



Alstonville  
Anglicans

**Ninth Sunday of Pentecost**

**Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> July 2021**



## **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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## Liturgy for 25<sup>th</sup> July

### Sentence of the Day

'I am the living bread that came down from heaven,' says the Lord. 'Whoever eats of this bread will live for ever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.'  
John 6.51

### Collect

Gracious God,  
you have placed within the hearts of all your children  
a longing for your word and a hunger for your truth:  
grant that, believing in the one whom you have sent,  
we may know him to be the true bread of heaven  
and the food of eternal life, Jesus Christ our Lord,  
to whom with you and the Holy Spirit  
be glory and honour for ever and ever. Amen.

### Readings

#### **John 6:1–21**

<sup>1</sup> After this Jesus went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, also called the Sea of Tiberias. <sup>2</sup> A large crowd kept following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing for the sick. <sup>3</sup> Jesus went up the mountain and sat down there with his disciples. <sup>4</sup> Now the Passover, the festival of the Jews, was near. <sup>5</sup> When he looked up and saw a large crowd coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?" <sup>6</sup> He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do. <sup>7</sup> Philip answered him, "Six months' wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little." <sup>8</sup> One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, <sup>9</sup> "There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish.

But what are they among so many people?" <sup>10</sup> Jesus said, "Make the people sit down." Now there was a great deal of grass in the place; so they sat down, about five thousand in all. <sup>11</sup> Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted. <sup>12</sup> When they were satisfied, he told his disciples, "Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost."

<sup>13</sup> So they gathered them up, and from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten, they filled twelve baskets. <sup>14</sup> When the people saw the sign that he had done, they began to say, "This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world." <sup>15</sup> When Jesus realized that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, he withdrew again to the mountain by himself.

<sup>16</sup> When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, <sup>17</sup> got into a boat, and started across the sea to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. <sup>18</sup> The sea became rough because a strong wind was blowing. <sup>19</sup> When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat, and they were terrified. <sup>20</sup> But he said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid." <sup>21</sup> Then they wanted to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the land toward which they were going.



Image by 3282700 from Pixabay

## Messages

### Worship & Spirituality

#### Messy Church

Messy Church today!  
Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> July 4pm



#### Family Ministry Meeting

Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> July 11am in the  
Meeting Room



## Anam Cara Earth Vigil

The Anam Cara group are organising an Earth Vigil Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> September 8am – 8pm. You are invited to a **planning meeting** on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> July 2pm in the Meeting Room.

## Messy Life?! Church

Remember Messy Life?! Church  
Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> August 5pm

### Profits and prophets

- Prophets specialise in connecting cause and consequence.
- According to biblical prophets there is a direct relationship between the health of the most vulnerable of society (repeatedly symbolised in the “vulnerable trinity” of orphans, widows and foreigners) and the health of society at large.
- To neglect the vulnerable is to cause societal collapse.

Join us for Messy Life Church?!  
1 August 5pm

# Anam Cara

Wednesday 9am and Thursday 6pm



## LOVE AS ENERGY

*In the spirit of  
Teilhard*

1 X 15ML LAVENDER  
1 X 15ML BLENDED BODY OIL  
LINK TO A RECORDED VERSION OF JUNE 27TH  
REFLECTION DAY

The Oils are used as an  
intimate part of the  
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email [kellietancred@gmail.com](mailto:kellietancred@gmail.com)  
mobile 0411 704 955

We recently held a Quiet Day, 'Love as Energy' In the Spirit of Teilhard facilitated by Kellie Tancred. Kellie is offering these products to assist with your home practice.

## Pastoral Care portfolio

### Family Crosses

On Sunday 25 July, the Family Cross is being given to Carolyn Cocks.



### Pastoral visits Remember!



If you or anyone you know is ill or in hospital, please let the office or Lynne Watt our Pastoral Care Coordinator know. Also, if you do visit anyone could you email Lynne? [wattlg@bigpond.com](mailto:wattlg@bigpond.com).

## Mothers Union

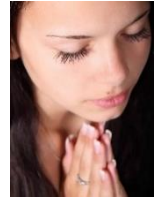
Meetings are 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of each month.

Contact [joyce@stephanies.com.au](mailto:joyce@stephanies.com.au) .

## Prayers

This week we remember in our prayers the

- Cocks Family
- Vidal Family



## Good Governance portfolio

### Current COVID Restrictions NSW Government

- You are encouraged to use QR code check in whenever possible as per Government Regulations.
- No singing by congregation.
- Masks to be worn.
- Hand sanitisation, good ventilation and recording of names.
- Limit of 1 per 4 square metre ie. maximum of 36 in St Bartholomew's and 65 in the Ministry Centre.

These restrictions remain in place until further notice. Watch this space! COVID Committee

## Safety on the Internet

It has been brought to our attention that a scam using the Rev'd Desiree Snyman's name has been sent to our parishioners asking for gift cards.

