



Alstonville
Anglicans

Sunday 25th October 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

Memorial Moment



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

Questions

A Grief Observed 1961 (Faber and Faber) journals CS Lewis harrowing journey through grief. The death of his wife left him disgusted with platitudes in sympathy cards he called “pitiabile cant”, cant is a synonym for blather or drivel. When he tries to pray for his wife,

“bewilderment and amazement come over me. I have a ghastly sense of unreality, of speaking into a vacuum about a nonentity... Apparently the faith—I thought it faith—which enables me to pray for the dead has seemed strong only because I have never really cared, not desperately, whether they existed or not.”

Jessica Mesman is a widely published writer whose work has been noted in *Best American Essays*, writes: “The rubber has met the road, and he (CS Lewis) has found that all the theology in his world cannot fix a blown out tire.” (Source: <https://www.americamagazine.org/arts-culture/2019/04/24>).

It is so human to feel viciously angry at God when touched by grief. Yet when we learn from loss, we may come to learn that the dead are our closest neighbours who are still with us, although in a different way that what we are used to. Wisdom comes from journeying deeper into grief, if we are not embittered by our loss. Whether we believe in God or not, God is always present to us, helping us to listen and learn from our fear, our sadness, our dread, our loss and loneliness.

By Desiree Snyman

Liturgy for 25th October

Sentence of the Day

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment.

And a second is like it: you shall love your neighbour as yourself. On

these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Matthew 22.37–40

Opening Song

1. *Pull back the veil on the dawn of creation;
Vanish the mists from the sources of time;
Echo the bird that broods over the waters;
Singing the secret of grace in its prime.*

*Love's the secret! Love's the secret!
Love is God's risk and God's reason,
God's rule and God's rhyme,
And God's rhyme.*

2. *Pull back the curtain on Bethlehem's stable;
Strip off the tinsel and peer through the dark;
Look at the child who's a threat yet in danger,
Homeless and helpless he first makes his mark.*

*Love's the secret! Love's the secret!
Love is God's cradle and God's table,
God's cup and God's ark,
And God's ark.*

3. *Pull back the veil on each parable's story,
Be it of virgins or talents forlorn;
Find in the kernel a core of compassion,
Planted in minds yet in flesh to be born.*

*Love's the secret! Love's the secret!
Love is God's madness, God's sadness,
God's feast and God's corn,
And God's corn.*

4. *Pull back the curtain that hides what is holy;
Tear it in two as Christ did from the hill;
See at the centre of Good and bad Friday
Something no mob or marauder can kill.*

*Love's the secret! Love's the secret!
Love is god's way and God's witness,
God's worth and God's will,
And God's will.*

5. *Pull back the stone that conceals what is buried;
Pull back the veil and the curtain of doom;
Pull back the centuries' doubts and delusions,
Look through the mystery into the tomb.*

*Love's the secret! Love's the secret!
Love is surprising, Gods rising,
God's wealth and God's womb,
And God's womb.*

Readings

Matthew 22:34-46

³⁴ When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, ³⁵ and one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. ³⁶ “Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” ³⁷ He said to him, “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’” ³⁸ This is the greatest and first commandment. ³⁹ And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself.’ ⁴⁰ On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” ⁴¹ Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them this question: ⁴² “What do you think of the Messiah?[a] Whose son is he?” They said to him, “The son of David.” ⁴³ He said to them, “How is it then that David by the Spirit[b] calls him Lord, saying,

⁴⁴ “The Lord said to my Lord,
“Sit at my right hand,
until I put your enemies under your feet””?

⁴⁵ If David thus calls him Lord, how can he be his son?” ⁴⁶ No one was able to give him an answer, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions.

Closing Song

1. Help us accept each other
As Christ accepted us
Teach us as sister brother
Each person to embrace
Be present Lord among us
And bring us to believe
We are ourselves accepted
And meant to love and live
2. Teach us O Lord Your lessons
As in our daily life
We struggle to be human
And search for hope and faith
Teach us to care for people
For all - not just for some
To love them as we find them
Or as they may become
3. Let Your acceptance change us
So that we may be moved
In living situations
To do the truth in love
To practise Your acceptance
Until we know by heart
The table of forgiveness
And laughter's healing art
4. Lord for today's encounters
With all who are in need
Who hunger for acceptance
For justice and for bread
We need new eyes for seeing
New hands for holding on

Renew us with Your Spirit
Lord free us make us one

CCLI Song # 3609613 Brian Hoare | Fred Kaan © Words: 1975 Stainer & Bell Ltd Reproduced with permission CCLI#12035

Reflection

A reflection on

Matthew 22:15-22:

Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor, or not?

“No one,” wrote Raj Nadella, “would have expected the Pharisees and the Herodians to come together on the issue of taxation.”¹ The Pharisaic movement strongly opposed the Roman empire whereas the Herodians benefitted from their active association with it.

This strange alliance sought to entrap Jesus by devious questioning, a characteristic of the so called “controversy stories” in Matthew. The Greek word Matthew used,² connotes ensnaring someone in their own words; and we can note in passing that the question is framed as a closed question requiring a yes or no answer, something contemporary QCs are very good at. Any direct answer like “yes” or “no” to the question would either defy Caesar, or offend those who were resisting Rome. Either way, Jesus would appear to foot-fault himself.

