



Alstonville
Anglicans

Sunday 24th December 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

Bank account: BSB 705 077 / Acc:00032931

24th December – 31st December

24 th December	9am	Sunday Holy Communion
	5pm	Lost Sheep Family Christmas Service
	11pm	Carols & Communion
25 th December		Monday Christmas Day Holy Communion
	9am	Tuesday Boxing Day
26 th December		Wednesday
27 th December		Parish Office Closed
28 th December		Thursday
	9am-12pm	Parish Office Closed
	9am-3pm	Op Shop Closed
29 th December		Friday
	9am-12pm	Parish Office Closed
	10am	No Friday Service
31 st December		Sunday
	9am	Holy Communion
5 th January 2024	10am	Friday Holy Communion
10 th January 2024		Wednesday
	9am-3pm	Op Shop Reopens
5 th February		Monday
	9am-12pm	Office Reopens

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](#)

AGM 2024

The 2024 AGM will be held on Sunday 18th February. If you are responsible for submitting reports for inclusion in the Annual Report please forward them to office@anglicans.live by the 15th of January.

Christmas Closures

Parish Office 22nd December – Reopens 5th February 2024
Op Shop 22nd December – Reopens 10th January 2024

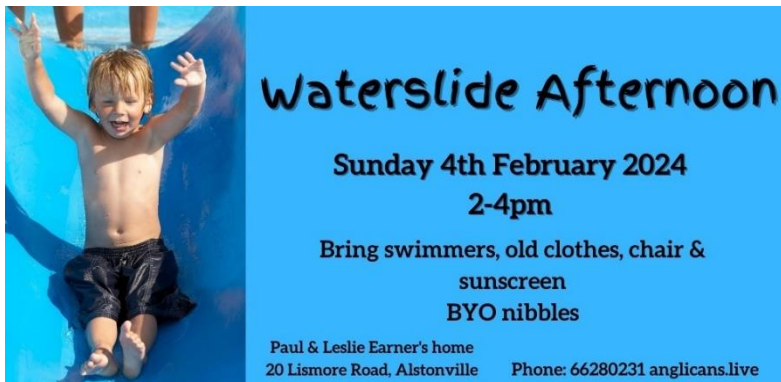
Anam Cara

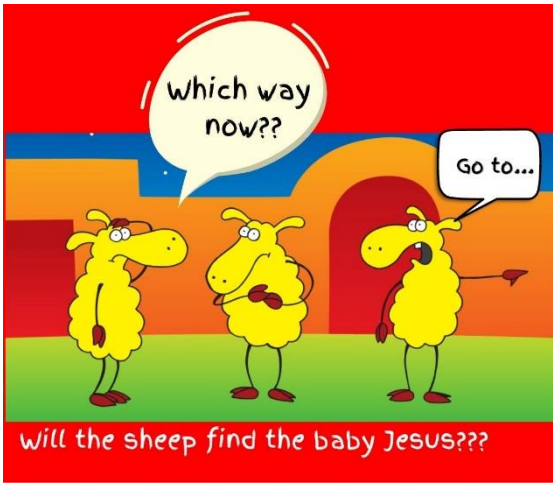
Anam Cara on Wednesdays 9am and Thursdays 6pm is now in recess. Recommencing Wednesday 7th February 9am and Thursday 8th February 6pm.

Bulletin

This is the last bulletin until February 2024.

To Make you Smile





Lost Sheep Family Christmas Service

Alstonville Anglicans
Saturday 24th Dec
5pm



6 The Avenue
Alstonville
anglicans.live



From our family to yours COME AS ...YOU

24 Dec 5PM
FAMILY SERVICE

24 Dec 11PM
CAROLS & COMMUNION

25 Dec 9AM
CHRISTMAS SERVICE



anglicans.live

Sermon Notes Sunday 17th December Desiree Snyman Based on John 1

Many of you are aware that I play bagpipes. Most marches for the pipes are structured in what we call two bar phrasing. There is a call and a response such that the first two bar phrase asks a question and the second two bar phrase replies.



When we read the prologue of John's Gospel (1.1 to 1.28) we notice how the great cosmic hymn that sings about the wisdom of God is interrupted by the story of John the Baptist. John 1.1-5 begins with great poetry and there is musicality in the style.

Verse 6 barges in: "there was a man whose name is John." The text is matter of fact and clunky, it contrasts the flowing energy of the previous verses. I compare the structure of the opening chapter to the two-bar phrasing of music for bagpipes. The great wisdom hymn (John 1.1-5) is the first two bar phrase asking a question. The introduction of John (John 1.6-8) is the second two bar phrase giving a response.

