

## AN UNEXPECTED ROUTE TO THE CROSS

Two weeks ago we were on the way to the cross. That journey has taken a dramatic and unexpected turn—as we find ourselves confined to our homes for at least four weeks following the governments activation of Alert Level 4 in response to COVID-19 Pandemic. Words and expressions we have never used before have suddenly become part of our everyday language as, count cases, seek the flatten the curve and we move towards a new normal, through a very real wilderness.

Vestry reflected together on our various experiences of isolation this week, we spoke of many differing and sometimes contradictory emotions – a sense of relief that the government has acted quickly, grief for the loss of freedom and the people we are not able to see, feelings of isolation, dislocation, anxiety and apprehension; concern for our own health and that of others in our society. Some of us were looking forward to getting things done which we have wanted to do for a long time and some to enforced quiet time and prayer; as we watch the fabric of our society change before our eyes. And still we journey to the cross thought a changing landscape and unfamiliar land.

In the reading from Ezekiel today, God takes Ezekiel to a Valley of Dry bones. Showing him an isolated, desolate, place of death and destruction, God asks: Mortal, can these bones live? Ezekiel puts his trust in God as he replies, “O Lord, God you know”. Not only does God bring the bones together with sinews and flesh, God breathes life into the bones that they may live. David Gerber explains that Ezekiel and his community have survived the pain and suffering of exile in Babylon.

He writes: “The true miracle [of this vision] is that it occurs after the community has faced such devastating loss.”

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St Andrew's  
Welcomes You

**29th MARCH 2020**

**FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT - CHURCH AT HOME**

*continued from front page*

Out of pain and dislocation, even on the most devastating scale, God brings restoration and wholeness – to body, mind and spirit.

“Mortal, can these bones live?” Yes. They most certainly can.

Even as we journey through the unfamiliar territory of lockdown, as we seek to explore what it means to be church when you can’t meet in person, we look for the blessings in this enforced quiet time, we give thanks for technology which helps us to stay connected and for neighbours we had not met until last week. We pray for those who work on the front time of our medical and social services, we hold firmly to the belief that collective effort and responsible citizenship can ‘flatten the curve’ and that there is light at the end of the tunnel.

Ezekiel reminds us that beyond the desert times, beyond death and destruction, we hold tight to the promise of the resurrection of hope and new life in the most unexpected of circumstances.

On the road ahead there will be difficult days. They will be moments of insight and discovery for us as individuals, as a parish, as the body of Christ, as a nation and as a global world. Some of us will desperately crave company, some of us will wish we could have some quiet time to ourselves. But whatever challenges exist in each of our different ‘bubbles’, we know that God is with us, calling us through this challenging time to new life.

Though we are fragmented and scattered, like the dry bones in the valley in Ezekiel 37, God continues to breath life into us. That we might bring life to others.

*The Reverend Sarah Stevens-Cross*

## **Psalm 130**

Out of the depths have I called to you  
O Lord:

give heed O Lord to my cry.

**Let your ears consider well:  
the pleas I make for mercy.**

If you should keep account of what is  
done a’miss:

who then O Lord could stand?

**But there is forgiveness with you:  
therefore you shall be revered.**

I wait for you Lord with all my soul:  
and in your word is my hope.

**My soul waits for you O Lord:  
more than those who watch by night  
long for the morning,  
more I say than those who watch by  
night long for the morning.**

Wait in hope for the Lord, for with the  
Lord there is love unending;  
and with the Lord there is ample  
redemption.

**The Lord will redeem you:  
from all your many sins.**

## Readings

Ezekiel 37: 1-14 Romans 8: 6-11

John 11: 1-45

## Resources for Reflection

One such resource is the examen prayer. Aimee has prepared this for our children this week. But it is a great for all ages.

Copy and paste the link below to listen.

