

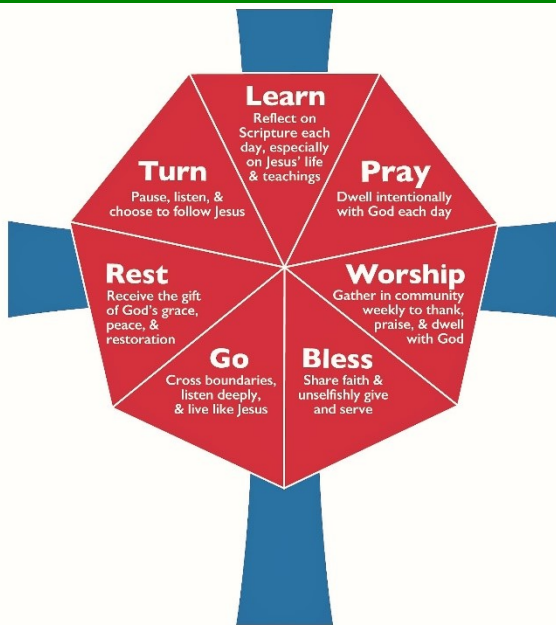


Alstonville
Anglicans

Sunday 29th November 2020 Advent 1

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



THE WAY OF LOVE

Practices for Jesus-Centered Life

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

'The Way of Love'

Invitation for Advent: The way of Love

I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. – Ephesians 3:17-19

The Way of Love is promoted by Presiding Bishop Michael B. Curry (The Most Reverend Michael B. Curry, Primate and Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church).

The Way of Love is not a programme, but a way of life. It seeks to live out the question "how can we deepen our friendship with Jesus Christ at the centre of our lives, so we can bear witness to his way of love in and for the world?"

For centuries Jesus followers have filled the world with love by practising certain disciplines in a rule of life. A rule of life is a pattern for living; **The Way of Love** is an outline of an Anglican based rule of life. **The Way of Love** is deliberately spare and spacious so that individuals and groups can flesh it out in ways that are true to their character.

The Way of Love is about committing to seven practices to allow the power of Christ's love to transform our live and the world.

Turn - Learn - Pray - Worship - Bless - Go – Rest



Turn: Pause, listen, and choose to follow Jesus

Learn: Reflect on scripture each day, especially on Jesus' life and teachings

Pray: Dwell intentionally with God each day

Worship: Gather in community weekly to thank, praise, and dwell with God

Bless: Share faith and unselfishly give and serve

Go: Cross boundaries, listen deeply, and live like Jesus

Rest: Receive the gift of God's grace, peace, and restoration

Through Advent and Christmas we reflect on each of these practices in turn. Notes for each week for personal or group study are provided in the bulletin. Further resources are available on the website.

Your sister in Christ
Desiree

Worship and Spirituality

The Way of Love

for November 29, 2020

First Week of Advent: Saying "Yes" to the Journey

As Advent begins this week, we invite you to orient yourself to the coming of Jesus at Christmas through the practices of *the Way of Love*. This journey begins by saying "yes" to God's call to birth new life into the world—a call that is both powerful and gentle, a call that will, if fully embraced, grow beyond our imaginations, spilling out of ourselves and into our family, friends, community, and the whole world. Over the course of this holy season, we invite you to respond to that call using these daily practices, and encourage you to offer them to your friends, family, and neighbors.

Sunday, November 29

WORSHIP

What word or words from worship today have found a home in your heart? Share these words with a friend or family member.

Monday, November 30

GO

Take time to listen closely to someone you may not ordinarily take seriously or someone with a different perspective than you. Pray that you hear this person as God does.



THE WAY OF LOVE
Practices for Jesus-Centered Life

Tuesday, December 1

LEARN

Read Luke 1:30. What are you afraid of that keeps you from saying “yes” to God?

Wednesday, December 2

PRAY

Set a timer for three minutes. Silently repeat this prayer – “Here I am, God” – until time is up.

Thursday, December 3

BLESS

The angel blessed Mary with the gift of presence. To whom can you give the gift of presence this week?

Friday, December 4

TURN

In giving generously, St. Nicholas turned from a sense of scarcity to a posture of abundance. What do you need to turn from in order to be generous of heart?

Saturday, December 5

REST

From what could you rest in order to receive renewed life? Find that rest today, and do it for as long as you are able.

