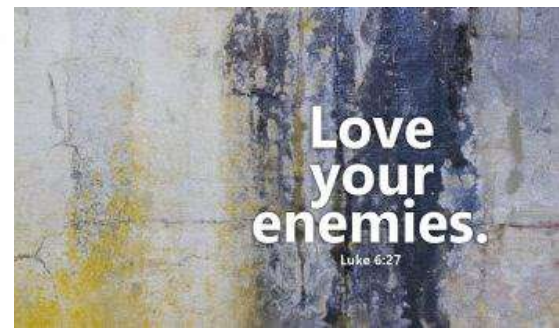


HOLY COVENANT ANGLICAN CHURCH

a place for everyone



SUNDAY 23 FEBRUARY 2025

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

Womb-like Love (Luke 6.27-38)

"But I say to you that listen, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you." (Luke 6:27-28).

My initial response to this command from Jesus is utter denial. "It's OK for you Jesus, you're the Son of God. You can pull off stuff like this without breaking a sweat. But I'm just human, and you are asking too much. I can't possibly love someone who physically abused me, or who hurt my kids, or who believes that empathy is a sin. You can't expect that from me."

Yet, there are humans who can do this. One of their tools is found in Luke 6:36: "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful". A literal translation of the Aramaic word expressed here as "merciful" is "womb-like". In 'Taking Jesus Seriously' Marcus Borg says: "What does it mean to be womb-like? ... It means to be life-giving, nourishing. It means to feel what a mother feels for the children of her womb: tenderness, willing their well-being, finding her children precious and beautiful. It can also mean a fierceness, for a mother can be fierce when she sees the children of her womb being threatened or treated destructively." Mercy doesn't have to be soft and fuzzy; it can also be fierce and passionate.

The situation in Ukraine is a clear demonstration of the need for fierce love and mercy. Tribal tendencies to settle for the kind of peace that benefits "our people" is what's being demonstrated by Putin and Trump. Real peace, the peace that Jesus is talking about when he says "blessed are the peacemakers" comes from justice. And that's justice for everyone, not just the people in our tribe or the people who think like us. Real peace and justice in Ukraine can only be achieved when Russia, Ukraine and the rest of Europe are involved in the peace making and peace keeping process.

Few if any of us here at Holy Covenant can influence peace in Ukraine. But we can apply fierce and passionate womb-like love to our own situations. Let's love with the kind of ferocity that takes the initiative away from those who hate and breaks hateful systems apart. Let's love like Martin Luther-King and other non-violence practitioners and change the world.

Megan Arthur

To join us on Zoom, please use the link below:

<https://zoom.us/j/8820962366?pwd=YUpja05YTxFcN0N4MGRiSFVIRlI0Zz09>

Meeting ID: 882 096 2366
Password: 033643

SUNDAY 23 FEBRUARY
8am Holy Communion
Celebrant: Revd Bili Malek
Preacher: Revd Dr Wayne Brighton
10 am Holy Communion
Celebrant and Preacher:
Revd Dr Wayne Brighton

SUNDAY 2 MARCH
8am Holy Communion
Celebrant: Revd Bili Malek
Preacher: Revd Dr Wayne Brighton
10 am Holy Communion
Celebrant and Preacher:
Revd Dr Wayne Brighton

Coming soon:

Parish Council 27/2, 7:30pm
Lent Group 4/3, 4pm
Shrove Tuesday Pancakes 4/3, 6pm
Ash Wednesday Services 5/3, 10am & 6pm

Bank details for direct debit:

Bank: Commonwealth
Branch: Jamison Centre ACT
BSB 062 907
Account No: 802588
Name: Holy Covenant Anglican Church

Office: (staffed Tues, Thurs, Fri 10am –3pm) ph: 6251 6100 email: office@holycovenant.org.au

Website: <https://www.holycovenant.org.au>

It's raining, raining, raining

But since they had stayed awake, they saw his glory.
Luke 9:28

It's raining, raining, raining and the crickets are singing and from thick dark clouds above the lightning flashes and the thunder rolls until it reaches its peak and then crack, it reveals itself above my head. Heavy rain falls from the gutter edge onto the thirsty garden and the birds are silent, tucked up tight in the trees - heads hidden in feathers. I love a wet day. I love a thunderstorm as it awakens me to God's glory in such a different way and I wonder, what are the things that awaken you to God's glory?

May the God of life bless you and keep you today and always.

Anne, servant of the Lord.



