

MARCH PREACHING PLAN

March 1st Lent 2

8.30 Lockyer HC	Rev Corina	Genesis 12: 1 - 4a
9.30 Denmark	T Ayers	Psalms 121
10.00 AUC HC	Rev Corina	Romans 4: 1 - 5, 13 - 17
11.00 Mt Barker	S Wilson	John 3: 1- 17 or Matthew 17:1 - 9

March 8th Lent 3

8.30 Lockyer	A Hortin	Exodus 17: 1 - 7
9.00 Denmark HC	Rev Corina	Psalms 95
10.00 AUC	A Hortin	Romans 5: 1 - 11
11.00 Mt Barker HC	Rev Corina	John 4: 15 - 42

March 15th Lent 4

8.30 Lockyer	Rev Corina	1 Samuel 16: 1 - 13
9.30 Denmark	A Hortin	Psalms 23
10.00 AUC	Rev Corina	Ephesians 5: 8 - 14
11.00 Mt Barker	R Anderson	John 9: 1 - 41

March 22nd Lent 5

8.30 Lockyer	Rev Corina	Ezekiel 37: 1 - 14
9.30 Denmark	Rev R Vertigan	Psalms 130
10.00 AUC	Rev Corina	Romans 8: 6 - 11
11.00 Mt Barker	E Burns	John 11: 1 - 45

March 29th Palm Sunday

8.30 Lockyer	Rev R Vertigan	Isaiah 50: 4 - 9a
9.30 Denmark	Rev Corina	Psalms 118: 1 - 2, 19 - 29
10.00 AUC	Rev R Vertigan	Philippians 2: 5 - 11
11.00 Mt Barker	S Wilson	Matthew 21: 1 - 11
11.00 Mt Barker	S Wilson	



THE ARC MONTHLY

ALBANY REGION CONGREGATIONS

*Albany Uniting Church,
Denmark, Lockyer, Mt Barker*



MARCH 2026



*In the meeting of our lives Lord,
be the focus of all that we are.
In the singing of the hymns,
the prayers that we shall make,
the reading of your Word,
and the preaching of the same,
speak to us, encourage us and forgive us.
In the meeting of our lives Lord,
be the focus of all that we are.*



Message from the Manse: FASTING

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The President of the Uniting Church in Australia, Rev. Charissa Suli, invites us all to embrace Lent with renewed intention. We are encouraged to look beyond surface-level sacrifice. Rev. Suli writes, “The Lenten season is not about giving up chocolate ... If that is all we do, we have missed the invitation.” calling the Church into deeper reflection and spiritual renewal. In a world marked by uncertainty and division, Rev. Suli urges us to fast from whatever “hardens the heart” and to turn toward prayer, courageous love and generous action. Lent, she suggests, is not a time for retreat, but an opportunity to allow God to reshape our hearts and habits – individually and collectively. This season is not about spiritual performance. It is about transformation. May this Lent shape us into a Church that looks more like Christ – courageous, humble and radiant with resurrection hope!” I share this thought with you, because I promised to write about the “right kinds of fasting” and about practices of fasting beyond the Christian church.

Rev. Suli already gives an idea of what ‘right’ fasting might mean. Moses fasted on mount Sinai, for a long time, twice, which highlights his complete humility and dependence on God. He also prayed for the rebellious people who worshipped another god or gods. His closeness to God transforms him, to the point of his appearance changing; his face shining brightly. The ancient people of Israel fast too, they experience hunger and thirst in the wilderness years. They don’t do this intentionally, rather they complain about their circumstances. This cannot be called ‘right fasting’.

The prophet Elijah is on the run, trying to save his life, when he has to make do without food for quite some time and – exhausted – is ready to give up and die. God provides food, which gives Elijah enough strength to walk for forty days – a very long time, until he reaches mount Horeb.

We have heard about Jesus’ time in the wilderness. He is led there by the Holy Spirit. The earliest Gospel, Mark, tells the us “For forty

DIARY DATES

- SAT 28th FEB** THE Quiet Space, Wesley, Church, 2 – 3pm
Musician: Patrick Elms
- FRI 6th MAR** WORLD Day of Prayer, 10am AUC Duke St
- TUES 10th MAR** AUC FELLOWSHIP, Handasydes, 2pm, All welcome
- FRI 13th MAR** SCOTS MARKET, CWA Hall Serpentine Rd 9am-3pm
teas and lunches available, come and say hello!
- THUR 19th MAR** FELLOWSHIP Morning Tea, 10am, Vancouver Café,
ALL WELCOME. Details from Mary 0427 554 947
- THUR 26th MAR** AUC COUNCIL MEETING, Lesser Hall, 3pm
- SAT 28th MAR** THE QUIET SPACE, Wesley Church, 2 – 3pm
Music provided by the classical guitar sister trio
Misty Gem