For more Advent resources related to the Way of Love, visit episcopalchurch.org/wayoflove. There, you'll find links to the full Advent curriculum *Journeying the Way of Love*, as well as *Living the Way of Love in Community*, a nine-session curriculum for use anytime.

Liturgy for 29th November

Sentence of the Day

Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths. Isaiah 2.3a

Opening Song

The heavens shall declare

the glory of his name,
all creation bow
at the coming of the King;
every eye shall see,
every heart will know,
every knee shall bow,
every tongue confess:

Holy, holy,
holy is the Lord;
see the coming of the King;
holy is the Lord.

CCLI Song # 904033 Words © Geoff Bullock *Reproduced with permission*
CCLI Licence # 12035

Readings

Mark 13:24-37

²⁴ "But in those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, ²⁵ and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. ²⁶ Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in clouds' with great power and glory. ²⁷ Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven. ²⁸ "From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. ²⁹ So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. ³⁰ Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. ³¹ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. ³² "But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³³ Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. ³⁴ It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. ³⁵ Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, ³⁶ or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. ³⁷ And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake."

Closing Song

1. Take my life, and let it be

consecrated, Lord, to thee.

Take my moments and my days,

let them flow in ceaseless praise..

2. Take my hands, and let them move
at the impulse of thy love.

Take my feet, and let them be
swift and beautiful for thee.

3. Take my voice, and let me sing
always, only, for my King.

Take my lips, and let them be
filled with messages from thee.

4. Take my silver and my gold,
nothing, Lord, would I withhold.

Take my intellect, and use
every power as thou shalt choose.

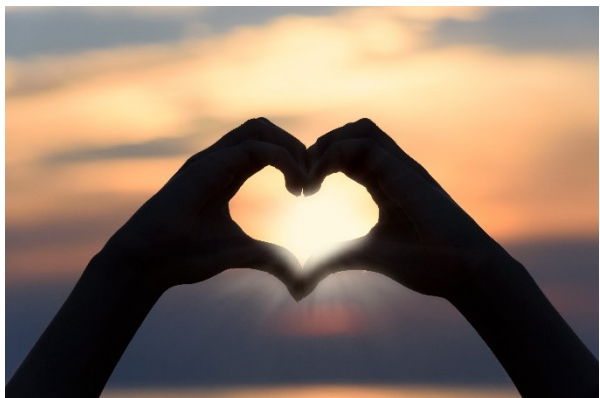
5. Take my will and make it thine;
it shall be no longer mine.

Take my heart, it is thine own;
it shall be thy royal throne.

6. Take my love: my Lord, I pour
at thy feet its treasure-store.

Take myself, and I will be
ever, only, all for
thee.

Words © Frances Ridley Havergal
Reproduced with permission CCLI
#12035



Reflection

A reflection on Matthew 25:1-13

Reign of Christ

Diana Lipton, author of a tome on “Unexpected Biblical Tales”, wrote that:

Readers of all persuasions have a tendency to privilege simple interpretations over complex, unsettling, readings. The more fraught the issue, the more often we find in the history of interpretation that a simple reading has been generated that masks its complexity.¹

So, to the Judgement of the World. Not just a little bit of it. All of it. The phrase “all the nations” is deliberate. Judgement, then, is not about individual fate per se. It is about the fate of “all the nations”.

Furthermore, it is vital to keep in mind that the Parables of the Kingdom are always qualified by the phrase “is like” or “as if”. “The Kingdom of God is as if ...” That opens many doors of enquiry. And it also means that attempting to derive doctrine from parables is a pretty futile exercise. In short, do not take a parable literally.

Which means that we are faced with questions, the exploration of which may lead “all the nations” through the thicket to enlightenment.

Philosophy and Religion teacher, Janet Williams, often starts a study session on judgement by asking her students to summarize what they already know.² And up pops the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats.

When asked, “What is the *criterion* by which one is judged?”, they usually agree that the answer is ethical, but disagree on what ethic. Compassion for the poor? Have we been good or bad? Or are we, as Luther suggested, justified by grace, that is to say, through God’s free and unmerited gift of faith in his Son as our Saviour?

Nevertheless, everyone usually agrees that “there will be a day when humanity will be gathered before the throne of a righteous Judge, who will

separate us into two streams, one welcomed into his kingdom of love, one banished forever”.

What do we do with this? It is there in black and white. Unthinkable. Unpreachable.

