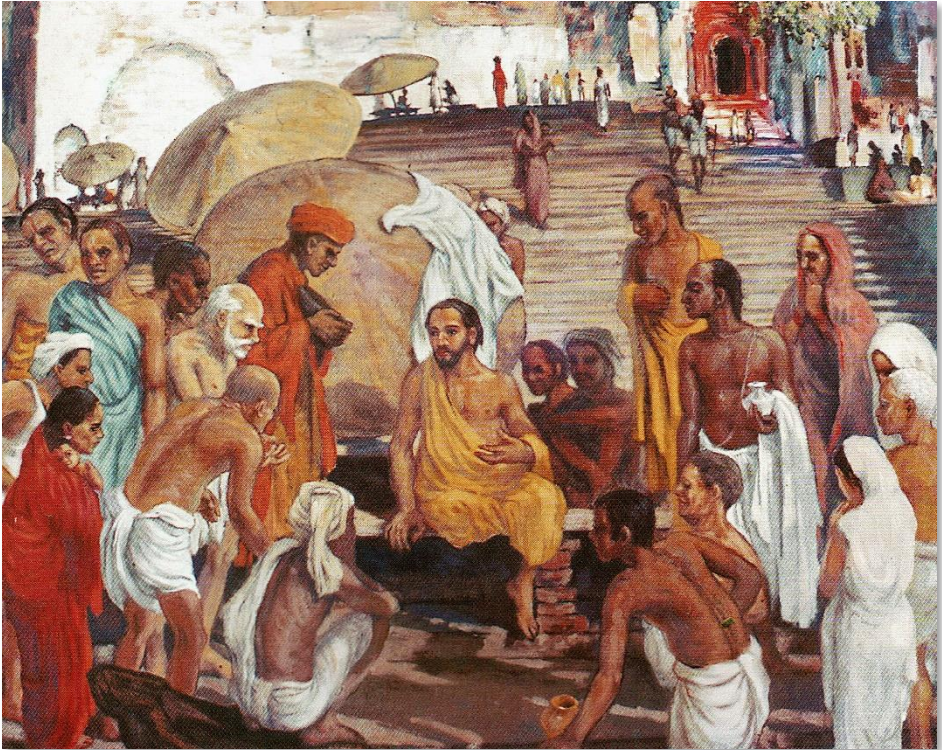




Alstonville  
Anglicans

**Sunday 1<sup>st</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**

## 1<sup>st</sup> October – 8<sup>th</sup> October

1 <sup>st</sup> October	2am 9am	<b>Sunday</b> <b>Clocks go forward 1 hr</b> Holy Communion
2 <sup>nd</sup> October	9am-12pm 9am-3pm 10am 10am 1pm	<b>Monday Public Holiday</b> Parish Office ( <b>closed</b> ) Op Shop ( <b>closed</b> ) Anam Cara Deadline for bulletin items Sew Helpful (in recess)
3 <sup>rd</sup> October	9am-12pm	<b>Tuesday</b> Parish Office <b>Closed</b>
4 <sup>th</sup> October	9am-12pm 9am 9am-3pm 11am 4pm	<b>Wednesday</b> Parish Office Open Anam Cara Op Shop Pastoral Care Meeting Messy Church Meeting
5 <sup>th</sup> October	9am-12pm 9am-3pm 9.30am 6pm	<b>Thursday</b> Parish Office Open Op Shop Play Place (in recess) Anam Cara
6 <sup>th</sup> October	9am-12pm 10am 3pm	<b>Friday</b> Parish Office Open Holy Communion Voice Study
7 <sup>th</sup> October		<b>Saturday</b>
8 <sup>th</sup> October	9am	<b>Sunday</b> 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. [../..../welcomeBooklet\\_v3.pdf](#)

## The Voice Referendum

Friends,

The upcoming referendum is a matter of justice and reconciliation. Reconciliation is central to the Ministry of Jesus. Reconciliation with God produces an imperative for reconciliation between people. [Churches have been leaders](#) in the Reconciliation space for decades. This is why so many Christians in the Anglican Church are actively supporting the Voice to Parliament. Our Parish Council joins the wider Anglican Church in promoting “Yes” because the question before us concerns the dignity of people and their claim for justice.

