Bible, and the faith.

So reality has been — how shall I put it mildly? — a rude and massive shock. Who knew that my life with God would actually be one long goodbye? That to know God, I would have to unknow God? To shed my neat conceptions of the divine like so many old snakeskins, and emerge into the world bare, vulnerable, and new, again and again? Like the disciples suddenly facing the end of the Incarnation, I didn't know that the process of shedding would be personal and costly. Or that it would hurt. Or that there would also be a complicated joy — layered and bittersweet — in the pain of parting.

"Let us pray to God that we may be free of God," the 13th century mystic Meister Eckhart wrote, implying that our conceptions of God must always fall short, always fail. Let's name honestly, he suggested, the imposter gods we conjure because we fear the Mystery who really is. Let's admit

that we shape these gods in our own image, and that they serve us as much as we serve them. Let's dare to commit ourselves to the long goodbye.

Well, I'm trying, but I won't lie: it's hard. Some gods slough off easily. But others cling. Like the disciples in this week's lectionary, I find it very hard to let go of one way of relating to Jesus, and trusting him into another. Here are some of the "imposter" gods I'm struggling to prise off now, in the shadow of Covid-19:

The god who bargains, transacts, and seals the deal: if I do A, then god does B. If I behave, then I'll be loved. If I mess up, I'll make god angry. If I work hard, I'll earn forgiveness. If I'm the best, I'll earn a blessing.

The god whose omnipotence guarantees my safety: the god who spares the children, eliminates the virus, stops the rapist, and defuses the bomb. Who conquers depression, ends anxiety, eliminates terror, and postpones death. The god who explains satisfactorily when things go wrong.

The god whose perfect will controls everything: the god who secures parking spots, bank balances, good health, and gentle partings. Who controls my choices and directs world history.

The god whose desires order all things, such that nothing happens unless this god wants it to.

The god who makes faith easy, by providing answers, erasing doubts, planting signs, and peddling miracles. By coming when called, and leaving when dismissed. By parting all clouds, and enabling me always and everywhere to feel his presence.

These are just a few of my current imposters. I've had others, and I will again, I'm sure. Layer by layer, I work to peel them back. The difficulty is, these gods don't look ugly or sinister. They look beautiful. They speak kindly and make the most alluring promises. They pretend to make the world less scary, more manageable, more tame. They play tricks on my tired mind. Worse, they take hold of my deepest hungers and promise feasts beyond imagining. I'm afraid I'll starve if I let them go.

So I pray and wait, wait and pray. I ask for the courage to say goodbye again and again and again, and I mourn the deaths of these gods, even as I recognize them to be fake. I pray to God to be free of god — of all the gods who keep me from apprehending the One who really is. And then I pray to know the God who dwells in mystery. The God who says, "I have to go now, but I will still be with you. Things are changing, but you are not alone." I pray to love this God. To trust this God. To thrive under this God's care. I pray for what will come after each long and arduous goodbye. I pray to know the God who IS.

Maybe it feels like a tall order right now, to "not let your heart be troubled." To trust that you do in fact know the way — the quiet, unglamorous, risky, but ultimately life-giving way of Jesus. But you do. Like Thomas, like Philip, like Peter, like the others, you know Jesus. You know his life. You know his love. You know his death. You know his resurrection. You know what it is to hunger for him, to seek him, to listen for him, to hope in him. You know the way.

No, the way isn't what we thought it was going to be. The way is demanding. The way is precarious. The way takes time. But the invitation of this Gospel is still an invitation to confidence. Not because we're experts at finding God, but because God has always and already found us. With every unknowing we embrace, God finds us one more time.

"In my Father's house there are many dwelling places," Jesus tells his sorrowing disciples. Meaning: God is roomy. God is generous. God is hospitable. God can handle your doubts, your fears, and your questions. And God's offer of belonging extends far beyond the confines of this mortal life. "I go and prepare a place for you," Jesus says as he stands in the shadow of his own cross. You have a place with me. You have a place with God. You have a place.

A grim setting. Real questions. An offer of comfort. The promise of home. The Way.

This is a Gospel for our time. The story — your story, my story, our collective story of this precarious, overwhelming moment — will not end in death. Though we might feel alone and frightened right now, the Way is open before us. We know it. We know Jesus, and because we

know Jesus, we know God. The Way will safely bear us home. Do not let your hearts be troubled.
Debie Thomas

Every blessing,

Vicar Helen

- Prayer Diary -

In accordance with the aspiration of the Diocesan Vision and Directions to strengthen and nurture a culture of prayer and spiritual growth across the diocese, a Prayer Diary has been produced and is now available for free download as an APP via the Apple Store and Google Play Store.

The Prayer Diary follows the lectionary readings as set by An Australian Lectionary, and provides a short devotion and prayer for each day of the year.

