



# Alstonville Anglicans

**Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> May 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**

## 21<sup>st</sup> May – 28<sup>th</sup> May

21 <sup>st</sup> May		<b>Sunday</b>
	9am	Holy Communion
22 <sup>nd</sup> May		<b>Monday</b>
	9am-12pm	Parish Office Open
	9am-3pm	Op Shop
	10am	Anam Cara
	10am	Deadline for bulletin items
	1pm	Sew Helpful
	4pm	Fete Committee Meeting
23 <sup>rd</sup> May		<b>Tuesday</b>
	9am-12pm	Parish Office <b>Closed.</b>
24 <sup>th</sup> May		<b>Wednesday</b>
	9am-12pm	Parish Office Open
	9am	Anam Cara
	9am-3pm	Op Shop
25 <sup>th</sup> May		<b>Thursday</b>
	9am-12pm	Parish Office Open
	9am-3pm	Op Shop
	9.30am	Play Place
	6pm	Anam Cara
26 <sup>th</sup> May		<b>Friday (National Sorry Day)</b>
	9am-12pm	Parish Office Open
	10am	Holy Communion
27 <sup>th</sup> May		<b>Saturday</b>
28 <sup>th</sup> May		<b>Sunday</b>
	9am	Holy Communion (Pentecost)
	4pm	Messy Church Bonfire

**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](#)

## Mother's Day Fete

**A huge thank you to everyone who contributed to making the fete such a fun and successful event!**

**Fete Committee Meeting Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> May at 4pm in the Ministry Centre.** If you are unable to attend please forward to Des Fitzpatrick any ideas, improvements or suggestions.



## Join in Messy Church Pentecost fun!

**MESSY CHURCH BONFIRE**

★ Charlie and Jenny's home  
★ Brockley Farm 1385 Bruxner Highway  
★ Phone: 0427 462 540  
★ Bring: chairs, mugs, rugs, sturdy shoes, torches ...

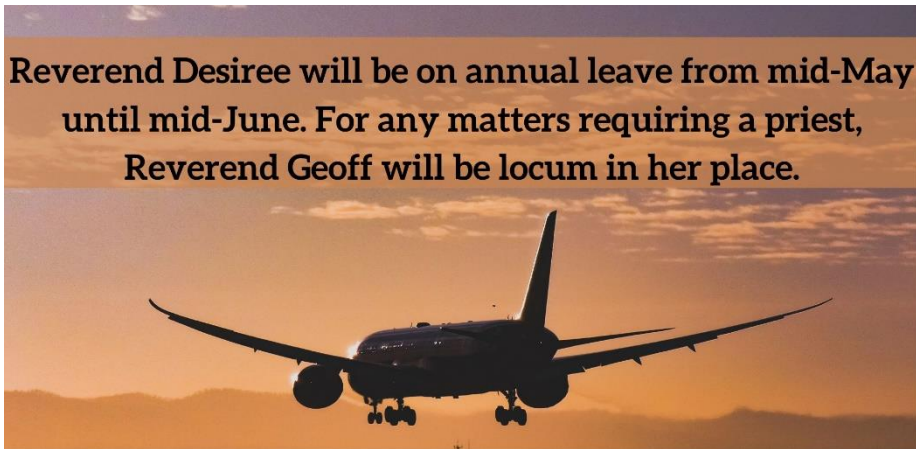
**SUNDAY 28TH MAY 2023 4PM**

Alstonville Anglicans [anglicans.live](http://anglicans.live)

## Pastoral Care:

Barry Campey is in hospital with Leukaemia. Barry and Barb are very grateful for your kindness, well wishes, prayers and concern. At this stage, because of Barry's weakened immune system, only immediate family are visiting.

Reverend Desiree will be on annual leave from mid-May until mid-June. For any matters requiring a priest, Reverend Geoff will be locum in her place.



## Rainforest Labyrinth Experience

'Brockley' 1385 Bruxner Highway Lindendale  
(Jenny & Charlie Handley)

Sat 9am or Sun 2pm

Arrive and welcome

9.15am and 2.15pm

'About the Labyrinth'

Short talk about its history, features and practice with time to experience the Labyrinth and its peaceful surrounds.

All welcome. Bring a friend

Donation appreciated

Refreshments available

Sat 20th May

9-11am

Sun 21st May

2-4pm

RSVP Jenny Handley 0400 361 059

## Church Linen

Thank you to everyone who has been caring for the church linen. If you have any items, please return them to the church or speak to Carolyn Cox. Supplies at the church are very, very low.

## **AREA Bunning BBQ Fundraiser**

Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> June at Bunnings Ballina. Three churches are providing a team of 5 volunteers. Our team needs 5 keen helpers from 1.30-4pm. If you can help to raise urgently needed funds, please contact John Noble on 0414 285 132.



