



Alstonville
Anglicans

Transfiguration Sunday

14 February 2021

Welcome



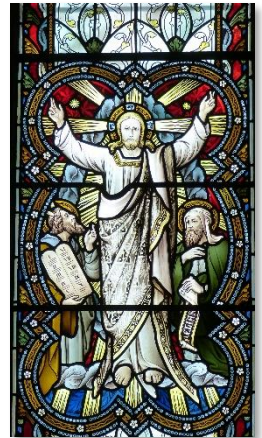
Sharing the Good Life

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

Thought for the week.

Mark 9:2-9

The season of Epiphany is when Christ is presented to the entire world, all the nations, as the light of the world, for the World. The season of epiphany closes with a meditation on a vision of Jesus transfigured by light. The authors of Mark's Gospel want us to read the story of the transfiguration together with the story of baptism and the story of the Crucifixion. Indeed, the transfiguration is given here to strengthen the disciples to face the crucifixion. In the context of the pure glory of Jesus as shimmering light, the path to the cross is defined. The way forward is the way of the cross. Without the cross and the willingness to sacrifice the self in the service of love, we remain caught in the web of competition and selfishness that tears us apart. The cross is about how the self is second place to love. Even God's Messiah has to go the way of love, the way of the cross – the alternative is just another imperial venture with the one at the top using everybody and everything for their own pleasure and profit. The transfiguration is a foretaste of the bliss that awaits us beyond the cross, in the land of Resurrection.



Liturgy for 14th February

Sentence of the Day

It is the God who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. 2 Corinthians 4.6

Collect

Almighty God,
whose Son was revealed in majesty
before he suffered death upon the cross:
give us faith to perceive his glory,
that being strengthened by his grace
we may be changed into his likeness, from glory to glory;
through the same Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Readings

Mark 9:2–9

² Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, ³ and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them. ⁴ And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus. ⁵ Then Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." ⁶ He did not know what to say, for they were terrified. ⁷ Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, "This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!" ⁸

Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them anymore, but only Jesus. ⁹ As they were coming down the mountain, he ordered them to tell no one about what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

Messages

Worship and spirituality portfolio



Lenten Study – Way of Love

Rev Desiree will be facilitating two groups Wednesdays 11am-12.30pm, Thursdays 4pm-5.30pm commencing 24th & 25th February. Please add your name to the list provided. The Way of Love study guide is also available for those wishing to form a Lenten study group. Guides available parish office.



Ash Wednesday

Wednesday 17th February 6pm
Ministry Centre



Parish Leaders Retreat Day

Saturday 27th February 10am-4pm
St Matthew's Church, Dunoon.

BLESSING OF THE BACKPACKS
SUNDAY 28TH FEBRUARY 4PM

Students, teachers and educators are encouraged to bring school bags or pencil cases to be blessed for the new school year.

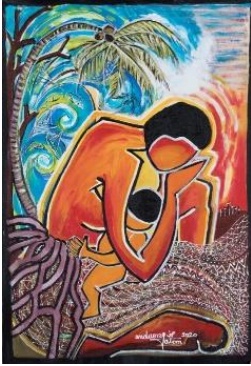


Alstonville Anglicans
6 The Avenue Alstonville
RSVP: anglicans.live/contact

Messy Church

Blessing of the Bags

Sunday 28th February, 4pm
A blessing of school bags and all school endeavours for 2021.
RSVP: anglicans.live/contact



World Day of Prayer

Friday 5th March 10am in the Ministry Centre. This year we are hosting the World Day of Prayer. The country is Vanuatu and the theme is "**Build on a Strong Foundation.**" The guest speaker is Mike Wolfe.



Sew Helpful

Sew Helpful will now be meeting on the 2nd and 4th Mondays only. Contact Carol: 0427326832

Empowering Leadership



AGM

February 21st, 11am.

Annual Report

Thank you to everyone who has submitted reports. The Annual Report is available for collection today.

Nominations

Please submit your nomination forms as soon as possible.



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. At the present time members of the congregation are forbidden to sing. 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 Tregeagle 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.



Keys

If you have keys to any of the church buildings that you are no longer using could you please return them to the office as soon as possible?



Repurposing Plastic

We have an opportunity to recycle plastic milk bottle tops and bread tags. These items are sorted in our area and sent to Adelaide where they are melted down and repurposed to assist people with disabilities. Items can be left at the collection point at the Op Shop.

Contact person is John Noble.

