



Alstonville Anglicans

Third Sunday of Advent

Sunday 12th December 2021



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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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About Advent

Welcome to Advent! Advent is the four weeks in which we get ready for the mystery of Christmas. Advent is a time of spiritual darkness for us where we are set free to engage with doubt and the shadow side of spirituality.

Liturgy for 12th December

Sentence of the Day

Do not fear. The Lord, your God, is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory; he will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love. Zephaniah 3.16–17

Collect

Almighty God,
you sent your Son into a world
where the wheat must be winnowed from the chaff
and evil clings even to what is good:
let the fire of your Spirit purge us of all corruption,
so that, purified, we may wait eagerly for him
whose coming is certain, whose Day draws near,
your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Readings

Luke 3:7–18

⁷ John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? ⁸ Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. ⁹ Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear

good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”¹⁰ And the crowds asked him, “What then should we do?”¹¹ In reply he said to them, “Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise.”¹² Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, “Teacher, what should we do?”¹³ He said to them, “Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you.”¹⁴ Soldiers also asked him, “And we, what should we do?” He said to them, “Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages.”¹⁵ As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah,¹⁶ John answered all of them by saying, “I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.”¹⁷ His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”¹⁸ So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

Messages

Pastoral Care



To make you smile...

A gingerbread man went to the doctor's office complaining of a sore knee.

"A sore knee?" the doctor asked. "Have you tried icing it?"

Pastoral visits Remember!

If you or anyone you know is ill or in hospital, please let the office or Lynne Watt our Pastoral Care Coordinator know. Also, if you do visit anyone could you email Lynne? wattlg@bigpond.com.

Mothers Union: third Monday of each month. Contact Pam on 0417 258 991 or Joyce 0407 690 874 joyce@stephanies.com.au .

Community Engagement



Community-On-the-Verge

Help yourself to what is ripe and ready for picking. If you are keen to be involved as the garden evolves, please contact Alan Larsen on 0409 655 123 or Barbara Fewtrell 0429 385 713.

- Community on the Verge (CoVe) will be hosting a table at Bunnings Ballina Christmas markets **Thursday 9 December. Join us from 6pm!!!** Lots of fun activities for children and a free sausage sizzle.



Play Place

Play Place Thursdays 9.30am – 11.30am.
Play Place Christmas Party is on 10 December 5.30pm, and will then be in recess until 10 February 2022.



Sew Helpful

Sew Helpful is in recess over the holiday period but we plan to meet at Options on Monday 17th January at 2pm for afternoon tea. All welcome. Margaret.



Christmas Dinner in the Church

To celebrate being back in the Church together, there will be a Christmas Dinner in the Church on Saturday 11th December at 6.30pm.

If you have booked a seat and are not able to attend, please let Jenny know as soon as possible on 0416 285 140.

Tweed, Byron & Ballina Community Transport Fundraiser

A fundraising BBQ will be held in Ballina Bunnings carpark Saturday 18th December. Please support this very worthy cause.

Good Governance

COVID Update Singing without masks

This is the last weekend we must wear masks in church. From 15th December NSW COVID rules are relaxed.

1. Masks are not necessary at worship or the Op Shop.
2. COVID check in not required at the Op Shop.
COVID check in still required for worship services.
3. Density limits abolished – as many in church as we like.
4. Ventilation still very important, so Church & Ministry Centre doors and windows must be open while being used.

A final word – “Well done,” BUT if things flare in the COVID world, it could all change.
COVID Committee

Finance: Supporting Alstonville Parish

Parish Provider is now Planned Giving

Have you thought about how your day is simplified if you are not having to remember to bring your cash/cheque offering to church? Planned Giving takes this pressure from you.

Our office staff can assist you to complete the new Planned Giving form. Simply bring your bank account details in with you for assistance.

Parish council will continue to promote electronic giving as the normal way. We pray for a day when every parishioner in the parish will embrace this method. Before Christmas we will be writing to you asking that you to embrace this way forward to ensure a stable future for Alstonville Anglicans.

Luke 6:38 "Give and it will be given to you."

Mowing roster: We have had some people drop off the roster, and therefore need to request another couple of men or women to join the Roster. You will only need to do a few turns per year, in teams of 2-3 people. Please contact Barry Campey on 6628 3089 if you can assist.

Worship and Spirituality

Invite your friends for Christmas



Save the date!



Sermon notes for the 5th December

Practicing the Presence of God

Aim: that people experience Advent as a marker for embracing the reality of Emmanuel, God with us in darkness and light; in messiness and peace, in pain and wholeness, in sorrow and joy, in birth and death.

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“Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Repent and be baptized for the forgiveness of sins.” This is our gospel for the Advent season today. John the Baptist is encouraging his generation to a time of preparation for the coming of the Messiah.

On the first Sunday of Advent last week, Geoff concluded his address with the challenge to be ready to meet Jesus when

he comes. "Let's keep our heads up! We watch. We wait. We wonder", he said.

During the past week, I was quietly empathizing with a person on her mobile as she conveyed the sad story of her ageing husband who had a fall. He has a broken pelvis, broken arm, broken collar bone and broken ribs. He was still in hospital and waiting for a nursing home room to become vacant. I was thinking about the pain of all that. And then she broke into the story with a very emphatic statement of faith. "There's no need to worry", she said, "Jesus is coming again, and all the signs are, that it is going to happen very soon. Alleluia!" she proclaimed.

