



Alstonville
Anglicans

Pentecost 16 on Sunday 20th September 2020

This week...

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



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

God is Great!



Does looking up at the stars at night make you wonder about God? There are approximately 100 billion stars in our Galaxy. The Hubble telescope revealed that in the small section we can observe - there are around 200 billion galaxies. As for distances they are almost incomprehensible (especially to someone who thinks it's a long way to Perth).

Down here on Earth watching little fairy wrens raise their chicks fills one with delight and awe at such complexity and beauty. We are just beginning to understand the physical, chemical and biological patterns and processes involved in our world. What we are discovering leaves us with a feeling of wonder, it makes us feel there

must be a creative, spiritual force, a mind, God somehow intimately connected to it all.

I wonder, is there sentient life on other planets contemplating the greatness of God?

God is incomprehensibly great!

In his book ***Sapiens***, Yuval Harari makes the case that our human laws and social rules are just that. We've made laws and rules to enable us to function as a society. We've used God to justify them or claimed God gave them to us, (but that doesn't mean s/he did). The Ten Commandments or the Divine Right of Kings are just two examples. We don't follow the *Ten* literally anymore. A wife is no longer considered 'property' for example. As for the Divine Right of Kings, English speakers ended that idea with the beheading of Charles I, and are not too keen on "Presidents for Life". However, the Chinese think the latter is okay. Every society has different structures and rights and responsibilities, and they change and evolve. These are human institutions. We kid ourselves thinking God follows our rules or notions of fairness or is *US* written large - unless we believe that in the beginning humans created God.

Life in God's Universe is like the parable of the labourers. Our ideas of what is fair and what's not don't apply. Sometimes "Good people" have terrible lives and "Bad people" have terrific lives and visa versa. We get different abilities or lack of them, and life offers us different opportunities. Our planet could be wiped out by an asteroid tomorrow.

Our Universe does follow God's rules, it follows these patterns rigidly it seems, in as far as we understand them, and based on those rules - our actions have real outcomes. Our universe's rules govern how nature and the universe works which we haven't always understood but are slowly beginning to. Knowledge of these rules means we can begin to control the outcome of what happens to our little planet and beyond. Human ingenuity and the possibilities for the future of life are both exciting and frightening.

What do we want that outcome to be? The possibilities of both Utopian and Dystopian outcomes are in our grasp, now. God is great!

Liturgy for 20th September

Sentence of the Day

By grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God. Ephesians 2.8–9

Opening Song

1. God who stretched the spangled heavens,

infinite in time and place,
flung the suns in burning radiance
through the silent fields of space,
we your children,
in your likeness,
share inventive powers with you:
great Creator, still creating,
show us all we yet may do.

2. Proudly rise our modern cities,
stately buildings, row on row;
yet their windows, blank, unfeeling,
stare on canyoned streets below,
where the lonely drift unnoticed
in the city's ebb and flow,
lost to purpose and to meaning,
scarcely caring where they go.

3. We have ventured worlds undreamed of
since the childhood of our race;

known the ecstasy of winging
through untravelled realms of space;
probed the secrets of the atom,
yielding unimagined power,
facing us with life's destruction
or our most triumphant hour.

4. As each far horizon beckons,
may it challenge us anew,
children of creative purpose,
serving others, honouring you.
May our dreams prove rich with promise,
each endeavour, well begun:
great Creator, give us guidance
till our goals and yours are one.

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Reading

Matthew 20:1-16

¹ "For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. ² After agreeing with the laborers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. ³ When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace; ⁴ and he said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.' So they went. ⁵ When he went out again about noon and about three o'clock, he did the same. ⁶ And about five o'clock he went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, 'Why are you standing here idle all day?' ⁷ They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard.' ⁸ When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, 'Call the laborers and give

them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.’⁹ When those hired about five o’clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage.¹⁰ Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage.¹¹ And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner,¹² saying, ‘These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.’¹³ But he replied to one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage?’¹⁴ Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you.¹⁵ Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?’¹⁶ So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”



Prayers

Season of Creation 2020 Prayer

Creator of Life,

At Your word, the Earth brought forth plants yielding seed and trees of every kind bearing fruit. The rivers, mountains, minerals, seas, and forests sustained life. The eyes of all looked to You to satisfy the needs of every living thing. And throughout time the Earth has sustained life. Through the planetary cycles of days and seasons, renewal, and growth, you open your hand to give creatures our food in the proper time.

