



Alstonville
Anglicans

Pentecost 15 on Sunday 13th September 2020

This week...

- Sunday@9am Anglican Service in the Ministry Centre
- Sunday@10am online via webpage 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

A Forgiving Planet?



Some say we live in paradise here on the North Coast. Even while the rest of the country struggles under COVID 19, we seem to cruise on unscathed. A little discomfort from the precautions and that's about it. At least so far anyway.

In scripture and theology there is this thing called God's providence. He blesses his people so that they *enjoy the bounty of the earth* says the Psalmist. Except when they don't! This Psalm would have been sung in the temple by a very self-satisfied nation. God is on our side- BUT it forgets to mention that God's covenant always has a clause about the responsibilities of God's people - God may forgive us

breaking the Covenant- but the consequences remain. To put it another way; God may forgive us but the planet won't. With the drought then bush fires, then Covid19 – we are having a taste of the consequences of continuing to burn fossil fuels with no thought for the consequences to the planet. We think everything is *Jake mate*. “*Why are you afraid of this little lump of coal?*” This is what’s making us prosperous so the national religion Economy opines.

It is worth considering the quote from Carl Sagan speaking about the photo taken of the Earth, from deep space by the Voyager Space Craft.

“There is perhaps no better demonstration of the folly of human conceits than this distant image of our tiny world.

To me, it underscores our responsibility to deal more kindly with one another, and to preserve and cherish the pale blue dot, the only home we've ever known.”

Liturgy for 13th September

Sentence of the Day

If you, O Lord, should note what we do wrong, Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with you, so that you may be revered. Psalm 130.3–4

Opening Song

All creatures of our God and King,

lift up your voice and with us sing

alleluia, alleluia;

O burning sun with golden beam,
and silver moon with softer gleam,

O praise him, O praise him,
alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Swift-rushing winds that are so strong,
and clouds that sail in heaven along,

O praise him, alleluia!

fresh-rising morn, in praise rejoice,
and lights of evening, find a voice:

O praise him, O praise him,
alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

O flowing water, pure and clear,
make music for your Lord to hear,
alleluia, alleluia;

O fire, so masterful and bright,
providing us with warmth and light,

O praise him, O praise him,
alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Dear mother earth, who day by day,
unfold rich blessings on our way,

O praise him, alleluia!

All flowers and fruits that in you grow,
let them his glory also show;

O praise him, O praise him,
alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Let all things their Creator bless,
and worship him in humbleness;
O praise Him alleluia
Praise, praise the Father, praise the Son,
and praise the Spirit, Three in One:
O praise him, O praise him,
alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Words © William Draper
CCLI Song # 3608102 Reproduced with permission CCLI # 12035

Reading

Matthew 18:21-35

²¹ Then Peter came and said to Jesus, "Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?" ²² Jesus said to him, "Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times. ²³ "For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. ²⁴ When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; ²⁵ and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. ²⁶ So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' ²⁷ And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. ²⁸ But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, 'Pay what you owe.' ²⁹ Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' ³⁰ But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. ³¹ When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. ³² Then his lord summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked slave! I

forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. ³³ Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?' ³⁴ And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. ³⁵ So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart."



Prayers

Season of Creation 2020 Prayer

Creator of Life,

At Your word, the Earth brought forth plants yielding seed and trees of every kind bearing fruit. The rivers, mountains, minerals, seas, and forests sustained life. The eyes of all looked to You to satisfy the needs of every living thing. And throughout time the Earth has sustained life. Through the planetary cycles of days and seasons, renewal, and growth, you open your hand to give creatures our food in the proper time.

In your Wisdom, you granted a Sabbath; a blessed time to rest in gratitude for all that you have given; a time to liberate ourselves from vicious consumption; a time to allow the land and all creatures to rest from the burden of production. But these days our living pushes the planet beyond its limits. Our demands for growth, and our never-ending cycle of production and consumption are exhausting our world. The forests are leached, the topsoil erodes, the fields fail, the deserts advance, the seas acidify, the storms intensify. We have not allowed the land to observe her Sabbath, and the Earth is struggling to be renewed.

During this Season of Creation, we ask you to grant us courage to observe a Sabbath for our planet. Strengthen us with the faith to trust in your providence. Inspire us with the creativity to share what we have been given. Teach us to be satisfied with enough. And as we proclaim a Jubilee for the Earth, send Your Holy Spirit to renew the face of creation.

In the name of the One who came to proclaim good news to all creation, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Final Song

Sing, all creation sing,
sing to God in gladness,
joyously serve him,
singing hymns of homage,
chanting his praises,
come before his presence:
Praise the Almighty!

Know that our God
is Lord of all the ages;
he is our maker:
we are all his creatures,
people he fashioned,
sheep he leads to pasture:
Praise the Almighty!

Enter his temple,
ringing out his praises;
sing in thanksgiving
as you come before him;
blessing his bounty,
glorify his greatness:
Praise the Almighty!

