



Alstonville
Anglicans

Pentecost 17 on Sunday 27th September 2020

This week...

- 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



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

Leadership and Natural Resources



Watching the media at the moment it seems leaders can't do anything right. And the leaders themselves are vying for top position, power and influence. In our Exodus reading for this week you could say Moses is having a Dan Andrews moment. People questioning his leadership.

Whether it's Koala's, water sources, energy sources, freedom of movement, our pay check or in the case of Jesus, spiritual and moral authority, it seems leadership has to deal with a shrill outcry if people feel fearful or if they feel the status quo is being challenged and therefore their sense of security or authority.

In short we don't like being uncomfortable in any way at all and some feel this more than others. Jesus makes the point it's those who have the **least** to lose who trust the visionary leader the most. Those who have the **most** to lose are the **first** to try and find a way to undermine the visionary leader. Following a 'vision' is uncomfortable, even scary for those of us with the most to lose.

Moses had water issues. So do we! According to the CSIRO our Rainfall has been dropping 10mm near the coast to 50mm further inland every 10 years and is projected to continue to do so. Drying trends and water scarcity issues are affecting large areas of Australia (and the world). Water has been identified as a catalyst in areas experiencing national and civil conflict, according to Australian Defence Analysts. The underlying cause is Greenhouse Emissions and the resulting Global Warming.

There are Jesus figures and Moses figures, trying to lead us to do something about Climate Change, and the underlying causes. However, fear and denial seem to rule the day.

Who will we support and follow?

Liturgy for 27th September

Sentence of the Day

Come, let us return to the Lord, that we may live before him.
Hosea 6.1a, 2b

Opening Song

1. For the beauty of the earth,
for the beauty of the skies,
for the love which from our birth
over and around us lies,
*Christ, our God, to you we raise
this our sacrifice of praise.*

2. For the beauty of each hour
of the day and of the night,
hill and vale, and tree and flower,
sun and moon and stars of light,
*Christ, our God, to you we raise
this our sacrifice of praise.*

3. For the joy of ear and eye,
for the heart and mind's delight,
for the mystic harmony
linking sense to sound and sight,
*Christ, our God, to you we raise
this our sacrifice of praise.*

4. For the joy of human love,
brother, sister, parent, child,
friends on earth and friends above,
for all gentle thoughts and mild,
*Christ, our God, to you we raise
this our sacrifice of praise.*

5. For each perfect gift divine
to our race so freely given,
graces all of your design,
flowers of earth and buds of heaven,
*Christ, our God, to you we raise
this our sacrifice of praise.*

6. For the church that evermore,
lifting holy hands above,
offers up on every shore
the pure sacrifice of love,
*Christ, our God, to you we raise
this our sacrifice of praise.*

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Readings

Exodus 17:1-7

¹ From the wilderness of Sin the whole congregation of the Israelites journeyed by stages, as the LORD commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. ² The people quarreled with Moses, and said, "Give us water to drink." Moses said to them, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the LORD?" ³ But the people thirsted there for water; and the people complained against Moses and said, "Why did you bring us out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and livestock with thirst?" ⁴ So Moses cried out to the LORD, "What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me." ⁵ The LORD said to Moses, "Go on ahead of the people, and take some of the elders of Israel with you; take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. ⁶ I will be standing there in front of you on the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it, so that the people may drink." Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. ⁷ He called the place Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites quarreled and tested the LORD, saying, "Is the LORD among us or not?"



Matthew 21:23-32

²³ When he entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching, and said, "By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?" ²⁴ Jesus said to them, "I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these

things. ²⁵ Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?" And they argued with one another, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say to us, 'Why then did you not believe him?'" ²⁶ But if we say, 'Of human origin,' we are afraid of the crowd; for all regard John as a prophet." ²⁷ So they answered Jesus, "We do not know." And he said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things. ²⁸ "What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today.' ²⁹ He answered, 'I will not'; but later he changed his mind and went. ³⁰ The father went to the second and said the same; and he answered, 'I go, sir'; but he did not go. ³¹ Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. ³² For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him.

