



Alstonville
Anglicans

The Season of Epiphany

10 January to 31 January 2021

Welcome



Sharing the Good Life

We acknowledge the Bundjalung people,
Traditional custodians of the Land.
Our doors are open: LGBTQIA+ welcome here.
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Thought for the week

There is a story that I read which sounds like it might be true. A Sunday School practised for hours and hours to make sure their Christmas Pageant was perfect. Everything was brilliant until the moment the wise ones arrived at the scene. Overwhelmed by the moment the young child playing the role of the wise one, took a dramatic bow before the manger holding Jesus before announcing:

**“Greetings, baby, I
bring you gifts.
Gold,
Circumstance,
and Mud.”**



That’s precisely what

Epiphany brings. Gold, much gold in the kindness of neighbours, the endurance and persistence of health professionals at the front line of the pandemic, and the patience of parents housebound with school aged children. We have had Circumstance aplenty. The mud is key. Not into perfectly ordered lives does God plant the seed of God’s divinity, but into the mud of chaos. The literal mud of a home shared by animals. The literal mud walked in from Nazareth by Mary and Joseph and the donkey. But also, the figurative mud, the mud of broken dreams

when life isn't what you imagined it to be. The mud of messed up relationships. Barbara Brown Taylor has a delightful story that happens after Christmas Nativity, after "the happily ever after". "...That is when the picture was taken—right then, while the star was still overhead, and the angels were still singing in the rafters. But twenty minutes later, what? The hole in the heavens had closed up and the only music came from the bar at the inn. One of the cows stepped on a chicken and the resulting racket made the baby cry. As she leaned over to pick him up, Mary started crying too and when Joseph tried to comfort her, she told him she wanted her mother. If she had just married a nice boy from Nazareth, she said, she would be back home where she belonged instead of competing with sheep for a place to sleep. Then she said she was sorry, and Joseph said not to think another thing about it. He meant it, too. They both hurt all over and there was nothing to eat and it was cold as the dickens, but you know what? God was still there, right in middle of the picture. Peace was there, and joy and love—not only in the best of times, and also, and especially in the worst of time: (Home by Another Way, pp. 23-3). God comes to us in gold, circumstance, and mud. It's in the moments of mud that we have to hang onto the Gospel message,

God is with you. Emmanuel.



The Season of Epiphany



The Greeks gave us democracy and learnt that one can have either democracy or empire, but never both at the same time for long. Rome had to learn a similar lesson. To prevent empire and royal tyranny that later plagued the British, the Romans elected two consuls that would govern together for a year. This worked really well, until it didn't. One consul went west and conquered Gaul. The other went East and conquered Syria. Why then should the two consuls come together and cooperate? The ensuing civil war in Rome destroyed the Roman empire from within and much of the Mediterranean with it. The Roman Civil war reached its climax when Octavian supported by Italy and Mark Anthony supported by Egypt met in battle near the Ionian Sea (north western Greece). On 2 September 31 BCE, Mark Anthony's troops were left to fend for themselves while Anthony and Cleopatra suicided in Alexandria. The civil war ended, as did the Roman republic. A deified imperial Roman monarchy was born

under Octavian later called Augustus, the One who is Divine, the One who is Worshipped, the Autocrat Caesar.

How did Rome under Augustus maintain such power for so long? Their strength lay in combining **military** domination with **economic** control and maintaining **political** and **ideological** power.

The **military strength** of the Romans is well known. The reorganisation of the army into legions, as well as the engineering achievements that were necessary for military control are staggering. The Roman Legions built roads, bridges, aqueducts, and other infrastructure that are still in use today. In fact, some Roman Roads have lasted 2000 years yet the roads in Byron Bay hardly last 6 years! (tongue-in-cheek).

Military domination gave rise to **economic control**. The infrastructure built by the army allowed for greater commerce as the roads made trade easier. Moreover, as Roman soldiers retired, they settled in "new" areas along the frontier and their finances contributed to trade and industry.

The main strategy of the Romans **political power** was **ideological power**. They controlled meaning and interpretation. Caesar's titles are telling: God from God, Redeemer, Liberator, Saviour of the World. Since Octavian (Caesar) had saved the world from years of unrest and war, he was considered saviour of the world and therefore the divine son of God. Augustus gave thanks to the gods Mars and Neptune for blessing him with

victory in war and gifting peace to the world. Religion, war, victory, peace – in that order – are four words that summarise the imperial ideological and political power of Rome. Religion, war, victory, peace. It is important to understand that the perspective of the time was that peace is won through victory in war blessed by the gods.

All this long background is to give you leverage to understand the power of the Christmas story given in our Gospel reading, Matthew 2. Understand this final episode of our Christmas story and you understand the whole Gospel.

Christ's birth and the magi's visit

What is the meaning of Christ's birth and the visit of the magi in the context of Rome's Empire? Our Epiphany story is subversive, it turns the world upside down.

