



Alstonville  
Anglicans

Pentecost 19 on Sunday 11th October 2020

## This week...

- Sunday@9am Anglican Service in the Ministry Centre
- Sunday@10am online via webpage [www.anglicans.live](http://www.anglicans.live)
- Wednesday 9am & Thursday 6pm at St Bartholomew's
- Friday 10am Anglican Service in the Ministry Centre



## Sharing the Good Life

We acknowledge the Bundjalung people,  
Traditional custodians of the Land.  
Our doors are open: LGBTQIA+ welcome here.  
Streaming licence CCLI#690910

# Thought for the week

## The Feast of Life

There are two great pleasures in life. One of them is eating delicious food the other the emotional, physical, and spiritual communion of two lovers. So, it is no wonder that it is the Marriage Feast that is used to symbolise the superlative, spiritual experience of communion with God. It is an auspicious, euphoric time. It is so sad when communion with God is projected into a future experience, Pie in the sky by and by. This is especially upsetting for the poor and disadvantaged of the world. So often, for the suffering and poor 'religion' a drug, an "opiate of the people" (Karl Marx), stopping them from questioning why is there no banquet now and causing them to accept their lot, their predestined place in the world. Thus, this most wonderful experience has become a tool of oppression. This is NOT the meaning of the parable. The wedding feast is NOW. We are being invited NOW. Unfortunately, sometimes we get distracted by what we think are the important things i.e. work and making money or even securing a nice house, which means we miss the FEAST. The FEAST is found in the sharing or God's abundance not

in things or activities but in real communion with God in creation and other humans. God is not in some faraway place called Heaven waiting for us to arrive for a heavenly banquet. God is here. God is now. The banquet is laid out before us. Bog in!



# Liturgy for 11<sup>th</sup> October

## Sentence of the Day

Give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God  
the things that are God's.

Matthew 22.21

## Opening Song

- 1. Come, sing praises to the Lord above,**  
rock of our salvation, God of love;  
with delight into God's presence move,  
for the Lord our God is king!

*God is king above the mountains high,  
the ocean deep, the land and sky;  
mighty continents and islands lie  
within the hollow of God's hand.*

2. Come to worship him and bow the knee,  
Praise our shepherd with humility;  
humble creatures in his hand are we  
sing the praise of God the king!

*God is king above the mountains high,  
the ocean deep, the land and sky;  
mighty continents and islands lie  
within the hollow of God's hand.*

3. Hear the story of God's people now,  
you with stubborn hearts who will not bow;  
learn what happened long ago and how  
God can show you who is king.

*God is king above the mountains high,  
the ocean deep, the land and sky;  
mighty continents and islands lie  
within the hollow of God's hand.*

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## Readings

Matthew 22:1-14

<sup>1</sup> Once more Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying: <sup>2</sup> “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son. <sup>3</sup> He sent his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding banquet, but they would not come. <sup>4</sup> Again he sent other slaves, saying, ‘Tell those who have been invited: Look, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready; come to the wedding banquet.’ <sup>5</sup> But they made light of it and went away, one to his farm, another to his business, <sup>6</sup> while the rest seized his slaves, mistreated them, and killed them. <sup>7</sup> The king was enraged. He sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. <sup>8</sup> Then he said to his slaves, ‘The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. <sup>9</sup> Go therefore into the main streets, and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet.’ <sup>10</sup> Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both good and bad; so the wedding hall was filled with guests. <sup>11</sup> “But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing a wedding robe, <sup>12</sup> and he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe?’ And he was speechless. <sup>13</sup> Then the king said to the attendants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ <sup>14</sup> For many are called, but few are chosen.”

# Prayers

Let us pray.

Maker and Lover of all,  
in the mystery of your kindness  
you have bound us to each other,  
and called us to serve the earth and its people.

So hear us, as in this place of worship  
we pray for the church to which we belong  
that they may ever be centres of faith, hospitality and imagination,  
modelling the future rather than lamenting the past.

God, in your mercy,  
HEAR OUR PRAYER.