Offertory Options

Alstonville Anglicans - Offertory Options

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

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.

Sermon Notes

Epiphany 5, 7th February 2021

Isaiah 40.21-31, Mark 1.29-39

*And down, a long way down, below the frost
must be soft embers sending up the light
from fires the night-fog has muffled but not kill*

The response to the question “Why do you climb a mountain?” is often “Because it’s there!” What does that really mean? As a youth, I climbed the hillsides in the Scottish Highlands; yes, because they were there, but when I reached a summit, I breathlessly paused and looked around. The landscape set before me always elicited wonder, awe, peace, silence, a sense of the infinite depth of creation, and a desire to stay there for the rest of my life. It seemed as if there was some indefinable presence, powerful, benign, beckoning.

I must offset that with the fact that I have also, to borrow Richard Holloway’s words, stood on the edge of the abyss at 2 o’clock in the morning drinking a cup of hot strong coffee.

The spectrum of human experience is vast, and impossible to convey in a few words.

Why did Jesus go out on a mountain? To pray says Mark’s gospel. But there must be more to it than that. I say that because



I cannot define prayer in so many words any more than you can. Holy things cannot be pinned down to simple statements. Myths, legends and faerie stories, all of which are laden with metaphor, are better vehicles for such things.

Metaphors shape the mind

A growing body of literature suggests that metaphors shape the mind, structure our experiences, and influence behaviour. Metaphors are the language of mythology. The canon of our scripture is constructed as myth, rich in metaphor, poetry and story. It is our mythology and it is the primary source of our theology. Without that acknowledgement, we are likely to miss the light of Epiphany, what Rowan Williams called the “secret fire at the heart of earthly reality”.

However, it seems to me that we can broaden our understanding of sacred literature to include the writings of people like J.R.R. Tolkien, whose *Lord of the Rings* is as profoundly theological as anything I know. Fr. Guglielmo Spirito OFM of the Theological Institute of Assisi remarked that

In the life of any individual, a book that is reread several times is one that both establishes itself as an intimate and familiar conversational partner, but which at every reading also conceals and reveals different things, opens different doors.

As one may ask of scripture, one may ask of Tolkien, “What is the underlying reality or truth that these would have us see?” Listen to this.

They stood on a wet floor of polished stone, the doorstep as it were, of a rough-hewn gate of rock opening dark behind them.

But in front a thin veil of water was hung, so near that Frodo could have put an outstretched arm into it. It faced westward. The level shafts of the setting sun behind beat upon it, and the red light was broken into many flickering beams of ever-changing colour. It was as if they stood at the window of some elven-tower, curtained with threaded jewels of silver and gold, and ruby, sapphire and amethyst, all kindled with an unconsuming fire.

This was the 'Window of the Sunset', fairest of all the waterfalls of Ithilien, the land of many fountains, the inspiration for Williams' secret fire, the light kindled at the very foundations of creation.



Tolkien, said Fr Guglielmo was an artist who created a world that has "the inner consistency of reality ..." But he was also a devout Catholic, and his Christianity gave him the joy and vision that characterises his work.

With the foregoing in mind, let us revisit the prophet Isaiah.

The period within which today's reading was composed began with the defeat of Judah by the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar in 587 BC. Jerusalem was utterly destroyed and the kingdom of Judah reduced to a Babylonian province. Several thousand inhabitants, the cream of society, were exiled to Babylon, there to be added to another exiled group that had been taken there ten years earlier. Most of the fortified cities of Judah

were left in ruins. Some cities were abandoned for generations after this war, and a few permanently.

Fifty years later, after Babylon was, in turn, defeated by the Persian King Cyrus, the exiles were allowed to return to Judah, there to rebuild both the city of Jerusalem and the great temple.

Now, in the minds of the exiles, the power of their captors demonstrated the power of their captors' Gods. So, it was inevitable that the exiles absorbed some of the religious leanings of their captors.

Isaiah was not pleased about this, and we find the prophet appealing against this assumed power on two fronts. Firstly, referring to the great public processions in which effigies of the Babylonian Gods were carried with great ceremony, Isaiah pours scorn upon these obviously human creations.

*To whom then will you liken God,
or what likeness compare with him?
An idol? - A workman casts it,
and a goldsmith overlays it with gold,
and casts for it silver chains.*

Then comes the opening verse of today's reading in which an incredulous prophet chastises the people.