In your Wisdom, you granted a Sabbath; a blessed time to rest in gratitude for all that you have given; a time to liberate ourselves from vicious consumption; a time to allow the land and all creatures to rest from the burden of production. But these days our living pushes the planet beyond its limits. Our demands for growth, and our never-ending cycle of production and consumption are exhausting our world. The forests are leached, the topsoil erodes, the fields fail, the deserts advance, the seas acidify, the storms intensify. We have not allowed the land to observe her Sabbath, and the Earth is struggling to be renewed.

During this Season of Creation, we ask you to grant us courage to observe a Sabbath for our planet. Strengthen us with the faith to trust in your providence. Inspire us with the creativity to share what we have been given. Teach us to be satisfied with enough. And as we proclaim a Jubilee for the Earth, send Your Holy Spirit to renew the face of creation.

In the name of the One who came to proclaim good news to all creation, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Final Song

All things bright and beautiful,
all creatures great and small,
all things wise and wonderful
the Lord God made them all.

1. The wildflowers in their beauty,
the mountain ranges tall,
the billabongs and rivers,
and friendly birds that call,

All things bright and beautiful,...

2. The cold wind in the winter,
the bright, life-giving sun,
the ripe fruits in the garden—
he made them everyone.

All things bright and beautiful,...

3. The coloured walls of gorges,
the gum trees green and tall,
the rocks, and pools, and palm trees,
the sparkling waterfall,

All things bright and beautiful,...

4. The many-coloured corals,
the creatures of the sea,
of bushland, field or desert,
on farms, or roaming free,

All things bright and beautiful,...

5. He gave us eyes to see them,
and lips that we might tell
how great is God Almighty
who has made all things well.

***All things bright and beautiful,
all creatures great and small,
all things wise and wonderful
the Lord God made them all.***

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Reflection

Matthew 18:21-35

The Tragedy of the Commons

by Desiree Snyman on the 13th of September 2020 at Alstonville Anglicans

Read Matthew 18.21-35

Once upon a time there were two fields. One field was privately owned. The owner-farmer was wise. He knew that after grazing cattle for a while on one part of the field, the cattle had to be moved to another part of the field to allow the land to recover. He never had more cattle than the land could cope with. The land prospered.

The second field was a common resource – the commons. The commons was shared by a number of cattle herders who were entitled to graze the land with an allotted number of cattle. These cattle herders were cunning, but not wise. They soon realised they could maximise profits if they increased their herd. While the increased herd benefitted individual herders with more earnings, the

land suffered from overgrazing to the detriment of all: the herders, the cattle, and the land.



The story I have told is a metaphor by William Lloyd's 1833 pamphlet and later Garit Hardin's 1964 published article "The Tragedy of the commons." The point of the metaphor observes that the privately owned property prospers because the owner has a vested interest in its longevity. The tragedy of the commons is that what is held in common is destroyed to the detriment of all because of individually focussed decisions.

How do you solve the tragedy of the commons? Imagine you are one of the cattle herders on the commons and you have observed the deterioration of the commons due to overgrazing. How would you convince your fellow herders to forego some profit short term to sustain the whole enterprise long term? The tragedy of the commons, as Aristotle summarises simply in *Politics* is that "what is common to the greatest number gets the least amount of care."

In September, the worldwide church celebrates the Season of Creation. The focus of our reflection, inspired by Gardin's article, is the *Tragedy of the Commons*. The tragedy of the commons is a lens through which we experience the climate emergency. The commons is the ocean, the atmosphere, water, soil...the whole environment in fact. The tragedy is that actions and decisions which may benefit a few with higher profits, is to the detriment of our survival.



How do we respond to the tragedy of the commons? To go back to the metaphor, how do we encourage the cattle herders not to overgraze? The answers to the metaphor are the same answers we give to the climate emergency. How do we encourage people to give up personal comfort, and personal benefit to sustain the whole? More importantly what do we do when they don't cooperate? Fundamentally the issue posed by the tragedy of the commons is a question about community and what to do when it goes wrong, and this is where Scripture steps in.

Matthew 18 is about community and what to do when community breaks down. For example, how to respond to conflict, how to value the most vulnerable in community, how to communicate and the role of forgiveness in repairing community. The question today posed in verses 21-35 is when things go wrong, do you forgive and if so, how many times. Jesus answers that we forgive continually. Forgiveness is easy to understand, often hard to practice.