Grateful for the life in our bodies,  
we pray for those whose lives are diminished  
by ill health, depression, grief or rejection,  
asking for the healing, the affirming, the listening  
which will encourage and restore them.

God, in your mercy,  
HEAR OUR PRAYER.

Conscious of the peace of this place, we pray for those who have no  
peace because of war or the fear of war,

or the threat of violence,  
or the grip of hunger,  
or the loss of hope.

May the voice of the victims be heard  
and the work of the peacemakers be blessed.

God, in your mercy,  
HEAR OUR PRAYER.

Surrounded by tender beauty,  
we pray for the earth,  
especially where it is damaged by human carelessness  
and threatened by human greed;  
and ask that we may learn to care for the earth as you do.

God, in your mercy,  
HEAR OUR PRAYER.

And because we are here to meet with Jesus,  
we join our words to those he taught us, saying

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name;  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread;

and forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Save us in the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil;  
for the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours,  
now and for ever. Amen.

## Reflection

A reflection on

**Matthew 21:33-46**

### **The spiral of violence**

Jesus the Jew, a book written by Geza Vermes, caused controversy when published in 1973. Today it is commonplace to reflect on Jesus' Jewish background. We have Geza Vermes to thank for that. In 1973, however, Jesus the Jew was provocative title. Why?

Jesus the Jew was a confrontational title because Christianity has internalised the oldest hatred, anti-Semitism. Moreover, we have over spiritualised our reading of Scripture. Over spiritualised means that we read the Gospels in moral tones, ignoring the justice, environmental, economic, and political impacts of the text. As I have studied and read, my research into Scripture has cleaned a mirror for my attitudes



and I have been saddened at how the reflection reveals my prejudice and bias. Our over spiritualised and anti-Semitic bias in reading scripture are like cataracts clouding our sympathy for the context of the Jewish Jesus. Read through anti-Semitic and over spiritualised cataracts, often this parable has been interpreted as an indictment on the religious hypocrisy of the Jews who have had 'heaven' taken away from them and given to the Christian gentiles, while our own hypocrisy remains hidden. Many explanations of this parable regard it as an attack on the Jewish leaders of Jesus time. Furthermore, some interpretations of this parable describe how God has sent pastors to the vineyard his church only to have them abused by the tenants until eventually God will (re)send his son in a second coming. Such teachings cassoack church leaders in a false piety when they themselves are at times the wolves in sheep's clothing. The Royal Commission into institutionalised responses to child abuse has been a cleansing, a necessary movement of the Spirit to disallow any such interpretations.

As background to this parable, the authors of our lectionary have revealed their own bias in marrying Matthew 21.33-46 with Isaiah 5.1-7 – song of God's vineyard:

Let me sing for my beloved my love-song concerning his vineyard:

My beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill...

he expected it to yield grapes, but it yielded wild grapes...

For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel and the people of Judah are his pleasant planting; he expected justice, but saw bloodshed; righteousness, but heard a cry!

Tellingly they have stopped short at verse 7, omitting verse 8, which is the interpretive key for us:

Ah, you who join house to house,  
who add field to field,  
until there is room for no one but you,  
and you are left to live alone



in the midst of the land!



“Add house to house and join field to field” to where there is “no more room in the land.” What does this refer to? The audience in the first century existed under a multiple tax burden. In addition to levies paid to Roman officials there was also the necessary

taxes paid to the temple. In Matthew 23.1-12 Jesus refers to this: “They (the priests and pharisees) tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on the shoulders of others; but they themselves are unwilling to lift a finger to move them.” The multiple tax burdens which leached life out of the average Jew living under Roman and Temple rule is one of the reasons Jesus became angry. In Matthew 20.12-13 we read: “And Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who sold and bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. He said to them, “It is written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer,’ but you make it a den of robbers.”

When one was no longer able to pay one’s taxes and debts, a loan was taken out. When the loan could not be paid, land was forfeited to the wealthy city-based class from whom you were awarded a loan. You hired yourself out as a labourer to the very land you used to own.