Prayers

Season of Creation 2020 Prayer

Creator of Life,

At Your word, the Earth brought forth plants yielding seed and trees of every kind bearing fruit. The rivers, mountains, minerals, seas, and forests sustained life. The eyes of all looked to You to satisfy the needs of every living thing. And throughout time the Earth has sustained life. Through the planetary cycles of days and seasons, renewal, and growth, you open your hand to give creatures our food in the proper time.

In your Wisdom, you granted a Sabbath; a blessed time to rest in gratitude for all that you have given; a time to liberate ourselves from vicious consumption; a time to allow the land and all creatures to rest from the burden of production. But these days our living

pushes the planet beyond its limits. Our demands for growth, and our never-ending cycle of production and consumption are exhausting our world. The forests are leached, the topsoil erodes, the fields fail, the deserts advance, the seas acidify, the storms intensify. We have not allowed the land to observe her Sabbath, and the Earth is struggling to be renewed.

During this Season of Creation, we ask you to grant us courage to observe a Sabbath for our planet. Strengthen us with the faith to trust in your providence. Inspire us with the creativity to share what we have been given. Teach us to be satisfied with enough. And as we proclaim a Jubilee for the Earth, send Your Holy Spirit to renew the face of creation.

In the name of the One who came to proclaim good news to all creation, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Final Song

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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Reflection

Matthew 20:1-16 Australia takes from the Poor to give to the Rich

Intro

Isabel Allende is at the top of my list of favourite authors. In "*Sum of our Days*" she summarises her son's threefold philosophy that he applies to all relationships:

- it isn't personal,
- everyone is responsible for his or her own emotions and
- life isn't fair so don't expect it to be.

In contrast Isabel writes that the angst that ruins her poise is because

- she takes everything personally,
- feels responsible for the feelings of others, even complete strangers, and
- cannot and will not reconcile herself with the fact life isn't fair.

It's not fair. Is this your reaction to the parable? It's not fair? The conventional interpretation of the parable is that of allegory, that God the vineyard owner is generous. This parable stresses the lavishness of God's grace and our inability to earn favour with God. We, like the workers, are reprimanded for grumbling "it's not fair" and urged to imitate the generosity of God. I wholeheartedly disagree with this interpretation.

The text and the text's context

Here are some observations about the text:

The immediate context for the parable is the rich young ruler asking what he needs to do to inherit eternal life.



Jesus says in Matthew 19:

If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth. Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly I tell you; it is hard for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of

heaven. Again, I tell you; it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God."

The parable of the vineyard workers occurs after Jesus' formal accusation on wealth. Wine is a luxury product. The owner is likely one of the rich elites, not a subsistence farmer. The idea that the owner represents God is hardly likely when Jesus chooses solidarity with the poor and warns of the dangers of wealth.

Usually the owner would send a supervisor to hire workers, yet here the owner hires workers himself; why, we are not told. It appears that he either doesn't know what he is doing or is stingy, wanting to get away with the least number of workers, because he returns to town three times to hire workers for what appears to be a bumper crop.

I imagine that for an Australian reader of the parable, the scene is unfamiliar. In Australia it is not often that you can just employ someone off the street. Workers need the correct visas, insurance must be covered, registration with the ATO is necessary, super is compulsory etc. In contrast, "piece workers", were something that Marius and I grew up with. Usually at traffic intersections, the unemployed would line the roads, vulnerable and desperate for work. It is this that colours my imagination as I hear the parable. When the owner approaches workers at the end of the day asking, 'Why are you standing here idle all day?' my blood boils with anger and sympathy. With few exceptions, people want to work, the workers may have appreciated being hired earlier with the first mob. The workers explain, 'Because no one has hired us.' Here victims of social injustice are being blamed for the social injustice. The owner implies that they are lazy.

My reading of the parable is that Jesus evokes debate about justice and economics. This is not a moral story with a spiritual meaning about late believers going to heaven. Spiritualising the parables is a device that we the wealthy use to avoid the cost of discipleship, just like the rich young ruler asking about "buying" eternal life with legal obedience to laws. This is an earthly story with political and economic

significance. The parable is conscience raising, inviting the audience to examine the many ways in which the systems at play oppress them. For us as wealthy readers, the parable scrutinises the ways in which we benefit from the exploitation of others. Jesus' mandate is summarised in the Our Father: may it be on earth as it is in heaven. Heaven is God's transformed future available now. In heaven, work is shared, and wealth is distributed so there is enough for all. Therefore, in the present God's people challenge injustice and work towards restructuring economic policy.



