



Alstonville Anglicans

Pentecost 20

Sunday 23rd October 2022

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

Bank account: BSB 705 077 / Acc:00032931

Dates 23rd October to 23rd October

23 rd Oct	Sunday
9am	Holy Communion
4pm	Messy Church
24 th Oct	Monday
9am-12pm	Parish Office Open
9am-3pm	Op Shop
25 th Oct	Tuesday
	Parish Office Closed (No office access)
4pm	Singalong group (contact Susan)
26 th Oct	Wednesday
9am-12pm	Parish Office Open
9am	Anam Cara (contact Charlie)
9am-3pm	Op Shop
27 th Oct	Thursday
9am-12pm	Parish Office Open
9am-3pm	Op Shop
6pm	Anam Cara (contact Charlie)
28 th Oct	Friday
9am-12pm	Parish Office Open
10am	Holy Communion
30 th Oct	Sunday
9am	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.

https://anglicans.live/s/welcomeBooklet_v2.pdf

Community Engagemnet



Sylvia Hannah's family wish to thank everyone at Alstonville Anglicans for their kind thoughts, prayers and written and spoken condolences. Thank you especially to all those who planned and worked to give her a special farewell and to all her friends who came and said goodbye.

This is Sylvia's wish for her many friends

*May God's blessing surround you each day,
As you trust Him and walk in His way.
May His presence within guard and keep you from sin;
Go in peace, go in joy, go in love.*

Prayers

Clair Benstead would like to thank everyone for their expressions and acts of love and support and prayers during this recent time of grief, when her grandson Eli Rose was tragically killed in an accident with a truck. Please continue to uphold Eli's parents, Warren and Melanie, in prayer.

A.R.E.A. Fundraiser

A Sausage Sizzle at Ballina Bunnings on Saturday 22nd October. Five volunteers from the Anglican community are needed from 1-4pm. A jobs sheet is available. Please contact John Noble 0414 285 132 if you are able to help out.

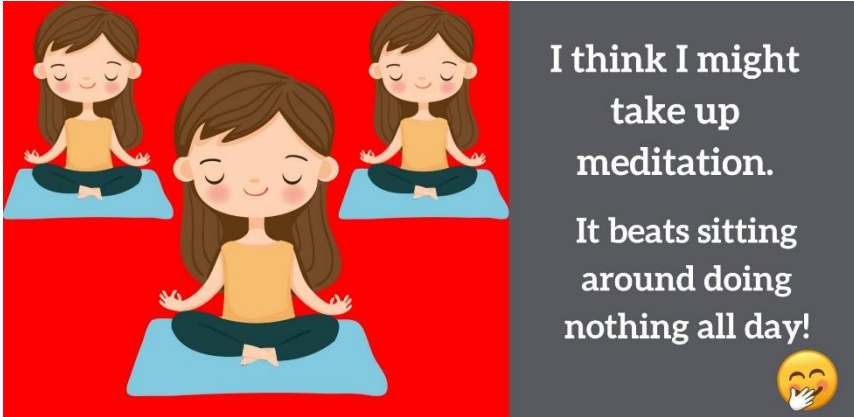
Ballina Region for Refugees Fundraiser

This fundraiser will assist with the settlement of refugees in the Ballina and Byron Shires.

Saturday 12th November
Tintenbar Hall, Tintenbar 2487
\$25 or \$20 for BR4R members

<https://events.humanitix.com/swing-with-acid-bleed-a-ballina-region-for-refugees-fundraiser-8ldi2c2m>

To make you smile!



Quota Alstonville's Creative Christmas Tree event

Sat / Sun 26th & 27th November

10am – 3pm

Alstonville Community Centre

All proceeds to local charities.

Our Messy Church families will be creating an entry.

Worship & Spirituality

Messy Church

Messy Church is on Sunday 23rd October at 4pm. This is family focused ministry that includes craft, games and a shared meal. Our Parish has an extraordinarily talented, creative and motivated team. Could you please help spread the word and let your family, friends and neighbours know what we have to offer our community. This month the families will be creating fun pot plants with faces made out of recycled milk bottles. We will then use these pots to create a Christmas tree to enter into the Quota Christmas Tree competition. We have chicken wraps for dinner. Fun, fun and more fun! Let's spread the word!

Which one is the face of Christmas?

Come and Face Off with Christmas!

Messy Church
(Family focused with craft and games)

Sunday 23rd October
at 4pm

Shared family friendly dinner
PS Dinner free for first timers!!

Alstonville Anglicans
6 The Avenue
Alstonville
anglicans.live

Can Christmas GROW on you?