And the lightning flashes

A Prayer for the Middle East

We pray for those grieving the sudden loss of loved ones, those who have suffered an injury and for those who have been displaced, facing an uncertain future.
Lord hear our prayer.

We pray for a miraculous de-escalation of this conflict, for reason to overcome rage and revenge.
For peace to reign.
Lord hear our prayer.

Lord we pray for protection, courage and strength for the staff at the al-Ahli Arab Hospital.
Bring comfort, wisdom and resilience as they care for the wounded.
Lord hear our prayer.

We pray for the Diocese of Jerusalem.
For your servants and parishioners.
May they know your love, wisdom and protection.
Lord hear our prayer.

Amen.

JOA Anglican
Overseas
Aid
Transforming Connections



Last week, we welcomed back our long-term client, who we will call A. Living in regional New South Wales, A had travelled to the ACT

seeking legal support when their car was stolen—a distressing event that left A without essential medication, as it was in the stolen vehicle.

A approached St John's Care (SJC) for assistance in returning to NSW with their children and pet. Recognising the urgency, I contacted several services in Canberra to arrange transportation, but initial efforts were unsuccessful. Fortunately, Tumut District Community Transport, which has been serving the Snowy Valleys Region for over 30 years, agreed to help. They promptly organised for A and their family to be picked up the next day by a dedicated volunteer driver with over 10 years of experience.

Given that A couldn't return to regional NSW the same day, we secured emergency accommodation for the family on short notice, thanks to our strong community reputation. Upon learning that A and the children hadn't eaten for the past three days, we provided a hot meal and supplied groceries for their journey. Additionally, our volunteers prepared school packs for the children, ensuring they were ready to return to school the following Monday.

Through our script assistance program, in collaboration with Campbell Pharmacy and Pharmacy on Northbourne, we addressed A's medication needs. By coordinating with A's pharmacy in NSW, we arranged for the prescription to be sent to Pharmacy on Northbourne, allowing A to promptly take the necessary medication.

A and their children were overwhelmed by the support, love, and care they received from SJC and our partner organisations. They expressed deep gratitude for alleviating their immediate concerns, while the ACT Police handled the stolen car incident.

To our amazing donors, your support of St John's Care extends beyond meeting physical needs; you impact every area of individuals' lives during their most challenging times. Thank you for your unwavering support, love, and compassion toward the community. We also extend our gratitude to the community agencies we partner with in supporting those in need.

Lisa Masamha Case Manager

We have very little or no stock of the following:

Pantry items required: Tinned Irish Stew, hotpot etc, Large tinned fish, tinned soup, tinned vegetables, cooking oil, dry lentils, 1kg flour, 1kg sugar, pasta/rice meal packets, peanut butter
Other items required: dish washing liquid, shampoo & conditioner, soap, children's toothbrushes, incontinence pads.

St John's Care is to be part of the Hands Across Canberra 'Canberra Day' Appeal. To find out more or, better yet, to make a donation today, visit <https://canberraday.org.au/st-johns-care> Please help us reach our goal. Thank you!

Exploring Lent

Lent is a 40-day period prior to Easter. Traditionally, it commemorates how Jesus spent 40 days in the wilderness prior to commencing his public ministry. It is a window to understanding better Jesus' character, purpose and ministry that led to the cross and beyond.

Christians engage with Lent in many ways, taking either the way of ascent or descent by incorporating some simple disciplines, practices or service into their daily routines.

The way of ascent is a bit like climbing a mountain, upwards towards God in order to enhance our awareness, understanding or experience of God through obedience. This approach emphasises more of God and less of me. It adopts spiritual disciplines like fasting and self-denial by giving up certain luxuries such as sweets or habits like social media. New spiritual practices like attending church more regularly or reading Scripture more fully are also helpful. Some might prefer to engage in new acts of service by volunteering or caring for those around them.

The way of descent is more like swimming in the ocean. It enhances our awareness, understanding or experience of God by becoming more attuned to how God is with us. The disciplines, practices and acts of service are tuned to help us see, know and participate in God's love. Disciplines like prayer encourage us to listen more deeply to God rather than simply talking at them. Practices like meditation can help attune our lives to God's heart. Acts of service help us to see God's presence in the people around us.

