



Alstonville
Anglicans

Sunday 22nd November 2020

Welcome back

- 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

Christ the King



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

Human Flourishing

How do we measure human flourishing? How do we measure the success of the nations of the world? Since the Great Depression, GNP (Gross National Product) was developed as a way to measure how countries were emerging out of the Great Depression into sustainability. GNP was introduced on the floor of congress in the USA in 1937. It was never meant as a way to compare nations. Today GDP (Gross Domestic Product) is closely watched as an economic indicator of a country's growth. GDP determines whether or not investors decide to make investments in a country or not, obviously low GDP = low stock prices = low earnings = poverty. Using GDP as a measurement, unsurprisingly, the measure of the nations is

1st USA

2nd China

Last Tuvalu.

What GDP hides is how that wealth is shared, where in some rich countries 80 percent of the wealth is controlled by 20 percent of the people. Moreover, tragedies such as bush fires, COVID pandemics, cyclones etc INCREASE GDP as millions are spent in rebuilding countries.

Are there other ways to measure the wellbeing of a country? King Jigme Singye Wangchuckj of Bhutan rejects GDP. Instead from 1972 Bhutan measures the Gross National Happiness. Through randomised interviews, 9 variables are measured:

- living standards
- health
- good governance
- ecological diversity
- resilience
- time use

- psychological wellbeing
- cultural diversity and resilience
- community vitality.

Similarly, Matthew 25:31-46 reveals the key to human flourishing. Those nations that value feeding the poor, clothing the naked, visiting those in prison and serving in love, are those judged by the Son of Man as successful.

Liturgy for 22nd November

Sentence of the Day

O shout to the Lord in triumph all the earth. Serve the Lord with gladness and come before his face with songs of joy. Psalm 100.1

Opening Song

Christ's is the world in which we move

1. Christ's is the world in which we move;
 Christ's are the folk we're summoned to love;
 Christ's is the voice which calls us to care,
 and Christ is the one who meets us here.

(Chorus)

*To the lost Christ shows his face;
 to the unloved he gives his embrace;
 to those who cry in pain or disgrace,
 Christ, makes, with his friends, a touching place.*

2. Feel for the people we most avoid.
 strange or bereaved or never employed.

Feel for the women and feel for the men
who fear that their living is all in vain.

(Chorus)

3. Feel for the parents who lost their child,
feel for the women whom men have defiled,
feel for the baby for whom there's no breast,
and feel for the weary who find no rest.

(Chorus)

4. Feel for the lives by life confused,
riddled with doubt, in loving abused;
feel for the lonely heart, conscious of sin,
which longs to be pure but fears to begin.

(Chorus)

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Readings

Matthew 25:31-46

³¹ "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. ³² All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, ³³ and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. ³⁴ Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; ³⁵ for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, ³⁶ I was naked and you gave me clothing, I

was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.' ³⁷ Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? ³⁸ And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? ³⁹ And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' ⁴⁰ And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.' ⁴¹ Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; ⁴² for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, ⁴³ I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' ⁴⁴ Then they also will answer, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?' ⁴⁵ Then he will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.' ⁴⁶ And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

Closing Song

1. From heaven you came, helpless babe,
entered our world, your glory veiled;
not to be served, but to serve,
and give your life that we might live.

*This is our God, the Servant King,
he calls us now to follow him,
to bring our lives as a daily offering
of worship to the Servant King.*

2. There in the garden of tears,

my heavy load He chose to bear;
his heart with sorrow was torn,
'Yet not my will but yours', he said.

(Chorus)

3. Come see his hands and his feet,
the scars that speak of sacrifice,
hands that flung stars into space
to cruel nails surrendered.

(Chorus)

4. So let us learn how to serve
and in our lives enthrone him;
each other's needs to prefer,
for it is Christ we're serving.

(Chorus)

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Reflection

A reflection on Matthew 25:14-30

Parables

I have a friend who tortures the rest of us with his puns. When reading through a long essay that he has posted on Facebook, you are always alert, waiting for the inevitable facepalming pun, that reverses the whole meaning of the story.

I have the same trepidation when reading parables. Like puns, parables have other meanings that subvert a superficial reading of the text. When reading parables, I'm alert wanting to be ready for the inevitable subversion beyond the initial reading.

The trepidation in reading parables reaches its climax in Matthew 25. A quick superficial reading leaves the parables as moral tales, but will a closer reading of Matthew 25, reveal a "pun" another meaning?

