

**Parish
Newsletter:
August 23rd
2020**



ST PAUL'S | ST THOMAS' | ST STEPHEN'S
LITHGOW | WALLERAWANG | PORTLAND

Dear Friends,

It is tempting to think we are alone in the service of God. It's always a temptation, & with COVID restrictions that anxiety can grow. What a blessing it has been to recently be reminded in online-church of Christ's promise to all who come to Him that He is with us always – to the very end of the age.

Alongside the temptation to think we are solo Christians, is the temptation to think that our parish is alone. The reality is, God has partnered us with others. One of the partnerships God has formed, is our connection to other Anglican parishes in the diocese. Our diocese is roughly 270 parishes. At this present time, many of our partner parishes need our prayerful assistance. 30 of them are without a rector (Senior Minister). The list of parishes appears in Southern Cross & our Archbishop writes asking:

'When reading your Southern Cross, to take a moment to pray for each of these parishes. There are more than 30 of them listed this month – so they all need your prayers. You might also consider praying for suitable men to fill these positions. For unless there are men willing and able, gifted and godly, prepared to take on the challenge of being the pastor-teacher of God's people, these parishes will remain vacant and their ministry impaired.

The role of rector is an important part of our parish system. Indeed, the appointment of presbyters or elders to lead the church of God is a God-given mandate for the health of his people. Jesus' appointment of 12 disciples was for the purpose of training them to become fishers of men and women, and teachers of God's word under the new covenant so that the people of God might be equipped for every good work.

The apostles were a discrete number of men, who exercised a foundation-laying ministry, along with the New Testament prophets (Ephesians 2:20). However, the "superstructure" gifts of evangelists, pastors and teachers reflect the ongoing gifts of Christ, equipping the saints for ministry and building up the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:11-12). The apostle Paul saw this task as an imperative, as he appointed elders in every church with prayer and fasting (Acts 14:23) and gave instruction to Titus to do the same (Titus 1:5) outlining the qualifications for elders, as he did

also to Timothy. Of course, we need deacons as well as presbyters, women in ministry as well as men.

Paul was following in his Master's footsteps, of course, as Jesus encouraged his disciples to pray to the Lord of the harvest that he would send labourers into his harvest (Matthew 9:37). Note, firstly, that it is God's harvest. He draws men and women to himself and he draws labourers into his harvest. Secondly, note that Jesus invites us to pray to God to that very end. How often do you pray to God to raise up men and women to become full-time labourers in the Father's harvest? Who in your congregation might have the gifts of grace for leadership, but might lack the prayers of God's people to encourage them and challenge them to consider full-time ordained ministry in our Diocese?

The Rev Dr Ed Loane recounts this delightful story about the Rev D.J. Knox, father of Canon Broughton Knox. Although retired by the late 1950s, Knox often filled his Sundays preaching in different places. Once, while he was racing between two churches to preach, a policeman pulled him over for speeding. The officer asked why he was travelling so quickly and Knox explained that he would not have to travel so fast between churches if more young men like the policeman entered the ministry. This comment resonated with the policeman and Knox was allowed to travel without reprimand.

Loane then makes the comment:

'Knox's ministry is a good example of the dedication and priorities that have shaped Sydney Anglican clergy. At the same time, the interaction with the policeman highlights his concern that more Christians would rise to the need of leadership in the church.' [...]

Pray for each of our vacant parishes. Pray to the Lord of the harvest that he might raise up a fresh generation of labourers for his harvest. '

The Archbishop's request reminds us our role in partnering other churches in the diocese. Even more it reminds us of our role in ensuring the gospel is not simply protected for our generation, but passed to the next generation.