Michael Jensen is the Rector of St Mark’s Anglican Church, Darling Point, in Sydney. He writes that:

“any Christian citizen ought to begin with a generous disposition towards the Voice proposal, even if he or she has serious questions. A very important consideration is that our constitution was drafted at a time when the prevailing thought was that Indigenous peoples would be extinct by the 1960s. This is why there is silence about recognition in the document.”

He writes further that:

“I believe that it will be a courageous decision for Australians to take. It is not without risk or complexity. But the proposal for the Voice is more than a platitude. It asks the 97% to give something to First Nations peoples—not just to see them, but to listen to them, and to enshrine this practice at the heart of our nation. After so many decades of suffering and failed attempts by governments and by churches and other agencies, I am convinced that it is a risk worth taking.

<https://au.thegospelcoalition.org/profile/michael-jensen/>

Some disagree with my encouragement for Anglican Protocol in supporting the Voice, for the reasons listed below.

### **“We should not have politics in the church”**

We are not promoting party politics nor are we telling people how to think or to vote for one political party and not another; we are not at all political because the concern is justice and ethics. However politics is bigger than what party you support because it is about our societal and economic systems. The Easter story entails a political crucifixion of a martyr who stood against corruption and brutal oppression. Jesus died a political death in a political manner (crucifixion was reserved for treason) at the orders of a political Pontius Pilate who represented the might of Rome. Our faith, tradition and Scriptures are profoundly political in calling for a just world. The Voice to Parliament is the first reform of the [Uluru Statement From the Heart](#), which has been described as a “powerful and historic offering of peace.” As Christians, we place a high value on peace and on Jesus as a peacemaker, as well as on unity and healing.

### **“We agree with reconciliation but think that there are better ways to achieve this goal”**

It has been said that when the Holy Spirit comes, those with power listen and those without power speak. It doesn't matter what we think is the best way, we are asked to listen to those who are effected. More than 80 percent of Aboriginal and Torres strait Islander people support the Voice. Glen Loughrey asks us to listen: “Listening is vital to this process. Listen to us. And listen to the majority of tribes and nations who signed the Uluru Statement from the Heart.”

### **“We need more information”**

We would like to support you as you prayerfully consider your response to the Referendum.

Small group studies are offered on:

**Friday 6<sup>th</sup> October and Friday 13<sup>th</sup> October**

## **at 3pm in the Meeting Room.**

The following websites may be helpful.

The book is "A voice in the wilderness" and is freely available here

[https://www.abmission.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/VITW\\_August2022\\_electronic.pdf](https://www.abmission.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/VITW_August2022_electronic.pdf)  
[https://www.abmission.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/VITW-Leaders-Guide\\_v3.pdf](https://www.abmission.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/VITW-Leaders-Guide_v3.pdf)

Other resources

- <https://www.redshoeswalking.net/voice-no-obstacles/>
- <https://lens.monash.edu/@politics-society/2023/02/27/1385518/voice-to-parliament-debunking-10-myths-and-misconceptions>

God who listens,  
open our hearts to hear the gentle invitation of those without a voice;  
placeless and dispossessed of all that was theirs,  
instead of anger, revenge or blame,  
they offer in their open hand absurd generosity,  
an act of transformational forgiveness  
from the centre of their being to ours:  
May we sense the integrity of country speaking to country, body to body;  
and find within ourselves the humility to accept and journey together,  
to become our nation's better future,  
resolving our colonial memory, Australia's original sin.  
As Jesus gave his body for ours,  
help us to receive and pass on this gift of new life,  
for his name's sake. Amen.

*(This prayer was written by Wiradjuri Anglican Priest and NATSIAC Chair, the Rev'd Canon A/Prof Glenn Loughrey.)*

## **Email Scams**

We once again have had some suspicious emails circulating. The following points may assist you:

## 1. Stop

Does a call, email or text seem off?

## 2. Check

Ask someone you trust or contact the person the message claims to be from.

## 3. Reject

If you're unsure, delete the email or text and block the phone number. Change your passwords.

## 4. Report

Report the scam to Scamwatch [Report a scam](#) | [Scamwatch](#)




**Spirit Ability**

Spirit Ability is a fellowship group for Christians living with a disability.

Monday 2nd October 6-8pm  
The evening will include a meal & sharing time.