The cycle of daily prayer for the Diocese of Melbourne (the TMA Prayer Diary) is incorporated into the App.

The App can be downloaded for Apple users at:

- <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/id1479125626>

The App can be downloaded from the Google play store at:

- <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.melbourneanglican.melbourneanglican>

OUR MISSION:

Growing the Kingdom of God in Mornington & Mount Martha by: Nurturing people in FAITH, Living as people of HOPE, & Connecting as people of LOVE

MISSION RESOURCING: Offertories to end of April 2020

YTD budget: \$57,283.35 YTD actual \$36,777.42

ADF DIRECT GIVING: BSB 703122 ACC 05004697

[LINK TO ADF GIVING FORM](#)

If you normally give through the plate on Sundays, we ask you, please, to consider joining up for online giving. Our current cash flow situation is serious. Our wardens have had to arrange for a substantial amount to be moved across from our reserves to keep us going. We ask you to pray and reflect on this matter. If you have been collecting your envelopes at home and would like someone to collect them, please let us know.

- PRAYER POINTS FOR THIS WEEK -

- We give thanks for our Children's & Families Ministry (mainly music and NextGen) continuing via Zoom and for the families, current and new, who are connecting with us through these ministries.
- We give thanks for those who are watching our videos and reading our articles on Facebook, especially those who do not currently attend church anywhere.
- We pray for those who are unwell, particularly those affected by COVID-19, and all who are in isolation, enforced quarantine or disconnected from familiar people and activities.
- For all who are anxious or uncertain, those who have little or no work and are concerned about financial security during this time.
- We give thanks for this unexpected time of slower life, time and space for prayer and reflection. Help us to use treasure it and use it wisely.

- We give thanks for the vision God has entrusted to us. May we listen for his voice and follow wherever and however he leads us, especially as we navigate these coming weeks of uncertainty.
- We give thanks for others who have caught our vision and are joining us to grow God's kingdom in this place. Help us to stay connected with those who are new to our church and that this may be a time that draws people closer to you.
- We pray for the families who are involved in our Children's & Families ministries, that this time may be an opportunity for deep connection and reflection on our faith together.
- That our strategic planning and decisions will help us to further develop the mission and vision you are calling us to, enable us to reach those who need it, and help us to grow the kingdom of God in this place.
- That we might overcome any obstacles as we pursue our vision, especially the limitations of personal contact.
- That we may have generous hearts, reflected in the giving of our time, talents and treasure towards building up God's kingdom in this local area.
- We pray for our bishops, archdeacons and area deans as they seek to support clergy and lay leaders through difficult situations and times.
- Staff, management & residents of The Mornington Aged Care.
- Ministry Formation – Examining Chaplains.
- Ecumenical – New Peninsula Baptist Church
- The ministry of ABM – Sustainable Development Goals
- The ministry of Anglican Overseas Aid in the Solomons (Solar Lights).
- The ministry of BCA in Lightning Ridge, NSW (community support).
- The ministry of CMS in Europe - France (discipling programme).
- The ministry of Mothers Union in Argentina (working towards unity)

- PRAYER LIST -

Sandy, Val Sh, Ken, Brian, Peter & family, Bruce, James & Heather, Beryl, Helen & John, Hilary, Lauren, Keith & Edna, Chris & Brian, Sue & family, Luke Cheryl & David, Wendy

This prayer list has been updated, so please send through any names you would like to be included.

- From Our Memorial Book -

We give thanks for the life and witness of George Manning, Dr. Arthur Garnham, Florence Bowen, Vera Dockesy, Lesley Butcher, Ernest Burchall, George Reaper, James Olifert, Lawrence Hammond and Rita Gaunt, whose anniversary of death falls this week. May they rest in peace and rise in glory.

- We Commemorate This Week -

14 May - MATTHIAS, APOSTLE AND MARTYR

- We celebrate -

Birthday: (7) Rob MC

-Prayer of the Week -

Saving God, who called your Church to witness that you were in Christ reconciling the world to yourself: help us so to proclaim the good news of your love, that all who hear it may be reconciled to you; through him who died for us and rose again and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

- Readings Next Week – Easter Six (White)

Acts 17: 22 - 31 Psalm 66: 7 - 19
1 Peter 3: 8 - 22 John 14: 15 - 21

CONTACT DETAILS

Have you moved? Are you new? Has your phone number changed? Do you have a new email address? Do we have current next of kin details if you become unwell? Please ensure that we have current details for you. If you're not sure, please fill out a [Membership Details form](#). Thank you.

WE DON'T LIKE TO TALK ABOUT IT, BUT

Did you know we provide booklets to assist you with the difficult task of planning your funeral. Make sure that family and your church know what is important to you. Need help? Just ask.