

# NO TURNING BACK

unpacking our baptismal vows

Lent 2026

“Whoever wants to be my  
disciple must deny  
themselves and take up their  
cross and follow me.

For whoever wants to save  
their life will lose it, but  
whoever loses their life for  
me will find it.”

- Matthew 16:24-25 -

# NO TURNING BACK

Lent is a season of return. A time when the Church invites us to slow down, to be honest, and to remember who we are and whose we are. At the heart of the Christian life stands a simple but profound moment: our baptism. Whether we were baptised as infants, or came to the waters later in life, baptism marked a decisive turning point. We were claimed by Christ, renounced the powers that oppose God, and committed ourselves to a new way of living. In the words of the old hymn, we said, “No turning back.”

This seven-week Lenten Bible study, “No turning back... unpacking our baptismal vows,” invites us to revisit our baptism promises as living commitments that shape our daily discipleship. Lent is not about adding extra burdens, but about clearing space so that we can once again hear Christ’s call and respond with renewed faith.

Each week we will take one of the baptismal questions and allow Scripture to speak deeply into it. We begin where discipleship begins: ‘Do you turn to Christ?’ as Jesus calls ordinary people to follow him (Matthew 4:18–22). We will then reflect on repentance and new life with Nicodemus (John 3:1–17), and what it means to reject selfish living as we encounter the transforming grace of Jesus.

We will face the reality of spiritual resistance as we ask, ‘Do you renounce Satan?’ (Matthew 4:1–11) and consider the cost and gift of discipleship in Jesus’ words, ‘Take up your cross’ (Matthew 16:21–28). We will reflect on our shared life in Christ supporting one another as one body (1 Corinthians 12:1–12). Finally, we end not in solemnity but in hope, hearing the risen Christ’s invitation to come and live not in fear but in hope (Matthew 28:1–10).

My prayer is that this journey will help us reclaim the courage of our baptismal promises, deepen our trust in Christ, and renew our commitment to follow him without turning back.

In Christ,

*Rev’d Christopher Bate*  
*Holy Spirit Anglican Church Algester*



### Warming up:

What moment in your life was the biggest turning point?

### Read: Matthew 4:18-22

1. Who does Jesus meet in this passage? What are they doing when Jesus meets with them?
2. What two things does Jesus say to the fishermen?
3. What do you think Jesus meant by 'come follow me'? Is Jesus asking them to follow him to a specific place or does he mean something else?
4. What do you think Jesus meant by 'I will send you out to fish for people'? How does Jesus take what these men already know and re-shape it for their new role in following him?
5. How does this link with Jesus' preaching topic in v.17?
6. Think about the attributes of a fisherman: patience, diligence, courage to face storms and a willingness to sit in the cold and rain. Would these attributes still be beneficial as they follow Jesus and fish for people? Why? How?
7. How do the fishermen respond to Jesus' invitation? What stands out to you about the speed and simplicity of their response?
8. What have the fishermen left behind to follow Jesus?
9. How do these men embody 'turning to Christ'?
10. Does Jesus tell them what their future would hold before they follow him? Do they understand everything about Jesus before turning to follow him? Why is this significant for them and for us?

### Rubber hits the road:

What might 'leaving the nets' look like in your life today, either as you choose to follow him for the first time or as you continue to turn to him? Where might Jesus be calling you to turn more fully toward him this Lent - in your habits, priorities or identity?





### Warming up:

How do you know if a person is sorry for something they've done to you?

### Read: John 3:1-17

1. Who is Jesus speaking to in this passage? In your opinion, how does the conversation go?
2. Why is Jesus talking about being 'born again'?
3. Notice how in vv.5-8 the word 'spirit' is used with a capital 'S' and lower case 's'. What is the difference?
4. Why is Jesus' questioner shocked by his words?
5. Why does Jesus use 'earthly' analogies to speak of 'spiritual' things?
6. Who is Jesus speaking about when he refers to 'the Son of Man'? Why is this significant? (see also Daniel 7:13-14)
7. How does Jesus' questioner respond to his words? Are they ready to repent of their sins?
8. How would you respond if you had been at this meeting?
9. In a baptism service, the candidate for baptism is asked: 'Do you repent of your sins'? How could this passage relate to that question?
10. What is repentance? Is repentance just about saying 'sorry'?
11. What does the Bible say about repentance? (See: Proverbs 28:13, Mark 1:15, Acts 3:19, Acts 11:18, 2 Peter 3:9, 1 John 1:9, Revelation 3:19)
12. What role does the Holy Spirit have in repentance?
13. What role does repentance play in the life of a believer?

### Rubber hits the road:

What holds people back from repentance? How can we encourage life-long repentance and sanctification in our church community?

If you are baptised, how can you keep your vows to repent of your sins? If you're not yet baptised, is now a good time for you to receive baptism?





### **Warming up:**

We are asked, 'Do you reject selfish living and all that is false and unjust?'. What does it mean for us to do this?

### **Read: Luke 9:21-26**

1. What has just happened in Luke's Gospel? What does Jesus say will happen to him?
2. The cross was only known as an instrument of shameful torture and execution in Jesus' time. So what is he asking of his disciples here?
3. What reason does Jesus give for this extraordinary statement in v.24?
4. What is the alternative to this selfless giving of ourselves described in v.25?
5. What is the good news in this passage?

### **Read: Titus 2:1-14**

1. How do we see Paul address selfishness, injustice and falsehood all in this passage?
2. What does that tell us about the relationship between all three?
3. What 'teaches' us to reject selfish living (v.12)? Why is that important?
4. How is that related to our baptism?

### **Rubber hits the road:**

Consider where your life is marked by selfishness. Consider where you have embraced or ignored lies and injustice for personal comfort. Ask Jesus for forgiveness and the strength to love him fully. Consider how you can remind yourself of the gospel as a guard against selfishness.