**Alstonville Religious  
Education Association**

## **2023 AREA BREAKFAST**

Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> June

*Alstonville Uniting Church*

Main St Alstonville 7:30am – 9:30am



Cereal, Hot Food, Tea, Coffee

Hear Bruce Fleming speak about his  
work at Alstonville High School

\$25 per person

All funds raised go to AREA to support  
Bruce's work

## Sermon Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> May

### By Bruce Fleming



This passage in Acts is often falsely presented as a badge of academic honour for Paul; “Look how he was invited to present to the Areopagus, the court of philosophers of Athens, the centre of Reasoners and Thinkers in the Ancient world. Paul has earned his place with Socrates and Plato.” That may have been the case in 400 BCE, but not now.

Greece is now simply a part of the massive Roman Empire and the Areopagus court is now simply a civil court addressing concerns of a civic nature. Paul has been invited to present his agenda in order to vet him. This was not a 1st century equivalent of a TED talk to inspire inquisitive minds. It was a case of his reputation preceding him - a reputation for causing division, conflict and chaos. Even in Athens you can’t just pull out an accordion and start playing - you need a buskers license! Modern Universities have a similarly cautious approach to public lectures on their campuses lest they be accused of entertaining “hate speech” or inciting violence. “Cancel culture” was alive and kicking back in Athens but Paul succeeded in allaying any fears they may have had that his message represented a politically motivated attack on their guardian and patron, the Roman Empire.

He opens with what he hopes might establish some common ground between his message and this pagan jury. As he gazed at the temples and shrines around him, he saw a universal human quest for meaning and their acknowledgement of mystery in an alter to “an unknown God.” He hadn’t come not to insult their culture but to share the great revelation of hope - something new had entered human history in Jesus Christ representing and responding to our ultimate needs and aspirations. But it also judges our flawed belief systems, what

the Jews called idolatry - allowing a thing that is not ultimate to have a claim over your life as if it was. Like your Facebook profile, job status, military power, income, or a fashionable cultural ideology. There is much we can learn about the Gospel and culture from this short account of where Paul places his focus.

We are often keen to prove our culture WRONG, and so move to the important task of getting them to repent, and thus become RIGHT, what we often call being SAVED. Paul shows us a more nuanced approach. If you want to persuade people about where they may be wrong, or perhaps are in need of some clarity or a new perspective, sometimes it helps to show them where they are RIGHT. A positive approach to engaging the culture is to understand it, to read some of their "contemporary poets" and to hear what they truly value and aspire to. We may discover we share some common ground with our agnostic and atheistic artists and thinkers. Like Paul, we can assert some of the things **we** believe by saying, "*as some of **your** poets have said...*" Paul did not begin by quoting the Bible in Athens! He only began by opening the scriptures when he was addressing a Jewish audience who shared his belief that the Old Testament texts were authoritative. A good start for Christians might be to stop quoting the Bible at non-Christians as if that wins the argument.

So Paul did not begin with, "I hate your idols because they are an offence to the one true God and you are clearly breaking the first two Commandments." Instead, he opened with, "I see you are a very religious people." Such tolerance is astonishing coming from an orthodox Jew who absolutely abhorred idolatry. Then he seized on the place of confessed mystery - their alter to an "unknown God," though that may just have been a concession for international visitors and tourists. They couldn't cover every nation's God in



their temple precinct so they provide a place where those who don't worship Aphrodite or Apollo may worship. But it is an opportunity for Paul to shed light on a "different" kind of God.

Before he says more, he says something I think Christians zealous to spread the gospel, have largely ignored. Paul acknowledges God's gift of life (breath) and space to every human and every culture in history to both thrive and to seek him. God welcomes the spiritual search of every culture our world history has known so we must not disparage our Hindu, Buddhist, Sufi, or indigenous fellow travellers in their quests. God is glad that in seeking some may find him. Jesus said something similar - the one who genuinely knocks will find the door opens. For, as Paul proclaims, God is not far from any one of us. Carried within each precious human soul is God's breath and Paul's first quote from the Greek Religious thinkers acknowledges that; "For in him we live and move and have our being." That was written by Epimenides, a philosopher of the 6th Century BCE and it was spoken of the Greek God, Zeus, not Yahweh. The original context is quite amusing.

The Cretans had apparently, sometime past, built a tomb to Zeus. A **tomb!** In the famous book, *Greek Religion for Dummies*, it explains on page one that a God is immortal. Gods don't die. So to build a tomb to Zeus is actually an insult, if not blasphemy. But certainly, very stupid. (Hence the term "cretin" today for someone really stupid!)