Imagine now that the land you owned and loved that supported you and your family for generations was totally destroyed and then replanted with a vineyard. For at least five years the land would bear no fruit which means you had to have enough savings to pay wages without an income. This highlights that only the extremely wealthy could afford the luxury of digging up a workable farm to replant with vines. Imagine being in near poverty working on this farm. As part of your work agreement you are allowed to plant vegetables in

between the vines to feed your family, as long as you pay some of this harvest to your already wealthy property owner. Step into scene, you are hungry and tired, you have been working in the sun, your children are suffering and starving, the small amount of food you are able to grow to feed an undernourished family is taken from you as payment for using the land to grow it, land that once belonged to you. These labourers would have longed for a Messiah to come, to destroy all those who generated wealth at the expense of the peasants, and to overturn the tables of history so that the poor would be rich and the rich, poor. Perhaps you can have sympathy for the violent revolt the desperate tenants resort to, especially if their religious hopes are for a Messiah who would violently destroy the oppressors and support their uprising.

Yet Jesus warns that such an uprising will not be effective and lead to a spiral of violence and not have a happy ending for anyone. The ominous question "Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?" possibly alludes to the siege of Jerusalem in 70CE, a decisive event where the Roman army destroyed the city and Temple of Jerusalem. Josephus the historian suggests that 1.1 million people were killed in that siege. Aware that such a brutal response to an uprising against Rome was possible, the audience in Matthew's Gospel reply to Jesus question, "He will put those wretches to a miserable death."

I suggest that in this parable Jesus is inviting listeners to question for themselves the spiral of violence and its lack of efficacy in overcoming evil. A more nuanced approach is needed, where we are as wise as serpents but as gentle as a dove. Since Jesus does not intend to be the sort of Messiah who will lead a violent uprising against corrupt leadership, many will reject his Messiahship. The unusual messiahship Jesus offers will be a cornerstone for the new community he inaugurates, a new community that adopts the beatitudes as its constitution. To opt for violence instead of the

beatitudes means that one will always stumble against the character of the Christ, the cornerstone is, for some, a stumbling stone.

As we allow the parable to interrogate us, unless we are widows, we as wealthy readers examine the extent to which our lifestyle rests on the exploitation of others, like the wealthy landowner in the text. Is it possible to imagine a new future that subverts the imbalance of the rich being too rich at the expense of the poor who are made poorer?



I suggest a new future is possible. St Francis of Assisi is a living parable of how the spiral of violence described in Matthew's Gospel can be undone. After Jesus, St Francis has had the greatest impact on human history. He is credited with the non-violent destruction of the feudal system of Europe, a feudal system which is summarised in Matthew's parable in 21.33-46. In Matthew's parable, the wealthy landowner sends his son to collect the "taxes". St Francis was the son of such a rich noble, however instead of perpetuating his father's wealth, Francis rejected the lifestyle completely. He lived a life of solidarity with the poor and sick. St Francis not only rewrites the parable, by refusing to be an agent of destruction on behalf of his wealthy patriarch, he also heals the spiral of violence destroying the marginalised and the earth.

As a hero of the faith St Francis empowers us with a creation spirituality that heals a spiral of violence. Compare and contrast is perhaps not the best way to highlight the example St Francis offers us, but this method summarises his impact below:

As a hero of the faith St Francis empowers us with a creation spirituality that heals a spiral of violence. Compare and contrast is perhaps not the best way to highlight the example St Francis offers us, but this method summarises his impact below:

1. While we may have been taught that we are born in original sin, in contrast creation spirituality celebrates that we are as an original blessing, blessed to be a blessing to others.

2. While we may have been taught that the nature of humans is that they are sinners, in contrast creation spirituality celebrates that we the baptised are the anointed kings and queens of the new creations.
3. While we may believe in a divided world, in contrast creation spirituality teaches the interconnectedness of all things; rich and poor, humans and animals, animate and inanimate are linked together as interdependent siblings. It is because the world is enjoyed as an undivided whole that St Francis sings a hymn to sister moon and brother sun.
4. While we may see the world in dualistic terms and define some areas as secular and others sacred, in contrast St Francis teaches the divine permeates all things. Creation spirituality notes that all things pulsate with God's breath, God's energy.
5. Similarly, since the world vibrates with the energy of Christ, the universe itself is the body of Christ and the Risen Lord Jesus is worshipped as the Cosmic Christ present in all that is.