DIRECTORY

- MINISTER** Rev Corina van Oostende 0417 169 544
Email: Corinamode@gmail.com
- PASTORAL CARERS**
- | | | |
|-----------|----------------|--------------|
| Denmark | Margaret Cocks | 0428 608 620 |
| Lockyer | Joan Wright | 0429 413 759 |
| Mt Barker | Sue Wilson | 0437 184 692 |
| AUC | Edith Verran | 9841 2729 |
| | Heather Bailey | 0428 936 824 |
- PRAYER COORDINATOR**
- AUC OFFICE** **Open Hours:** Tues – Thurs 8.45 – 12.45pm
Phone 0472 732 441
Email unitingchurchalbany@gmail.com
Address PO Box 5170 Albany WA 6332
- MAGAZINE** ferry@omninet.net.au

Rosters for AUC and Lockyer:

Recording/

	<u>DOOR</u>	<u>READING</u>	<u>FLOWERS</u>	<u>Music</u>
<u>1st March</u> <i>Lockyer</i>	D Hockey	W Dwyer <i>M Hannington</i>	M Gunther	M Vertigan / P Elms
<u>8th March</u> <i>Lockyer:</i>	A Gunther	A Lucas <i>Alan Hortin</i>	C Ferry	W Dwyer/ S Harris
<u>15th March</u> <i>Lockyer:</i>	A Glasgow	C Ferry <i>Anne Hortin</i>	A Tero	M Vertigan/ P Elms
<u>22nd March</u> <i>Lockyer:</i>	C Ferry <i>J Bowman</i>	S Harris <i>J Dunbar</i>	C Ferry	W Dwyer/ P Elms
<u>29th March</u>	A Glasgow	W Dwyer <i>M Hannington</i>	A Tero	M Little/ P Elms

Morning Tea, *Lockyer only*
Joint effort by those available

I am only one, but still, I am one.
I cannot do everything,
but still, I can do something,
and because I cannot do everything,
let me not refuse to do
the something that I can do.

As one person I cannot change the world, but I can change the world
for one person

wilderness days and nights he was tested by Satan. Wild animals were his companions, and angels took care of him". Did Jesus fast? The Gospels according to Matthew and Luke tell us he did. In Matthew, fasting for forty days and forty nights is in preparation for the test that is to follow. After the – resisted – temptations the angels come and take care of Jesus. In Luke, Jesus is filled by the Spirit, and he is tested during the forty days of his fast, as well as after this period. The Devil retreats temporarily, 'lying in wait for another opportunity'. The Gospel of John does not mention fasting or times of temptation. 'Right fasting', in Matthew and Luke, has as its purpose drawing near to God, focusing on Scripture and resisting temptations the world offers: endless supplies of food (and drink); control over danger in risky situations; dominion over other people on the condition of idolatry: loving any worldly; 'power' more than God. Fasting without these intentions is worthless, the Hebrew Scriptures say. Today still, just giving up something is not going to bring about humility, closeness to God or changes of mind and heart and action. Fasting for its own sake, or to look good, is not a right kind of fasting. Christians today fast during Lent to help concentrate on the events of Holy Week, especially Good Friday and Easter. We could set some time aside each day and ask ourselves what these events mean in our lives, and how the death and resurrection of Jesus prompt us to act, how they challenge us to change our habits, routines, daily living...

Let's look at some different traditions, and their fasting. First there is Islam. Muslim people observe a month long fast. They pray, read the Quran and engage in introspection during Ramadan. Muslims hold that the prophet Muhammad received the first revelation of the texts of the Quran during the last ten days of the ninth month of their lunar year: Ramadan. They believe that it has always been necessary to fast to find the 'fear of God'. Pre-Islamic pagans in Mecca fasted on the tenth day of the first month of their calendar Year to redress sin and avoid drought. Modern day observance of

Ramadan fasting (taking no food or drink between sunrise and sunset) formally began in the 7th Century. It quite likely grew out of the strict Lenten discipline of the Christian Syrian Churches. Hinduism encourages fasting on one day a week. People should have an empty stomach until the afternoon, but drinking water is allowed. In the afternoon, having fruit juice or one or two pieces of fruits are recommended, to avoid increased acidity or low blood sugar and blood pressure levels. Fasting is done between sunrise and sunset or else 12 a.m. to 12 a.m. the next night (24 hours). Hindu believers think sins would decrease if the body suffers. Instead of God punishing you, you punish yourself. This would result in a better time in life. Part of Hindu belief is that God has many different manifestations, gods, who are also worshipped. If someone fasts on a particular day, the god who rules that day will be happy and cause you to suffer less. Someone facing trouble can visit an astrologer, who can advise you to fast on a particular day. Fasting in this tradition seems to be done to earn a reward.