Sermon Notes

Preached on 16th October

Luke 18.1-8

The Persistent Widow

Today's gospel reading, the so-called parable of the Persistent Widow, occurs near the end of Jesus' journey to Jerusalem and immediately follows his teaching about the coming of God's kingdom. Despite the shift to the topic of prayer, the eschatological thread of the previous passage is sustained. In brief, it offers the imperative of persistently and actively relying on God, even in the face of insufferable injustice.



The parable itself focuses on a widow dealing with a judge in a corrupt judicial system. The widow repeatedly approaches the judge in pursuit of justice to no avail, and, the judge, equally persistently, ignores her pleas. The judge ignores the law and the prophets, which unambiguously include provisions to ensure that widows,

orphans, the poor, and resident aliens do not become victims of exploitation.ⁱ

Jesus' audience, would have found the judge's lack of action particularly scandalous. Notably, however, this widow strongly resists such exploitation.

Like other widows before her, such as Tamar, Ruth and Naomi (not to mention other heroines throughout history), Luke's widow takes matters into her own hands. And her persistence in pressing for justice is such that the judge characterizes her actions as those of a boxer.ⁱⁱ In the original Greek, the judge comes to fear that the widow will give him a black eye (*hypopiazō*)ⁱⁱⁱ, a boxing metaphor. And let us note that Paul uses exactly the same word when he writes, "so I do not run aimlessly, nor do I box as though beating air."^{iv}

English translations quench the humour Luke has infused into this scene; a humour which pokes fun at the powers that be, "lamprooning and upending the unjust system stacked against widows, orphans, immigrants."^v The equivalent of modern-day political cartoons, which use humour and satire to make their point.

The conclusion of the parable touches on the character of God and the nature of faith. "God is ... not like this reluctantly responsive judge. If anything, God is more like the widow in her own relentless commitment to justice."^{vi}

OK. That was the nuts-and-bolts bit; but there are many rabbit holes to explore.

Last week, Desiree reminded us that in-between-spaces are spaces of transformation. And if you have ever been down a rabbit hole, you would know that it is chock full of them. More like the mythical labyrinth built for King Minos of Crete by Daedalus, the mythical Greek inventor, architect, and

sculptor. Daedalus became a symbol of wisdom, knowledge and power.

Behold the inner life of an introvert. The rabbit hole I happened upon started with the term “persistent prayer”, thence to meander through Thessalonians, Isaiah, Kings, a Psalm, and finally the Book of Wisdom. Thus:

(Paul)^{vii} Pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances. ... Do not quench the Spirit– (Isaiah)^{viii} A bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice – (1 Kings)^{ix} But the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence – (Psalm 46) ^x Be still and know that I am God.

The thread I followed started with prayer without ceasing and arrived at stillness and silence, with justice neatly book ended in between.

Of course, we encounter silence in everyday life, say, in response to unwelcome news of one sort or another. News of the death of a loved one always renders me silent, as do the associated memories; the silence at the end of a really good concert or play speaks volumes about our collective awe and appreciation; and sometimes we are silent simply because we do not know what to say or do.

The common factor in these kinds of silence is a loss of power.



For example, how do I normalise the knowledge that I’m going to die, or that someone I love is going to die, or that a loved one has died? I cannot. The human trait is to try to “do the right thing” in response to critical moments in order to stop them being critical.

But such attempts to control or domesticate critical situations diminishes our humanity, reinforcing a false self, rather than accessing our true self and beyond. As Rowan Williams^{xi} pointed out, if we wish to develop and grow as human beings, then we must accept moments when we are taken beyond the familiar and the controllable. True humanity welcomes silence as an in-between space, if you like; a space of learning, wisdom and growth.

I often find pearls of wisdom in unlikely places. My latest source is one of the Percy Jackson novels I am currently bingeing on. They were published around ten years ago, so if you have grandchildren, you may know them. In a modern world inhabited by the mythical Greek gods of yore, Hestia, the goddess of the hearth who is responsible for domesticity, the family, the home and the state, says to Percy, "Not all powers are spectacular. Sometimes the hardest power to master is the power of yielding."^{xii}

It is more than profitable then, to yield to the experience of silence that leaves you with nothing to say, "the experience of helplessness about who you are, the experience of death and suffering, or [the] experience of extraordinary depth and beauty," being up against what cannot be mastered and managed. Ultimately, "everybody is silent in the face of the utterly unmanageable, which is God."^{xiii}

As with Jesus when he was silent before Pilate, our silence becomes a place in the world where the mystery of God is present. We literally become a place where the mystery of God happens.