The view that Jesus is a spiritual teacher of divine wisdom and that the parables are spiritual sermons is challenged by the political nature of his death and the prophetic subversity with which Jesus challenged the status. The trial and execution of Jesus as an agitator shows that Jesus was a threat to the political and economic interests of the Jewish elite who collaborated with Roman powers to crucify Jesus. Thus, the political and subversive effects of Jesus ministry prevent an overly spiritualised interpretation and force us to consider political and economic understandings. For example, "traditional" interpretations have described the parable of the talents as being "spiritual gifts" and not money. The virgins that run out of oil are explained as people who do not prioritise prayer. The five virgins who refuse to share their oil with those who do not have, cannot be justified in the light of Christ's actions and his stories of sharing, for example the feeding of the five thousand and the last supper where his body and blood are "shared".



The man going on a journey (v14) implies an absent God, if this is assumed to be the God figure. This view of an absent God is exacerbated by the third slave's interpretation of him as harsh: "I know that you are a harsh man." The nobleman does not refute this but agrees with the assessment: "you know that

I am a harsh man". In contrast Jesus emphasises the love of God, as do the New Testament writers that follow his teachings: "God is love and those who dwell in love dwell in God" (See 1 John). Matthew 25 is not three separate parables with three separate meanings. A close examination of the Greek text will refute this. Each of the parables is connected to the other with the words *hoster gar*. My argument is that Matthew 25 should be understood as one parable with three chapters.

If the reader agrees that Matthew 25 represents not three but one parable, then the following argument may be considered:

In Biblical exegesis, when there are three aspects of a text, attention is often drawn to the middle section. In other words the middle "chapter" of Matthew 25 is the key. The first "chapter" prepares the reader for the second "chapter" while the third "chapter" vindicated the actions of the second "chapter". In the light of this argument, the message of the first "chapter" is to be awake for a new insight which comes in chapter two.

In chapter two the nobleman is not the God figure but an absentee lord who bleeds the land dry even in his absence. Greed is such a drive for him that even in his absence he expects his assets to yield a return. This interpretation is offered in the light of sociological background. Only the wealthy could "travel abroad." The nobleman's wealth was because of injustice. The synoptic Gospels refer to those who join field to field leaving many vulnerable,

economically deprived and in debt. In Matthew 24 Jesus offers a similar critique against the temple wealth. The initial hearers of this parable would have resented the nobleman who goes away for a long time, he represents the cause of their economic suffering. This is made clear in Luke's telling of the Parable which is a direct reference to King Herod: In Luke 19.11 – 27 the image of the noble man is Herod:

So (Jesus) said, 'A nobleman went to a distant country to get royal power for himself and then return. He summoned ten of his slaves, and gave them ten pounds, and said to them, "Do business with these until I come back." But the citizens of his country hated him and sent a delegation after him, saying, "We do not want this man to rule over us." When he returned, having received royal power, he ordered these slaves, to whom he had given the money, to be summoned so that he might find out what they had gained by trading.

On his return the first two slaves are welcomed into the oppressive paradigm of the nobleman hence he congratulates them. The third slave speaks truth to power and criticises the harsh man who reaps where he does not sow. The nobleman agrees with this interpretation and throws him out into outer darkness. In other interpretations, writers have considered this an image of hell. It is not. It represents the Gospel ideal of solidarity with the oppressed. The outer darkness is to be with those who suffer, who are hungry, naked and in prison. To be in outer darkness is to stand outside the oppressive paradigm. This opinion is confirmed by the third chapter of the parable where those who stood in solidarity with the oppressed are seen to be living the Jesus ideal; in other words feeding the hungry, visiting those in prison and clothing the naked.

Crudely put, the interpretation of this parable is that the parable is not a story about heaven but rather a story about earth and how we design our economic and political systems in a way that is consistent or inconsistent with the Jesus event. If you agree with the decoding

of Matthew 25 as argued here, we are then equipped with relevant tools with which to understand systems of oppression which is the first step in dismantling them. Some examples include

- 1) Criticising exploitive financial services who "reap where they do not sow" and take advantage of the poor especially.
- 2) Criticising corporate institutions who are able to manipulate the markets to their excessive financial gain but to the impoverishment of many. A recent example may be the events that led directly to the Global Financial Crisis.
- 3) Exploring ways in which we too can be cast into outer darkness and how solidarity with the poor (the hungry, the naked and those in prison) can take shape.
- 4) Baptism for us means being this third slave, the one who speaks truth to power and is cast out into outer darkness to love the poor, the rejected, the hungry, and those who live outside the systems of power.