In Him,

Mark Smith



Reading: 1 Corinthians 3v5-9

Keeping in Contact

Ministry contacts:

Senior Minister

Mark Smith 0430 393 414
mark.smith@lpachurch.org.au
Not Available Thursdays

Children's & Youth Minister

John Young 0418 610 655
john.young@lpachurch.org.au
Not Available Saturdays

Wardens

Robert Hookham 0403 506 693
John Stevens 0438 473 862
Eric Young 0429 664 436

Pastoral contacts (Growth Group leaders)

Peter Avery 6352 3059
Julie Barnett 6352 2553
James Barnes 0424 825 369
Andrew Doran 0466 734 110
Ralph Fairbairn 0400 302 901
Jill Hookham 0403 502 181
Lauren Hookham 0400 295 427
Philippe Reyter 6352 1803
Garry Roberts 0400 075 761
Julie Roberts 0429 911 643
Anna Smith 0424 340 687
John Stevens 0438 473 862

Office Administration

Corinne Ogg 6351 3070
office@lpachurch.org.au
Fridays 9am – 12pm

People I need to contact. *After reading this & joining in 'church', who are the one or two people God put on my heart to contact & pray for?*

Responding to God's Word in Practice:

1. HEAD: What did you learn?
2. HEART: What did God say to you?
3. HANDS: What will you do?

Word of encouragement:

Knowing, Serving & Proclaiming Jesus in Lockdown (Kris Young – 10am congregation)

This year started well. A new job opportunity. A chance to share Jesus with Youthworks' Year 13, to help young people navigate life after school, spend time in God's word and grow as Christians. I had a book deal, too. We were getting over the bushfires in town, but things were getting back to normal. But then a dear family member was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, and the rollercoaster began.

When COVID hit for the first time, I was already trying to navigate the balance of pastoral work with the need to see family and care for them at a distance. One by one, all my neatly-laid plans evaporated, as the WHO announced we were officially in the grip of a global pandemic.

A key component of Year 13 was a learning trip to Fiji, and students were rocked when it was cancelled. But that seemed small fry in comparison to my family's issues. My parents, already in the vulnerable age group, were now dealing with the rigors of Mum's chemotherapy as well as Dad's daily health care needs. I was too far away to help, and swamped.

Lockdown was hard. I couldn't see my parents face-to-face for months. For several weeks, Year 13 pivoted to online learning. It was a blessing to be able to stay at home with my immediate family, but a major blow to a program built on community, discipleship, and overnight stays on campus.

We began long days of Zoom meetings, praying with students and running classes at a distance. They were devastated that their gap year plans were shattered. We were busier than ever. All of us went through culture shock as our society went through momentous change. But week after week, we looked at how God is not thwarted when our plans disintegrate. There's no complete substitute for face-to-face contact. But God is present. Even then.

Lockdown brought valuable lessons. For many of us, programs had become a substitute for presence. We thought we were disciples of Jesus because we went to church, we were involved in the rosters, we ran the events, we did All The Things. But some of us discovered that these had become the main game, instead of a means to bringing us closer to our Lord and each other. So what happened when the 'main game' was cancelled by global disaster?

We had a chance to discover God's main game, instead. God threw our neatly-ordered worlds up in the air, and forced us to lean in to his sovereignty and his mighty hand. One by one, our discipleship crutches were taken away until there was only God our Father to lean on. Our prayers were often shallow and hurried. Our Bible reading often turned to the Psalms and their cries of "How long, O Lord?" And in the midst of our helpless inability to control our worlds, God met us. In our weakness, He was strong.

In Romans 8, Paul asks some big questions: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: 'For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.' No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom 8:35-39)

Lockdown has taught me that Jesus is Lord. I am only just beginning to witness the change God has wrought in the hearts of the students, but this time has been like a refining fire for so many of them. As they share their testimonies, we see faith emerging from their trials, forged stronger and more humbly dependent on God than ever before. In lockdown we could control almost nothing in our worlds. But we were held close to the God who has all things in his hands.

May God hold you close to himself, too.

Prayer Points

Collect for Sunday - Lord God, you declare your almighty power chiefly in showing mercy and pity: grant us such a measure of your grace that, running in the way of your commandments, we may obtain your promises, and share in your heavenly treasure; through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

Monday – Give thanks & praise to Jesus, who is Lord of everything. He rules all that is seen & unseen. Pray that you might live trusting His rule in everything. Pray that those living apart from Him would acknowledge Christ. Amen

Tuesday – Praise God for His wisdom in choosing to work through His people to build His kingdom. Commit yourself afresh to Him & ask God to use every member of our church to gather others into His kingdom of life.