One of the traditions of the season of Advent has been to focus on preparation for the second coming of Jesus. In the tumultuous times of the early church, the Bible records that Jesus would come again in like manner, as they recorded him ascending into the clouds. In the face of fierce persecution, they developed a faith that encouraged Christians to see this life as very temporary and to look forward to the immanent return of Jesus, to come as judge of the wicked and to establish heaven on earth for the faithful.

Another tradition also developed, maybe as a result of the reality that Jesus hasn't returned as originally predicted. Consequently, Advent as the season for preparing for the celebration of Christmas and honouring the first coming or birth of Jesus, became more relevant to observe. In this tradition, which is widespread today, as we physically prepare for Christmas with our buying sprees, holiday planning, and family gatherings, we also take time to reflect on the reason for the season, the birth of Jesus, the Saviour. So, we sing the carols and listen to the readings that transport us to the physical event of some 2,000 years ago in Bethlehem in the Holy Land.

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Then there is a further tradition unfolding, some of which is part and parcel of the earlier traditions. It focuses on Advent, as a marker leading up to the celebration of Christmas and the birth of Jesus, but it emphasizes the faith that this Jesus the Christ, known as Emmanuel, God With Us, has not only come, but is present in all creation as the cosmic Christ.

The gospel writer John states, "In the beginning was the Word and Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that was made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all humankind. That light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not yet overcome it."

This emerging tradition of Advent then, becomes a season for renewing faith in Jesus, the Christ of Christmas, human and divine, who has been with us in the billions of years since creation, and is now revealed in human form in the babe of Bethlehem, and who is with us today, recognized as the Holy Spirit. Christ has come and continues God's Presence in all of creation and is available for all who have eyes to see and hearts to respond to wisdom, beauty, presence and love, that is present here and now.

The Advent season then becomes, not so much a focus on a second coming of Jesus; not so much a preparation to observe the birth of Jesus; but a time to renew the faith and reality of the living Jesus, the Holy Spirit, God with us and in all creation, ever since the beginning, billions of years ago, and is now revealed in the babe of Bethlehem, and is living in us and in all creation. Luke in the Acts of the Apostles writes, 'In him we live and move and have our being". We are in God and God is in us. Isn't that what Jesus prayed for before his death, where it is recorded in John's gospel, "Father just as you are in me and I am in you, may they also

be in us and we in them". Paul writes similarly, "It's no longer I who lives but Christ who lives in me".

My experience, my practice of faith, is that God is not somewhere ascended into the skies, but is the very ground of my being, God is in me, and I am in God. So, God has already come!

For me, Advent then becomes that marker in the church calendar, that encourages me to prepare for the celebration of the birth of Jesus by reaffirming God's presence with me and in all creation. I am inspired to check out how my mind, body, and spirit can be more attentive to the Christ revealed in Jesus, living in me, and as the collect for today put it, to "bring to perfection the good, God has begun in me".

For not only do we live, and move, and have our being, in the ONE who IS LOVE, this very ONE, this DIVINITY, this GOD if you will, works in, with, through, and beyond us, in all of our chaotic mess. God is with us in our darkness, constantly creating hope in the midst of despair, creating justice in the midst of injustice, creating vaccines in the midst of this pandemic, and offering compassion, kindness, and LOVE, as we work together to keep as many people as possible safe and healthy. Even in this COVID chaos and when we are locked-down, LOVE is working miracles. We are not alone in this chaos.

Desiree's article in the Bulletin today is reminding us of just that truth; that God is with us in our dark times even when we are not necessarily conscious of that presence.

I want to be part of the SOURCE of ALL, ALL that IS, a deity, a force, a LOVE which is capable of working in, with, through, and beyond us to bring order out of the chaos, to inspire scientists to create vaccines. I want to be part of the ONE who weeps with those who weep, who suffers with those who

suffer; a LOVE which dances, sings, laughs and rejoices whenever and wherever LOVE emerges in the midst of the mess and chaos of life. I want to be part of a LOVE which is beyond my ability to comprehend; and yet a LOVE which works in, with, and through those who work to heal the sick, care for the dying, toil away in laboratories seeking vaccines, who seek for justice for the poor, the oppressed and the marginalized; a LOVE which works, in, with, through, and beyond us to heal the wounds of the afflicted; a Love that inspires Barbara Swain and her supporters to give so generously of themselves to support those afflicted with mental illness; I want to be part of a LOVE which challenges us, and at the same time, a LOVE which allures us in ways which empowers us to live fully, love extravagantly, and be all that we are created to BE.

Will you wonder, ponder, and reaffirm God's presence in you, in dark times as well as in times of great inspiration and hope this Advent. Will you allow the miracle of the Christ child to be fully alive in you?



ANGLICAN PARISH OF ALSTONVILLE

Ministers all the baptised!

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The Anglican Op Shop

1 The Avenue, Alstonville **Tel:** 6628 8777

Dates 12th to 19th December

12 th Dec	Sunday 9am Advent Lessons and Carols
13 th Dec	Monday 10am Anam Cara Praying for You Parish Office 9am-12pm Op Shop 9am-3pm
14 th Dec	Tuesday Parish Office Closed Please refrain from visiting the Parish office on a Tuesday. This time is set aside for staff to work uninterrupted. Thank you.
15 th Dec	Parish Office 9am-12pm Op Shop 9am-3pm Anam Cara 9am Parish Council Meeting 6pm
16 th Dec	Parish Office 9am-12pm Op Shop 9am-3pm Thursday Anam Cara 6pm
17 th Dec	Friday 10am Holy Communion Parish Office 9am-12pm
12 th Dec	Sunday 9am Holy Communion