The Pharisees were well versed in negotiating with the Roman Empire even as they opposed its rule; whilst the Herodians were often in bed with Rome in order to further their political and economic interests. So, to imply in their question that Jesus was either collaborating with or defying the empire was blatant hypocrisy.

Jesus knew their game from many similar encounters in the past. And he asked them to show him a coin of the realm. The image and inscription thereon identified who controlled the economy. Everyone, even the temple, traded in that economy because they had no other choice. Consequently, they were legally obliged to pay tax. And Jesus certainly did not intend to encourage those at the margins to defy the empire and jeopardize their lives.

You may recall that, prior to this, Matthew tells us that the collectors of the temple tax ask Peter if his teacher pays the temple tax. Peter replies that Jesus did indeed pay the temple tax.³ However, this particular tax, the *fiscus Judaicus*, was imposed on all Jews after the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE, 40 or 50 years after Jesus' lifetime. This tax was a punishment of all Jews for the Jewish Rebellion, and was used to rebuild and maintain the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus in Rome, thus asserting that Jupiter claimed power superior to the Jewish God; a somewhat studied insult. So, this particular vignette of Matthew's was directed at his post 70 CE audience.

Peter, too, was liable to pay the tax, and at the conclusion of the story Jesus says to Peter, "... so that we do not give offense to them, go to the sea and cast a hook; catch the first fish that comes up ; and when you open its mouth, you will find a coin; take that and give it to them for you and me." In turn, Jesus has claimed that God will pay their taxes – a sideways swipe at the rich and powerful who could easily afford it, and at the Roman God Jupiter, who seemed to need a cash boost from a Jewish God.

That story is echoed in today's gospel. "Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor ... ?" Significantly, Jesus' reply highlights the other, theological, dimension of this question. "Give therefore to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to God the things that are God's".⁴

So, this little drama to do with the payment of taxes poses yet further questions to God's followers. "What are the mechanisms—the coinage—we need to put in place in order to transform the current reality and bring about a different reality that would be more acceptable to God?"⁵

Perforce, we have to pay taxes, and in a true democracy, if there be such a thing, one would do so willingly for the good of the community. Warren Carter⁶ noted that an imperial tax can be paid without the payment being a vote of support for Rome or its ethos. And, the coinage of God's realm is not the same as Caesar's. God's realm is one of love, not coercion; it is a realm of community and all that implies.

Grace, sharing, care for others, negotiation, consensus, solidarity, willingness. These are the currencies of God's realm.

As Desiree pointed out last week, this currency is given full expression in the Beatitudes, which value wholeness, transformation and healing for Godly communities. Raj Nadella suggests that these values are also the means to challenge oppression, including the oppression arising from unfair and biased taxation.

Jesus' social programme was, in Richard Rohr's words, "a quiet refusal to participate in almost all external power structures or domination systems", ⁷ and he avoided the monetary system as much as possible by using a common purse.⁸ His three-year ministry offered free healing and health care for all. He treated women with a dignity and equality that was almost unknown in an entirely patriarchal culture. He welcomed the alien, the refugee and the enslaved as legitimate members of the human race.

Now; I am indebted to Robyn Hannah, firstly for a most illuminating conversation last week, about simplicity, and secondly for drawing my attention to Richard Rohr's Daily Meditations last week.

Rohr has been discussing the question "What do we do with evil?",⁹ focussing on what Paul called powers, principalities and thrones,¹⁰ what we call corporations, institutions, nation-states, and what Walter Wink called "the domination system"; AKA the meritocracy, people

and organisations that have a stranglehold on power and wealth¹¹ - summed up by Rohr as

... corporate evils ... [that] ... have risen to sanctified, romanticized, and idealized necessities that are saluted, glorified, and celebrated in big pay checks, golden parachutes, parades, songs, rewards for loyalty, flags, marches, medals, and monuments.

When the systems of “the world” are able to operate as denied and disguised evil, says Rohr, they do immense damage for which they are not held accountable.

And herein lies a stark and scary contrast between corporate sin and individual sin. Rohr’s thesis is that we should pursue, and convict, evil in its organizational form – not in its adherents.

Jesus always forgave individual sin, whereas, in contrast, he is not once recorded as forgiving the sin of systems, institutions and empires. What he did was to make them show themselves and name themselves,¹² lamenting over city states like Bethsaida, Chorazin and Jerusalem, which harboured such systems of control and oppression.¹³ Matthew records that it was Capernaum that would be “cast into hell”.¹⁴ These represented the powers and principalities of which Paul wrote.

So, I return to God’s currency. Love, as Don Black and Charles Hart

wrote, can sometimes be a most unwelcome guest. Jesus, during his ministry, challenged much wrongdoing with impunity, but within a week of taking on the principalities and powers, he was killed. Empire and religion conspired, in a social contract, to murder him. He is finally a full victim of the systems he refused to worship.