*Have you not known? Have you not heard?
Has it not be told you from the beginning?
Have you not understood from the foundations of the
earth?
It is he who sits above the circle of the earth,
and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers;*

The prophet explains that the one true God is the creator of the universe, of the waters, the heavens, the earth, the air; not some tin pot little statuette of an idol sitting on the mantelpiece. Speaking with the authority of the one true God, Isaiah declaims,



*To whom will you compare me,
or who is my equal? Says the Holy One.*

So, the exiles, now restored to Jerusalem are presented with a striking article of faith that still stands. In the contemplation of creation and our place in it, the vastness and the power of our God are perceived, if but dimly comprehended. We can note that in this literature, the idea of a creator God appears for the very first time in the history of the Hebrew nation.

I wonder, then, if a few modern-day prophets are pointing to that same article of faith, which has been somewhat distorted over the centuries. Although we have always had appeals to creation, they have been appeals that assume that we humans have a mandate to subdue, dominate, and exploit the natural world. That has led in short order to ecocide.

A very careful reading of the first few chapters of Genesis informs us that the call is to *cooperate* with creation as stewards of a sacred trust. That is what the Australian Earth Laws Alliance (AELA) is on about; developing earth centred laws that respect the rights of nature, challenging the idea that that nature is 'property'.

Rights of Nature

Rights of Nature is grounded in the recognition that humanity is just one member of the wider Earth community, and that we have evolved with, and are dependent upon, a healthy, interconnected web of life on Earth. Rights of Nature laws create guidance for actions that respect this relationship.

In essence AELA, working with the International Center for the Rights of Nature, advocates for the Rights of Nature in Australia. And one of its dictums is that human beings do not take precedence over other parts of the created world.

So, when we are faced with a choice between ecologically sound solutions to human needs and solutions guaranteed to destroy or degrade yet more of the environment, I know which I will choose. Would that national and local government bodies, including local councils, would heed this, currently the greatest challenge to our existence.

The consolation of faerie stories, suggests John Davenport, is the joy of a happy ending, the 'sudden miraculous grace', 'joy beyond the walls of the world', 'poignant as grief'. May we do what we can.

Amen.

Doug Bannerman



^{1 17} Rowan Williams, "Morning: Winterreise for Gillian Rose, 9

¹ Myth: 1 a traditional story, especially one concerning the early history of a people or explaining a natural or social phenomenon, and typically involving supernatural beings or events. (e.g.ancient Celtic myths)

2 a widely held but false belief or idea. (e.g. the belief that evening primrose oil helps to cure eczema is a myth, according to dermatologists)

¹ On the Problem and Promise of Metaphor Use in Science and Science Communication

Cynthia Taylor and Bryan M. See

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5969428/>

¹ c.f. Review Article "The Secret Fire and the Heart of Earthly Reality": The Theological Vision of Rowan Williams by Jane Barter Moulaison. See http://touchstonecanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Jan-2010-review_article.pdf

¹ J R R Tolkien *The Two Towers* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd 1966)p282

¹ Isaiah 40:18,19

¹ Isaiah 40.21

¹ Isaiah 40 25

¹ DAVENPORT, John J., *Happy Endings and Religious Hope*, p. 68 in BASSHAM, *The Lord of the Rings on Book to Rule Them All*, Gregory and BRONSON, Eric, Chicago, Open Court, 2003, p. 210.

ANGLICAN PARISH OF ALSTONVILLE

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Associate	The Reverend John Kidson The Reverend Geoff Vidal The Reverend Doug Bannerman The Reverend Greg Ezzy	0411 394 213 0447 645 456 0418 182 450 0412 660 742
Parish Office:	The Ministry Centre, 8 The Avenue, Alstonville	
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e-mail:	office@anglicans.live	website: anglicans.live
The Anglican Op Shop	1 The Avenue, Alstonville Tel: 6628 8777	

Calendar 2021

14 th February	Holy Communion 9am
	Transfiguration Sunday
	AGM papers distributed
	St Peter & St Paul's Service 10am
15 th February	Anam Cara Praying for You 10am
17 th February	Anam Cara 9am
	Ash Wednesday 6pm
18 th February	Anam Cara 6pm
19 th February	Holy Communion 10am
21 st February	Holy Communion 9am
	AGM 11am in Ministry Centre
27 th February	Parish Leaders Retreat Day 10am-4pm
28 th February	Holy Communion 9am
	St Peter & St Paul's Service 10am & AGM
	Messy Church Blessing of the School Bags 4pm

