

KEEPING CONNECTED TO OUR ST MATTHEW'S FAMILY



From the Church of England,

A prayer for all those affected by coronavirus Keep us, good Lord, under the shadow of your mercy. Sustain and support the anxious, be with those who care for the sick, and lift up all who are brought low; that we may find comfort knowing that nothing can separate us from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Stay at home, continue to pray, to love, to care for the vulnerable.

*Join in Worship from St Matthew's on our website and Facebook
Good Friday 9:00am and 12 noon with Sacred Music from Sally-Anne
Russell Easter Sunday 9:00am St Matthew's family Easter with our Choir*

This Holy Week and Easter will find mountains of merchandise left on the shelves of closed shops, and opportunities to celebrate together so often taken for granted, valued as never before.

We have never needed Easter more than now!

Easter isn't just a religious festival but touches our greatest human need - to be well and to be together. For us at St Matthew's we live out these themes every day realising that sometimes we need to go into bat for the values that make life worthwhile.

We are discovering Holy Week and Easter can mean to everyone in a multifaith diverse society and we are learning new things this year.

Churches aren't really set up as "take away" but this year finding "Easter out of Church" is a bit of a BYO experience.

The traditional themes of Palm Sunday - when everything's great until things change, through Maundy Thursday when Jesus tells his friends that life really needs to be different, they will need to challenge self-interest and reach out to others, and then people losing their nerve experiencing betrayal and then isolation and powerlessness and separation and ultimate lockdown and disappointment.

The whole world has arrived at the same station - lockdown and it's a painful place to be.

We think of those who have this as their personal homepage - those who are isolated, alone, rejected, victims of violence or prejudice, Indigenous people with a frightening incarceration rate and reduced life outcomes the elderly who have been forgotten and neglected while we pin medals on them on National

Days and abandon them until a Royal Commission turns up. We remember the unemployed and those on Newstart and refugees who have been victims of inhumane policies shutting the doors on a safe future.

The Easter message, of a real future together, a culture of welcome and level playing fields where the most vulnerable are cared for without political or religious bias has just shot up our national charts. Let us pray that when this period has been left behind we will find ourselves cleansed cured or at least for a while inoculated against attitudes that divide and isolate and that we take time to connect, to reach out and support our families, neighbours, friends and strangers .

Whether we connect over the phone, chance meetings at the shops, through websites Facebook or cards let us pause for a moment, give thanks for the gift of hope and renew our commitment to share it in new ways in these challenging new times.

We aren't nearly as helpless as we appear, I particularly commend being part of "Shaking Virtual tins for the Royal Children's Hospital" to help little local Hailey Wright and other children with serious illness.



We deeply appreciate the daily contact and concern of our new Bishop Clarence and look forward to sharing Easter hope for better times ahead.

'It is at Easter that Jesus is most human, and like all humans, he fails and is failed. His is not an all-powerful God, it is an all-vulnerable God.' **Michael Leunig**

Luke 24:6-7: He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: 'The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.

EASTER GREETINGS FROM THE BELFRY: St Matthew's Band of Ringers wish Fr Peter and all the Congregation a happy and holy Easter. All the ringers are suffering withdrawal symptoms due to the anti-virus legislation which effectively stopped our ringing. Actually, we decided to postpone ringing before that, even before other towers. As most of our Band is in the vulnerable range, we felt it best to hang up our ropes and survive. Within a short time, ringers all over Australia, and indeed the world did the same. It does seem strange though! We do have some recordings of our bells, and we have made a CD for Fr Peter of part of a Quarter Peal rung at St Matthew's on January 25th 2017 by a visiting English band and myself of 1280 changes of Cambridge Surprise Major which was completed in 43 minutes. The recording will be broadcast through the Church PA system and good comments were received at a test run on the day before Palm Sunday. We hope that all of us can all avoid this current pestilence and return to regular worship at St Matthew's, and of course, listen to the bells, live!

Jim Jefferies, Ringing Master

MEDITATION

Hope for the Future

“I am going to prepare a place for you...I will come back and take you to be with me, that you may also be where I am”. (John 14:2-3)

Easter is the most triumphant and joyful day in the calendar of the Christian Church – symbolised by Easter lilies and daffodils, and hot cross buns - but most of all by believers who sing such hymns as “Thine be the glory, Risen, conquering Son”.