1. Desiree will NEVER ask for money in an unofficial manner and NEVER through iTunes cards or gif cards.
2. Please report any such scams to <https://www.scamwatch.gov.au/report-a-scam>
3. We use the best online protection available and have a contract with a company that helps us protect you and ourselves.
4. We suggest the following websites to help you stay safe online.

**<https://esafety.gov.au/>**

Free courses on everything from how to access the internet, using your device and keeping in touch with others online:

**<https://beconnected.esafety.gov.au/>**

## Ministry and leadership

### Worship Team members



We are looking for people to assist on the Worship team on a Sunday: welcomers, readers and people to help with morning tea. Please contact Helen Nicholson [helen22nic@gmail.com](mailto:helen22nic@gmail.com) if you are able to assist.

**Synod 2021** has been postponed due to the current COVID situation.



## Community Engagement

### A.R.E.A

If you have not yet received your receipt for your donations to AREA (during the financial year), you can collect your letter at our church office. THANK YOU for your continuing financial support for Bruce Fleming at our High School. John Noble AREA Hon Treasurer.



### Sew Helpful Craft Group

Sew Helpful meet the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Mondays of each month at 1pm in the Ministry Centre. Everybody welcome.

## Sermon notes on Mark 6.30-34, 53-56

### for Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> July

Jeremiah 23.1-6, Psalm 23, Mark 6.30-34, 53-56

My cello teacher has a way asking me what seems, a first sight , to be a simple question. "What are you thinking when you ...?" The question could refer to my bow hold, or how I draw it across the strings, or what my left hand is doing, or what are my fingers doing when they encounter the strings. Provocative! And informing. What I am thinking, what my mood happens to be, or what my state of mind is at any given moment, how I am sitting – all feed into the quality of the sound my darling cello produces.



That sound accurately portrays something about my state of being. I mean Being with a capital B.

The possibilities provoked by this mode of questioning are endless. The question, "What do you think about when ...", is a valuable entry into profound reflection.

What do you think about when you enter the church, when you sit, perhaps, in a moment of silent preparation prior to enjoining the mysteries of our faith? And if you think about God, what are you thinking? What do you think about when you take the host into your hand?

Long before he was a saint or bishop, the 4<sup>th</sup> century Cyril of Jerusalem said

In approaching ... make your left hand a throne for the right, as for that which is to receive a King. ... [and] after having carefully hallowed your eyes by the touch of the holy body, partake of it ... <sup>1</sup>

A practice to which many of us still adhere. But what are you thinking as you do that? And what are we doing when we hallow our eyes. We hold God in the palms of our hands, both literally and metaphorically. That is the nature of sacrament. Impossibly possible.

Richard Kearney suggests that "one of the most telling ways in which the infinite comes to be experienced and imagined by

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<sup>1</sup> St Cyril of Jerusalem, Catechetical Lecture 23.21 see CHURCH FATHERS/ Catechetical Lecture 23 (Cyril of Jerusalem).webarchive

finite minds is as *possibility* – that is, as *the ability to be.*” That is a curious phrase to adopt for God. But Kearney does not offer us some recently discovered ‘Master Word by which we might unlock the ancient Secret of divine nature.’<sup>2</sup> Rather it is a kind of poetic conjecture with which to exercise our spiritual muscles.



Many scriptural passages inform us that what is impossible for us is possible for God. John’s prologue tells us that our ability to become sons of God in the Kingdom is made possible by God: ‘Light shone in the darkness and to all who received it was given the possibility (*dunamis*) to become sons of God.’ Here, it is crucial for us to keep in mind that the Greek term *dunamis* translates as either power or possibility, a device of semantic ambivalence that is similar to John’s use of the Greek *pneuma* which translates as either wind or spirit.

And the Gospels are full of metaphors, images, parables and symbols deployed to communicate the eschatological promise in which the “God of small things,”<sup>3</sup> is vibrantly active. Yeast in flour, pearl of great price, mustard seed growing into the largest tree in the world (poetic licence) in which the birds of the sky can roost, and, of course, an infant. Big things grow from little things, minute things.

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<sup>2</sup> Richard Kearney “Re-imagining God” in John D Caputo and Michael J Scanlon Eds. *Transcendence and Beyond: A Postmodern Enquiry* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press 2007) pp51-65

<sup>3</sup> *The God of Small Things* is the title pf Arundhati Roy’s wonderful novel



The little things are imbued with possibility, a possibility only realised when some other agency cooperates. The baker crafts the dough, the pearl is sold at market, the farmer plants the mustard seed and nurtures its growth, the mother nurtures the infant from the

very genesis of conception, the cellist plays the cello. There is, as it were, a gift exchange, the mystery of growth, between the human agent and the little thing.

Christ became a little thing, 'the least of these,' when he emptied himself of absolute power (*kenosis*) echoing Isaiah's striking phrase, 'a bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice.' (Isaiah 42.1-4) Gospel also hath it that the Judgement of the Kingdom is related to how we respond in history, here and now, to 'least of these, *elakhistōn* (Matthew 25.40).