Update from the Rector

I greatly desire that our communication be as effective as possible. Much is happening despite the COVID challenges. Below, I share a snap shot of the ministry I am currently engaged in. I thank each of you for your support in making this possible.

The presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church of the USA, Michael Curry is responsible for "The way of love: practices for a Jesus Centred life." Michael says that:

More than a program or curriculum, it is an intentional commitment to a set of practices. It's a commitment to follow Jesus: Turn, Learn, Pray, Worship, Bless, Go, Rest." If we hope to not only worship Jesus but to grow more like him and bear his redeeming love in the world, we can adopt a rule of life like the Way of Love and find a community with which to practice it. What is a Rule of Life? How Do I Begin? A Rule of Life is an intentional commitment to a set of practices that provide guidance, rhythm and inspiration for living a beautiful, meaningful and holy life. As we place these practices at the heart of our daily lives and join

with companions who share the commitment, we grow more and more in the unselfish, hope-filled Way of Love that Jesus embodied in the world.

I have found the material easy to understand and practical to implement. I intend to offer 'A way of Love' in Advent and Lent 2021. Besides Sunday services, the 'way of love' will include material for LIFE groups and personal study which will be available in the Bulletin.

Community Engagement, online ministry, photos and films

We are privileged to welcome the lovely Charis and Hope who are doing the work placement with our parish under the supervision of Robyn Hannah, our productions manager. One project we are working on is short 30s video segments of "meet the parishioner". We are also adding stock footage of our congregation offering the welcome, acknowledgement of country, prayers and blessings. If you would like to be filmed, please let Anne know.

On November 27 Friday from 12.30pm, the church is being used as a venue for the professional production of a film starring a ballet dancer. The church has been offered a reasonable donation for the use of our facilities. We welcome Adele and her team into our community for a short while

About Morning tea

The worship and spirituality committee have recommended that morning tea be a simple affair with plain biscuits and crackers with dips. The reason is we are hoping to encourage more participation and think that reducing labour intensity may help. We suggest we save the delicious slices and cakes for festive occasions like our patronal festival. Further, in consideration of those on duty for tea, we would ask people to have their teacups back by 10.45.

Family Ministry at 9am

One family from Messy Church has indicated that they would like to worship regularly on a Sunday. As part of the Sunday Worship I intend to use the Messy Church method. For those new to Parish Council:

Christian nurture.

- **Godly Play** is based on long established, tried and tested approaches.
- **Godly Play** encourages participants to make meaning for themselves by inviting them into stories and providing the opportunity for them to connect the stories with their personal experience.
- **Godly Play** is a non-coercive way to encourage people to move into larger dimensions of belief and faith through wondering questions and open-ended response time.
- **Godly Play** values process, openness and discovery.
- **Godly Play** is a way of preparing children to join in the worship and life of their congregations as they develop a deeper understanding of stories, symbols and rites.

If the Family Ministry grows, the Parish Council may need to consider starting a service of praise and prayer on Sunday afternoons to accommodate a simpler liturgy aimed at parents and children.

Fridays@10

Friday 20 November Mothers' Union certificates are being given to two members for long service, Isobel Farlow and Elaine Pringle. I offer support and appreciation for the work Mothers' Union does.

St Peter and St Paul's

A letter to Bishop-in-Council was sent and acknowledged requesting that the closure of Tregagle be delayed for two years.

Emmanuel Anglican College Life group

For October and November, I attended a Reading Group for the Staff at EAC as part of their well-being programme. Initiated by Greg Ezzy and supported by the principal, Rob Tobias, "The Inner Self" by Hugh McKay was studied and discussed on Tuesdays. It was a privilege for me to be involved.

Messy Church

While Messy Church is an embedded feature at Alstonville Anglicans, it is good to remind ourselves that it is very much church and worship. Messy Church is part of the "Emerging Church" movement that explores different modes of worship and being church. It is intentionally different from a traditional Anglican service, but this does not diminish the fact that it is both Anglican worship and church. Messy Church is a church for families who may not find other forms of church appealing and who may not belong to a church. It prioritises neither the needs of children or adults but intentionally welcomes and provides for all ages. It is church, not a kids' club or Bible study. Therefore each Messy Church is Christ-centred and available and welcoming to all ages. There is a strong emphasis on hospitality from the invitation, the welcome at the door, the knowing of people's names, the offer of conversation and drinks to sharing worship and a sit-down meal for all. The celebration is an invitation to worship through song, prayers and story. Creativity in many forms is encouraged, nurtured and explored by people of all ages, together. The people who coordinate and attend Messy Church become a congregation of that church in their own right, not a steppingstone to the existing (usually Sunday morning) congregation.