Wednesday – Burdened still by COVID, praise God for the future He's made: Sovereign Lord, you are the hope and healer of your people and have promised a world where there is no more sickness or crying or death. By your death and resurrection you have set your people free from the penalty of sin and death. We pray your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Amen

Thursday - Burdened still by COVID, pray for those on the frontline: Please prosper the work of those who are seeking a vaccine for the coronavirus, please strengthen those who are treating the sick, please comfort those who are mourning the loss of loved ones or living in fear of this disease. Amen

Friday - Burdened still by COVID, remember our leaders: Please give to governing authorities wisdom in their management of this crisis, and give to your people your peace beyond understanding, generous and wise hearts and a renewed trust in your sovereign goodness and glory. Amen

Saturday - Burdened still by COVID, intercede for those overwhelmed: Turn the hearts of many now experiencing fear and anxiety that they may find that peace which is the fruit of the death and resurrection of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, in whose name we pray, Amen.

Collect for Sunday - Almighty and everlasting God, you are always more ready to hear than we to pray, and constantly give more than either we desire or deserve: pour down on us the abundance of your mercy, forgiving us those things of which our conscience is afraid, and giving us those good things which we are not worthy to ask, except through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, your Son our Lord. Amen

Notices

Online Church & 'face to face prayer': To create opportunity to meet face to face for prayer, we now **only livestream services at 8 & 10am each**

Sunday. You can catch missed services on <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCnuMfxexSgmazKVkzjDCbkw>

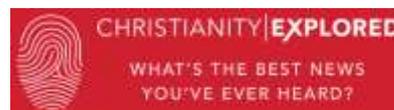


We meet 'face to face' for prayer meetings **Sunday at 3pm:**

August 23rd – Portland (with children's programme)
August 30th – Lithgow (with children's programme)
September 6th – Wallerawang
September 13th – Fresh Food Day – no prayer meeting

If you intend to come, please let Mark know. RSVP helps in us running it safely & well.

Beirut Appeal (Anglican Aid). Anglican Aid, partnering with the Baptist Association of Lebanon, will provide Christian care for the community in Beirut through local churches on the ground. Donate through this link: <https://anglicanaid.org.au/care-for-beirut>



Christianity Explored.

Christianity Explored

is a 7-week course that in a simple & easy way, explains the heart of the gospel – why it's the best news you'll ever heard. It goes through the gospel of Mark & deals with the big issues: Who Jesus is; What Jesus has done; & the difference it makes to follow Him. After 'Christ: Here & Beyond' we will offer it 'face to face', over 'Zoom' & share the materials if you'd like to do it with a friend. Contact Mark if you'd like to be a part of it.

CAP Home budgeting Course. CAP Money teaches people from all walks of life how to create a budget and prevent bad debt We are running the course again for church members & the community: 3 sessions, **7-9pm, starting 20th August at Lithgow Church Hall.** Contact Chris Barnett chrisbarnett@bigpond.com or 0419 437 339

Giving during COVID-19

The wardens would encourage all to give online where they are able. If you prefer to give in person, on the first Sunday of each month 2 trustworthy people will be on-site to receive offertory. The next date is: **Sunday 6th September: Lithgow - 11:15-11:30am; Wallerawang - 11:45am-12:00pm; Portland - 12:15-12:30pm**

Direct Giving details

Account Name: ANGLICAN PARISH of LITHGOW DIRECT GIVING
BSB - 062591
Account No. – 10085204
At the bank - Use the above details to make a deposit at the bank
Cheque - Send to PO Box 192 Lithgow, NSW, 2790

Groups we are able to pass your giving on to

Some choose to give through us to others (by marking their giving). We can do this for the following groups: AFES; Anglican Aid; Anglicare; Arise; BCA; CAP; CMS (Newbys); Fresh Food; LCEA; Open Doors; MAF (Hadfields); Pioneers (Blair); Winter Appeal; Nungalinga College