Which brings us to the paradox that although the Kingdom *has already come* – and is "incarnate here and now in the loving gestures of Christ and all those who give, or receive, a cup of water – it still remains a possibility *yet to come*." 'As "eternal," the kingdom transcends all chronologies of time.' Christ indicated this when he said, 'before Abraham was, I am.' John (8.58) 'In short, the Kingdom is (1) already there as historical possibility, and (2) *not yet there* as historically realised kingdom "come on earth."'"<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Kearney op cit p 53

Now, I am taking merciless short cuts here, but I am steering towards the idea that creation may be depicted as an endless giving of possibility.

Shortly before her death in Auschwitz, Dutch born Etty Hillesum wrote:

You God cannot help us but we must help you and defend your dwelling place inside us to the last.<sup>5</sup>

Centuries before her, Nicholas of Cusa (1404-1464), inter alia, declared that "God is all he is able to be,"<sup>6</sup> a phrase that needs unpacking. Kearney's words.

Unlike the God of metaphysical omnipotence, ... which seeks to justify evil as part of the divine will, ... [the] notion of God as an "abling to be" (*posse* or *possest*) points in a radically different direction. ... Since God is all good, God is not able to be non-God – that is, ... defective or evil. In other words, God is *not* omnipotent in the traditional metaphysical sense<sup>7</sup> ... The Divine is not some being able to be all good *and* evil things. That is why God could not help Etty Hillesum and other victims of the Holocaust: God is not responsible for evil. And Hillesum understood this all too well when she turned the old hierarchies on their head and declared that it is *we* who must help God to be God. ...

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<sup>5</sup> Etty Hillesum *An Interrupted Life* (New York: Owl, 1966) p 176

<sup>6</sup> Nicholas of Cusa *Dialogos de Possest*, in J. Hopkins *A Concise Introduction to the Philosophy of Nicholas of Cusa* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press 1978) p69. The original Latin is: *Deus est omne id quod esse potest.*

<sup>7</sup> As understood by Leibnitz and Hegel

If Hillesum and others like her had not let God be God by defending the divine dwelling place of *caritas* within them, even in the most hellish moments of the death-camps, there would have been no measure of love – albeit as small as a mustard seed – to defy the hate of the Gestapo.<sup>8</sup>

Many figures in literature echo this way of thinking about God, that the possible God relies on human beings to become God.

The immortal Rainer Maria Rilke, in his *Letters to a Young Poet*, wrote:

Why don't you think of Him [God] as the one who is coming, one who has been approaching from all eternity; the one who will someday arrive, the ultimate fruit of a tree whose leaves we are? What keeps you from projecting His birth into the ages that are coming into existence, and living your life as a painful and lovely day in the history of a great pregnancy? Don't you see how everything that happens is again and again a new beginning, and couldn't it be *His* [God's] beginning, since, in itself, starting is always so beautiful?

If He is the most perfect one, must not what is less perfect *precede* him, so that he can choose himself out of fullness and superabundance? – Must not *He* be the last one, so that He can include everything in himself, and what meaning would we have if He whom we are longing for has already existed? As bees gather honey, so we collect what is sweetest out of all things and build Him.

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<sup>8</sup> Kearney op cit p 69

So, as Evelyn Underhill wrote,

I COME in the little things,  
Saith the Lord:  
Not borne on morning wings  
Of majesty, but I have set My Feet  
Amidst the delicate and bladed wheat  
That springs triumphant in the furrowed  
sod.  
There do I dwell, in weakness and in power;  
Not broken or divided, saith our God!  
In your strait garden plot I come to flower:  
About your porch My Vine  
Meek, fruitful, doth entwine;  
Waits, at the threshold, Love's appointed  
hour.<sup>9</sup>



Doug Bannerman © 2021

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<sup>9</sup> From the poem *Immanence*, by Evelyn Underhill, Nicholson & Lee, eds. *The Oxford Book of English Mystical Verse* 1917

# ANGLICAN PARISH OF ALSTONVILLE

Ministers	all the baptised!	
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	The Reverend Doug Bannerman	0418 182 450
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## The Anglican Op Shop

1 The Avenue, Alstonville **Tel:** 6628 8777

### Dates 25<sup>th</sup> July to 1<sup>st</sup> August

25 <sup>th</sup> July	Sunday 9am Holy Communion Sunday 10am St Peter & St Paul's Tregagle Sunday 4pm Messy Church
26 <sup>th</sup> July	Monday 10am Anam Cara Praying for You Parish Office open 9am-12pm Op Shop 9am-3pm
27 <sup>th</sup> July	Tuesday Parish Office closed
28 <sup>th</sup> July	Wednesday 9am Anam Cara Parish Office open 9am-12pm Op Shop 9am-3pm Family Ministry Meeting 11am Anam Cara Earth Vigil Planning Meeting 2pm
29 <sup>th</sup> July	Parish Office open 9am-12pm Op Shop 9am-3pm Play Place 9.30am-11.30am Thursday 6pm Anam Cara
30 <sup>th</sup> July	Friday 10am Holy Communion Parish Office open 9am-12pm
1 <sup>st</sup> August	Sunday 9am Holy Communion Sunday 5pm Messy Life?! Church