## To Make you Smile



I have a joke about chemistry...  
but I don't think it will get a reaction...

## 'A Voice in the Wilderness' Study Group

Friday 6<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup> October 3pm in the Ministry Centre.



## Sermon Notes Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> September

### Geoff Vidal

#### **MATTHEW 20:1-16** “It wasn’t meant to be fair”



In Matthew, the emphasis is on the things that Jesus teaches about Christian life: the Kingdom of God. This Kingdom is different. There’s a different way of sorting out conflict and last week Desiree helped us understand what Matthew reported on generous forgiveness. Often, we are able to see how the Lectionary readings are linked to a

particular message or theme. Today the Old Testament reading from Exodus clearly sets the scene for the Gospel story. Our life is a journey with God: The Israelites see that God is with them as they journey out of Egypt through the Sinai and the companions of Jesus are journeying with him to Jerusalem. And, on our life’s journey, God will provide us with what is needed. The Israelites wandering in the Sinai desert are provided with a sort of bread they call manna and birds. If you read on in Exodus, you hear how they eventually find that they can’t control what God provides. We are not able to store up what God provides and choose when we wish to use it.

We often hear that Jesus was a brilliant teacher who used the telling of parables to help people remember his message. But these parables are more than just good teaching; they are an invitation for us to see how God acts. In the parables we find some really significant information on what the Kingdom of God is like. The parables open up a world of possibility for us and they encourage us to respond by changing our way of doing things



(repenting). Jesus teaches how to live the life of the Kingdom where the poor in spirit and the meek and the hungry are blessed.

There are always new ways of looking at a parable even if we think we know it well. New things are always to be learned about life in the Kingdom of

God. So, let's go digging into the parable of today, being open to the possibility there might be something new to discover.

Today's parable unfolds in several scenes. It begins with the vineyard owner as he moves through a series of hiring of workers: early in the morning, and then at nine o'clock, noon, three o'clock, and finally at five o'clock. The next scene occurs when evening comes (about 6 o'clock) and the owner gives instructions for the way the workers are to be paid. The story then escalates with the way the wages are paid and it culminates in a confrontation between certain disgruntled laborers and the owner who has the final word. The passage ends with Jesus summarising "So the last will be first, and the first will be last".

Because Jesus began the parable by saying "the Kingdom of Heaven is like a landowner", we suspect initially that this is in some way a story about God. (Desiree has often pointed out that we need to be careful in our thinking about who is what in our Bible stories.) And, as we read this story today, we wonder what kind of God is lurking in these words of Jesus. The owner of the vineyard deals fairly with one group, paying them exactly what they bargained for after twelve hard, hot hours in the fields; but then he turns around and gives exactly the same pay to those who put in only one hour's effort in the cool of the evening.

To our way of thinking, there is no justice if the letter of the law is followed with the way one group is paid and then there is startling generosity shown to other workers who began their day much later. We wouldn't do that. Our kids and little grandkids have



a better understanding of fairness than this vineyard owner. Kids are pretty quick in telling us "That's not fair". There's no doubt that, in a situation like this, the ACTU and the Labor Council and all sorts of workers' rights people would say, "You can't do that, it's not fair!"

You don't have to be a unionist to know that the people who worked longer should have been paid more. That's the way any fair-minded person would do it. But that isn't the way the owner of the vineyard does things. When he is criticized, the landowner points out "You might not like it; you might think it's not fair. But I can do it if I want to." And he says "I did no wrong!"

We have a problem in letting God do things God's way. We expect that things will be done our way. So, God surprises us. The master of the vineyard hasn't been unjust; he's simply been extraordinarily generous to some of the workers. It's God's strange and unexpected generosity that causes us a problem. There's a warning here that those who think that they know exactly how God must act are in for a big surprise. God's plan is to bring delight and fulfillment to everyone. But it's God's plan, not ours! Remember the link to our Exodus reading; God certainly will provide everything that is needed (although not necessarily all that we want).

Everyone who toils in the Lord's vineyard should be delighted that some receive exactly what is just. If some others who work in the vineyard have been blessed with God's extravagant generosity, who are we to question why? Isn't God allowed to do what he likes with his love? And we are loved. In the story, the words spoken to the grumbling worker are "My friend, I am doing you no wrong ... are you envious because I am generous".