"Good liturgy is about silence."^{xiv} Increasingly, the church at large has felt a kind of anxiety about silence; an urge to fill up the apparent void elicited by silence; to clutter up the beauty of liturgy with needless activity. You have only to

listen to a monastic community singing the compline service to appreciate the value of silent spaces in liturgy. Like white spaces in the printed word, silent spaces in the liturgy reveal depths of meaning otherwise unremarked.

A lot of liturgical reform is a response to this discomfort with silence. Trim it; it's too long. It's difficult; so we must explain it. I don't understand it; so we must simplify it. But in doing so much of our church has lost sight of the ways in which the slow pace and the carefully chosen word, however mysterious, have their own integrity and their own effect.

Again, to quote Williams, "Coming out of liturgy and saying, 'Did I do that?' is a perfectly proper experience. Something happens that nobody in particular has done." And I am delighted to say that that is a frequent experience of mine in this place.



Somewhere, Thomas Berry remarked that our own interior life began when the universe began, that we are further elaborations of a spirituality that was there from the beginning. So, I conclude with the last place of my introverted rabbit hole meanderings – a little bit of Wisdom.

For while gentle silence enveloped all things, and night in its swift course was now half gone, your all-powerful word leapt from heaven ... ^{xv}

Sentence of the Day

Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it. Luke 18.17

Collect

O God,
who alone can probe the depths of the heart,
you hear the prayer of the humble
and justify the repentant sinner:
grant us the gift of humility,
that, seeing our own faults clearly,
we may refrain from judging our neighbour
but rely solely upon your saving grace.
We make our prayer through your Son, our Saviour,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Luke 18.9-14

⁹ Jesus told a story to some people who were sure they were right with God. They looked down on everyone else. ¹⁰ He said to them, "Two men went up to the temple to pray. One was a Pharisee. The other was a tax collector. ¹¹ The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed. 'God, I thank you that I am not like other people,' he said. 'I am not like robbers or those who do other evil things. I am not like those who commit adultery. I am not even like this tax collector. ¹² I fast twice a week. And I give a tenth of all I get.' ¹³ "But the tax collector stood farther away than the Pharisee. He would not even look up to heaven. He brought his hand to his heart and prayed. He said, 'God, have mercy on me. I am a sinner.' ¹⁴ "I tell you, the tax collector went home accepted by God. But not the Pharisee. All those who lift themselves up will be made humble. And those who make themselves humble will be lifted up."

ⁱ For example, Exodus 22:21-25; 23:6-9; Deuteronomy 24:14, 17-18; Isaiah 1:17

ⁱⁱ Brittany Wilson *op cit*

ⁱⁱⁱ the verb *hypopiazō* (ὕπωπιάζω) literally means “to give a black eye”.

^{iv} 1 Corinthians 9.26

^v F. Scott Spencer *Salty Wives, Spirited Mothers, and Savvy Widows: Capable Women of Purpose and Persistence in Luke’s Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 292-93.

^{vi} *Op cit* Brittany Wilson

^{vii} 1 Thessalonians 5.17-19

^{viii} Isaiah 42.3

^{ix} 1 Kings 19.11-13

^x Psalm 46.10

^{xi} Rowan Williams “Encounter in the Face of Mystery: God is the Encounter we cannot Control”, see <https://www.christiancentury.org/article/critical-essay/silence-face-mystery>

^{xii} Rick Riordan *Percy Jackson and the Last Olympian* (Penguin Random House/ UK 2018) p92

^{xiii} *Op cit* Rowan Williams

^{xiv} *Ibid*

^{xv} Wisdom 18.14,15a

Values

What follows are the best words that we are able to offer, to describe what we love best about Alstonville Anglicans. When you come to us and when we go to you, this is what we are thinking and feeling.

Beloved:

each person comes into the world as an original blessing from God. Thus, each person is a beloved person: significant, wanted and loved.

Belonging:

anyone who wants to belong already belongs. We want to welcome each other as a gift, saying, "my greatest difference from you is my greatest gift to you". Community matters and is protected. We want to consciously enjoy each other hearing "the Christ in me sees the Christ in you."

Being:

we are human beings not human doings. Our being present is important. The Spirit of God vibrates within us "like a pure diamond, blazing with the invisible light of heaven."

Believing:

we are partners with God in living heaven on earth now. We want to be one call among many, offering a provocative but compassionate voice calling for a whole new way of thinking and believing that is loving, liberating and life-giving.

Blessing:

as beloved original blessings, we are blessed to be a blessing to others. God is always on God's way through us to creation, of which humans are a part. We believe everyone is called, that everyone has something beautiful to do for God. We want to be the sort of beloved community that creates space for people to express their calling.