



Alstonville  
Anglicans

**Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> September 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**

## 17<sup>th</sup> September – 24<sup>th</sup> September

17 <sup>th</sup> September		<b>Sunday</b>
	9am	Holy Communion
18 <sup>th</sup> September		<b>Monday</b>
	9am-12pm	Parish Office
	9am-3pm	Op Shop
	10am	Anam Cara
	10am	Deadline for bulletin items
	1pm	Sew Helpful
19 <sup>th</sup> September		<b>Tuesday</b>
	9am-12pm	Parish Office <b>Closed</b>
20 <sup>th</sup> September		<b>Wednesday</b>
	9am-12pm	Parish Office Open
	9am	Anam Cara
	9am-3pm	Op Shop
	6pm	Parish Council Meeting
21 <sup>st</sup> September		<b>Thursday</b>
	9am-12pm	Parish Office Open
	9am-3pm	Op Shop
	9.30am	Play Place
	6pm	Anam Cara
22 <sup>nd</sup> September		<b>Friday</b>
	9am-12pm	Parish Office Open
	10am	Holy Communion
23 <sup>rd</sup> September		<b>Saturday</b>
24 <sup>th</sup> September		<b>Sunday</b>
	9am	Holy Communion
		<b>No 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](#)

## **Season of Creation**

**The theme for 2023 is Let Justice and Peace Flow and the symbol is A Mighty River.**

### **A mighty torrent can move mountains**



Our individual actions during the Season of Creation are important. Celebrating Creation, taking part in clean-ups, planting trees, and reducing our carbon footprint are some of the immediate actions we can take. We must also recognise that as we need a mighty movement of justice, individual actions are no longer enough. Justice also includes paying historic debts. At a global level, nations with power and wealth have a duty to deal justly and honestly with communities that suffer most from the climate and ecological crises. They have not dealt righteously with their less wealthy neighbours in global forums. They have not fulfilled their promises of financing the losses and damages that vulnerable communities are suffering from, or funding necessary biodiversity initiatives in less wealthy nations, nor have they made the necessary sacrifices to stay below 1.5 degrees Celsius global warming. Nevertheless, Global South nations, working together for more than 30 years, have just managed to win a victory at COP27 in making wealthier nations realize their moral duty to provide financing for loss and damage. The recent decisions at COP15 to preserve biodiversity are also hopeful and required similar perseverance. These victories have been achieved by those with less power working together. Together we can be a mighty river of justice and peace, that brings new life to earth and future generations, a river that can move the mountains of injustice.

## Walking Together-Listening with Heart



You are invited to join us at  
**The Rainforest Labyrinth,**  
1385 Bruxner Highway, Lindendale. 2480  
on **Saturday, 23<sup>rd</sup> September**  
**from 2-5pm.**

(A guided walk will begin at 2.30pm)

We join the vision of the Australian Labyrinth Network to hold labyrinth walks across the Nation leading up to the Referendum **not to influence voters** but with the intention of

- Holding the space for an inclusive and mutually expansive way forward
- To listen with our hearts and feet to the song of this land, in the hope of
- Creating a harmonic chord of gratitude and grace, and a chance
- To cross the threshold into new beginnings.

**Refreshments to follow** – please bring a small plate of food to share.

### **Numbers limited**

**RSVP ESSENTIAL by Thursday, 21 September**

**Mobile No. 0400361059 (Jenny)**

**Jenny and Charlie Handley**

*"The Labyrinth invites and welcomes people to walk the path together –*

*it calls them to the land in oneness"*

*(Aunty Ali Golding, Elder of the Biripi Nation)*

### **Regerer8**

Grafton Cathedral Parish Centre 21-22 October 2023

Registration forms are available at the office. For more information contact Maria Gandey: 0407 172 062.

## To Make you Smile

I asked my wife when her birthday was and she said March 1st.



So I walked around the room and asked her again!

## Sermon Notes Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> September

### Matthew 18:10-20

#### “We are called to live well together”



Over in USA in the last few weeks, Carol and I noticed many homeless people: many with obvious psychiatric or drug issues. This was distressing and confronting. In the Gospel reading today, Jesus says look out for the little ones. This doesn't necessarily mean infants. Jesus is referring to those who are considered by society to be of no great value: people like the ones we encountered in USA who are thought of as being just a total nuisance. How do you look out for these little ones? Handing these people money isn't always helpful. The assistance required is much more likely to become available to the desperately needy through our support of organisations such as Anglicare.

The need to care for each of the “little ones” is emphasised by the reminder in today’s gospel that it is God’s desire to search for and to recover the one lost sheep that has gone astray. When it is found there is great joy!!!

We have been given this challenge to show concern for the lost in our community. When we are seen to have concern, we are like a magnet. We draw people in by the way we live and deal with each other. Outsiders are attracted to a community in which they can see a sharing of care and love. People stay away when they see there is a lack of love; where no one seems to care. People find it a turn off if they suspect disinterest and apathy and can see no obvious desire to resolve problems in a community.

The church should be a special place where God’s people live well together and set an example of how to resolve conflict. Doesn’t the world need that? What great timing it is that this teaching on what it means to be a loving and caring Church comes up on the day before the anniversary of Sept 11<sup>th</sup> (and at the time of G20 meeting where world leaders are struggling to find agreement on how to make life better for so many).

The best way to show care for the little ones is to be an obvious good example. This is seen in the work of the op shop and in the way we accept different people. If we live with each other and deal with each other well, we become a magnet to draw people in. That’s our mission; to be a community that outsiders can see is attractive.

For sure, it’s not easy to live this life of attractive unity and acceptance but, because it’s so important that we love each other, Jesus gives us this critical teaching on the way to sort



out our conflicts. And there will be conflicts! There will be difficulties, disagreements and upsets in our families and our church community that we are going to need to settle properly; in a way that attracts and doesn't repel.