Rowan Williams noted that “the Christian engaged at the frontier with politics, art or science will frequently find that he or she *will not know what to say*,”³ because the languages of these other arenas of life are not at home with our theological language. The premature and facile use of Christian interpretation, he says, “invites judgement of another kind”.

⁴ So, the “Church judges the world; but it also hears God’s judgement on itself in the judgement passed upon it by the world”. And that judgement amounts to this:

... that Christian language actually fails to *transform* the world’s meaning because it neglects or trivializes or evades aspects of the human. It is notoriously awkward about sexuality; it risks being unserious about death when it speaks too glibly and confidently about eternal life; it can disguise the abiding reality of unhealed and meaningless suffering. So it is that some of those most serious about the renewal of a moral discourse reject formal Christian commitment as something that would weaken or corrupt their imagination.⁵

It is possible that when the Church fails to understand that, *inter alia*, “the political realm is a place of spiritual decision ...”, it “forfeits the authority to use certain of its familiar concepts or images in the public arena”.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s well-known meditation written for his godson’s baptism in 1944, remarks that

Our Church, which has been fighting in these years only for its self-preservation, as though that were an end in itself, is *incapable* of taking the word of reconciliation and redemption to [hu]mankind and the world.⁶

Bonhoeffer sought a non-religious language in which to proclaim the Gospel, one that would purvey the word of God in such a way as to change and renew the world. He did not seek to modernize or

secularize the lexicon of dogma and liturgy. Rather, it would be more like Jesus' *own* language and practice, in that it elicits God's peace within her/his creatures—that is, all the world.

Whether or not it uses the word "God", it would bring about faith, conversion, hope.⁷

Bonhoeffer's paradigm is, quite simply, the encounters between Jesus and those he calls or heals, events in which people are drawn into a new kind of life and identity. In this, "They do not receive an additional *item* called faith; their ordinary existence is not reorganized, found wanting in specific respects and supplemented: it is *transfigured* as a whole."⁸



We could call the language Bonhoeffer sought *Parables-plus-Jesus*, for its seminal context would be that of Jesus' own life and practice. Such a language is universal because Parables-plus-Jesus are not religious stories or expositions of a tradition. Rather, they are stories of everyday life; they crystallize how "people

decide for or against self-destruction, for or against newness of life, acceptance, relatedness".⁹ This is what made Clarissa Pinkola Estes' book *Women Who Run with the Wolves* so powerful.

Parables do not so much convey a *particular truth* as provoke discussion and rumination, during which deeper layers of truth will be disclosed. This is, in part, what Jesus and Hebrew prophets meant by "having eyes to see and ears to hear".¹⁰

The transfiguring of the world in Christ will seem partial or marginal if we have not learned, by speaking and hearing parables, a willingness to lose the identities and perceptions we make for ourselves. All good stories change us if we listen to them attentively. The most serious stories change us radically.¹¹ (Death and Resurrection and all that.)

Litmus test. Ask yourself, am I the same today as I was yesterday?

Theology, wrote Williams,

should equip us to recognize and respond to the parabolic in the world - all that resists the control of capital and administration and hints at or struggles to a true sharing of human understanding, in art, science and politics. It should also equip us to *speak* parabolically as Christians, to construct our meanings and our acting "texts" about conversion - not translations of doctrine into digestible forms, but effective images of a new world like the parables of Christ.

Therein lies the power of T S Eliot's Four Quartets, which is almost devoid of Christian language. And the force of the witness of the L'Arche Communities lies in what they are, collaborations of those we call handicapped with those we call normal. Is all. No theology. Just living - pun intended.

With that, I leave you with the parable to ponder afresh over the coming weeks or months. Keep it close to your heart; and you may receive an unexpected gift.

And what price judgement? More questions. Consider the empty tomb. Only John's Gospel has two angels sitting inside the tomb, at either end of the grave slab (20:12). Why? This tale calls to mind the Mercy-Seat of God, the Ark of the Covenant surmounted by two golden cherubim, their huge wings touching to frame the empty space of the seat itself (Exodus 25:18-19).¹² So John's Gospel invites us to see the empty tomb as the very judgment seat of God. Is Christ's resurrection the "incarnation" of God's word of judgment? Is our judgment about the identity of *this* Christ the criterion which will separate the sheep from the goats? Is this a valid question? Or does John perhaps seek to reassure us that our Judge is the one who, in surpassing love, gave his life for us, and asks us "Why do you weep?"¹³

"Whatever story we tell about judgment is secondary. What has primacy is the greater conviction: God is love, loves us freely, and in him justice and mercy meet and kiss."¹⁴

Amen.