This month the Messy Church will make Christmas decorations from dried Australian botanicals that will be part of the Christmas Tree program run by Quota. I think it's a wonderful community enhancing initiative.

Extra Messy Church

I will send an invitation to Messy Church families for a swim party on the 29 November and 6 December. The hosts are the Earners and the Bryces (a new parish family) respectively.

Messy Church Life Group

I am in the process of finalising a life group aimed at Messy Church families. At this stage the times and days negotiated are Sundays at 5pm, Monday at 4pm, Thursday at 4pm. I am grateful to parish council for their support in this initiative.

Synod – Restructuring for Mission & Ministry Update – Parish Council have noted that Alstonville and Ballina Parishes are to form a Ministry Network during 2023-24. It was disappointingly noted that Tregeagle church was to be sold 2021-2022. The actual timeframe was yet to be advised by Bishop-in-Council. In the meantime I have written to Bishop in Council recommending that if possible the closure of Tregeagle be delayed to the end of 2022.

Missions – Payments had been deferred due to COVID-19. \$8,250 had been paid as at end September, and another \$4k in October. The total Mission support allocated for 2020 was \$18,295. A letter of invitation for nomination of a student for the 2021-22 Barbara Whittred Scholarship had been sent to the Principal, Alstonville High School. A report from the current recipient, Kairo Byrne will be published in our Annual report.

Some 2021 dates to consider

- **Sun 31 Jan** – Slip & Slide –
- **Sun 14 Feb** – Pancakes –
- **Early Feb** – Revd Desiree – Annual leave
- **Sun 21 Feb** – AGM
- **Sat 27 Feb** – PC Retreat Day
- **Fri 5 Mar** – World Day of Prayer

- **Sat 13 – Sun 14 Mar** – Family Camp, Sthn Qld – You Are Loved
- **Sun 4 April** – Easter Day

Rev Desiree

Worship & Spirituality



Getting ready
for the mystery
of Christmas

Alstonville Anglicans
Sunday 22nd November
4pm

St Peter & St Paul's

The next service will be Sunday 22nd
November 2020.





We are praying for you.

Every Monday 10am

Join us in St Bartholomew's or submit your prayer requests online

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).



Community Engagement



Play Place Christmas Celebration

Come and join the Play Place Christmas Celebration. Friday December 11th 5.30pm. Fun and games and a sausage sizzle.



Sew helpful

Come along on Mondays from 1.00pm to 3.00pm. Not everyone brings a craft project! You can learn a new skill, work on a project, or just enjoy the company. All welcome!

Quota Creative Christmas Tree Event

Entry forms available from the office.

We need your help!

Alstonville Anglicans Twilight Christmas Fair

Friday 4 December, 3.30pm

Stalls:

- Cake stall
- Craft stall
- Cards and gifts stall
- Plants stall
- Sausage sizzle
- Colouring-in activity for the children
- Christmas Hamper raffle
- Festive music

We need:

- Items for the stalls
- Assistance to run the stalls
- Helpers to set up and pack down

Please contact:

- Graham Ireland
- Robyn Beck (cakes)
- Mary Ireland (craft)
- Carol Stone (cards and gifts)
- Barbara Fewtrell (plants)
- Gail Burley (raffle)
- Brian Delaney (sausage sizzle)

Let's share the joy of Christmas with one another and our local community.

Finance

Alstonville Anglicans - Offertory Options

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

Your offertory can be made using the following options:

- Direct transfer to our bank account
BSB 705 077 / Acc: 00032931

- Parish Provider - Direct debit through Anglican Funds - Forms available from the office
- Cheque to Alstonville Anglicans (PO Box 451, Alstonville 2477 or Offertory Plate)
- Offertory envelopes
- Cash

Thank you for your support.

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

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e-mail: office@anglicans.live **website:** anglicans.live

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



Alstonville
Anglicans

Twilight Christmas Fair

**BE PART OF
SOMETHING
SPECTACULAR!**

Friday 4th December
3.30pm—7.00pm
6 The Avenue Alstonville

Immerse yourself in an enchanting world of COVID safe celebration, clowns, cards, crafts, cool plants and Christmas hampers