Like Christmas, Easter has been commercialised and popularised. But for Christians who have shared in Jesus’ passion and death, who have spent time in the tomb and then been flooded with the light of the resurrection and the promise of all that shall be in the future, it is a glorious time of hope and fulfilment. Have you ever wondered why Jesus (after the resurrection) didn’t try to score points off those who had injured him? Why didn’t he appear to Pilate or Caiaphas and say, ... “here I am, the one you condemned to death, but am now risen?” It wasn’t Jesus’ way. The Lord of life appeared to the humble and penitent, to heartbroken Mary, to doubting Thomas, to Peter and many more. Peter was ashamed and humiliated for denying his Lord, but it made him realise his weakness and see his true self. Without this realisation he may never have been able to hold such a high position in the church which emerged after the resurrection. The apostles realised that it wasn’t just Jesus’ divinity that was proved by the resurrection, but also his love and holiness and they were determined to serve him in whatever way they could, living lives of sacrifice, lowliness and service. Jesus told his disciples not to be afraid and in the strength of the Holy Spirit they preached boldly and without fear. It is when Christians lose sight of the next world that they become ineffective in this one.

So why did Jesus suffer for you and me? That we might worship our creator and redeemer, follow his way of love and sacrifice, and have peace in the midst of life’s storms. The cross is the measure of God’s love. How do you respond to that love?

In the midst of the pessimism, gloom and frustration of the present time, there is a bright beacon of hope and that is the promise of Jesus - “I go to prepare a place for you... I will come back and take you to be with me.” (John 14:3) The resurrection of Jesus should influence our belief, behaviour and expectations and prayer gives us the strength to endure. This truth is a force which gives meaning to every crisis. “I am with you always, even to the very end of the age.” (Matthew 28:19-20)

Through Jesus new life can spring out of hopelessness and despair, hardened hearts can come alive through loving care. No situation is without hope and it is never too late to start again.

The cross of Christ is my only power for living and my only hope in dying.

(From the sermons of Father Colin)

STARS IN THE DARKNESS



*Update: Hailey is going well, still in isolation, but positive outcome.

St Matthew’s - Supporting the Good Friday Appeal - Royal Children’s Hospital and 6-year-old Hailey Wright one of our own children in ALBURY Wodonga.

Tin shaking is more fun with friends! Ask your friends, kids, neighbours, grandkids, brothers, sisters... to share your virtual tin page? Simply ask them to share your virtual tin shake page via social media or sms:

<https://2020-gfa-virtual-tins.everydayhero.com/au/st-matthew-s-church-albury>

For every person you reach out to in your network, you can make a big difference to the patients and their families at The Royal Children’s Hospital.

*People notice, one of our Paramedics sent a note on his way past: 'Just walked to Post Office past St Matthew's. The garden and Church look beautiful!'

*A bike rider hearing the bells, recorded from the Bell Tower yelled a big 'thank you' over the fence 'So wonderful to hear the bells!'

MEDITATION across the world and in Albury we are using new ways to stay in touch. There are growing numbers using ZOOM to connect with a meditation group at 5:30 each Thursday. At a time of great stress and isolation this could be just the tonic we need! Connect with Michelle and Paul on:

Zoom: <http://www.explorationinmeditationandprayer.com/>

PASTORAL CARE: We have started the 'Phone Tree' idea to keep in touch. If you would like one of our team to phone you, or if you know of anyone who would appreciate being contacted, please contact Annette 0413938541. Through these difficult and changing times it is important we think of each other, and those who are sick and isolated, and pray for all.

TUNES ON TUESDAY continues at the usual time, every week online, please check our website for details.

PARISH FINANCES – All on board! Share the load! We all know that these days are very challenging for individuals' families and organisations. There is Government help for some, and we want to ensure we can see our way through this without huge crisis. There is something we can all do, if we all do a little, it will sort the problem, we can stop talking about it and it will be one less thing to worry about.

There is an urgent need for St Matthew's Parishioners to commence making direct deposits to the Church accounts if we are to keep St Matthew's afloat for when we come out the other side of the pandemic. So far there has been a great response, please keep up the great work. Without further contributions the Parish will not be able to pay Father Peter's wages and other fixed costs for April and beyond. Your assistance is urgently needed.

Bank details are:

Account name: St Matthews Church Albury

BSB: 032736

Account no: 392189

Reference: 'Giving' and your name

Please help us reach all our Parish Members: If any of your friends have recently got an email address, could you please send an email to St Matthew's Office, with their name and email address, so we can add it to our emailing list. We can no longer deliver printed copies.

Regular Updates - Please keep going back to the website, includes Livestream links and Facebook, so we can continue to share the many opportunities to explore Holy Week, Easter and beyond.

It is a different Easter, but we are connected in thought, prayer and technology!

FAMILY FUN IDEAS



HAVE FUN MAKING A RESURRECTION GARDEN !
WITH POTS AUCCER, LITTLE PLASTIC POT,, LUMP OF LAWN, FEW ROCKS, SOME STICKS TIED TOGETHER AS CROSSES

EASTER SUNDAY: 'He is Risen!' Make a yeast dough for pizza or bread, watch the yeast rise, and say together 'He is risen indeed, Alleluia!' Everyone can make their own individual pizza and create their toppings! Enjoy!