Great in his goodness
is the Lord we worship;
steadfast his kindness,
love that knows no ending;
faithful his word is,
changeless, everlasting:
Praise the Almighty!

Words © James Quinn
Reproduced with permission CCLI # 12035

Reflection

Matthew 18:15-20

I wonder if you have noticed how much of our spiritual endeavours are frozen into moral imperatives. You should do this; you should do that; you must not do this or that. I suppose it is, in part at any rate, the fruits of dualism, something that seems impossible to avoid as we wend our way along the path of life.

This troubles me, because moral imperatives can quickly become distorted in the interests of political expediency. They transmogrify into laws or regulations that enable one to say "Oh, that is illegal. That is against the law" (or vice versa) – the first response of discomfited politicians. Thus, morality dies a painful death in the hands of leadership, and spiritual endeavour suffocates.

Scholarly discussion of *binding* and *loosing* centres around regulations or laws concerning who has authority to do what. The historian, Josephus, reported that "The power of binding and loosing was always claimed by the Pharisees. Under Queen Alexandra [76 BCE to 67 BCE], the Pharisees became the administrators of all public affairs so as to be empowered to banish and readmit whom they pleased, as well as to loose and to bind."¹

Rabbis, aka wise men with a spiritual bent, had similar power to decide disputes relating to the Law. That which was permitted in law they declared to be *loosed*,² whilst a forbidden practice was called *bound*.³ To confuse the issue, however, there were different schools of thought. For example, there was a saying: "The School of Shammai binds; the School of Hillel looses."⁴

This manner of discussion is commonplace, but it leads to the frozen-ness to which I have already referred. This bothers me because something has

been lost in translation. And I think that *that* something is our humanity, our divinity, the core of who and what we *are*.

This month we are to focus on CREATION with a capital C. So, let us start at the beginning.

¹ <http://jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/3307-binding-and-loosing>

² OT Hebrew בָּרָא

³ There is no OT term for *bind*.

⁴ See TK Cheyne and JSutherland-Black *Encyclopedia Biblica* (1903) Library of Adelbert College of Western Reserve University, see <https://glossarissimo.wordpress.com/2017/07/27/en-pdf-encyclopedia-biblica-1903-t-k-cheyne-j-sutherland-black/>

As I told our Friday congregation last week, the Dutch theologian, Edward Schillebeeckx, wrote that our creation myths are “not a *cosmological* explanation for the origin and nature of the world and human beings,” but rather “a theological *elucidation* of God and God’s *relationship* with creatures.”⁵

The word *creature* comes from the same Latin root as the word *creation*. We are creatures, created beings, something we have in common with “all that is, seen and unseen,” as the creed has it.

So, I, a human being, am an integral part of, “all that is, seen and unseen” – closer than breathing. You too. This mystery of what we call existence, however, is one of total reciprocity. “On that day,” said Jesus, “you will know that I am in the Father and you in me, and I in you.”⁶ That is the closeness of creation. As our Buddhist friends might tell us,



When a drop of water falls in
the ocean, When a speck of
dust falls on the ground,
At that moment the drop of water is no longer a drop of
water, It becomes the ocean,
And the speck of dust is no longer a
speck of dust, It becomes the entire
earth.⁷

In Christian terms the foregoing suggests to me that you and I and the rest of creation are imbued with a sacramental quality. That certainly makes sense in terms of my own understanding of Aboriginal Spirituality. However, like all sacrament, something becomes a sacrament for me when that is my own particular intention. Our world is our sacrament, if that is our intention.

⁵ Aloysius Rego, O. C. D. *SUFFERING AND SALVATION: The salvific meaning of suffering in the later theology of Edward Schillebeeckx* (Peeters Press Louvain – Paris – Dudley, MA: W. B. Eerdmans 2006) p227

⁶ John 14

⁷ <http://www.anatmavada.net/2013/05/a-drop-of-water-is-the-ocean/>

His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew said,

It is our humble conviction that divine and human meet in the slightest detail contained in the seamless garment of God's creation, in the last speck of dust.⁸

So, as we exploit the environment, we permit an avoidable suffering of all creation. The gospel writer Matthew would say we do *not bind* that suffering, but rather we *loose* it. To quote Bartholomew again, we refuse to accept the world as a "sacrament of communion". Schillebeeckx called it a neglect of "the physical and social aspects of salvation", noting that

Jesus makes visible by his action that the whole of human reality – physical, social, and spiritual – are also part of the sphere of the offer of wholeness of life ...⁹



In all of this, we have the conundrum of how to access true wisdom; the

wisdom to think, pray and act in a way that augments our precious world.

Barbara Brown Taylor wrote in her book, *Holy Envy*, that it can be “helpful to be authentically human.”¹⁰ Schillebeeckx pointed to a God, who by nature, “is present to human beings in a deep and hidden intimacy”.¹¹ The contemplative world will suggest that we can access that wisdom within the practice of silent meditation or contemplation. But that is not necessarily everyone’s path.