Focusing only on the first part of chapter a of John's Gospel (1.1-5) may encourage a platonic spirituality. The beauty of the Word that was in the beginning, the Word that was with God and was God and through whom all things came into being lulls you into an otherworldly overly spiritual experience, looking for a God separate from the mess of human civilisation, a God "up there". Instead, the introduction of John lands you square into the heart of reality with a hard bump (John 1.6-8).

I suggest that there is a message in this structure of John's prologue. The way the great hymn of the universe is intercalated with the story of John the Baptist tells us that the Universal Story of God's Love is intercalated with our personal stories. The message is that our own finite time-bound stories are swept up within the Infinite, Divine, Timeless story. Although the Word gives birth to us, we also give birth to the word too. Jesus is the Word, but John comes as a word about the Word. There is a generous mutuality in God. God's eternal loving energy radiates the Logos into the universe. The Word makes its home within us, among us. Now creation is so close to the Creator she can be kissed by the Divine Wisdom or Logos, or by the Holy Spirit, who give us access to the Invisible Infinite Fierce Creative Love that is

always looking for a new place, a new temple, to pitch its tent and to call home.

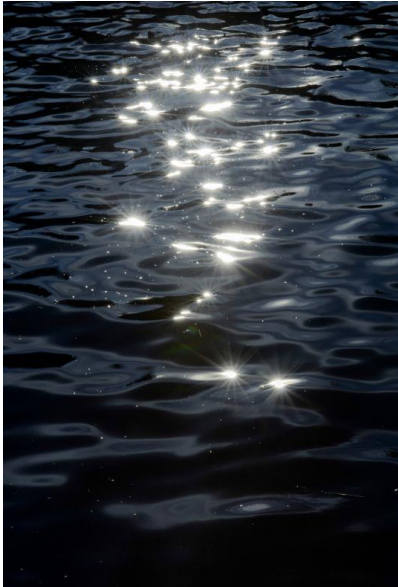
The Word that came into the world is always coming into the world moment by moment. If we had eyes to see we would realise that the kingdom of God is already unfolding within our midst, within the horror of any crises we face. The intercalation of our story within the divine cosmic story explicates that the kingdom of God has already arrived. There at the heart of reality is love and light and goodness deeper than anything that may separate us from love. There is nothing left for us to do but to surrender and become part of the kingdom, realising our inherent unity in God and with each other.

For too long religion and spirituality has separated the world into good and bad, evil and holy, sheep and goats, spiritual and profane. God is thought of up there beyond the world while we are below. Time is separate into holy time and ordinary time. Space is separated into sacred space and secular space. Some representations of Christianity describe how the purpose of life is to be a good person so that when you die you go "up" to heaven. Yet in scripture it is always heaven coming down to us. God's story and John's story interweave, representing the union of the finite with the Infinite, the time-bound with the Timeless Eternal, the earthling with the cosmic Word. Thus, no aspect of life is "un-sacred."

John's prologue, with its cosmic hymn to the Word, interlaced with references to John, represents the New Creation, a marriage of heaven and earth. The cosmic, divine Word dances out with the breath of God and is beheld by a witness, in this case an earthy and human John. If you think about it, John and Jesus have much in common. Both John and Jesus are sent by God. Both testify to the light. Both are children of God.



Perhaps advent is not asking you to **believe** something about Jesus but rather to **see** something about Jesus. We are not being asked just to believe that Jesus is Divine and Human. We are asked to see that all our lives and all of creation shimmer with the divine. We find the good the true and the beautiful in all things. This is our core identity, our core task.



If the Word became flesh and dwelt among us then God is baptised, immersed into the details of materiality. God has become one of us. This means that our everyday lives have eternal significance. Matter matters to God. It matters what we think, what we do to our bodies, our earth, what we do with our emotions, our angers, and our hurts: will we be transmitters of our pain or transformers? All that we long for is already present. All that we hope for has already arrived, but

it is not yet complete because we are the evolution of Christ. We are the fullness of Christ. As Theresa of Avila stated: "Christ has no body now but yours. No hands, no feet on earth but yours. Yours are the eyes through which he looks compassion on this world. Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good. Yours are the hands through which he blesses all the world. Yours are the hands, yours are the feet, yours are the eyes, you are his body. Christ has no body now on earth but yours."

Sentence of the Day

This child will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High. He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end. Luke 1.32–33

Collect

Gracious God,
whose eternal Word took flesh among us
when Mary placed her life at the service of your will:
prepare our hearts for his coming again
and keep us steadfast in hope,
that we may be ready for the coming of his kingdom;
for his sake, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Luke 1:26-38

²⁶ In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you.' ²⁹ But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰ The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. ³¹ And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³² He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³ He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.' ³⁴ Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' ³⁵ The angel said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. ³⁶ And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. ³⁷ For nothing will be impossible with God.' ³⁸ Then Mary said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.' Then the angel departed from her.