Sikhism is probably the only major organised world religion that does not promote fasting except for medical reasons. Fasting is considered to bring no spiritual benefit to the person. The Sikh holy Scripture, Sri Guru Granth Sahib says: "fasting, daily rituals, and austere self-discipline— those who keep the practice of these, are rewarded with less than a shell".

To fast or not to fast? If it helps to focus on your relationship with God, then do give up food, drink, or a habit that is not helpful anyway. Please do not fast to punish yourself or to be rewarded by God in this life or a possible next. Christians believe that divine Love just does not work that way: it is unconditional. Blessings, Corina

BITS FROM BARKER: We carry on much as usual, taking the opportunity to go out for lunch after the Service when we have visiting preachers which is always enjoyable. The Manse was leased to a new tenant recently, so it is only the church and its surrounds

very demanding if we stay with our routine and keep sharing the load. I thank the other volunteers: Elizabeth, Kathy, Allan, Barbara McNeil, Patrick and now Julie Parish, for their continued service and cooperation. We do take feedback but are limited in how much we can do. If you'd like to help out there are many ways as suits your ability. The smallest task, reliably done regularly makes a big difference, even just giving out info sheets at the door, or finding ways to promote the event online. We even have a slide show of soothing imagery which is in need of refreshing, so if you have photos that may suit, please get in touch.

In any case, we hope you all have your own quiet spaces in your life or in prayer. If, like me, you need an appointment to motivate you, please join us on the last Saturday of every month except December, 2 - 3pm. As always contact us at wesleyalbany@protonmail.com

Thanks everyone, Seb

EDITORIAL COMMENT: It is good to have Seb back on board and it would seem we have much to look forward to music-wise from next Saturday. It was tempting to leave doing the magazine until next week for Sunday 1st March but 22nd February is the first Sunday in Lent which gave Corina the chance to give us a good over-view of how we can use the whole period of Lent wisely, and with a better outcome from doing some serious thinking. It also gave more time for people to plan to set aside time to attend The Quiet Space next Saturday, 28th Feb, and also attend the World Day of Prayer Service on 6th March The message went out to the contributors who didn't let me down then the fun was getting everything to fit, which was quite a challenge. I was greatly saddened by the passing of a very dear and long-time friend in Doug Coxall and was ready to fill gaps with some of the sayings, prayers and poems from the vast number Doug has given me over the years, but alas there is only room for: **Do not focus on what you have lost. Learn to give thanks for what you have now.** Doug has earned his place in God's Kingdom, Clare

WESLEY MUSIC NEWS: The Quiet Space got off to a good start with one of the three new artists we welcome this year. Adam Grok describes himself as a “heartland Roots and Folk” artist, and brought a style and harmony quite unlike we’ve had before with his voice, subtle electronic effects and ngoni. As we learned, the ngoni is a plucked string instrument originating from central Africa made from dried gourd, wood and metal strings. The sound was wonderful and with his sensitivity to the Wesley acoustics, he took us through a landscape very fitting for The Quiet Space.

Our regular appointment with tranquillity continues on, with our regular following generally joined by friends or curious visitors at the monthly event, keeping numbers steady. The mailing list is now up to 56 contacts and cash donations remain around half of the running costs. However, thanks to supporters of this community outreach program, the cost to the congregation is negligible. At our annual volunteers meeting in December, we decided to continue in its current format, based on our mission to serve the community, and determination to welcome everyone no matter who they are. We also looked at other ways to spread the word, and we again ask that you keep it in mind, especially for anyone you know who may be worried or stressed. While it’s unusual to spend time simply settling and being calm, it can be so pleasant and good for the mind if you try.

Patrick Elms is our solo artist for **28th Feb**. We welcome back ambient classical guitar sister trio Misty Gem on **28th March** and on **25th April**, yes Anzac Day, Julie Parish with Patrick Elms.

As well as David Rastrick, Ross Dwyer and Adam Cook later in the year also welcome Neville Talbot and Nola Formentin, who promises meditative percussion and chants, new for us. 30th May is actually the only date of the year where we haven’t found an available artist, so if you know any advanced musician interested, please put them in touch, otherwise, it may have to be me!

Running The Quiet Space is a labour of love, not easy but also not

that we need to keep in a good state during the hot weather.