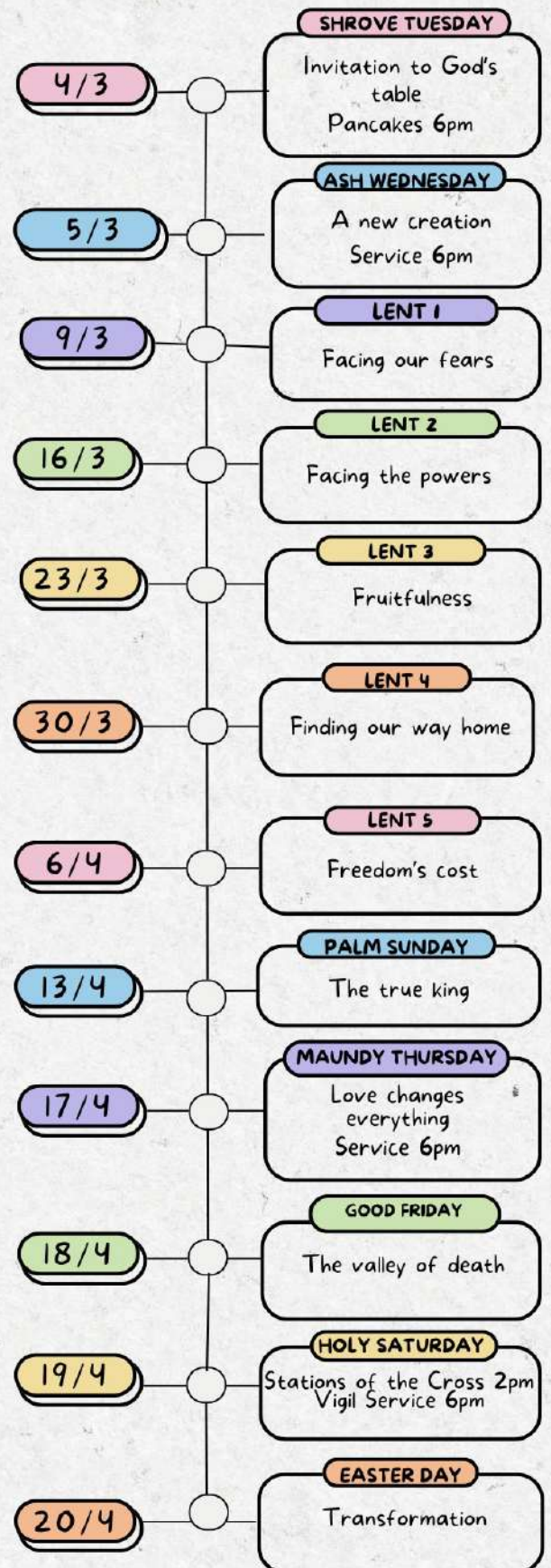
At Holy Covenant, you can explore Lent in two ways. Both streams will overlap at various points.

A study group exploring *Jesus: a pilgrimage*, will meet on Tuesdays from 4-5pm. People can share stories, insights and community together.

A more personal pilgrimage will also be available. This will consist of weekly readings and reflections that you can take by yourself.

Why not come along on the journey?

LENT - EASTER 2025



SAFE MINISTRY TRAINING

Friday March 7th from 2pm

in the Worship Centre.

Help with this will be provided to

Category 4 Volunteers

(service leaders, readers and intercessors)

needing to complete the

Safe Ministries Essentials

(Module 1) On-line training.

Please register your interest in attending with Caity in the Parish Office,

either by email at office@holycovenant.org.au

or calling during office hours on 6251 6100

The training will be paid for by the Parish.

After payment is made you will receive a registration confirmation email.

In this email there will be a hyperlink which will take you to the course Sign Up page.

Bring your device, with access to your email account, along with you on **Friday 7th March**.

OR if you prefer you can attend 'In-person' training at

Good Shepherd Church, Curtin on

Saturday 22nd March.

More details about this training be provided next week.

For more information contact Anne McDowell

Mb: 0421 606 655 or email: anne@scma.info



St Mark's Commencement Service
The Heart of Service: restoring an ethic of Christian service to our churches and public life
Thursday, 27 Feb 6-8pm at St Mark's NTC
Book via QR code below

You've been summoned: to the St Mark's commencement service on Thursday 27th February.

We're honoured to have Justice Richard Refshauge come and speak in the service led by Bishop Vanessa Bennett.

From his many years on the bench of the Supreme Court of the ACT, Justice Refshauge will speak about "The Heart of Service: restoring an ethic of Christian service to our churches and public life."

It's a great chance to consider your next steps, on your life. And perhaps some ways St Mark's could help you.

Let us know if you're coming, by booking here.