When we hear this story about the farmer who hires servants to work in his vineyard, most of us would probably think of ourselves as being like the servants who worked out in the vineyard all day. After all, here we are "in the vineyard" so to speak. We are people who have been here in church all our lives, or certainly most of our lives. To be told that somebody who shows up in the vineyard



just one hour before the end is given the same as those who have laboured here all day, well, no wonder there was grumbling!

And yet, if we were prepared to hear this parable from the standpoint of those workers who came late (the people who were passed over all day long and only got hired at the end of

the day) and yet received the same wage as those of us who had been there the whole day, we would see it as a really good news story. And it is a good news story. The unemployed have now been employed. Those who have recently decided to live their lives as followers of Jesus in this Kingdom of God that he says is near, can be encouraged to know that they don't have to work themselves into a frazzle trying to catch up with people who have known Jesus all their lives. The bandit on the cross next to Jesus who probably had never seen the inside of a synagogue was promised "today you will be with me in Paradise".

There is a common theme running through these parables that Jesus shared, and it is grace. What God will do for us is not a matter of shrewd calculation on our part (how we manipulate God), but rather it is a matter of God's extravagant graciousness. We somehow tend to think, "As far as God is concerned, if I do this, then I will get that." But what if our relationship with God is not a matter of what we do, or the way we understand it, but a matter of what God does and the way God understands it?

Last week we heard how the disciple Peter came to Jesus wondering how often he should forgive someone who had wronged him. He asks, "seven times?" That seems reasonable; perhaps even more than reasonable.

We know that it is hard enough to forgive someone one time, little own seven times. But Jesus told him that we are to forgive someone not seven times, but seventy times seven times.



It seems that, built right into the heart of the gospel is a kind of generosity, of extravagance. And, as Jesus said on one occasion, God makes his sun to shine on the good and the bad and his rain to fall on the just and the unjust. We are being given the message that God has created the world in such a way that there is room for God to be

gracious. There is room for people who have nothing to be given everything. It is possible for those whose lives don't add up to much of anything to have everything.

God is willing to risk everything just for one who is lost. On the other hand, the wealthy, the trend setters, and the big wheels, are seen as nothing. A poor widow's single copper coin is seen as being bigger than a huge cheque from someone with lots of money in the bank.

Or as Paul said to one of the early churches, God has chosen to take the things that add up to nothing, and make them into something big. God takes those things with which the world is impressed and reduces them to nothing.

Soon you are going to come forward to the Lord's table. You will receive just one little bit of compressed bread, hardly enough to satisfy a big appetite. And you will have just a thimbleful of wine, not enough to cure a big thirst. However, our hungers are so deep and our thirsts are so unquenchable. And yet as we accept the good news of Jesus Christ, just that sip, just that little bite of bread is enough to feed you forever, to strengthen and preserve your soul, not just through daily life, but into eternal life.

## Sentence of the Day

Come, let us return to the Lord, that we may live before him.  
Hosea 6.1a, 2b

## Collect

Grant, O merciful God,  
that your people may have that mind that was in Christ Jesus,  
who emptied himself, and took the form of a servant,  
and in humility became obedient even to death.

For you have highly exalted him  
and bestowed on him the name that is above every name,  
Jesus Christ, the Lord;  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, in everlasting glory. Amen.

## Matthew 21:23-32

<sup>23</sup> When Jesus entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching, and said, 'By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?' <sup>24</sup> Jesus said to them, 'I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. <sup>25</sup> Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?' And they argued with one another, 'If we say, "From heaven", he will say to us, "Why then did you not believe him?" <sup>26</sup> But if we say, "Of human origin", we are afraid of the crowd; for all regard John as a prophet.' <sup>27</sup> So they answered Jesus, 'We do not know.' And he said to them, 'Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things. <sup>28</sup> What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, "Son, go and work in the vineyard today." <sup>29</sup> He answered, "I will not"; but later he changed his mind and went. <sup>30</sup> The father went to the second and said the same; and he answered, "I go, sir"; but he did not go. <sup>31</sup> Which of the two did the will of his father?' They said, 'The first.' Jesus said to them, 'Truly I tell you, the tax-collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. <sup>32</sup> For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax-collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him.