If this parable is about raising our awareness of how labour and economic practices privilege some at the expense of others, it has much to say to our Australian context, especially in relation to tax, Medicare, and welfare.

The text and our context

Kasey Chambers (2018ⁱ) quotes Minister Michaelia Cash who expects "that those who can work should work and our welfare system should be there as a genuine safety net, not as something that people can choose to fund their lifestyle."¹ This is typical of the coalition's narrative. When asked if he could survive on the Newstart allowance; Matthias Cormann dodged the question with the comment "it's a transitional payment"ⁱⁱ. These comments reveal the unstated prejudice on which the coalition operates: "

- Those on Newstart are dole bludgers (a strange and uniquely Australian term)
- "The best welfare is a job"
- Those receiving welfare are a drain the rest of us.

It is simply wrong to assume that the pittance the unemployed and pensioned are expected to survive on is expensive for the budget. The days of Robin Hood are dead and gone. **Nowhere** in our economy do we take from the rich and give to the poor. **Unconscionably, the opposite is true.** We take from the poor to give to the rich.

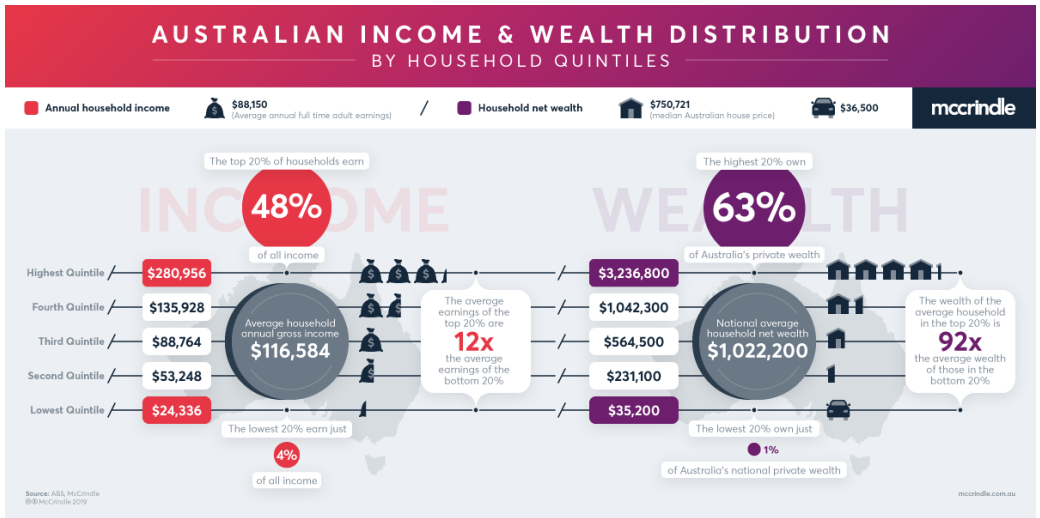
[*The Cost of Privilege \(2018\)*](#) was researched and written by Emma Dawson and Warwick Smith employed by Per Capita. Commissioned by Kasey Chambers CEO of Anglicare, the report proved that **the richest 20% of Australians cost taxpayers over AU \$68 billion per annum. That is around \$37 a week from every worker in the country.** In contrast, assistance provided to people with disabilities cost \$31.721 billion (\$17 a week per worker). In 2018, Newstart (unemployment benefits) cost us \$10.994 billion (\$6 a week per worker).