Doug Bannerman □ 2020

Worship & Spirituality



Messy Church

This month the Messy Church families made Christmas decorations from dried Australian botanicals that will be part of the Christmas Tree program run by Quota. I think it's a wonderful community enhancing initiative.

The Quota Christmas tree event is on this weekend and is open to the public from 10am-3pm Sat 28th and Sun 29th at the Uniting Church hall, Bugden Ave Alstonville.

St Peter & St Paul's

Graze and Praise Sunday 29th November 2020.
Outside at St Peter & St Paul's



We are praying for you.

Every Monday 10am

Join us in St Bartholomew's or submit your prayer requests online

Funeral

The Committal of Dorothy Davis will take place on Monday 30th November at Lismore Memorial Gardens. This will be followed by a Memorial Service in St Bartholomew's at 11am. The family have asked that in lieu of flowers a donation to the Stroke Foundation would be greatly appreciated. Please continue to pray Allen and his family.

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).



Community Engagement



Play Place Christmas Celebration

Come and join the Play Place Christmas Celebration. Friday December 11th 5.30pm. Fun and games and a sausage sizzle.



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!

We need your help!

Alstonville Anglicans Twilight Christmas Fair
Friday 4 December, 3.30pm

Stalls:

- Cake stall
- Craft stall
- Cards and gifts stall
- Plants stall
- Sausage sizzle
- Colouring-in activity for the children
- Christmas Hamper raffle
- Festive music

We need:

- Items for the stalls
- Assistance to run the stalls

- Helpers to set up and pack down

Please contact:

- Graham Ireland
- Robyn Beck (cakes)
- Mary Ireland (craft)
- Carol Stone (cards and gifts)
- Barbara Fewtrell (plants)
- Gail Burley (raffle)
- Brian Delaney (sausage sizzle)

Let's share the joy of Christmas with one another and our local community.

Donated cakes need to be accompanied by an ingredients list please. Cakes can be dropped off Friday 4th December.

Mother's Union

Congratulations to Elaine Pring and Isobel Farlow who celebrate 60 years of Mu Membership.



Finance

Alstonville Anglicans - Offertory Options

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

Your offertory can be made using the following options:

- Direct transfer to our bank account
BSB 705 077 / Acc: 00032931
- Parish Provider - Direct debit through Anglican Funds - Forms available from the office

- Cheque to Alstonville Anglicans (PO Box 451, Alstonville 2477 or Offertory Plate)
- Offertory envelopes
- Cash

Thank you for your support.

ANGLICAN PARISH OF ALSTONVILLE

Ministers	all the baptised!	
Rector	The Reverend Dr Desiree Snyman	0402 764 969
	priest@anglicans.live	
Associate	The Reverend John Kidson	0411 394 213
	The Reverend Geoff Vidal	0447 645 456
	The Reverend Doug Bannerman	0418 182 450
	The Reverend Greg Ezzy	0412 660 742

Parish Office: The Ministry Centre, 8 The Avenue, Alstonville

Telephone: 6628 0231

Postal: PO Box 451, Alstonville NSW 2477

e-mail: office@anglicans.live website: anglicans.live

The Anglican Op Shop 1 The Avenue, Alstonville Tel: 6628 8777

Sermon end notes:

- 1 Diana Lipton, *Longing for Egypt and Other Unexpected Biblical Tales* (Sheffield Phoneix Press 2008) Abstract
- 2 See Janet Williams, <https://www.crconline.org.uk/resources/articles/judgement-sheep-and-goats>
- 3 Rowan Williams, *On Christian Theology* (Oxford:Blackwell, 2000), pp29-43, "The Judgement of the World"
- 4 ibid
- 5 ibid – my italics
- 6 Dietrich Bonhoeffer *Letters and Papers from Prison* (London SCM, 1971) p300, my italics.
- 7 Op cit Janet Williams
- 11 Op cit Rowan Williams
- 12 ibid
- 13 See Rowan Williams pp184-196, "Between the Cherubim"
- 14 Op cit Janet Williams



Alstonville
Anglicans

Twilight Christmas Fair

BE PART OF
SOMETHING
SPECTACULAR!

Friday 4th December
3.30pm – 7.00pm
6 The Avenue Alstonville

Immerse yourself in an enchanting world of COVID safe celebration, clowns, cards, crafts, cool plants and Christmas hampers