<https://www.standrewsepsom.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Examen-Prayer.mp3>

Copy and paste the link below to listen to a recording of the St Andrew's Choir:

<https://www.standrewsepsom.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Praise-to-the-Holiest-from-Tell-Out-My-Soul-St-Andrews-Choir-2003.mp3>

## Sentence of the Day

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

*Romans 15:13*

## Collect of the Day

Life-giving God,  
come from the four winds,  
and breathe your breath of life  
into our dry bones.  
Fill us with your Holy Spirit  
that we may experience you more fully.  
Unbind all that keeps us dead inside,  
so that we may be alive  
to your covenant of love  
with humanity.  
With Jesus we pray. Amen.

## Thanksgivings and Intercessions

*Prepared by Lesley Anderson*

As the people of the living God  
Let us join together wherever we may be  
in our prayers  
for the church, New Zealand  
and the World.

Holy God breathe your life into the  
Church,  
breathe holiness , deepening faith and  
energy.

Make us receptive to your gentleness  
and your power.

Holy God breathe your life into our  
country and the troubled world  
breathe responsible caring, honesty and  
compassion  
breathe right values, peace  
and reconciliation,  
vision and hope.

Holy God breathe your life into all those  
affected by COVID-19  
Breathe comfort and wholeness  
Breathe peace of mind and the  
knowledge of your love.

Holy God breathe your life into the dead  
and dying  
breathe courage for the journey  
and the realization that you  
can be trusted.  
Breathe life that lasts for ever.

Breathe into us; so that we live in you.  
Accept these prayers  
for the sake of your son, Jesus Christ  
Who is the resurrection and the life.  
Amen

## Report from Vestry meeting Tuesday 24th March

The Vestry held its meeting via Zoom on Tuesday evening. This was a new experience for many of the members but it worked very well. This is one way we are able to stay connected in these challenging times.

We started the meeting with a round robin checking that all members had systems in place for the Lock down period. The discussion followed on what was being put in place to keep the parish connected. You will see the results over the next few weeks.

Our priorities are to connect—with one another and those around us. It is important we stay connected and you should have had your first call from the Phone Tree. If you have not or if you know someone in the wider community, who would benefit from a weekly call from a parishioner, or needs help with groceries, please contact Karen and we will ask someone to get in touch. We have a long list of people ready, willing and able to assist with shopping and other practical needs. Please let us know if you need anything.

Karen is working from home to keep our financial processes ticking over, respond to phone calls and emails, and keep up with the general administration of our parish. Phone 09 6388 264 or email this address to get in touch with her.

The main business of the meeting was to appoint a new Treasurer. The Vestry has appointed Stephen Hamilton as our new Treasurer. Stephen is known to all of you as he was our Auditor for many years and we are used to seeing him in his red choir robes. Thank you Stephen for accepting this role, an important one in our parish.

The vestry acknowledged the work done by Margaret Tracey and wish her well with her plans for the future.

The Vestry will have another Zoom meeting to approve the Financial reports when Margaret receives them from Trust Management.

Vestry notes that there will be significant financial implications for the parish from this pandemic crisis. Many of which would not be known for some time.

The Vestry was very positive about the future with its many challenges and look forward to working with you all to find solutions over the coming months.

Reported by Lesley Anderson.

## Shutdown FAQ

**When and how will I receive my donation tax receipt?** These donation tax receipts are issued by Trust Management around the end of April. We will email them out to you instead of a printed copy being given to you as would normally happen.

**Can I switch from Envelopes to Automatic Payments while we are not meeting in person?** Yes, you can. The bank account number is on the back page of the pew sheet. Please make sure you include your name or your tithe number in the reference field so we can identify the payment and make sure it is allocated to you.

## **ZOOM INTO PARISH LIFE—COME AND JOIN US**

As much as possible we hope to continue a range of parish events.  
Modern technology makes this easier than ever before from any device or land line.

Follow the instructions below to join us on Zoom :

Tuesday 11am Coffee morning - make your own coffee and join us for a catch up  
Meeting ID # 260-873-490

Wednesday 10am Morning Prayer followed by Lenten Study Group - If you are interested email Karen and she will send you a copy of the order of service to download.  
Meeting ID # 260-154-652

Thursday 7pm Lenten Study Group - Lead by Emma Lamb  
Meeting ID # 449-711-084

### **INSTRUCTIONS FOR ACCESSING ZOOM**

If you haven't used Zoom before, I hope you will find it to be a simple enough process.