In one of my all-time favourite novels by Charles Williams, *Prester John*, the mysterious, mythical, Priest/King of the Graal makes several appearances. His last one involves an encounter with Barbara, whose 4-year-old son, Adrian, has been rescued from a hideous end by John and a cohort of angels. Adrian wants to go to church, and Barbara blushing confides to Prester John that “we don’t go as regularly as we should.”

“It is a means,” he answered, “one of the means. But perhaps the best for most, and for some almost the only one. I do not say that it matters greatly, but the means cannot both be and not be. If you do not use it, it is a pity to bother about it; if you do, it is a pity not to use it.”

⁸ <https://www.patriarchate.org/bartholomew-quotes>

⁹ op cit Aloysius Rego pp 262, 263

¹⁰ Barbara Brown Taylor, *Holy Envy: Finding God in the Faith of Others* (NY: Harper Collins 2020) p212

¹¹ op cit Aloysius Rego pp 243

I leave the last word to Jen Hadfield, a poet who lives on the Shetland Isle of Burra. Her words, as Mark Oakley remarked, “interrogate and bless the natural world ... pour light on, and through, the people, animals and landscapes that make her feel “connected and protected.”¹² Her poem, *Paternoster*, is the Lord’s Prayer as uttered by a draft horse, and one can almost smell the mix of grass and mash on its breath as it repeats the

words "it is on earth as it is in heaven"



Paternoster. Paternoster.
Hollowed be dy mane.
Dy kingdom come.
Dy draftwork be done.
till plough the day

And give out daily bray
Though heart stiffen in the harness.
Then sleep hang harness with bearbells
And trot on bravely into sleep
Where the black and the bay
He sorrel and the grey
And foals of bearded wheat
Are waiting.
It is one earth as it is in heaven.
Drought, wildfire,
Wild asparagus, yellow flowers
On flowering cactus.
Give our daily wheat, wet
Whiskers in the sonorous bucket.
Knead my heart, hardened daily.
Heal the hoofprint in my heart.
Give us our oats at bedtime
And in the night half sleeping.
Paternoster. Paternoster.
Hallowed be dy hot mash. ¹³

Doug Bannerman □ 2020

¹² Mark Oakley 2017 *The Splash of Words: believing in poetry* Canterbury Press:
Norwich, p2

¹³ Paternoster by Jane Hadfield



Housekeeping

Our notices are organised under our mission goals.

Worship & Spirituality



Messy Church

The theme for the next Messy Church is Creation. The families will be building large sculptures (1m high) out of recycled materials. We are asking for help to source materials eg. Egg cartons, lids, bottles, cans, cardboard, wire, wire netting, plastics etc. These can be left in the parquet area in the hall.



St Peter and St Paul's

Next Service Sunday 13th
September at 10am



Prayer

Monday morning prayer for the church and the community 10am in St Bart's or join in at home. We are praying for you.



Season of creation 2020

Each year from **September 1 to October 4**, the Christian family unites for this worldwide celebration of prayer and action to protect our common home. This year, the theme for the season is "Jubilee for the Earth". We invite you to consider the integral relationship between rest for the Earth and ecological, economic, social, and political ways of living. We yearn for the moral imagination that accompanies the Jubilee.

Leadership

Thank you

The wardens, parish council and clergy offer heartfelt thanks for your generosity to the parish. Thank you for your giving through electronic channels and through the offertory.

Community Engagement

Play Place

After an extended time of only being able to meet on Zoom, the Play Place Team is excited to advise that Play Place has recommenced meeting in the Ministry Centre Hall on Thursday mornings, 9.30am to 11am.

Online Services

We are in need of a video camera to help us with our live streaming. If you have a camera that you are not using and are happy to lend or give it to us, please let us know.

We are also seeking people who would like to be technicians to assist this ministry. Full training and support provided. Please talk to Rev Desiree or Robyn Hannah.



Sew Helpful Group

Many thanks to all the generous people who knitted beanies for the soup kitchen. We are delighted to announce that the emergency is passed but we are happy to receive more in preparation for next year. So far, we have received over 150 beanies.

Good Governance

Safe Ministry

To comply with our church / state regulations, John NOBLE (our Safe Ministry officer) will be completing a 6-month review - by 15th Sept. If YOU have recently completed any training (e.g. First Aid certificate, Working with Children certificate, Criminal Records Check etc), please let John know (email : jnoble2477@gmail.com) AND provide a copy of those certificates to our office. THANKS for being part of our team and demonstrating to our community that Alstonville Anglicans is making positive efforts to provide a "safe place for all".

Pastoral Care

If you are aware of anyone who has needs or would appreciate Pastoral Care of ANY type (home communion, visits, meals, contact) please contact Lynne Watt on 66286751 or the office. Our Pastoral Care Team is here to care for you but can only do so when we know your need.

Property

Working Bee Help Needed.

Saturday 19th September 9am-12noon.

A Spring Clean for the grounds, Church & Ministry Centre



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
Life Groups Chaplain
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