- The presence of the magi from the East in the West, in Roman occupied land, is symbolic of the battles between the Romans in the West and Parthia and Persia in the East. Already there is political unrest in the story.
- In Rome's Kingdom, Herod is King of the Jews. In our story Jesus is born King of the Jews. More importantly the magi from the East name Jesus as King, bestowing him gifts worthy of a king.
- In literary terms, the magi are reminders of the magi in the Old Testament especially in the book of Daniel. There is a

twist. In the Old Testament, the magi are opponents of the Jews, as in Daniel 1.20, 2.2, 4.7 and 5.7. In Matthew 2 the magi are worshippers of Jesus while the Jewish Herod and his court are his opponents. The point being made by the writers of Matthews Gospel is that Jesus is the saviour of all, Jews, and Gentiles alike. In a world that takes as self-evident the total separation of Gentiles and Jews this is extremely subversive.

- There are other reminders in Matthew's Gospel of Old Testament texts. In Exodus Pharaoh slaughtered the innocents to stop the threat of Moses. In Matthew's writing Herod slaughters the innocents to stop the threat of Jesus. There is of course a twist. While Moses flees FROM Egypt to safety, Jesus flees TO Egypt for safety.

I have made but brief references to the political geography of Matthew 2: the challenge to King Herod, the atmosphere of violence and ongoing war, and the threat to innocent life that power, violence, and war represent. The slaughter of the innocents at the hands of political rulers should be enough to shake us free from our pious pageants and see the season of epiphany as a season of activism, citizen rebellion and political resistance. This is uncomfortable because the true worship of Christmas through the season of Epiphany may demand of us that we participate thoughtfully and thoroughly in movements like "Black lives matter" and "the extinction rebellion."

A fundamental option



The magi represent for us a fundamental option. Are we part of Herod's court of fear where we worship Caesar as Saviour, Lord, Son of God, and God from God? Or do we leave Herod's court and worship Jesus as King, Lord, God and Saviour?

It is not good enough to call the Roman kingdom "bad" and God's kingdom "good". Nor is it helpful to call the Roman kingdom "earthy" and God's kingdom "heavenly". Neither dichotomy leads a discussion forward, nor does it acknowledge the peaceful intentions of the Roman empire. Both kingdoms, claim divine titles. Both kingdoms offer a saviour. Both offer peace on earth. The Roman kingdom and God's kingdom differ only in method, they insist on different "recipes" for peace.

For the Roman kingdom, peace is won through victory in war.

In God's kingdom peace is through nonviolent justice.

By default, we are already in Herod's Court. There is an opt out clause. We can allow our dreams of peace through justice to disturb us enough to "leave by another road". In a world that offers peace through victory the Gospel offers an alternative road, peace through nonviolence.

Messages

Worship and spirituality portfolio

From Messy Church

'You are not Alone THE MOVIE'

will have its red-carpet PREMIERE amidst the greatest stars ever born



- on Sunday 10 January
- at 5pm
- in the Ministry Centre
(pizzas after \$10 donation per family)

For all the amazing people who participated in the 2020 Christmas Play, and those who missed out, come and relive the magic.

You will be amazed!

An event not to be missed!



Slip and Slide

31st January, 2pm

Paul & Leslie Earner's home

20 Lismore Rd, Alstonville

Ph: 0416280140



Blessing of the Bags
 Sunday 28th February, 4pm
 A blessing of school bags and all
 school endeavours for 2021.

From St Peter and St Paul's



Sunday 10th January, 10am
 Sunday 24th January, 10am
 Sunday 31st January, 10am

Other Services



Anam Cara

Anam Cara means soul friend. Guided Meditation is offered Wednesdays 9am and non-guided silence on

Thursdays at 6pm, following an abbreviated compline (prayer at the end of the day).

We are praying for you.
 Every Monday 10am
 Join us in St Bartholomew's or submit your
 prayer requests online.



Friday@10

A traditional Eucharistic service.

Sunday@9

A contemporary Eucharistic service.





Cursillo Diocesan Ultreya

Saturday 6th February 9.30am

Mark Stuckey is the contact person for this event. Please contact Mark for further information or to discuss carpooling. Ph: 0428404783

All services in January will be exploring the Season of Epiphany.

Leadership portfolio



AGM

February 21st, 11am.

Annual Report

Everyone responsible for providing reports for inclusion in the Annual Report please email them to the parish office by Sunday 31st January. This then allows time to compile the report and have it available by Sunday 14th February. (one week prior to the AGM)



Nominations

Nomination forms for all parish positions are available in the church at the front door to the ministry centre. Please complete these and return to the parish office as soon as possible.

Nomination for Parish Council Member

I wish to nominate _____
for a position on the parish council.

To nominate a member of parish council, to be nominated, you must be a communicant member of the Anglican church aged at least 18.