*They fashioned a tomb for you, holy and high one,  
Cretans, always liars, evil beasts, idle bellies.  
But you are not dead: you live and abide forever,  
**For in you we live and move and have our being.***

Paul is affirming where Greek pagan theology gets it right. Then he commends their poems in which a personal relationship with Zeus is acknowledged by referring to humans as "his offspring." Aratus of Cilicia (Stoic, 4th - 3rdC) wrote,



*All the streets and all the market places  
of humanity are full of Zeus.  
Also full of him are the sea and the harbours,  
and everywhere we all have need of Zeus.*

***For we are also his offspring.***

And Cleanthes (Stoic, 4th - 3rd C), wrote,

*The beginning of the world was from you,  
and with law you rule over all things.*

*To you all flesh may speak,*

***for we are your offspring.***

*Therefore, I will lift a hymn to you and will sing of your power.*

That last verse could have been written by Hillsong, but it is about Zeus. Only after respecting their temples, their literature, their search for truth, their believing, and their doubting, does Paul introduce them to Christ - a new word of hope from God - of power and new life available to all. But this God transcends the human echo chambers of our idols - our own contrived statues and dogmas - that rule us and that we use to rule others. From these dead ends we need to repent.

Paul shows the flaw in their system. If your insights are correct, and God is Creator and sustainer of life, and we are his offspring,

then we are made in *Zeus's image!*

But your system has it backwards.

You are the creators and have made

the gods in *your own* image,

reflecting *your* appetites, *your* value

system (silver and gold), and even

*your* bodies! And that is a great

definition of idolatry - worshipping,

binding ourselves to, or being ruled

by something we ourselves have

created. Even worse, we often use



these constructs to lord it over others.

And is that not the history of most religion, philosophy, cultural fashion, ideology, politics, and even theology throughout history? Humans build conceptual edifices of meaning and power and worship it, submit to it, enslaving themselves to it, yet also wielding them to colonise and control others. Christ beckons us to leave these systems of enslavement that, more often than not result, in abuse, exploitation, corruption and misery, and trust the true God who is the source of life and breath itself. The true source of all breath and life desires to embrace, love, free, heal, and exalt every human to a pedestal of glory. Jesus represents resurrection transformation and hope for all. Our human systems that degrade, control or delude each other are revealed as religious imposters. This is what Paul wants the Athenians to repent of and we need to repent of them in our own culture and churches as well. As we find the stories and aspirations within our own culture for truth and beauty, peace and grace, we can harness those voices and add them to our own witness to Christ.

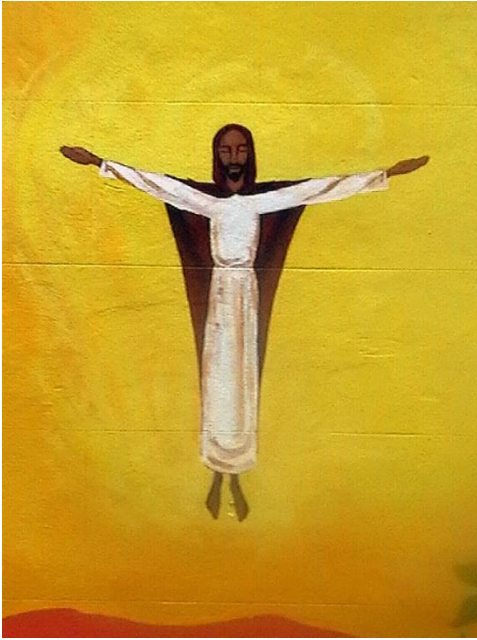
### Sentence of the Day

'Go and make disciples of all nations,' Jesus commands; 'I am with you always, to the close of the age.' Matthew 28.19–20

### Collect

O God,  
whose Son, Jesus, prayed for his disciples,  
and sent them into the world to proclaim the coming of your  
kingdom:  
by your Holy Spirit,  
hold the Church in unity,  
and keep it faithful to your word,  
so that, breaking bread together,  
we may be one with Christ in faith and love and service,  
now and for ever. **Amen.**

## John 17.1-11



<sup>1</sup> After Jesus had spoken these words, he looked up to heaven and said, 'Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, <sup>2</sup> since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. <sup>3</sup> And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. <sup>4</sup> I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. <sup>5</sup> So now,

Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed. <sup>6</sup> 'I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. <sup>7</sup> Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; <sup>8</sup> for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. <sup>9</sup> I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. <sup>10</sup> All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. <sup>11</sup> And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one.



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1998 - 2023*

YEAR 8 WELLBEING  
INVITES  
OUR COMMUNITY SENIOR CITIZENS  
TO

# *Cards & Cuppas*



Come along to  
Emmanuel Anglican College's  
Ezzy Centre  
to enjoy a round of cards and morning tea  
from 11.20am to 12.00noon  
on each of the following days;

Thursday 4 May 2023  
Thursday 18 May 2023  
Thursday 1 June 2023  
Thursday 15 June 2023  
Thursday 29 June 2023

Please RSVP to [enquiries@eac.nsw.edu.au](mailto:enquiries@eac.nsw.edu.au)  
or phone 02 6681 5054