Continuing the fantasy of a “trickle down” economy is like insisting that the tooth fairy is real. Yet in response to the recession our government has brought forward tax cuts. The Australia Institute states that early tax cuts would be a windfall to high-income earners but an 'ineffective stimulus' for our economyⁱⁱⁱ. The report from the Australia Institute provides modelling of how 91 per cent of the benefit from tax cuts would go to the richest 20 per cent of Australians, with the bottom 50 per cent of earners receiving just 3 per cent of the benefit. The government was urged to increase jobseeker.^{iv}

Concluding comments

Today’s parable of the vineyard workers is the lens through which we ask ourselves the questions: how do we read Scripture? How does scripture read us? Nicholas, Allende’s son is right; life isn’t fair. We can allow the parable to lure us into a debate about justice, as

opposed to fairness, and work as partners with God in mending a hurt and hurting world.



Housekeeping

Our notices are organised under our mission goals.



Office

The office will be closed on the 5th of October 2020

Office hours are Monday, Wednesday
Thursday, Friday 9am to 12pm.

Worship & Spirituality



Friday@10am

Friday@10 will now have a seated morning tea following the service.



Messy Church

The theme for Messy Church today is Creation. The families will be building large sculptures. Thank you to everyone who donated recycled items. Watch this space for updates on the creations!



Prayer

We are praying for you.

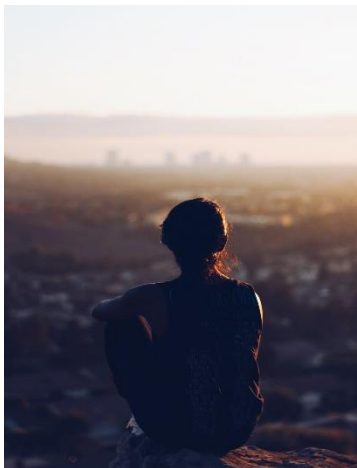
Every Monday 10am

Worship & Spirituality Meeting to co-ordinate the worship at 9am.

This meeting has now been scheduled for
Wednesday 7th Oct 6pm.



Email invitations have been sent to those who need to attend. If you are also interested in attending, please speak to Rev Desiree before the 1st Oct. We will be brainstorming ways of increasing community involvement and planning for Christmas.



Anam Cara

Anam Cara means soul friend. Guided Meditation is offered Wednesdays 9am.

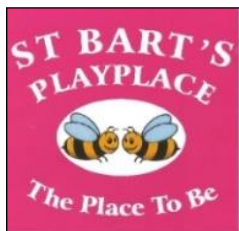
On **Thursdays at 6pm**, an abbreviated compline (prayer at the end of the day) is offered after which we surrender to uninterrupted delicious silence. Arvo Part's Spiegel im Spiegel marks the halfway point of our meditation and blesses us at the end of the hour.

Community Engagement



Sew helpful

Sew helpful will be in recess for the duration of the school holidays.



Play Place

Please note that Play Place will be taking a break for the school holidays. We will be back on the 15th October.



Online Worship engagement

We need a video camera to help us with our live streaming. If you have a camera that you are not using and are happy to lend or give it to us, please let us know.

Vacancy: Live Streaming Production Technician

We are seeking people who would like to be technicians to assist this ministry. Full training and support provided. Please talk to Rev Desiree or Robyn Hannah. At the end of the training you will be highly experienced in videography and well-versed in social media. This role is responsible for growing our capacities in filming events and conducting Live Streams.

- The Live Streaming Production Technician is the go-to person on-site for all live stream videos.
- This role involves ensuring everything is ready to go prior to shooting.
- They assist with sound and lighting, and make sure all the cords are in the right place and out of the way.
- The Live Streaming Production Technician stays on-site throughout the shoot to make sure everything stays in position and steps in when needed.
- Renumeration is \$40 per hour (kidding ... you are paid with gratitude)

Property



Working Bee Help Needed.

Heartfelt thanks to those that came along and helped with the working bee. The grounds look wonderful. Below Ray, one of our new parishioners in the turret.



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 the address above or placed in our locked letterbox. Before 12pm Fridays.

Leadership

Synod is on 26 and 27 September 2020 in Tweed. The reconstruction of the Diocese is on the agenda. Our reps. are Cathi Angus, Mark Stuckey and Desiree Snyman.

Did you know?

Congratulations to the Cowies as they welcome a new granddaughter. Esther Grace was born on the 28th August. Blessings to the family and welcome baby Esther.