### **Warming up:**

When you hear the words 'Do you renounce Satan and all evil?' what emotions or images come to mind? Does the language feel distant, confronting, or surprisingly relevant to everyday life?

### **Read: Matthew 4:1-11**

1. Jesus is led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted. What does this tell us about temptation in the Christian life? How does this challenge the idea that faith should make life easier?
2. Each temptation begins by questioning Jesus' identity. Why do you think temptation so often targets who we are rather than just what we do?
3. The first temptation appeals to physical need and immediate satisfaction. In what ways are we tempted to meet legitimate needs in illegitimate or self-centred ways?
4. The second and third temptations offer spectacle, safety without trust, and authority without obedience. Where do you see similar temptations at work in our culture or even in the church?
5. Satan quotes Scripture to justify his temptation. Why is it dangerous to use God's Word selectively or self-servingly? How does Jesus model faithful use of Scripture?
6. Jesus says, 'worship the Lord your God, and serve him only'. What does worship look like in everyday life? What are the 'false gods' today?
7. In our baptismal vows we are asked: 'Do you renounce Satan and all evil'? How does Jesus' response to temptation help us understand what renouncement actually looks like in practice?
8. Jesus' temptations end not with defeat, but with God's care. How does this encourage us when we feel worn down or discouraged?

### **Rubber hits the road:**

This week, where do you sense God inviting you to say 'NO' to a habit, a mindset, a distraction, or a compromise that pulls you away from trust and obedience? What practical step can you take to resist it, to renounce temptation, and who might help keep you accountable?





Week 5

# WILL YOU STRIVE TO BE A DISCIPLE

## Warming up:

What do you think is the most important attribute of a Jesus disciple?

## Read: Matthew 16:21-28

1. What does Jesus teach his disciples in v.21? What is the significance of Jesus using the word 'must'?
2. Why do you think Peter responds to Jesus in this way? How would this have challenged his expectations of Jesus being the Messiah?
3. What is the significance of Jesus referring to Peter as 'Satan'? (See Matthew 4:8-10).
4. What does Jesus say is required of anyone who wants to be his disciple? What do you think Jesus means by 'deny' yourself?
5. What do you think Jesus means when he says to 'take up your cross and follow me'? How does Matthew 4:18-22 help us to understand?
6. Jesus speaks about losing life and finding it in him. How do these words challenge common ideas of success, security and fulfilment?
7. Why do you think Jesus speaks about discipleship in terms of whole life (lifestyle) rather than just being about Sundays?
8. How does this passage challenge us to strive for the kingdom whilst we wait for the coming of the kingdom?
9. In light of this passage, how can we understand the correlation between relationship, discipleship and striving?
10. In our baptismal vows, the response to this question is, 'I will, with God's help'. Why is it vital that we respond in this way?

## Rubber hits the road:

What does striving with God's help look like for you this week? Where might the Holy Spirit be challenging, shaping, and growing you in discipleship? How can we encourage one another to persevere in discipleship, especially when it is difficult and requires sacrifice?





Week 6

# WILL YOU SUPPORT ONE ANOTHER

## Warming up:

Do you have godparents? What role should godparents have in the lives of those they have promised to support?

## Read: 1 Corinthians 12:1-12

1. How does this passage make you feel?
2. Who wrote this passage, and who were they writing to?
3. How many times is the Holy Spirit mentioned in this passage? Why?
4. What does this passage say about unity?
5. What does this passage say about diversity?
6. Make a list of the spiritual gifts in this passage. How many are there?
7. What are these gifts for?
8. Can you see people with these gifts in your church? Are they using their gifts?
9. What gifts do you have? How might God be calling you to use them?
10. During a baptism service, the minister asks the congregation: 'will you support (those who are being baptised) in their calling?'. What are we saying when we promise to do this?
11. If you are baptised, how has your church supported you in keeping your baptismal vows?
12. How can your church do a better job in supporting new believers?
13. What does your church do well in supporting new believers?
14. On Easter Sunday, many Christians will renew their baptismal vows. How might this help build up the body of Christ?

## Rubber hits the road:

If you are baptised, how can you show your appreciation for those who have supported you in keeping your baptismal vows to follow Christ? If you are not yet baptised, are you ready to 'take the plunge'? Why?





### Warming up:

Have you ever been given a second chance at something? Or has something ever given you a new lease of life? Describe your experience.

### Read: Matthew 28:1-10

1. What has just happened in this passage? What is so special about it?
2. In brief, what is the meaning of the resurrection for the world?
3. What were the women coming to do at the tomb of Jesus? (See also Luke 24:1)
4. What changes for the women? What are they now to do?
5. Why is it significant that this all happens on 'the first day of the week'?
6. What does the resurrection change for each one of us?

### Read Colossians 3:1-4

1. What does Paul mean about our being 'raised with Christ'? (See Col 2:9-12)
2. What is the symbol of this dying and rising (Col 2:12)? Why is that significant?
3. Since we have been raised with Christ, what should we do?
4. What does it mean in practice to set our hearts and minds on things above? Where do we usually set our hearts and minds?
5. What is Paul talking about in v.4?
6. Read Col 3:5-14. Why is it significant in this context that Paul talks about putting things to death? What should we put to death?
7. How then should we live? And what does the resurrection have to do with it?

### Rubber hits the road:

The resurrection of Jesus changes everything. We are joined to his death and resurrection by baptism. How does that change the way we live?





“Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.””

- Matthew 4:19 -



HOLY SPIRIT  
ALGESTER



HOLY TRINITY  
KAWANA



GLADSTONE  
ANGLICAN CHURCH



stanthorpe  
ANGLICAN CHURCH