



Alstonville
Anglicans

Sunday 17th December 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

Bank account: BSB 705 077 / Acc:00032931

17th December – 24th December

17 th December	9am	Sunday Holy Communion
	10.30am	Advent Life Group
18 th December	9am-12pm	Monday Parish Office Open
	9am-3pm	Op Shop
	10am	Anam Cara
	10am	Deadline for bulletin items
19 th December		Tuesday
	9am-12pm	Parish Office Closed
20 th December		Wednesday
	9am-12pm	Parish Office Open
	9am	Anam Cara (in recess)
	9am-3pm	Op Shop
21 st December		Thursday
	9am-12pm	Parish Office Open
	9am-3pm	Op Shop
	9.30am	Play Place (in recess)
	6pm	Anam Cara (in recess)
22 nd December		Friday
	9am-12pm	Parish Office Closed
	10am	Holy Communion
23 rd December		Saturday
24 th December		Sunday Christmas Eve
	9am	Holy Communion
	5pm	Family Service
	11pm	Midnight Service
25 th December		Monday Christmas Day
	9am	Holy Communion

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. http://www.welcomeBooklet_v3.pdf

AGM 2024

The 2024 AGM will be held on Sunday 18th February. If you are responsible for submitting reports for inclusion in the Annual Report please forward them to office@anglicans.live by the middle of January.

Christmas Closures

Parish Office 22nd December – Reopens 5th February 2024

Op Shop 22nd December – Reopens 10th January 2024

Anam Cara

Anam Cara on Wednesdays 9am and Thursdays 6pm will be in recess after this week until the first week in February.

Advent Life Groups



Advent is a time to pause and reflect on life. The final advent life group is on Sunday 17th Dec from 10.30am to 11.30 am. Alternatively you may choose to do it online, either alone or with a group of friends. The films will be available at 12.35 pm on Saturdays from our website. Our guide will be

Rachel Held Evans. The film series is called "A New Family".

<https://www.theworkofthepeople.com/premieres/1559>

Quota Alstonville Inc Donation



A huge '**Thank You**' to Quota Alstonville who have donated \$1500 towards the COVE Community Garden. The money will be used to further the current project to enhance the accessibility of the garden.

To Make you Smile

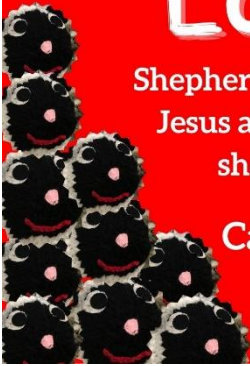


Lost Sheep

Shepherds Jed and Roy McCoy want to see the baby Jesus at Christmas but can't find their sheep. The sheep are hiding in stores in Alstonville.

Can you help them find their sheep?

Entry forms available at participating stores and
@ anglicans.live



The holiday season is hard for those who are hurting. You are not alone.

Blue Christmas

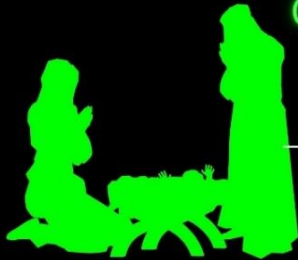
is a gentle, contemplative service for those who are carrying pain or loss during this season of celebration.

Thursday 21st December 7pm

Alstonville Anglicans
6 The Avenue Alstonville
anglicans.live



From our family to yours
COME AS ...YOU



24 Dec 5PM
FAMILY SERVICE

24 Dec 11PM
CAROLS & COMMUNION

25 Dec 9AM
CHRISTMAS SERVICE

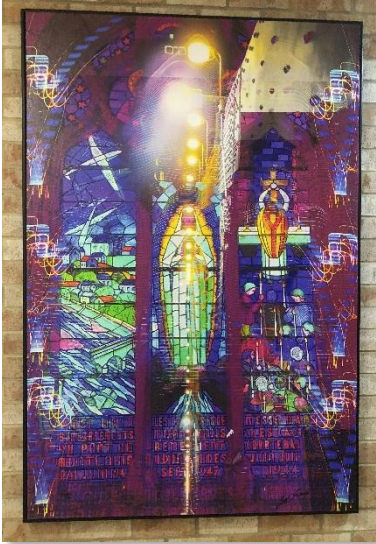


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Sermon Notes Sunday 10th December

Desiree Snyman Based on Mark 1

A reflection on Advent 2 through our advent painting



We reflect again on our Advent painting with three panels. The panel on the left, what I call 'waiting for justice', depicts in graphic terms a context of destruction, survival of the fittest and the suffering of the many for the benefit of the few. In the context of the original art in St Laurent in Mont-Louis it is the destruction of air and land of Nazi bombs destroying connection, the bridge over the Loire River. In our own context the left panel, waiting for justice, speaks of climate anxiety as unprecedented catastrophes of drought, fire, pandemic, lock down, isolation and floods (in that order) challenge our sense of safety and hope for the future. We are a community overcoming multifaceted trauma. The

trauma leaves its marks in our body, mind, and spirit. In the context of global events the left panel describes the devastation of war in Gaza, Russia, Afghanistan, Africa, and other places. In the light of the failure of civilisation to progress peace, freedom, and stability, and creation care, our second week of Advent asks us what the Good News is. We walk verse by verse through the Gospel of Mark 1:1-8 opening to glimpse an answer.

1 The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

"The beginning" echoes Genesis 1.1: "In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light." (Later, in verse 9, the one baptising with this same spirit will be announced). John 1.1 will offer a similar stance: "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God and the Word was in the beginning with God ...". The Gospel of Mark announces a fresh start, a new beginning for humans and all creation. But what is this new beginning?