Signed: Nominator _____

Signed: Nominee _____

Good Governance

COVID 19 & Church Services

With the resurgence of COVID 19 in Sydney and Victoria, NSW Health has some new regulations for church services.

1. Masks: - these are recommended for all members of the congregation but are compulsory for anyone singing. ie: members of the congregation are forbidden to sing unless wearing a mask. In our churches, masks will be made available at the door, so people have an option. (stocks are in the COVID box)

2. Food: - Morning tea is still allowed as long as social distancing is observed. At St Bartholomew's morning tea will be served outside. (reduces the risk by 95%). Milk and sugar will be on the outside tables to help with social distancing at the counter.

3. Numbers: - These cannot be increased so St Bartholomew's is in the hall and Tregagle is outside.

4. Cleaning: - Chairs need to be wiped over with detergent solution and dried after usage.

Church services have been inspected to ensure compliance. Please remember this is the current law.

Volunteers Needed – Concierge

Members of the congregation are very much needed to provide a hand sanitising and welcoming face to the Op Shop. If you can spare 3 hours a week or fortnight on a Monday or Thursday between 9am and 3pm please call Paul Earner 0416280140.

Finance

Alstonville Anglicans - Offertory Options

Your offertory can be made using the following options:

- Direct transfer to our bank account BSB 705 077 /
Acc:00032931
- Parish Provider - Direct debit through Anglican Funds -
Forms available from the office
- Cheque to Alstonville Anglicans (PO Box 451, Alstonville
2477 or Offertory Plate)
- Offertory envelopes
- Cash

Thank you for your support.

ANGLICAN PARISH OF ALSTONVILLE

Ministers	all the baptised!	
Rector	The Reverend Dr Desiree Snyman	0402 764 969
	priest@anglicans.live	
Associate	The Reverend John Kidson	0411 394 213
	The Reverend Geoff Vidal	0447 645 456
	The Reverend Doug Bannerman	0418 182 450
	The Reverend Greg Ezzy	0412 660 742
Parish Office:	The Ministry Centre, 8 The Avenue, Alstonville	
Telephone:	6628 0231	
Postal:	PO Box 451, Alstonville NSW 2477	
e-mail:	office@anglicans.live	website: anglicans.live

The Anglican Op Shop 1 The Avenue, Alstonville Tel: 6628 8777

Liturgy for 10th January

Sentence of the Day

God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; and he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. Acts 10.38

Collect

Eternal God,
at the baptism of Jesus in the river Jordan
you proclaimed him your beloved Son,
and anointed him with the Holy Spirit:
grant that all who are baptised into his name
may keep the covenant they have made,
and boldly confess him as Lord and Saviour;
who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns,
one God, in glory everlasting. **Amen.**

Readings

Mark 1:4–11

⁴ John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵ And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. ⁶ Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷ He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. ⁸ I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." ⁹ In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰ And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. ¹¹ And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

Liturgy for 17th January

Sentence of the Day

God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. 1 Corinthians 1.9

Collect

Almighty God,
whose Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, is the light of the world: may your people, illumined by your word and sacraments, shine with the radiance of his glory,
that he may be known, worshipped, and obeyed to the ends of the earth; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Readings

John 1:43–51

⁴³ The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me." ⁴⁴ Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. ⁴⁵ Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth." ⁴⁶ Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." ⁴⁷ When Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him, he said of him, "Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!" ⁴⁸ Nathanael asked him, "Where did you get to know me?" Jesus answered, "I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you." ⁴⁹ Nathanael replied, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" ⁵⁰ Jesus answered, "Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these." ⁵¹ And he said to him, "Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

Liturgy for 24th January

Sentence of the Day

Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people. Matthew 4.23

Collect

Loving God,
the light of the minds that know you,
the life of the souls that love you,
and the strength of the hearts that serve you:
help us so to know you
that we may truly love you,
and so to love you
that we may faithfully serve you,
whose service is perfect freedom;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Readings

Mark 1:14–20

¹⁴ Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, ¹⁵ and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news." ¹⁶ As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. ¹⁷ And Jesus said to them, "Follow me and I will make you fish for people." ¹⁸ And immediately they left their nets and followed him. ¹⁹ As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. ²⁰ Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him.

Liturgy for 31st January

Sentence of the Day

What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? Micah 6.8

Collect

Righteous God,
you confound the world's wisdom
by giving your blessing to the lowly and pure in heart:
give us such a hunger and thirst for justice
and perseverance in striving for peace,
that in our words and deeds
the world may see the promise of your kingdom,
which has been revealed in Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Readings

Mark 1:21–28

²¹ They went to Capernaum; and when the sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught. ²² They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. ²³ Just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, ²⁴ and he cried out, "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God." ²⁵ But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be silent, and come out of him!" ²⁶ And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. ²⁷ They were all amazed, and they kept on asking one another, "What is this? A new teaching—with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him." ²⁸ At once his fame began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee.