



# Alstonville Anglicans

Pentecost 12 - 23rd August 2020

## You are welcome to join us this week...

- Sunday@**9am** **Anglican Service of Worship in the Ministry Centre.**
- Or 10am connect via webpage [www.anglicans.live](http://www.anglicans.live)
- Anam Cara – a meditation group. Wednesday 9am & Thursday 6pm. St Bartholomew's.
- Friday 10am **Anglican Service of Worship 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.  
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# Thought for the Week

## "Saint Bartholomew"

Tomorrow, 24<sup>th</sup> August, is the day set aside for people all around the world to remember Bartholomew, Apostle and Martyr who gives our beautiful church building its name.

Perhaps the most amazing thing about Bartholomew is his low profile. We are not even sure who he was. Early sources suggest his full name was Nathanael bar (son of) Tolmai (later, Bartholomew) the Nathanael who was the friend of Philip and who questioned, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth" (John 1:46).

There is a suggestion that Bartholomew wrote a gospel, but this writing has not survived. Often, Parishioners in Alstonville have heard the story of his grizzly death by being skinned alive although there is no confirmation that this story is true.

Bartholomew represents a quiet alternative to the more visible and vocal public witnesses often associated with the apostles. Sam Portaro, an Episcopal Priest asks *"Is it purely by accident that Bartholomew is overshadowed? Is it merely that*

*his contributions, like so many, were lost for lack of archival care or scattered in subsequent upheavals? Were his contributions intentionally destroyed by jealous or rival factions of the kind that divided the post-resurrection community into separate cohorts of loyalty to Peter or Paul or Apollos? Was Bartholomew one of those persons who actually did very little, who only went along for the ride, so to speak? Or was Bartholomew the thoughtful one, prone to process his faith internally and intellectually, without a big fuss?"*

We realize that often in the background there are meditative and thoughtful people who go about serving others in a quiet and unassuming way.

More than anything, we owe our Christian faith to the multitude of anonymous scholars and scribes who wrote, tended, and translated the story of Jesus. It's a blessing for us to be connected with Nathanael bar Tolmai who Jesus greeted saying "Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!" (John 1:47)



# Pentecost 12

## 9am Liturgy

### 23rd August 2020

## Welcome and acknowledgment of country

### Sentence of the Day

Martha said, 'Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world.' John 11.27

### Opening Song

#### Let all creation dance

1. Let all creation dance  
in energies sublime,  
as order turns with chance,  
unfolding space and time,  
for nature's art  
in glory grows,  
and newly shows  
God's mind and heart.

2. God's breath each force  
unfurls,  
igniting from a spark  
expanding starry swirls,  
with whirlpools dense and dark.  
Though moon and sun  
seem mindless things,  
each orbit sings:  
'Your will be done.'

3. Our own amazing earth,  
with sunlight, cloud and storms  
and life's abundant growth  
in lovely shapes and forms,  
is made for praise,  
a fragile whole,  
and from its soul  
heaven's music plays.

4. Lift heart and soul and voice:  
in Christ all praises meet  
and nature shall rejoice  
as all is made complete.  
In hope be strong,  
all life befriend  
and kindly tend  
creation's song.

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### Reading

#### Matthew 16:13-20

<sup>13</sup> Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" <sup>14</sup> And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." <sup>15</sup> He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" <sup>16</sup> Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." <sup>17</sup> And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. <sup>18</sup> And I tell

you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. <sup>19</sup> I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." <sup>20</sup> Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

## Sermon

### Intercessory Prayers

In peace we pray to you, Lord God.

Silence

For all people in their daily life and work;

**For our families, friends, and neighbours,  
and for all those who are alone.**

For this community, our country, and the world;

**For all who work for justice, freedom, and peace.**

For the just and proper use of your creation;

**For the victims of hunger, fear, injustice, and oppression.**

For all who are in danger, sorrow, or any kind of trouble;

**For those who minister to the sick, the friendless, and needy.**

For the peace and unity of the Church of God;

**For all who proclaim the gospel, and all who seek the truth.**

For Murray Harvey our bishop, and for all bishops and other ministers;

**For all who serve God in the Church.**

For our own needs and those of others.

Silence.

**Hear us, Lord.**

For your mercy is great.

### Final Song

**Come down O love divine**

1. Come down, O Love divine,  
seek out this soul of mine,  
and visit it  
with your own ardour glowing;  
O Comforter, draw near,  
within my heart appear  
and kindle it,  
your holy flame bestowing.

2. There let it freely burn,  
till earthly passions turn  
to dust and ashes,  
in its heat consuming;  
and let your glorious light  
shine ever on my sight  
and clothe me round,  
the while my path illuming.

3. Let holy charity  
my outward garment be,  
and lowliness become my inner  
clothing:  
true lowliness of heart,  
which takes the humbler part

and for its own shortcomings weeps with loathing.

4. And so the yearning strong with which the soul will long shall far outpass the power of human telling; for none can guess its grace till we become the place in which the Holy Spirit makes his dwelling.

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## Sermon Notes (for Matthew 15:21-28)

**1. In the Parables etc, what view did the early followers of Jesus understand when the word 'devil' was used? What is today's understanding of "devil" in contemporary theology?**

**2. Angels: their place in scripture, their place in our lives today.**

### Bible

The word for "angel" is from the Greek *angelos* meaning



messenger or the *Hebrew malak Yahweh* transliterates a messenger of the Lord.

In the Old Testament when the word "angel" is used it often denotes simply that a messenger. Sometimes the messenger is a heavenly being. In this case the "angel" is God appearing in human form. The idea here is that no one can see God and live, thus God creates a visible form in which to meet with people. Only later did the idea develop that angels were beings separate from God.

Cherubim and seraphim were winged angels, often with animal faces, glowing with fire that are an aspect of Israel's culture background incorporated into religion. The main function of cherubim and seraphim is to sing God's praises. Thus, for us today, the cherubim and seraphim are symbols that remind or invite us to worship God with our whole lives. Seraphim is from the Hebrew seraph meaning burning brightly with fire. Here again is an invitation applicable today: that we are so close to God's presence through prayer and worship that we allow God's love to shine through everything we do.

The word for "devil" is the Hebrew language is *ha satan* meaning an accuser. The word

satan is someone's job description rather than their name. Job 1.6 describes an angel whose job it was to evaluate virtue through accusing Job of not being holy.

Another occasion when reference is made to ha satan is 1 Chronicles 21:6-7; 27:24: "A satan rose up against Israel, and he incited David to take a census of Israel". Here again this is an opponent or an agitator who offers an alternative view.

Another reference that is used to describe "a devil" is Isaiah. Isaiah 14.12 speaks of a carrier of light (a lucifer) being thrown into an abyss because of pride. In the context of Isaiah, however, the image of the morning star (a lucifer or light carrier) being thrown to earth could likely have referred to the demise of the Canaanite religion. Later of course it becomes a reference for the devil, but this idea seems superimposed by later interpreters. Jesus referred to Isaiah 14 when he said to his disciples "I saw Satan fall like lightning from the sky" (Luke 10.18). While some suggest that this is Satan, the devil, others argue that Jesus is announcing the end of judgement and accusation and the beginning of the era of grace.

The above is an all too brief

survey that shows that the Old Testament does not offer any concrete evidence for belief in "The Devil" as a monstrous entity opposing God and damaging humans. Note that in Genesis 3, the serpent that speaks to Eve is just that - a talking serpent, not a demon and not "The Devil".



By the time we reach the New Testament it is clear that there is a belief in "The Devil" and demons. The devil is the leader of evil who opposes God and therefore opposes Jesus. Jesus cast out demons and at times even dialogued with them. For example, Luke 4:35: "But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be quiet and come out of him!" And when the demon had thrown him down in the midst of the people, he came out of him without doing him any harm." Christians are also warned to expect opposition from demonic forces or the devil; James 4.7 instructs "Resist the devil and he will flee from you." Clearly some development took place at the end of the Old Testament and before the beginning of the New Testament that concretised a belief in the devil and demons.

The intertestamental period between the end of the Old Testament and before the

beginning of the New Testament was marked by conflict, oppression, and division for the Jewish people. The Hebrews suffered oppression from the Babylonians, the Medes, the Persians, the Jewish elite, and the Romans. Through the experience of suffering and exposure to other religions through war with Persians, Medes, Greeks, and Romans, the idea of the devil developed to explain the cause of suffering. In painting a picture of who the devil was the Jewish people adopted and adapted aspects of the gods from the cultures that oppressed them.

### **Tradition**

Church tradition as expressed in its catechism, liturgies and hymns, continues the New Testament belief in the devil. The Devil is explained as a fallen angel who now leads forces of demons responsible for the evil we find in the world. Perhaps one of the clearest representations of the traditional church's belief in Satan (the devil) is the Baptismal liturgy: "Do you renounce Satan and all evil? I renounce all that evil. Almighty God deliver you from the powers of darkness and lead you in the light of Christ to his everlasting kingdom. Amen." (A Prayer Book for Australia p. 56).

### **Reason**

The questions ask **What is today's understanding of "devil" in contemporary theology and Angels: their place in scripture, their place in our lives today?** In thinking of your own answer to the question it is helpful to be aware of how different our world view is in comparison to Jesus and the early Christian writers. Charles Taylor's *A Secular Age* (Harvard University Press, 2007) tracks what we already know; that the enchanted worldview of the early disciples took as self-evident the existence of a spiritual universe where everyone without exception believed in God or gods, demons and angels. This is in direct contrast to our highly secularised, disenchanted worldview where, at best, belief in God is optional and marginal. Our disenchanted, secularised world view anticipates scientific evidence as answers to questions we might have. Thus many modern scholars explain that Jesus and the early Christian writers need to be read and interpreted within their own context: namely that it is natural for first century people to ascribe illness and suffering to the work of demons and the devil. Moreover, the belief in paranormal entities such as demons and angels is greatly influenced by other cultures. For example,

Beelzebub or Lord of the flies is both a Philistine god and a variation of Baal, a god venerated by early Canaanites with whom the Hebrews came into contact. Our modern discoveries would give medical explanations for much of what Jesus, the early disciples and Christian writers experienced. For example, Luke 9.8-42 describes a boy suffering from epilepsy "a spirit seizes him, and he suddenly cries out. It convulses him so that he foams at the mouth, and shatters him, and will hardly leave him." Or Matthew 8.32 describes possible psychosis or schizophrenia: "When he arrived at the other side in the region of the Gadarenes, two demon possessed men coming from the tombs met him. They were so violent that no one could pass that way."

While an over-rationalised, materialist, disenchanted, scientific explanation for the belief in a spiritual realm may be appropriate in an academic setting, pastoral ministry with its various, inexplicable encounters, makes such a view difficult to maintain. The experience of Spirit and also of evil is real, although more "liquid" or diffused, not with the medieval imagination that reduces spiritual realities to animation cartoons. Thus, while some scholars rationalise that angels, demons, and the devil are

aspects of a premodern worldview, other highly regarded scholars such as Walter Wink offer an alternative: "I will argue that the "principalities and powers" are the inner and outer aspects of any given manifestation of power... As the inner aspect they are the spirituality of institutions, the within of corporate structures and systems, the inner essence of outer organisations of power. As the outer aspect they are the political systems, appointed officials, the chair if an organisation, laws – in short all the tangible manifestations power takes. Every Power tends to have a visible pole, an outer form—be it a church, a nation, or an economy—and an invisible pole, an inner spirit or driving force that animates, legitimates, and regulates its physical manifestation in the world." (in 1983/09/01:5 in *Naming the Powers*).

In summary, in determining your answer to the questions about the devil and angels, it is likely that your view would be situated on a spectrum of belief between non-belief on the extreme left and a belief that angels and demons exist in physical form on the extreme right. My own view is situated in the middle where I acknowledge the reality of spirit but suggest with Walter Wink that it does not take on a physical form



that can be photographed or drawn/depicted. Wherever you find yourself on the spectrum, angels and demons are not an article of faith. Nor does such a belief affect a good relationship with God and others. We can also know that a good God created a good universe, that Jesus has conquered all evil and that the Spirit that is in us was confirmed at our baptism – we are all sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked by Christ: “Christ claims you for his own. Receive the sign of the cross” (Baptism Liturgy).

## Housekeeping

**Our notices are organized under our mission goals.**

## Worship & Spirituality

### St Peter and St Paul's Tregagle

St Peter and St Paul's will recommence services from 30th August at 10am.

### Prayer

Monday morning prayer where we pray for our church and the community will recommence in the church 7th September at 10am. You are welcome to pray with Rev Desiree at St Bartholomew's or join in prayer from home.

## Leadership

A Clergy Rendezvous will be held on Monday 31st August from 10am—2pm. We are studying 'Holy Envy' by Barbara Brown Taylor.

## Good Governance Safe Ministry

To comply with our church / state regulations, John NOBLE (our Safe Ministry officer) will be completing a 6 month review - by 15th Sept. If YOU have recently completed any training (eg. First Aid certificate, Working with Children certificate, Criminal Records Check etc), please let John know (email : [jnoble2477@gmail.com](mailto:jnoble2477@gmail.com)) AND provide a copy of those certificates to our office. THANKS for being part of our team, demonstrating to our community that Alstonville Anglicans making positive efforts to provide a "safe place for all".

### Staff Leave

Anne Wareing will be on leave until the 7th September. Please contact Jo or Rev Desiree in her absence.

## Pastoral Care

If you are aware of anyone who needs or would appreciate

Pastoral Care of ANY type (home communion, visits, meals, contact) please contact Lynne Watt on 66286751 or the office. Our Pastoral Care Team is here to care for you, but can only do so when we know.

[publicity@friendslrbg.com.au](mailto:publicity@friendslrbg.com.au)  
Gold coin donation appreciated for all walks. Wear sturdy shoes and hat.  
Books and cards for sale. Native Rainforest Plants for sale at the Plant Nursery

**Lismore Rainforest Botanic Gardens - Open Day**  
**Sunday 30 August - 9.30am to 1,00pm**

313 Wyrallah Road, East Lismore (next to Waste Management Facility)

\*Bookings essential for all guided Walks by 28 August -



**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
	Life Groups Chaplain	
	The Reverend Greg Ezzy	0412 660 742
Parish Office:	The Ministry Centre, 8 The Avenue, Alstonville	
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website:	anglicans.live	
<b>The Anglican Op Shop</b> 1 The Avenue, Alstonville Tel: 6628 8777		

**Sharing the Good Life**

We acknowledge the Bundjalung people,  
traditional custodians of the Land.  
Our doors are open: LGBTQIA+ welcome here.  
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COVID COMING  
OUT PARTY

MESSY  
CHURCH IS  
BACK

Sunday 23rd August 4pm



Alstonville  
Anglicans

8 The Avenue

A stylized white hand with a thick black outline, making a peace sign gesture (two fingers up, thumb tucked). The hand is positioned in the upper right quadrant of the page, with its arm curving downwards and to the left, passing behind a white banner.

**PEACE OFF!**

Join us as we

A white, horizontal banner with a rough, torn-edge texture, containing the text 'PEACE OFF!' in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

**PEACE OFF!**

to other lands in our noble  
quest for peace.  
Our Messy Church will follow  
COVID safe plans to keep  
everyone well