There's love and justice in the way Jesus says we are to deal with disagreements. Think of the disasters you have known of or heard of in the life of church congregations, maybe even this one, and ask yourself whether things would not have turned out quite differently (just so much for the better) if Jesus' directions had been carefully followed.

We aren't asked to have a compassionate tolerance of everything and to let people get away with anything. We are to tell the truth even if that truth is a painful, tough truth. It's not always a loving thing to say "Who am I to judge?" or "I'll promise to stay out of your life if you stay out of mine. You can ruin your life but I won't interfere". That is not helpful. A real friend is somebody who cares so much that they are prepared to say something like, "Now, that was not one of your better decisions, was it?" A true friend would say "What on earth were you thinking when you did that?"

The deepest love we can have for one another is a love which is prepared to get involved: which cares enough to confront, to challenge and, if need be, to oppose. Such love requires real courage because it is liable to be misunderstood and can easily lead to hostility and rejection. Even with the best of intentions, mistakes can be made and relationships can go wrong. We are called to recognize right and wrong in love. But serious love for our neighbour must be the motivation.

When there is a breakdown in relationship, Jesus says the first step in attempting reconciliation is a private thing. We will make things worse if disagreements are brought up in public where self-defensiveness and self-righteousness could easily result and a person can be backed into a corner really quickly.

Often an apology is asked for. I believe that saying "Sorry" isn't necessarily the best way to apologize. There's not necessarily any interaction required when someone says "I'm sorry". Everyone has seen a huffy child stomp off saying "I'm sorry" when it is very obvious that they're not. A much more loving and helpful way to resolve an issue is to ask "Will you forgive me?" This requires a response and can often result in reconciliation.

Jesus is pointing out that, when there are differences between us, the responsibility for resolving them is ours; no one else's! And the responsibility is mutual. We both need to have the issue settled.

And if our best efforts don't bring reconciliation, (if we can't sort it out ourselves), we are not to let it rest. We are to bring in one or two witnesses who can moderate things and help us to get back on track and work things out.

And then, if there's still no resolution, Jesus says go to the "whole church" which for us doesn't mean the whole congregation but simply "a bigger group". There were no big Parishes and Hillsong churches back then. The purpose of bringing things to the bigger group is still to achieve reconciliation.

But finally, if all the efforts of the church fail, the stubborn one is to be regarded as being outside the church. It's not that this person is dismissed or finished with. But the matter has now





run its human course (everything humanly possible has been done) and it's now up to God.

Jesus words seem harsh here, "let such a one be to you as a gentile or tax collector", but remember Matthew's Gospel was written to encourage the sending out of the infant Church to the Gentiles to

teach them. The church was very aware of the mission it had to "outsiders" such as Gentiles and tax collectors. This Gospel was written by an "outsider", a tax collector named Matthew, whose selection by Jesus for him to be one of the disciples was a lesson in itself.

The Christian who refuses the authority of the community is not just to be shunned. He or she is to be loved more than ever and is to be the subject of outreach and concern; imitating the way in which Jesus was so interested in searching out tax collectors that he was described as their friend. These Gentiles and tax collectors were the very ones that God searched for to bring into the Church. Yes, offenders are dealt with. But they are to be dealt with in love, and for the purposes of reconciliation.

In all the gospels, this morning's passage in Matthew 18 is one of the only two places where the word church is used. And as a Church, Jesus has given us the job of exercising authority for doing the work of God on this earth. We are called to bind and to loose. Our job is to bind the forces of evil which enslave people and to loosen the bonds of oppression which prevent people from living the fullness of life of God's kingdom. Whether that means opposing wrong actions of individuals or

governments, clearly inappropriate values in our society or corrupt economic structures, the challenge of the gospel means that Christians need to love enough to speak uncomfortable truths in humility, but with courage. And when we do that, we can trust Christ's promise to be there with us.

In financial and management terms, we know that, to survive, the Church must be a well-run organization existing among all the rest of our society. But, if we are to be true to Jesus, his life and his teaching, then we must sometimes act in a way that other institutions regard as foolishness. Normal thinking is that you'd have to be crazy to search out and to care for those who refuse the authority of the institution; but that is the way of Jesus. Not very many people have turned away from the Church because they found it too forgiving. But I'm sure that you know of someone who doesn't come to Church anymore because they found it unforgiving and unloving.



We will always need the presence of Jesus to give us the courage and power to live our lives in love and harmony the way Jesus teaches. That is why Jesus finishes his instructions with a command to constant prayer. We should not expect that **absolutely anything** will be given to us if two of us agree and

pray. The context of Jesus' promise is living well together and winning back any lost member. The ultimate promise is that when we gather together in Jesus name, God is there in the midst of us.

## 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

## Collect

O God,  
you call your Church to witness  
that in Christ we are reconciled to you:  
help us so to proclaim the good news of your love,  
that all who hear it may turn to you;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

## Matthew 18:21-35

<sup>21</sup> Then Peter came and said to him, 'Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?' <sup>22</sup> Jesus said to him, 'Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times. <sup>23</sup> 'For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. <sup>24</sup> When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; <sup>25</sup> 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. <sup>26</sup> So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, "Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything." <sup>27</sup> And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. <sup>28</sup> 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." <sup>29</sup> Then his fellow-slave fell down and pleaded with him, "Have patience with me, and I will pay you." <sup>30</sup> But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he should pay the debt. <sup>31</sup> 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. <sup>32</sup> Then his lord summoned him and said to him, "You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. <sup>33</sup> Should you not have had mercy on your fellow-slave, as I had mercy on you?" <sup>34</sup> And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he should pay his entire debt. <sup>35</sup> So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.'