Pictured L-R are three of the longest serving volunteers at St Bartholomew's 'Top Shop at the Op-shop' and they are Lorraine Rosolen, Rose Jones & Valmai Cook. Rose (manager of the Top Shop) celebrates her 90th birthday on 4 October 2020. She

is indefatigable, always well-dressed & ready, willing & able to serve as she has done since the inception of the Op-shop in 2001. Sadly

the big-planned party is set aside owing to Covid-19 but optimism reigns-90 Not Out! Heartiest congratulations from all of us at St Bart's & the volunteers at OUR Op-shop!!

ANGLICAN PARISH OF ALSTONVILLE

| | | |
|----------------|--|--------------|
| Ministers | all the baptised! | |
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| | priest@anglicans.live | |
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| | The Reverend Geoff Vidal | 0447 645 456 |
| | Life Groups Chaplain | |
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The Anglican Op Shop 1 The Avenue, Alstonville Tel: 6628 8777

ⁱ Kasey Chambers “Australia takes from the poor to give to the Rich” in The Sydney Morning Herald. <https://www.smh.com.au/national/australia-takes-from-the-poor-to-give-to-the-rich-20180404-p4z7sn.html>. Retrieved 19 September 2020.

ⁱⁱ Finance Minister Mathias Cormann told the ABC’s Sabra Lane that the payment was “transitional” and was only for a “very short period”. From <https://theconversation.com/are-most-people-on-the-newstart-unemployment-benefit-for-a-short-or-long-time-120826>. Retrieved 19 September 2020.

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/sep/07/early-tax-cuts-would-be-windfall-to-high-income-earners-but-ineffective-stimulus-report-says>. Retrieved 19 September 2020.

^{iv} <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/sep/07/early-tax-cuts-would-be-windfall-to-high-income-earners-but-ineffective-stimulus-report-says>. Retrieved 19 September 2020

^v <https://mccrindle.com.au/insights/blog/australias-income-and-wealth-distribution/>



INVITES YOU TO A

RECYCLE RECREATE FEST 2020



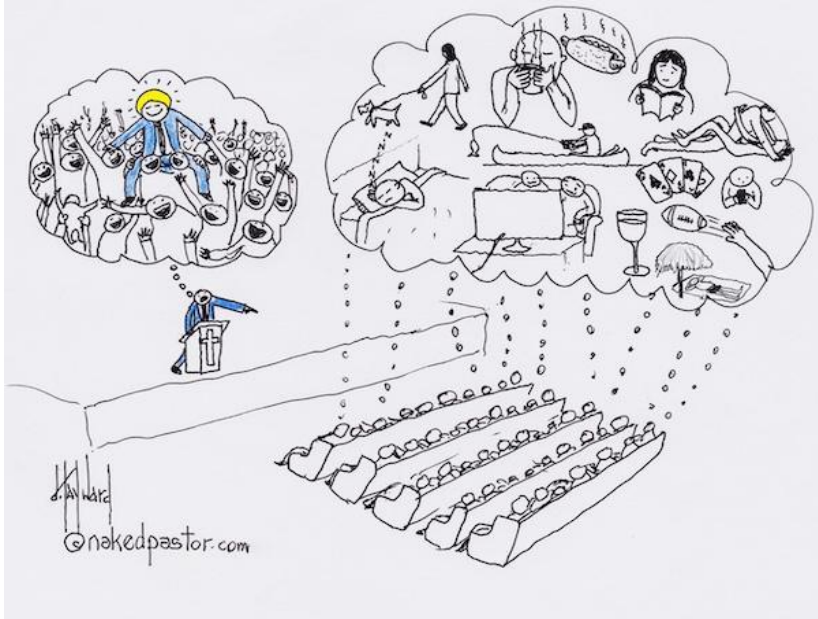
**THE BIGGEST RECYCLING EVENT
IN ALSTONVILLE!**

SEPTEMBER 27TH 4PM AT
ALSTONVILLE ANGLICANS
8 THE AVENUE



Alstonville
Anglicans

What Really Happens During the Sermon



Season of Creation