The new beginning is the Good News of Jesus the Christ, Son of God. The opening sentence is explosively political and revolutionary. Good News

comes from the Greek word *evangelion* from which we get the word evangelism. Mark's Gospel was written by a Greek speaker between 65 and 70 AD. The balance of probability is that the audience were gentile converts living in Rome. In Rome, as in Greece and other places in antiquity in the first century, everyone was polytheistic, (except for Jews and then later Christians). Polytheistic means they worshipped many gods. It was also common for humans to be considered gods. For example, Livy a Roman writer explains that Romulus the first king of Rome became a god at the end of his life. Suetonius writes that Julius Caesar was made a god after he died. Octavia Gaius later called Augustus Caesar was the son of Julius and likewise a god by virtue of being a son of God. Thus in 31 BCE after ending a brutal civil war Octavia was named Son of God, the Sacred One. His reign was said to be a new beginning, a time of peace, prosperity, and the end of civil war. Coins or *evangelions* announcing this good news were sent around the empire. In effect Mark's opening line says Jesus, not Augustus, is the anointed one. The Kingdom of God and not the Kingdom of Rome is the Good News. The Kingdom of God is the new creation, not Augustus' Pax Romana. The phrase Good News is heavily loaded. Not only does it refer to proclamations written on coins it also refers to the existential hopes of Israel. Good News alludes to the prophet Isaiah 52.7: 'How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the one who brings good news, who declares to Israel: your God reigns!'. Also, Isaiah 61.1: 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor.' Later Jesus will connect Good News to the year of Jubilee, the release of debt.

**2 As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,
'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way; 3 the voice of one crying out in the
wilderness:**

**"Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight"**

- ◇ There are several allusions to Old Testament writings that are woven together including:
- ◇ Exodus 23.20,
- ◇ Isaiah 40.3.
- ◇ and Malachi 3.1

In Exodus 23.20 God is speaking to Moses and the group of runaway slaves who have left Egypt escaping into the wilderness. The wilderness is a dangerous place. God assures the people of safety through the wilderness because an angel will go before them. John then appears in the wilderness as the angel or messenger for Jesus.

In Isaiah 40.3, the wilderness space that was once dangerous is now sanctified ground and a place of divine experience and expectation: "The voice of the one crying out in the desert, prepare the way". For example, the Qumran community settled near the Dead Sea in the wilderness to be the voice crying out, to prepare the way of God (Isa 40.3).

Malachi 3.1 states: "See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts." The scroll of Malachi expected Elijah to return at the end of history (4.5). John the baptizer appears as Elijah in the wilderness. This implies that now we are at the end of history.

4 John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

What the prophets Isaiah and Malachi, the book of Exodus and the Gospel of Mark have in common is grief and loss because of a failure. There is political, social, and economic failure and the failure of civilisation to thrive. The terror of war and destruction depicted on the left side of our Advent painting is symbolic of the failure of civilisation. The purple painting depicts through colour and form our communal grief at the failure of civilisation. As a nation and as a globe we are in communal grief. The terror of the skies represented by the bombing planes and the unstable ground represented by the broken bridge speak to us of climate catastrophe in floods, drought, pandemics and even war.

While there is grief over the failure of society, there is also hope. But hope is expressed only after grief and loss have been articulated. Loss that is denied leads to violence. Loss that is acknowledged and grieved leads to hope. The hope is depicted in the painting through the flashes of light that burst into the canvas.

What is Good News? For Rome it is Augustus and the emperors who bring about a peace, but peace wrought through violence. For Israel peace is the annihilation of Hamas. For Hamas Good News is the destruction of Israel. The Good News of God's kingdom is to dream of a future of what the world could be, shaped by the values of Jesus as expressed in his constitution. Jesus' constitution or bill of rights is the sermon on the mount: blessed are the poor, those who mourn, the pure in heart and those who hunger for what is right. The good news of Caesar and the kingdom of Rome leads to the destruction of war and climate catastrophe. The Good News of the Son of God, Jesus leads to repentance, a transformed mind.

Being baptised with water evokes the memories of Genesis 1.1 when a wind from God swept over the face of the water. To be baptised with spirit is to be immersed in the energy of God and fully contained in the breath of God. Being drenched and grace soaked in the loving energy of God gives birth to a new way of being.

The audacity of the church is the firm belief that a vulnerable baby placed in a manger that will be the one that answers the call to be Good News. The audacity of advent is the conviction that in saying yes to God Mary agrees to embody the Good News. God's hope for history, the Good News, a promised new beginning, is that we will be like Mary. Like Mary we will recognise our own dignity, the dignity of being the divine dwelling place. Once we glimpse the dignity of ourselves as being the dwelling place for the Divine, we notice it in others, and in creation. We are liberated to leave the full future in God's hands and agree to hold the present with humility.

Some Sources:

Ehrman, Professor Bart D. **How Jesus Became God.** The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (Lecture). Rohr, Richard. 2017. "Life is headed somewhere good this Advent." National Catholic Reporter.

Sentence of the Day

Bind up the broken-hearted, proclaim liberty to the captives and release to the prisoners, proclaim the year of the Lord's favour, the day of vengeance of our God. Isaiah 61.1-2

Collect

Eternal God,
you sent John the Baptist
to prepare the way for the coming of your Son:
grant us wisdom to see your purpose
and openness to hear your will,
that we too may prepare the way for Christ
who is coming in power and glory
to establish his rule of peace and justice;
through Jesus Christ our Judge and our Redeemer,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

John 1:6-8, 19-28