We, my friends, are gripped by a similar and evil social contract with those principalities of which we are barely aware, and which we seem powerless to oppose. The evidence of their destructive nature is all around us. There is not one single facet of our lives that is untouched. And, as we sleep and dream of good things, the juggernaut of big business, corrupted government practices, off shore trading and the like, continues along its path toward global destruction, literally.

Richard Flanagan's new novel, *The Living Sea of Waking Dreams*, has been described as a "wrenching response to a devastated world".¹⁵ This "tale of ecological anguish ... understands the textures of silence: what is unsaid, unsayable and unheard." It bespeaks "a fearful evasion of love's most intimate and painful obligations."

Let us pray that we can cease that evasion in our own lives.

Footnotes: 1 Raj Nadella, Samuel A. Cartledge Associate Professor of New Testament; Director of MA(TS) Program Columbia Theological Seminary Columbia, Ga. See https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=4624 2 Greek pagideusosin - παγιδεύσωσιν, 3 Matthew 17.24-27; 4 Matthew 22.21; 5 Op cit Raj Nadella 6 2.Warren Carter, *Matthew and the Margins: A Socio-Political Reading*, (Orbis Books: Maryknoll, NY 2000) 439; 7 Jesus' Social Programme, Richard Rohr's Daily Meditation, Thursday 15 October 2020 8 See John 12:6; 13:29; 9 Richard Rohr's Daily Meditations, 11-17 October 2020; 10 See Colossians 1:16; 11 Walter Wink *Engaging Powers: Discernment and Resistance in a world of Domination* (Augsberg Fortress: 1992); 12 As did Desmond Tutu in South Africa and Martin Luther King in the United States of America; 13 Matthew 11.21, Luke 13.34, 35; 14 Matthew 11:23; 15 Beejay Silcox, *The Guardian*, Fri 16 Oct 2020 03.30 AEDT

Worship & Spirituality

St Peter & St Paul's

The next service will be Sunday 8th 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).



Memorial Sunday

Today, Sunday October 25, 9am.



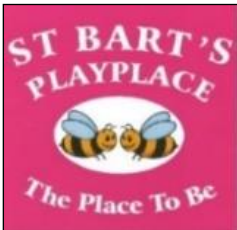
During the service, we will be encouraged to remember loved ones. **Through music, words, and rituals we remember** and honour friends and family who have died. **Come.** Everyone is warmly welcomed and safely held as you respect your loved ones who have died.

Today, Sunday October 25, 4pm



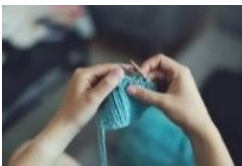
Invite your family friends and neighbours to **Messy Church Halloween** 25 October 4pm.

Community Engagement



Play Place

Has resumed meeting on Thursdays at 9.30am and runs each week during School Terms. A fun time of friendship, stories, music, craft and playing, with a break for morning tea and a cuppa for parents and carers.



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!



Live Streaming Technician

We are seeking people who would like to be technicians to assist this ministry. Please talk to Rev Desiree or Robyn Hannah.

Finance

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

Parish Provider these are the details: **BSB: 705 077 / Acc: 00032931**
Cheques can be posted to PO Box 451 Alstonville 2477.

Good Governance

Church Mowing Roster



We are now in process of preparing the roster for the next year. This year we have “lost” two members of our team, so we are looking for two (or maybe more) new volunteers to maintain our seven teams. Typically, each team has three turns at mowing and edging each year.



Please give your names to Barry on 6628 3089 as soon as possible to enable the preparation of the next roster.

We need more chairs with arms...




Do you have any wooden or metal chairs with arms, in good condition, that you no longer need or use, or would be willing to “long term loan” to us while we continue to meet in the Ministry Centre?

We have noticed some of our older parishioners are struggling now that they don't have a pew in front of them to assist them when standing up. If you can help, please contact Carol Vidal on 0427 326 832.

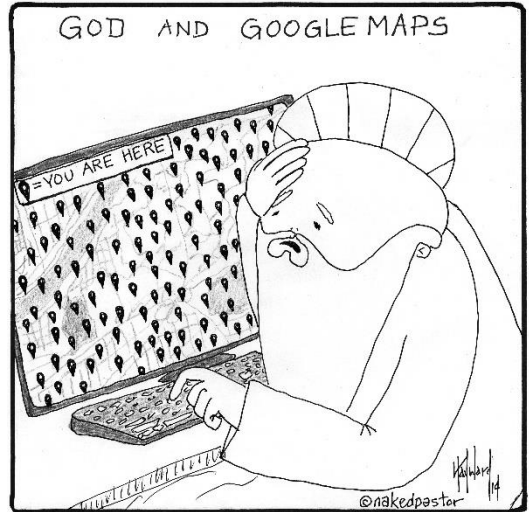



Present
Pretty Cool Pumpkins



Join the fun at 8 the Avenue Alstonville

October 25 2020 4pm



ANGLICAN PARISH OF ALSTONVILLE

Ministers	all the baptised!	
Rector	The Reverend Dr Desiree Snyman	0402 764 969
	priest@anglicans.live	
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	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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