Jesus then muddies the issue of forgiveness with a confusing parable. Well, confusing to me at any rate. The books, commentaries, and sermons I have read about this parable make me feel like I'm the only sober person in a room full of inebriated friends, or the only inebriated one in a room full of sober Methodists. If this parable is meant to illustrate the value and function of forgiveness and that we are meant to forgive because we are forgiven, it fails.

The first slave owes 10 000 talents. Either the amount is hyperbolic, or its highlighting a narrative context. Galilee and Perea owed Herod Antipas 200 talents per year in tribute. Overall, Herod earned 900 talents per annum. This amount of 10 000 talents is either 50 years' worth of tribute from Galilee and Perea or 10 years of Herod's annual income. In other words, this first slave is a high-level bureaucrat responsible for vast sums of money.

The second slave owes the equivalent of half a Roman legionnaire's salary or an annual wage of a labourer. In Australian terms my best guess would be the denarii is about 65 000 dollars. The debt owed by the second slave to the first slave while large, is nevertheless payable.

Bearing in mind that Jesus has just said we are to forgive 70 times 7, the king forgives a debt of 10 000 talents in one breath but withdraws the forgiveness in the next breath. The king passes sentence and the slave is tortured for eternity as opposed to the earlier punishment of merely being sold as a slave. The king has forgiven only once, according to Jesus, he still owes 489 clemencies.



I hope you can sympathise with my confusion. So, what is going on here?

If the first bureaucrat could be sold into slavery at the whim of a king, or worse, tortured, the

parable implies something about the system they are in. No one is safe, no matter how high up you are, how much power you have, and no matter how much money you have. Money, power, and position do not protect you from the system of debt and profit.

Even the king is undermined. Even if the king exchanges a policy of brutal tax exploitation for the cancelation of debt, the world doesn't change because his subordinates, his bureaucrats are still caught in the system of debt and profit. The king's hands are tied, and he is forced to bow down to the power of the system.

What this parable says to me is that there is a difference between change and transformation: you cannot change one element in a violent domination system and expect society to transform; that is like rearranging furniture on a sinking Titanic. In order for Christ's vision of an alternative society to take shape, and the ethics of mutuality, solidarity and generosity to be practical, the whole domination system must change.

Peter's question (how many times you forgive) indicates how much he buys into the system Jesus intends to overthrow. Who counts mercy? Like grace, mercy, generosity, and friendship are abundant; they are too priceless to count. Jesus' alternative is cooperation, generosity, leaders as servants, and offering help without counting the cost. The alternative Jesus offers requires radical, integral, and holistic transformation of attitudes, spirituality, beliefs, economics, faith, and business models. Jesus is proposing a revolution so great

that it doesn't only change the people, it changes the entire system itself.

Here-in lies the relevance of the parable of the unmerciful king for our climate emergency (or impending catastrophe depending on how you interpret the science). The parable calls for a total transformation and predicts the failure of one or two changes in making a difference to our world. It is not enough to change one aspect of our technology for another technology and expect creation to heal. For example, it is not enough to change diesel cars for electric or coal for solar panels and expect that to be a solution to our climate emergency/catastrophe. The climate emergency demands a whole system approach, an holistic and integral transformation of faith, spirituality, finance, business, education, health ... everything.

Jesus' background in Judaism holds the concept of shalom as central to a healed world. Shalom is a vision of interconnectedness, that we are one with each other, with the creator, and with the environment. Other cultures have similar understanding. For the Maori, shalom is whakapapa; for Africans, shalom is ubuntu; for Tibetan Buddhists, tendrel. Shalom, ubuntu, tendril, whakapapa have a similar energy – that we are all connected to God, to each other and to every atom in creation through an innate web of relationships.



Housekeeping

Our notices are organised under our mission goals.

Worship & Spirituality



Sunday @9am notices

In reviewing the worship and online ministry, we are asking that the notices be put at the end of the service. The reason is that we would like to livestream in real time to Facebook and this will make the technology side of things easier. As the notices are particular to our context we have decided not to include this in our livestreaming. Further we hope to keep what we offer online to 30 minutes maximum and including the notices will push out our timeline. Thank you for your understanding. If this causes concern or if you would like to offer feedback please speak to Desiree or the wardens.

Messy Church

The theme for the next Messy Church is Creation. The families will be building large sculptures (1m high) out of recycled materials. We are asking for help to source materials eg. Egg cartons, lids, bottles, cans, cardboard, wire, wire netting, plastics etc. These can be left in the parquet area in the hall.