Although Doug continues to travel to Perth quite often, he sees to the health of our street trees by watering them as needed. Nita, who has just celebrated her birthday, looks after the church garden, making sure it gets watered on a regular basis.

The Anglicans are hosting the World Day of Prayer in Mt Barker this year. We wish Albany Uniting Church well for their Service.

Blessings, Sue Wilson

LOCKYER NEWS: When Clare let me know the March magazine was underway, she said that the end of the month had crept up on her. It sure has, and it is the same in the Lockyer Congregation. We do miss those who are unable to come to worship with us on Sundays, but we do understand how age does affect our abilities! It is great to see Louise when Corina brings her and also Jan when she can get a ride. And we do look forward to a measure of peace in our lives as we get somewhat older.

Most people think peace is something we reach - after the conflict ends, after the world settles down. But Jesus never taught peace as a finish line. He taught it as a way of walking.

He said, "Blessed are the peacemakers." Not the peace-wishers. Not the peace-observers. The peacemakers —those who step into the world with healing in their stride.

Jesus walked the same truth. From Galilee to Jerusalem, his peace was never abstract —it was lived in dust and sweat, in shared meals and healed wounds. He crossed boundaries others enforced, touched people others avoided, and restored those the world had written off. His peace was forged in relationship, in the fierce tenderness of belovedness, in the widening circle of "we." He refused the sword in Gethsemane not out of weakness, but because he knew violence could never midwife the kingdom he proclaimed. Every step he took —toward the sick, the hungry, the outcast, the enemy, revealed a peace that grows only when we walk it together.

If peace is something we walk together, what might become possible if we believed in peace, and in our interdependence - letting that truth shape every step across the terrain of our own lives? Even as we age – as we all must. Celebrate our oldness with joy and humility. Cheers, Alan Hortin

DENMARK NEWS: The year began quietly for us, with very few visitors over the holiday period, to our church that is, there were plenty in town. February has been busier with the usual annual visit from the "Greenwood mob", now without a Uniting Church of their own, sadly, and several of the Hortin Clan to swell our numbers. There was also a very special occasion, with the dual baptism of a mother, Saskia, and her two- month- old daughter, Margot Blossom. Lucky Corina got to hold the baby!

Music is still important for us. The two choirs have resumed their weekly practices, and a group of harpists also use the church for their practices. Adam continues to give his music lessons twice a week, and our small but enthusiastic (and tuneful) choir still sings at some services.

It's coming up to a year after Hazel Moon's death and we think she would be pleased at the way things are keeping on going. Our role now is trying to help people to stay in the accommodation they have, by supporting them. Best wishes, Margaret Cocks

AUC News: Marian, Maxine and Corina have been busy making sure all is in readiness for the World Day of Prayer Service on Friday 6th March. They would appreciate some indication of how many intend to be there and who can contribute to the morning tea afterwards, whether with food or with help setting up or packing away. We are hoping for a good attendance, everyone is welcome and I apologise for my mistake last month, the event is not only for women, although the Service will acknowledge the heavy burden so many Nigerian women and girls carry. Clare F

PRAYER PROMPTS: Please keep the family of Doug Coxall, who passed away peacefully on Sunday 15th Feb, in your prayers as they wait to organise his funeral after the formalities have been observed. He will be greatly missed by his family and many friends. Please also pray for those you know who are ill, recuperating in hospice, or who struggle with health problems which keep them from attending church on a regular basis.

SHOEBOX SNIPPETS:

Ethel Halliday from the Anglican Church recently wrote to me to express their thanks for the donation of goods for this year's Shoebox Project, which we had passed on to them. As they were the leftovers after our final year of packing shoeboxes and you are the ones who backed us over many years, I would like to share the letter

Dear Edith,

On behalf of St John's Anglican Church Albany, I wish to acknowledge, with pleasure and grateful thanks, the very generous donation of suitable goods for the Operation Shoebox, Project 2026. These goods will be finding their way to children somewhere in the world by the end of this year and your donation will enable more boxes to be sent from St John's Albany.

When the completed boxes are sent to Perth for onward distribution, we will acknowledge the fact that many additional box items, supplied by the Uniting Church Albany Shoebox Team, have enabled extra boxes to be completed.

Many thanks to whole team, not just for these donations, but also for the many years of wonderful service and donations sent all over the world from you as a team. Enjoy your retirement from the project even though I know that you will be watching closely the distribution and success of this year's collection.

Regards and best wishes,

Ethel Halliday, Shoebox Coordinator for St John's Albany

God's blessings to you all, Edith