



Alstonville  
Anglicans

**Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> October 2023**

**Welcome**



## **Sharing the Good Life**

We acknowledge the Bundjalung people, traditional custodians of the Land.

Our doors are open: LGBTQIA+ welcome here.

Streaming licence: CCLI 102220

Alstonville Anglicans are committed to ensuring that all people who participate in our worship, programs and ministries have a safe and rewarding experience.

**Tel: 66280231 [www.anglicans.live](http://www.anglicans.live)**

**Bank account: BSB 705 077 / Acc:00032931**

## 15<sup>th</sup> October – 22<sup>nd</sup> October

15 <sup>th</sup> October	9am	<b>Sunday</b> Holy Communion
16 <sup>th</sup> October	9am-12pm 9am-3pm 10am 10am 1pm	<b>Monday</b> Parish Office Op Shop Anam Cara Deadline for bulletin items Sew Helpful
17 <sup>th</sup> October	9am-12pm	<b>Tuesday</b> Parish Office <b>Closed</b>
18 <sup>th</sup> October	9am-12pm 9am 9am-3pm 6pm	<b>Wednesday</b> Parish Office Open Anam Cara Op Shop Parish Council Meeting
19 <sup>th</sup> October	9am-12pm 9am-3pm 9.30am 6pm	<b>Thursday</b> Parish Office Open Op Shop Play Place Anam Cara
20 <sup>th</sup> October	9am-12pm 10am	<b>Friday</b> Parish Office Open Holy Communion
21 <sup>st</sup> October		<b>Saturday</b>
22 <sup>nd</sup> October	9am 4pm	<b>Sunday</b> Holy Communion <b>Messy Church</b>

This bulletin contains current announcements and the week's calendar and the sermon notes from the previous Sunday. Use our welcome booklet for info and contact details for regular activities. Keep it as a reference tool. We welcome any feedback on the booklet. [.../.../welcomeBooklet\\_v3.pdf](#)

## Messy Church



**Rainbow Treasure Hunt?**

**Messy Church**

End of year  
celebration BBQ!  
Sunday 22nd Oct 4-6pm

Ken & Margaret Brown's home  
343 Wardell Rd  
RSVP: Jenny 0400 361 059  
by 18th Oct

Meat supplied. Please bring a salad or sweet  
to share and drinks, plates and cutlery.

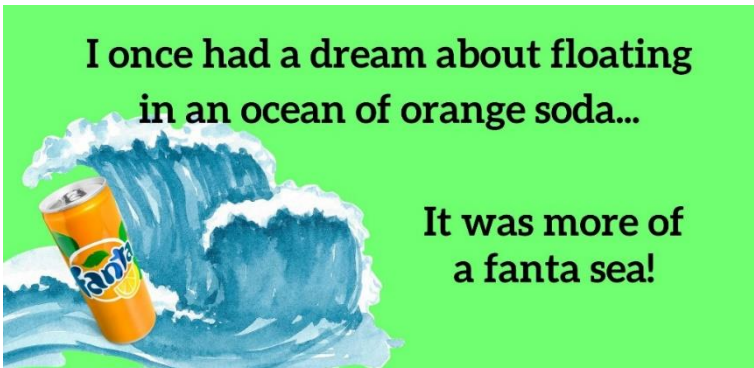
## Pastoral Care

If you are in hospital or are aware of any parishioners who are in hospital and would like to be visited, please let the office know. Make sure that you inform the hospital that you would be happy to receive visitors from the church.

## Anam Cara

Robyn Fitzgerald will be leading 3 Wednesday Advent Meditations on the 1<sup>st</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and the 15<sup>th</sup> of November at 9am. We look forward to welcoming Robyn. Everyone is welcome to attend.

## To Make you Smile



## Sermon Notes Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> October

### Geoff Vidal

#### Matthew 21:33-46

#### “Parable of the murderous tenants ”

For me, and most people I know, the best drama and comedy happens when the writer of a book or the producer of a movie is able to capture images of people behaving as we know that people do. A child finding wonder in something simple. Teenagers doing something pretty crazy because they think that they know everything. Someone looking in a mirror checking out a spot on their face when they think no one is watching. Mr Bean in Church.

This parable of Jesus, reported by Matthew is a wonderful story of people behaving as people do. We are at a point in our fairly rapid journey through the Good News according to Matthew, where parables are coming thick and fast. It is the week before Jesus is crucified and only a few days ago he entered Jerusalem on a donkey and made a big scene in the temple tipping over tables and chasing out money changers.

Matthew says that Jesus has the chief priests and elders of the people listening to him as he told these parables to help his followers live life in the Kingdom of God. He began this series of parables recorded in Matthew 21 by asking “what do you think?” Often people talk about Jesus being a very good teacher, and here he is like a conscientious teacher preparing students for the HSC. He is encouraging them to chew over what they know themselves; asking “what do you think?” so they use their brains fully. Earlier in his ministry, Jesus summarised the commandments by saying that we are to love God with **all our mind** as well as our heart and soul and strength.