The key detail is the meeting ID, which is like a virtual meeting room number – each meeting has been assigned one of these numbers (make sure you use the right number/link or you'll be in the wrong place...). There's no cost. If you need/want to join, you can just get a free account.

To get to the meeting:

Copy and paste this link: <https://zoom.us/>

- If you want to use your computer – just click on the link above and you will be taken to the Zoom website. The first time you use Zoom you will be prompted to install the software needed and you will then be taken to the meeting. Feel free to do this now if you want to see how it all works – just note that because you're really early for the meeting, you'll be the only one there! You can then leave and come back at the right time!
- If you want to use your smartphone/tablet – you will need to download the Zoom app. The only detail you then need is the meeting ID, which is noted above.

If you want to use your phone. If the technology doesn't work for you, you can phone in (we just won't be able to see you). The phone number is **+64 9 884 6780**.

If you need any further assistance please email the office: [office@standrewsepsom.org.nz](mailto:office@standrewsepsom.org.nz)

### **Creative Inspiration**

Has this time of enforced solitude got your creative juices flowing?  
Send us your contributions for the pewsheets so that we can share the joy.  
Email [office@standrewsepsom.org.nz](mailto:office@standrewsepsom.org.nz)

## RESOURCES FOR PRAYER

At times when we feel helpless one of the most powerful things we can do is to pray. Prayer not only connects us to God, it allows us to express the desires, fear and concerns of our hearts. The following resources might inspire your prayer life over the coming weeks.

Richard Rohr Wondrous Encounters - Daily readings from our Lenten Study Book

Pray as you Go - Copy and paste link : <https://pray-as-you-go.org/>

Pray As You Go is a daily prayer session, designed to go with you wherever you go, to help you pray whenever you find time. A new prayer session is produced every day of the working week and one session for the weekend. It is not a 'Thought for the Day', a sermon or a bible-study, but rather a framework for your own prayer.

### Prayers of Thanksgiving and the practice of Gratitude

As we seek to come to terms with all the things we are going without, freedom of movement, seeing people we love, employment etc, it can be easy to focus on the things we don't have. There is a large body of evidence that noting three things you are grateful for each day has a powerful positive effect on your mind, body and spirit. Offer this thanksgiving to God for the many blessings in your life, in our world and in our nation.

### Prayers at 7pm each Sunday

Every night at 7pm Bishop Ross will live stream night prayer. Copy and paste link:

<https://upload.latest.facebook.com/Bishop-Ross-Bay-736358193074303/>

You do not need to be on Facebook to join in this.

**The Bishops commend to all Anglicans and all people of good will the call of the Archbishop of Canterbury to join in a world-wide action of prayer. At 7pm every Sunday that worship services are suspended, please light a candle in your home and pray with and for others.**

Pray for your families, your neighbours, our country, and those ill with the virus. Pray for our health professionals and all those on the frontline who are working tirelessly to care for our community. Pray for the lonely and the frightened. Pray for the courage and grace to be a comfort and a light to the world. *"I roto i te pōuri te mārama e whiti ana; heoi kihai i mau i te pōuri / The light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it."* John 1:5

## CONNECTING AND RESOURCING

Vestry's priorities for the coming weeks are to help you feel connected with one another across physical distance; and to resource and nourish your spiritual journey through this challenging time. Whatever lies ahead, we journey forward together, and God goes with us on the road. This is novel territory for us all. We are experimenting with a range of platforms to offer at home worship. Our offerings might expand or change as we go. We welcome your feedback and your ideas.

You can expect a Pew Sheet to arrive each Friday from Karen, just as it did in life before COVID-19, with news of parish happenings, ideas and resources for your prayer and information about what else is happening around the Diocese. These resources will also appear on our website.

