



Alstonville
Anglicans

Sunday 29th October 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

29th October – 5th November

29 th October	9am	Sunday Holy Communion
30 th October	9am-12pm 9am-3pm 10am 10am	Monday Parish Office Op Shop Anam Cara Deadline for bulletin items
31 st October	9am-12pm	Tuesday Parish Office Closed
1 st November	9am-12pm 9am 9am-3pm 3.30pm	Wednesday Parish Office Open Anam Cara Op Shop Property Meeting
2 nd November	9am-12pm 9am-3pm 9.30am 6pm	Thursday Parish Office Open Op Shop Play Place Anam Cara
3 rd November	9am-12pm 10am	Friday Parish Office Open Holy Communion
4 th November		Saturday
5 th November	9am	Sunday Holy Communion

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. http://www.welcomeBooklet_v3.pdf

Spirit Ability

The next Spirit Ability event is Monday 6th November.



Spirit Ability

Providing Spiritual and emotional support to Christians living with a disability, their carers, families and supporters.

First Monday of each month 6-8pm

Alstonville Anglican Hall
6-8 The Avenue, Alstonville 66280231

Anam Cara



Over three weeks, in our Anam Cara Silence, we will behold and see the eternal birthing of Jesus in the silence of our hearts in the heart of God. Together, we will enjoy how this eternal birthing is the same birthing in all creation, unifying our hearts, all hearts, and making all things whole. Meditations will be partly guided and include a very brief reflection. Please feel free to arrive early for silent meditation. These meditations will be led by Robyn Fitzgerald and will be held on Wednesday the 1st, 8th and 15th of November at 9am.

Funeral

The funeral of Lesley Stone will take place on Friday 27th October at 12pm. There will be refreshments in the hall following the service.

To Make you Smile

A teacher asked his students to write a sentence including the words defence, defeat and detail...



Johnny wrote, When the horse goes over defence first go defeat and then detail.

Messy Church

Thank you to all the volunteers and families who contributed their time and energy to making Sunday's Messy Church End of Year Celebration so much fun.

Sermon Notes Sunday 22nd October **Geoff Vidal**

Matthew 22:15-33 "Give back"

I have found these last few weeks particularly distressing. Very hostile points of view have been blasted at us in media. People demand that we accept what they say without any discussion or search for understanding. There seems to be no attempt at seeking common ground or compromise. The VOICE referendum polarized opinions rather than drawing our nation into agreeing that there is a better way of working out how we do things. We have a horrible situation in the middle east with no obvious willingness to find ways to end conflict. Meanwhile the war in Ukraine forgotten and places of dreadful food shortages are ignored. That probably sounds a bit depressing, so let me tell you a Good News story.

There was a time when US Presidents thought deeply about people who were even fighting and killing Americans; enemies were not to be annihilated but prayed for. Every year Roosevelt attended a special service at St. John's church in Washington to commemorate his first inauguration. In 1944, as WWII was being fought, a junior Episcopalian Priest named Johnson was given the job of planning the service at St John's. Rev Johnson decided to include a controversial prayer, one entitled "Prayer for Our Enemies." The other clergy at St. John's were critical of what Johnson planned to do. They told him "The White House would never authorize that prayer in wartime," "It would be misunderstood throughout the country; the publicity would be terrible, since the Biblical instruction to pray for our enemies was scarcely understood, even by Christians in this country."

When Roosevelt read over the proposed service, however, he scribbled a note next to the prayer: "Very good - I like it." Roosevelt recognized that humility, not hatred or anger, was the proper attitude for a nation whose men were under fire. So, gathering in the church at 10:30 on the morning of Saturday, March 4, 1944, the President of the United States,

his Cabinet, and the senior officials of a nation that was fighting a major war bowed their heads as these words were prayed:

*Most loving Father,
who by thy Son Jesus Christ
hast taught us to love our enemies and to pray for them,
we beseech thee, give to those who are now our enemies the light of
thy Holy Spirit.
Grant that they and we,
being enlightened in conscience and cleansed from every sin, may know
and do thy will, and so be changed from foes to friends united in thy
service;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

(From American Gospel: God, The Founding Fathers, and The Making of a Nation, Jon Meacham, Random House, Inc., 2006, p. 167-8.)

That was 1944. Now, opponents are demonized and we are being bombarded by statements seemingly not up for discussion or thinking through. A commentator recently described us as living in our own bubble of opinion.

The last few weeks readings from Matthew have reported parables told by Jesus in the Temple in Jerusalem early in this incredible week of Jesus life between him riding the donkey into town and being crucified. (It's now probably the Tuesday of Passion Week or Holy Week). And while people (even ourselves) might be saying "here we go, yet another parable we have to listen to", Jesus began by asking "what do you think?"

The Friday people hear me week after week beginning the service by saying "Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength" These words continue on from where we stopped in Matthew 22 this morning and describe Jesus' answer to the next question he was asked; "which commandment is the greatest?"