## Housekeeping

**Our notices are organised under our mission goals.**

### Worship & Spirituality

#### **St Peter & St Paul's**

The next service will be Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> October 10am.



We are praying for you.

**Every Monday 10am**

Submit your prayer requests online

## 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).



**Memorial Sunday**  
**Sunday October 25,**  
**9am.** During the service, an opportunity is offered to remember loved ones. **Through music, words, and rituals we remember** and honour friends and family who have died. **Come.** You will be warmly welcomed

and safely held as you respect your loved ones who have died.



Messy Church  
Sunday  
October 25<sup>th</sup> at  
4pm

## Leadership

### COVID Restrictions in Worship

With no local COVID-19 transmission for months, we can move further towards normality.

So in our worship services:

- Masks are optional, and only compulsory for the welcomer doing hand sanitization and the priest giving communion.
- No temperature taking before services.
- Morning tea is on, but outdoors (infection rate between 2 people the same distance apart is 1/20<sup>th</sup> outside compared to inside.)
- Tea and coffee are poured inside, but consumed, including adding milk and sugar outdoors.
- Friday 10am service morning tea is inside but sitting not standing.
- Singing by the congregation is still illegal by NSW law.
- Social distancing of 1.5m and 4sq m space per person is still the law so Tregeagle Service is outside. Tregeagle Church building is maximum of 10. St Bart's has a maximum of 36, so Sunday and 10am Friday are in the Ministry Centre.

**Of course, if there is local transmission of COVID-19, we are back to the more stringent COVID-19 prevention/protection measures.**

COVID Committee

### Leave

Rev Desiree is on leave from the 12<sup>th</sup> October until the 21<sup>st</sup> October.

Anne Wareing is on leave from the 12<sup>th</sup> October until the 25<sup>th</sup> October.

## Community Engagement



### Play Place

We are back on the 15<sup>th</sup> October. Join us.



### Sew helpful

Sew helpful commences 12 October 2020



## Live Streaming Technician

We are seeking people who would like to be technicians to assist this ministry. Please talk to Rev Desiree or Robyn Hannah. The Live Streaming Production Technician is the go-to person on-site for all live stream videos.

- This role involves ensuring everything is ready to go prior to shooting.
- They assist with sound and lighting, and make sure all the cords are in the right place and out of the way.
- The Live Streaming Production Technician stays on-site throughout the shoot to make sure everything stays in position and steps in when needed.
- Renumeration is \$40 per hour (just kidding payment is gratitude.)



October is Mental Health Month. This helps to raise awareness around mental health and wellbeing. **Tuning In** means being present. It means being aware of what's happening within you, and in the world around you.

- Tune In to your senses – what can you sense right now? What can you feel?
- Tune In to your communities – what's happening that you can be part of, or that you can help others be part of?
- Tune In to stigma – how do attitudes and understandings of mental health and wellbeing impact people's ability to live the lives they want?

Firstly, taking a moment to Tune In can help still and focus your mind, it can help you understand what's going on for you and others.

Secondly, Tuning in can help you find a new perspective, and it can help you reflect and be present. It can help build self-awareness, help

make effective choices, reduce the impact of worry, and build positive connections.

Lastly, Tuning In to communities and the impact of mental health stigma can help ensure that people who need support have safe places to talk about their experiences and reach out.

***Tune In to Mental Health Month and help create a world we can all Tune In to.***

**NSW Mental Health Access Line: 1800011511**

**Life Line: 131114    Beyond Blue: 1300224636**

## Finance

**We give thanks to God for all people making offertories to the vision of God's Kingdom here on earth.**

Parish Provider these are the details: **BSB: 705 077 /Acc: 00032931**  
Cheques can be posted to PO Box 451 Alstonville 2477.

### 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
	<b>the Reverend Doug Bannerman</b>	
	The Reverend Greg Ezzy	0412 660 742

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