



Alstonville  
Anglicans

Sunday 18th October 2020

## This week...

- Sunday@9am Anglican Service in the Ministry Centre
- Sunday@10am online via webpage [www.anglicans.live](http://www.anglicans.live)
- Wednesday 9am & Thursday 6pm at St Bartholomew's
- Friday 10am Anglican Service in the Ministry Centre

## Next week...

**Memorial Sunday October 25, 9am.**

**Messy Church October 25, 4pm**



## 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

## Questions

Students often ask questions in a context where they expect, even hope for, a particular answer. Such is the situation with the Pharisees and the Sadducees. In their role of learning and teaching Judaism, these opposing groups often vied, if not for Jesus' approval, then for the satisfaction of proving him wrong.

When Jesus silences the Sadducees (Mt 22.23 *ff*), for their apparent lack of Scriptural understanding, the Pharisees take opportunity to test Jesus with a question aimed at settling an 'in-house' dispute. Some teachers permitted a distinguishing between lesser and greater commands, while others argued that as all commandments came from God they were of equal value. Hence, they ask Jesus: Which is the greatest commandment in the law?

Jesus' two-fold answer points out:

- \* the legitimacy of holding to first principles in the law, and
- \* the important immediate consequence – the 'what' and the 'how'.

Love of God and love of neighbour are inseparable. Jesus later extended the neighbour concept with his Parable of the Good Samaritan. Today, we may see a further corollary as we express our love of God and neighbour in caring for our damaged environment.

By John Kidson.

# Liturgy for 18<sup>th</sup> October

## Sentence of the Day

Give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's. Matthew 22.21

## Opening Song

1. Lord of the living in Your name assembled  
We join to thank You for the life remembered  
Hold us enfold us to Your children giving  
Hope in believing
2. Help us to treasure all that will remind us  
Of the enrichment in the days behind us  
Your love has set us in the generations  
God of creation
3. May we whenever tempted to dejection  
Strongly recapture thoughts of resurrection  
You gave us Jesus to defeat our sadness  
With Easter gladness
4. God You can lift us from the grave of sorrow  
Into the presence of Your own tomorrow  
Give to Your people for the day's affliction  
Your benediction

## Readings

Matthew 22:15-22

15 Then the Pharisees went and plotted to entrap him in what he said. 16 So they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, “Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and teach the way of God in accordance with truth, and show deference to no one; for you do not regard people with partiality. 17 Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor, or not?” 18 But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, “Why are you putting me to the test, you hypocrites? 19 Show me the coin used for the tax.” And they brought him a denarius. 20 Then he said to them, “Whose head is this, and whose title?” 21 They answered, “The emperor’s.” Then he said to them, “Give therefore to the emperor the things that are the emperor’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” 22 When they heard this, they were amazed; and they left him and went away.



# Closing Song

1. When human voices cannot sing  
And human hearts are breaking  
We bring our grief to You O God  
Who knows our inner aching
2. Set free our spirits from all fear  
The cloud of dark unknowing  
And let the light the Christ-light show  
The pathway of our going
3. Make real for us Your holding love  
The love which is Your meaning  
The power to move the stone of death  
The hope of Easter morning
4. And let the one we love now go  
Where we in faith will follow  
To travel in the Spirit's peace  
To make an end to sorrow

CCLI Song # 5936724 Shirley Erena Murray © 1992 Murray, Shirley Erena (Admin. by Hope Publishing Company) CCLI Licence # 12035

# Reflection

A reflection on

## Matthew 22:1-14: The parable of the feast

The Parable of the banquet includes a parable within a parable, namely the wedding garment. The parable in the parable is puzzling in that it confronts us again with an Old Testament God of wrath and punishment, law, and order. The excluding, punishing God King is in direct contrast to the other image of God also offered in the Gospel, a God of unparalleled graciousness and abundant, extravagant, reckless love. Let us agree for one moment to put the wedding garment aside and concentrate on the Parable of the Banquet.

Jesus' primary audio-visual image for communicating grace is the feast, the open table fellowship. The Gospel reading is one such example of this.

Grace is God's love that God lavishes over us. How do we respond to that love? Do we accept it with confidence and gratitude that God could be that good? Or do we make excuses. It is the undesirables that are then invited to the feast: **The good and bad alike**. The early readers would have been aghast at this suggestion: **Go out and call the good and the bad alike and call them in**. Our consciousness cannot take that. The early church was shocked at the suggestion that the kingdom of God be

open to the good and the bad alike. Jesus offers the symbol of the meal, the feast, the open table fellowship as an audio-visual teaching aid to offer people a new way of seeing reality. Our response is gratitude. Meister Eckhart says that if you have only prayed one prayer – thank you and meant it – you have prayed enough.