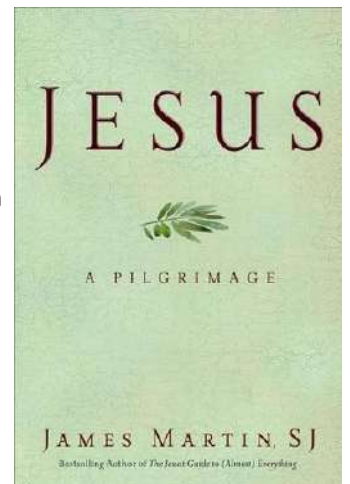
St Mark's
NATIONAL THEOLOGICAL CENTRE



2025 LENT GROUP

Bili will be hosting a Lent group this year, starting on the 4th of March 2025. We will read through James Martin's *Jesus: A Pilgrimage*.

In his book, Martin invites readers to experience Jesus's journey, prayer and scripture. It tells of Martin's experience of sites he visits in the Holy Land. In this book, we find an invitation to explore how our Christianity might be lived through some of the sites in the Holy Land and Scriptures. I have selected 6 chapters, as the book can be read piecemeal, for us to explore.



The eBook is available in the ePUB format for around \$11, or as a physical book for less than \$30, through Booktopia (an Australian online seller). The link is: <https://www.booktopia.com.au/jesus-james-martin/ebook/9780062292674.html>

It is not necessary to buy the book or even read the chapters as we will approach the study from the scripture attached to each chapter. A photocopy of each chapter will be available the previous week if you wish.

Blessings, Bili



"TO ENCOURAGE OUR CONGREGATION TO SIT IN THE FRONT PEWS, I'VE INSTALLED CELL PHONE CHARGING STATIONS IN THE FIRST THREE ROWS."

PRAYER POINTS

IN THE WORLD

- ⇒ Ukrainian leaders as Russia and America discuss a peace deal without them.
- ⇒ The German election (23 February) and the possibility of a neo-Nazi party gaining government.
- ⇒ Growing insecurity in Africa for when USAID ceases.

IN AUSTRALIA

- ⇒ For LGBTIQ+ people as they celebrate Mardi Gras.
- ⇒ The Western Australian election (8 March).
- ⇒ Islamic and Jewish communities who feel threatened and ignored.

IN THE DIOCESAN CYCLE OF PRAYER

- ⇒ Diocese of Tasmania
- ⇒ South Wagga Wagga
- ⇒ :The Forrest Centre, Wagga Wagga
- ⇒ Pray for: The bereaved and those who care for them.

IN OUR PARISH AND COMMUNITY

- ⇒ For all members of our parish family including Hugo Walker; Lydia Waldron and Mark Stevens; Peter and Wendy Ward; and Susan Webb.
- ⇒ We uphold those in special need of prayer (often for long term needs) including Barry & Sandra Button; Glenys Wimmer; Bev Chambers, Bruce Barnes, Megan McKay, Bob & Hilary Harris, Joshua Salske, Ian Matters, and anyone known to us personally.

COMMEMORATIONS

- | | |
|--------|------------------------------------|
| 25 Feb | Clifford Jack Daniels (d. 2005) |
| 26 Feb | Betty Joan Cooper (d. 2008) |
| | Jennifer Ellen Baines (d. 2019) |
| | Elizabeth Joyce Jennings (d. 2019) |

BIRTHDAYS

- | | |
|--------|--------------------|
| 24 Feb | Christine Mitchell |
| 26 Feb | Rick Tilden |
| 28 Feb | Rika Kobayashi |

BIBLE READINGS

Genesis 45: 3-11, 15
Psalm 37: 1-11, 40-41
1 Corinthians 15: 35-50
Luke 6: 27-38

COLLECT

God of compassion,
keep before us the love you have revealed in your Son,
who prayed even for his enemies.
In our words and deeds help us to be like him,
through whom we pray,
Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. **Amen.**

MINISTRY TEAM CONTACTS

Rector

The Reverend Dr Wayne Brighton,
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Assistant Minister

The Reverend Dr Bili Malek
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Wardens

Allison Cooper-Stanbury 0410 506 231

Prayer Vine

Rosemary Kennemore
6251 2009 kennemorerosemary@gmail.com

Belonging and Caring

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Covenant Care Program Manager

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Covenant Care Chaplain

The Venerable (EM) Anne Ranse OAM
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The Revd Connie Gerrity

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The Revd Lynda McMinn

0403 769 991 ellemm99@gmail.com

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