**Daily Lectionary Readings** – these are the daily readings followed by mainstream Christians all over the world. This pattern of daily and Sunday readings dates back to the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries. You might like to use these with a morning prayer service from the prayer book or simply read them and pray the collect below.

**Monday**

Psalm 23 / Susanna 1-9,15-17,19-30,33-62 (or 41b-62) / John 8:1-11

Holy Wisdom, you know our innermost thoughts. Write your law of love in our hearts. Make us, like Daniel, willing to speak out against oppression. Speak into our hearts so that we might know right from wrong, and can serve our neighbours with just love.

With Jesus we pray. Amen.

**Tuesday**

Psalm 102:1-3,16-23 / Numbers 21:4-9 / John 8:21-30

Generous God, you give us Jesus, herald of your mercy and grace. Be patient with us even when we grow impatient, and turn up our noses at the nourishment you offer us. Fix our attention on Jesus, sacrament of your generosity. Grace us, that we too may be sacraments of your grace in our communities. With Jesus we pray. Amen.

**Wednesday**

Canticle Song of the Three 29-34 / Daniel 3:14-20,24-25,28 / John 8:31-42

Saving God, when we are distracted by our own ways, losing sight of your truth within us, draw our attention to your way. When we are oppressed by injustice, stand with us in the flames of our despair. Free us to serve you, and our neighbours, with courage and hope.

With Jesus we pray. Amen.

**Thursday**

Psalm 105:4-9 / Genesis 17:3-9 / John 8:51-end

Ever-faithful God, just as you made a covenant of love with Abraham and Sarah, you also offer us the same promise of faithful relationship. When we feel like aliens in our world, remind us that you will never desert us. Help us to live faithfully the Jesus way.

With Jesus we pray. Amen.

**Friday**

Psalm 18:1-6 / Jeremiah 20:10-13 / John 10:31-end

Holy God, in whose image we are made, fortify us when we experience persecution. Purge us of all thoughts of vengeance, that we may be bearers of your mercy and grace. We have Jesus as model of your way of peace. Thank you. With Jesus we pray. Amen.

**Saturday**

Canticle Jeremiah 31:10-13, or Psalm 121 / Ezekiel 37:21-end / John 11:45-end

Ever-patient God, when we are afraid and reject you, gather us, your dispersed people, to see you afresh in Jesus. Fill us with your Holy Spirit, that we may enter Jesus' passion and death with receptive hearts, seeking to know and understand your passionate heart.

With Jesus we pray. Amen.

*Source: Our Daily Bread Jenny Harrison and John McAlpine*

## PARISH DIRECTORY

**Parish Mailing Address:** 100 St Andrews Road, Epsom, 1023

**Parish Office:** Karen Ross (09) 638 8264

office@standrewsepsom.org.nz

Tuesday to Friday 9:30am - 2:30pm

www.standrewsepsom.org.nz

**Vicar:** The Reverend Sarah Stevens-Cross

Vicarage (09) 623 2290 Mobile 021 921 080

vicar@standrewsepsom.org.nz Please note Monday is Sarah's day off.

**Deacon Assistant:** The Reverend Julian Morris (09) 638 8264

**Pastoral Care Co-ordinator:** Lucy Best (09) 520 0093 Mobile 021 350 480

**Services:** Sundays 8am and 9:30am and Wednesday Mid week Communion 10am

**If you would like to give via Automatic Payment or Direct Credit  
the NEW Parish bank account is: 06 0103 0780441 00**



### FROM THE REGISTERS

This week has been a busy week for everyone. Before the shutdown our Vicar Sarah conducted a baptism and a wedding. Our congratulations to Bryce Miller (son of Margaret) and Kim Adams as they begin a very different kind of honeymoon and to the Arauzo-Simpson family on the occasion of Mila's baptism.

*May God bless you and keep you,  
God's face shine on you  
and be gracious to you,  
and give you light and peace.*

Photos:

Right: Kym Adams and Bryce Miller.



Left: left to right:  
Cassandra Arauzo, Alexia and Mila  
Arauzo-Simpson, Myron Simpson.