Babette is a refugee who is a French, and she joins the community. She offers to cook them a French dinner. People feel very threatened by this. The sect agrees to the meal but promises not to enjoy it! During the meal they start to forgive each other, loosen up and enjoy the feast. At the end of the meal a general gives a speech. The general had obtained everything he had striven for, he only knew of a fact, that he was not happy. It seemed to him that the world was **not a moral concern but a mystical concern.**



General Löwenhielm's Speech summarises beautifully the resented banquet presented by Jesus:

“Mercy and truth, my friends, have met together. Righteousness and bliss shall kiss one another. Man, my friends, is frail and foolish. We have all of us been told that grace is to be found in the universe. But in our human foolishness and short-sightedness we imagine divine grace to be finite. ... **Grace, my friends, demands nothing from us but that we shall await it with confidence and acknowledge it in**

**gratitude.** Grace, brothers, makes no conditions, and singles out none of us in particular; grace takes us all to its bosom and proclaims general amnesty. See! that which we have chosen is given us, and that which we have refused is, also and at the same time, granted us. Ay, that which we have rejected is poured upon us abundantly. **For mercy and truth have met together and righteousness and bliss have kissed one another!**

Trusting that God could be that good for us; and living your life in gratitude for God's goodness. This is what the bible leads us to.

### **What about the person with the wrong wedding garment?**

There are many interpretations as to the meaning of the wedding garment and its wearer who is excluded from the feast. The fluidity of meaning is perhaps appropriate for a parable. I suggest that one interpretation acknowledges the shadow side of being an inclusive, welcoming, grace filled community. The parable within a parable makes clear that it is precisely because an inclusive, open, grace filled, invitational community unlocks wide their heart and doors, that a destructive element can creep in. The parable of the wedding garment is a caveat to protect what is precious, the pearl of great price, a community emulating the extravagance of the Divine. Here is the warning: without justice, grace is shallow, without truth, mercy is empty, without righteousness, bliss is irrelevant. I quoted in full General Löwenhielm's speech that married apparent opposites: mercy and truth,



righteousness and bliss. The point is this, to be truly inclusive, at some point we may have to exclude. To be truly open, welcoming, and hospitable requires that we vaccinate ourselves against the destructive effects of immunological failure from persons who are harmful to the community.

The COVID pandemic provides me with a parable that proves my point. All our welcome in our church, except if you have a temperature or have been to a COVID hotspot, in which case you are excluded, and we might also bind you hand and foot, and throw you into the outer darkness. Excluding potential carriers of COVID does not negate our inclusivity but protects it. Healthy communities need healthy boundaries. Have you ever been part of a group or organisation where you have been frustrated that one or two people ruin the fun for everyone? The parable begs the question, when dealing with an uncompromising force, is peace possible? Friedman's fable, the friendly forest gives us an example of the need for healthy boundaries in establishing an all-inclusive community.



The story of “The Friendly Forest” describes a place where all of the animals live happily together. One day a tiger asks to join the friendly forest. The tiger disrupts the enjoyable environment, especially for the lamb who is frightened when the tiger growls at her. The tiger

seems to stalk the lamb and even when he not physically present the tiger stalks the lamb in her dreams and consciousness. The friendly animals in the friendly forest beg the lamb not to leave. In attempting to solve the lamb’s dilemma, some friends suggest that maybe the lamb is too sensitive or maybe she should accept the tiger for who he is. Some of the animals insist that it is merely a misunderstanding that can be resolved if the lamb and tiger sit down and communicate. The lamb is worried about compromising since **there is something wrong about an**



**invasive creature agreeing to be less invasive if the invaded creature agrees to tolerate some invasiveness.** Another member of the friendly Forest overhears the mediation and blasts out: this is ridiculous, if you want a lamb and a tiger to live together in the same forest, you do not get them to communicate, you cage the bloody tiger!



# Housekeeping

Our notices are organised under our mission goals.

## Worship & Spirituality

### St Peter & St Paul's

The next service will be Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> October  
10am.



We are praying for you.

### Every Monday 10am

Submit your prayer requests online, or  
come along to St Bartholomew's and join  
in prayer.

## Anam Cara

Anam Cara means soul friend. Guided Meditation is offered Wednesdays 9am and non-guided silence on

**Thursdays at 6pm**, following an abbreviated compline (prayer at the end of the day).



## Memorial Sunday Sunday October 25, 9am.



During the service, an opportunity is offered to remember loved ones. **Through music, words, and rituals we remember** and honour friends and family who have died. **Come.** You will be warmly welcomed and safely held as you respect your loved ones who have died.



Invite your family friends and neighbours to **Messy Church Halloween** 25 October 4pm.

# Community Engagement



## Play Place

Has resumed meeting on Thursdays at 9.30am and runs each week during School Terms. For stories, singing and craft and friendship with babies to pre-schoolers.



## Sew helpful

Come along on Mondays from 1.00pm to 3.00pm.



## Live Streaming Technician

We are seeking people who would like to be technicians to assist this ministry. Please talk to Rev Desiree or Robyn Hannah.

# Leadership

Desiree is on leave until 20 October 2020.

Parish Council meeting 21 October 2020.

# Finance

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

Parish Provider these are the details: **BSB: 705 077 /Acc: 00032931**

Cheques can be posted to PO Box 451 Alstonville 2477.



Alstonville  
Anglicans

Present  
**Pretty Cool  
Pumpkins**



Join the fun at 8 the Avenue Alstonville



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October 25 2020 4pm

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Howard



## 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
	the Reverend Doug Bannerman	0418 182 450
	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:	<a href="mailto:office@anglicans.live">office@anglicans.live</a>	website: anglicans.live

**The Anglican Op Shop** 1 The Avenue, Alstonville Tel: 6628 8777