We are to love God with all our mind. We are to think! I appreciate the way the teaching of Desiree and Doug makes me think. I looked up some quotes on thinking.

"It isn't what people think that is important, but the reason they think what they think." EUGENE IONESCO

"Where all think alike, no one thinks very much." WALTER LIPPMAN

"Men fear thought as they fear nothing else on earth - more than ruin, more even than death". BERTRAND RUSSELL

Well, what happened after Jesus asked the Chief Priests and elders in the Temple "what do you think?"?

Matthew tells us that the Pharisees and the Herodians joined forces and went away plotting a strategy to trap Jesus. It is amazing that these two groups joined together. The Pharisees are nationalistic Jews and the Herodians are followers of Herod, a collaborator of the Romans and therefore a traitor to their people. These opposing groups have the common intent to trap Jesus and show that he was no better than any other Rabbi.

They begin by saying, "we know you tell the truth". But they aren't interested in the truth. They don't want to know the truth. They want to trap Jesus by putting him in a situation where they expect that his response would either cause him to be alienated to a major part of the population by supporting the Roman occupiers or that he would lay himself open to a charge of treason. The word "trap" reveals the motive in this; this is not a dispassionate inquiry into what was the proper attitude to have to the Roman occupiers and their demand for taxes to be paid. These opponents of Jesus aren't really interested in knowing the right attitude to Roman authority. They just want to put an end to the trouble Jesus is causing.

So, they ask Jesus this question about taxes. Using a coin to make the point, Jesus answers their question by telling them "give to the emperor the things that are the emperors and to God the things that are God's". This statement is sometimes taken to be a teaching about two powers; political and religious. But, if we really think about it, we are being pointed in the direction of something much more profound. Jesus has opened up a debate about worship. Jesus has been asked to judge the comparative worth between two valuable things.

A piece of metal is made valuable when the image of the Emperor (Caesar Tiberius or King Charles) is stamped on it. We are made valuable because we have the image of God stamped upon us; Genesis says all of us are made in the image of God. Lots of these gold coins with Caesar's image stamped on



them are still around. Coin collectors all around the world are excited that they own these coins almost 2000 years after they were first circulated. Caesar's image, his reputation, his golden impression has lasted 2000 years. Even in hundreds of years' time, a person who owns one of the coins will be reminded of Caesar and the Roman Empire. His image has stuck; we still render unto it in one way or another.

The image of God is not stamped on discs of silver or gold. God's eternal image is stamped on humankind. And thousands of years after people first started knowing God, even after the last man and woman are dead and gone from this earth, the image of God will live on in us for all eternity.

So, the real question is "what is the comparative worth between God and Caesar (or God and politics)?" Maybe that's the reason we come to church. Maybe we are trying to discover the relative worth of conflicting values in our lives.

The question they asked Jesus was about "paying taxes" to Caesar. Jesus' answer speaks of "giving back" the coin to Caesar. There are two very different things here, paying and giving back. The original Greek verbs express this it clearly.

Jesus' answer is not really "give", but "give back", to God the things that are God's. Just what we are to give back is not specified. But perhaps it's helpful to remember that Jesus was talking to people who knew scripture well. The people knew the Psalm that said, "The earth is the Lords and all that is in it, the world and those who live in it" (Psalm 24:1). Whatever we have, including life itself, is on loan to us from God. So, we give back to God our lives by enjoying relationship with him; our "worship".

There's not much time left now for us to start thinking deeply about the second part of today's Gospel reading. And it would be a very long sermon if we started to look at how the Exodus reading about the conversation between God and Moses ties in with our Gospel. But there is a reason why Matthew tells us that Jesus was asked another malicious question, this time about resurrection. Pharisees believed there was a resurrection, but the Sadducees thought that there was nothing after death. Although this case brought up by the Sadducees could have happened, it's most likely hypothetical, fabricated to confound the Pharisees and others who believed in resurrection.

Jesus answers the question by saying “you are wrong Because you don’t know scriptures nor the power of God”. By God’s power, the resurrection will bring about a change in relationships and in some way, we will be “like the angels in heaven”. Jesus is really sticking it into the Sadducees here, because the Sadducees also denied the existence of angels. In the resurrection, relationships of family and marriage will be so much better than is possible on earth. Jesus then turns from God’s power in resurrection to the word of Scripture. Jesus reminds his listeners of the passage in Exodus where God tells Moses that he **is** the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob: they are alive to God.

God is God not of the dead, but of the living. Here and in heaven. That’s why we **give back** to him our lives Our worship!

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

Collect

O God,
whose Son has taught us that love is the fulfilment of your law:
stir up within us the fire of your Holy Spirit,
and pour into our hearts your greatest gift of love,
so that we may love you with our whole being,
and our neighbours as ourselves;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Matthew 22:34-46