Prayer

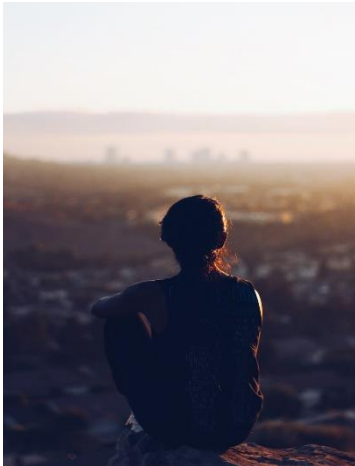
We are praying for you.

Every Monday 10am



Worship & Spirituality Meeting

On 30th September 6pm a Worship and Spirituality meeting will be held to coordinate the worship at 9am. We will be brainstorming ways of increasing community involvement and planning for Christmas. LLM's, musicians and those involved in making Sundays happen would be helpful at this meeting



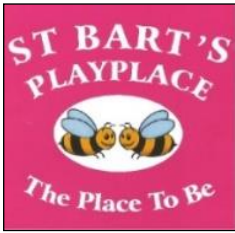
Anam Cara

Anam Cara means soul friend.

Guided Meditation is offered
Wednesdays 9am.

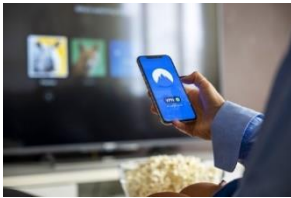
On **Thursdays at 6pm**, an abbreviated compline (prayer at the end of the day) is offered after which we surrender to uninterrupted delicious silence. Arvo Part's Spiegel im Spiegel marks the halfway point of our meditation and blesses us at the end of the hour.

Community Engagement



Play Place

Join us in the Ministry Centre Hall on Thursday mornings, 9.30am to 11.30am. Play Place is an exciting space for young families with pre-school children.



Online Worship engagement

We need a video camera to help us with our live streaming. If you have a camera that you are not using and are happy to lend or give it to us, please let us know.

Vacancy: Live Streaming Production Technician

We are seeking people who would like to be technicians to assist this ministry. Full training and support provided. Please talk to Rev Desiree or Robyn Hannah. At the end of the training you will be highly experienced in videography and well-versed in social media. This role is responsible for growing our capacities in filming events and conducting Live Streams.

- The Live Streaming Production Technician is the go-to person on-site for all live stream videos.
- This role involves ensuring everything is ready to go prior to shooting.
- They assist with sound and lighting, and make sure all the cords are in the right place and out of the way.
- The Live Streaming Production Technician stays on-site throughout the shoot to make sure everything stays in position and steps in when needed.
- Remuneration is \$40 per hour (kidding you are paid with gratitude)

Property



Working Bee Help Needed.

Saturday 19th September 9am-12noon.

A Spring Clean for the Church & Ministry Centre grounds.

Come for 1, 2 or 3 hours.

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

Or

Cheques can be posted to the address above or placed in our locked letterbox. Before 12pm Fridays.

Leadership

Parish Council met
Wednesday 16th
September. Stay tuned for
an update in next week's
bulletin.

Synod is on 26 and 27 September
2020 in Tweed. The reconstruction
of the Diocese is on the agenda. Our
reps. are Cathi Angus, Mark Stuckey
and Desiree Snyman.

Stop press! In breaking news...



Just to share with you in thankfulness and joy (and relief) - little Alice was born safe and well yesterday afternoon. Emily needed surgery for a significant haemorrhage and is recovering in ICU. Tim was able to be with Emily throughout and spend the night with baby Alice in the children's ward - unexpected blessings with C19 restrictions. The rest of us will have to wait til they come home in a few days for a welcome cuddle. Grateful thanks for upholding all in prayer. ❤️ Jenny & Charlie

ANGLICAN PARISH OF ALSTONVILLE

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Rector	the Reverend Dr Desiree Snyman	0402 764 969
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Associate	the Reverend John Kidson	0411 394 213
	The Reverend Geoff Vidal	0447 645 456
	Life Groups Chaplain	
	The Reverend Greg Ezzy	0412 660 742
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INVITES YOU TO A

RECYCLE RECREATE FEST 2020



**THE BIGGEST RECYCLING EVENT
IN ALSTONVILLE!**

SEPTEMBER 27TH 4PM AT
ALSTONVILLE ANGLICANS
8 THE AVENUE