And, if we are open to using our minds and learning new things, this parable today does give us something to make us think and use our minds fully. This is a parable that raises some doubts and makes us question things and think through all the possibilities. That’s the purpose of it. Jesus is encouraging us to perhaps even talk about these things; to share our thoughts about his teaching. I am just too

Anglican to stop now and open the floor for anyone to share their thoughts (but in some other denominations they do).

This parable today deals with a vineyard which has not given any fruit. "Listen" says Jesus. And there is plenty of scope for listening and thinking: putting old images together and coming up with new ones.

Jesus is capturing the image of people behaving as we know people do. The people Jesus is speaking to already know a fair bit about vineyards and owners. His listeners would have a good image in their minds of the people in charge of this vineyard - the tenants. They could probably say, "yeah, my cousin Joe runs a farm out on the Jericho Road". Jesus' listeners would have been able to picture what he is saying about these tenants reacting violently to the owner's messengers sent to collect the **fruit of their work**.

What are the fruits in question? This is a key question for the meaning of the parable. Grapes are just a metaphor. An understanding of what the fruits might be comes from the writing of the prophet Isaiah. These people would know Isaiah well. Isaiah was a frequently used scripture. Luke wrote that Jesus read from the scroll of Isaiah in the synagogue and a complete copy of Isaiah was found in Dead Sea scrolls.

So, from an early age, the people Jesus was talking with would have been well aware of this teaching in Isaiah that Israel is God's vineyard. They knew this prophetic teaching of Isaiah that from what had been planted, (that is to say God's planting of his nation, Israel), the Lord expected justice, but there was bloodshed. God expected righteousness but heard people crying out for better treatment. The establishment of justice and righteousness is one of God's major instructions (not just in Isaiah, but throughout all scripture).



There is even an old Arab proverb, "one hour of justice is worth a hundred of prayer".

In this vineyard, which the Lord planted and cared for, justice and righteousness should have grown. A life of justice and righteousness was a way of showing the relationship between God and his people.

Living a life of justice and righteousness was the way to show a desire to keep the covenant promise between God and God's people. The God of life and love wants justice to rule in the midst of God's people and wants the rights of everyone, especially the poor and the powerless, to be respected. That's what it means to pray "Your Kingdom come!"

But the people have chosen to not really bother about justice and right living. This is what our parable today is all about! The tenants have not practiced justice and they have not established righteousness. Their normal behaviour is to have contempt for other people's lives. They even show that contempt to those sent as messengers by the owner of the vineyard. But, even worse, they have committed murders.

In the Bible, oppression of the poor is frequently presented as murder. The tenants are not only murderers because they kill the messengers, (or even the son), but because they exploit the poor and totally disregard their rights. They are murderers from the moment they fail to produce the fruits of justice which the Lord requires, and as a result the Kingdom of God will be given to someone else.

This is a powerful illustration. But it isn't just a story or a history lesson. How often in our daily news do we hear about people pleading for their fundamental rights. The right to safety; to be able to live in Ukraine without missile attacks or to live in Syria or Sudan without fear. The right to be an educated woman in many countries where women are not allowed schooling. We hear of people pleading for the right to eat; to not need to line up for a UN food handout or fresh water from the single tap in the village. So many people cry out for the right not to be discriminated against.

I think the Gospel story today is in some way describing the rejection of Jesus' preaching by the leaders of Israel. Those listening to Jesus would have been well aware from their knowledge of Isaiah and their Jewish tradition that they were the caretakers of the vineyard of the Lord. So, Jesus asks "now, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?" and they answer, "He will put those wretches to a miserable death and lease the vineyard to other

tenants". What Jesus has done here is to confront his opponents with judgement that has come from their own mouths.

But it wasn't just the opponents of Jesus in the temple who didn't want to take on board what he was saying. Even Jesus' closest followers didn't want to hear Jesus' prediction of his own arrest and death.

Could it be that the parable is trying to get us to ask ourselves if there isn't some kind of similarity between these tenants who don't try to be righteous and the way we live our own lives? Maybe we should be asking ourselves, "what is our attitude to the things we know Jesus taught?" "What do we, as individuals, care about the establishment of justice and righteousness?" "What are our fruits?"

A prominent American Methodist Bishop of the 1930s, G Bromley Oxnam, spoke of the need for justice in the USA. He wrote "The Christian demand for justice does not come from Karl Marx. It comes from Jesus Christ and the Hebrew prophets".

Further along, in another couple of chapters, the gospel of Matthew will tell us what Jesus said about separating the sheep from the goats. We are told that failing to feed the poor or to welcome strangers is the same as denying Christ himself (which means condemning the poor and the strangers and Christ to death).

Being Christian is precisely the opposite; it is giving life! This is what the gospel requires and if we put it into practice, the God of peace will be with us (Philippians 4:4-9).

That's the really good news. The God of peace keeps coming to us. We simply have to accept that Jesus is our Lord and trust him. As the old hymn says, "Trust and obey ... there is no other way to be happy".



## Sentence of the Day

This is our God for whom we have waited; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation. Isaiah 25.9

## Collect

Saving and healing God,  
you have promised  
that those who have died with Christ shall live with him:  
grant us grace to be continually thankful for all you have done for us,  
and in that thankfulness  
to be eager to serve and live for others,  
so that we and all your children may rejoice in your salvation;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

## 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, maltreated 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.'