



Alstonville Anglicans

Pentecost 9 - 2nd August 2020

You are welcome to join us this week...

- Sunday@**9am**. **Anglican Service of Worship in the Ministry Centre.**
- Or 10am connect via webpage www.anglicans.live
- Anam Cara – a meditation group. Wednesday 9am St Bartholomew's.
- Friday 10am.**Anglican Service of Worship 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.
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Thought for the Week

(Based on Matthew 14:13-21)

Jesus said to his disciples "You give them something to eat"

We are often just like the disciples in this Gospel story of loaves and fishes. We think that we are not very well equipped and have little or nothing to offer others.

It's distressing for us to see advertisements on TV showing babies dying of starvation, families living in tents in muddy refugee camps and kids living in poverty without the proper school uniform or food. These advertisements move us from distress to despair. Often, we think "Jesus, please just send them away!". At other times, our sincere prayers are "Jesus, we want you to work some kind of miracle and to look after and feed these unfortunate people".



In this story of the feeding of the five thousand, Jesus shows that he can take what little we have to offer, bless it, and give it back to us so that we are then able to bring fullness to the needy.

In Holy Communion, Jesus transforms the eucharistic bread. He also transforms us into Eucharistic people. The meal of Jesus is always obtainable. The twelve baskets of leftovers collected by the disciples are a lesson to us that the miraculous nourishment provided by Jesus is still available for those who seek it.

As long as there are people looking for the gifts Jesus offers, this nourishment can never be totally used up.

But the Gospel story also tells us that Jesus wants disciples who are prepared to distribute his gifts. Jesus calls us to become his "subcontractors" to nourish the needy.

Jesus certainly works an amazing miracle. The miracle is seen as Jesus asks each one of us, "What do you have?" This isn't necessarily a question about money; perhaps it's about other resources such as time or a special talent.

The reality is that we don't have much. Just a couple of fish in

our basket, and a few loaves. But Jesus encourages us to take what little we have and to recklessly share it. Jesus desires us to give it away. We are urged to share our meager resources with the multitudes.

Whenever we respond to this urging of Jesus, the real miracle is that whatever we have to share turns out to be enough.

Pentecost 9

9am Liturgy

2nd August 2020

Welcome and acknowledgment of country

Sentence of the Day

The Lord is near to all who call on him in truth. He fulfils the desire of all that fear him, hears their cry, and saves them. Psalm 145.18-19

Opening Song

God has a table

1. Since the world was young there's a song that's been sung of a promise coming true: hungry folk will eat

and long-lost friends will meet and the Lord will make all things new

*God has a table
where He calls His friends
to a feast that never ends;
God has a table
and one day we'll meet Him
there.*

2. Jesus saw a crowd who were hungry, and vowed that they didn't have much food. So he fed that bunch with a little boy's lunch as a sign that God is good.

*God has a table
where He calls His friends
to a feast that never ends;
God has a table
and one day we'll meet Him
there.*

3. Jesus told a tale of how rich people fail to accept God's summons to dine. Then before their eyes those without earthly ties share heaven's finest food and wine.

*God has a table
where He calls His friends
to a feast that never ends;
God has a table
and one day we'll meet Him
there.*

4. Till we hear that word From the mouth of the Lord Saying join Me at My table

For the world we'll care
And its good things we will share
As long as we are able

*God has a table
where He calls His friends
to a feast that never ends;
God has a table
and one day we'll meet Him
there.*

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Reading

Matthew 14:13-21

¹³ Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. ¹⁴ When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. ¹⁵ When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves." ¹⁶ Jesus said to them, "They need not go away; you give them something to eat." ¹⁷ They replied, "We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish." ¹⁸ And he said, "Bring them here to me." ¹⁹ Then he ordered the crowds to sit down

on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. ²⁰ And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. ²¹ And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Sermon

Intercessory Prayers

In peace we pray to you, Lord God.

Silence

For all people in their daily life and work;
**For our families, friends, and neighbours,
and for all those who are alone.**

For this community, our country, and the world;

For all who work for justice, freedom, and peace.

For the just and proper use of your creation;

For the victims of hunger, fear, injustice, and oppression.

For all who are in danger, sorrow, or any kind of trouble;
For those who minister to the

sick, the friendless, and needy.

For the peace and unity of the Church of God;

For all who proclaim the gospel, and all who seek the truth.

For Murray Harvey our bishop, and for all bishops and other ministers;

For all who serve God in the Church.

For our own needs and those of others.

Silence.

Hear us, Lord.

For your mercy is great.

Final Song

Inspired by love and anger

1. Inspired by love and anger, disturbed by need and pain, informed of God's own bias, we ask Him once again:
'How long must some folk suffer?
How long can few folk mind?
How long dare vain self-interest turn prayer and pity blind?'

2. From those forever victims of heartless human greed, their cruel plight composes a litany of need:
'Where are the fruits of justice?
Where are the signs of peace?
When is the day when prisoners and dreams find their release?'

3. From those forever shackled to what their wealth can buy, the fear of lost advantage provokes the bitter cry:
'Don't query our position!
Don't criticise our wealth!
Don't mention those exploited by politics and stealth!'

4. To God, who through the prophets proclaimed a different age, we offer earth's indifference, its agony and rage:
'When will the wronged be righted?
When will the kingdom come?
When will the world be generous to all instead of some?'

5. God asks, ' Who will go for me?
Who will extend my reach?
And who, when few will listen, will prophesy and preach?
And who, when few bid welcome, will offer all they know?
And who, when few dare follow, will walk the road I show?'

6. Amused in someone's kitchen, asleep in someone's boat, attuned to what the ancients exposed, proclaimed and wrote, a Saviour without safety, a tradesman without tools has come to tip the balance with fishermen and fools.

John Bell and Graham Maule Newton

CCLI Song # 3163221

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Sermon Notes

(for Matthew 13:44-58)

A story

There was once a king. He went hunting and came across a boy looking after sheep.

He noticed a birthmark on the boy's face that reminded him of the son he had lost and thought dead. The king asked the young boy who he was, and the boy replied that he was the son of a shepherd from a village nearby.

The king was curious and drawn to the boy. He went to the village to ask the shepherd about the identity of the boy. The shepherd eventually admitted that he found the boy as a tiny baby at the edge of the forest and brought him up as his son.

What had happened was this: The king's son had been taken as a baby and left to die in the forest by his enemies; they were hoping wild animals would take the boy. Before this could happen the shepherd found the boy and joyously received him as a gift from God and brought him up as his own son.

Once the young man realised who he was he had no choice, but to accept his real identity as the son of a king.

(Story is from *Rediscovering the*

Eastern Jesus: You are the Light, by John Martin Sahajananda, published by Saccidananda Ashram in August 2002).

The point of the story will be made clear at the end of the address; it will help us understand today's Gospel in Mathew 13. Let us first situate the reading in the Gospel of Matthew as a whole.

Structure

The gospel of Matthew is divided into 5 books to correlate with the 5 books of the TORAH (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy). These five books in the Gospel of Matthew, the 'new' Torah, are bookended by a prologue – the birth of Jesus, and an epilogue – the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Since chapter and verse headings had not been invented, the community who gave us the Gospel in Matthew's name indicated the beginning and end of each of these 5 chapters with the use of the phrase... **when Jesus had finished saying these things**. The parables we reflect on appear in the central book which begins and ends as follows:

Chapter beginning at 12:46...

12:46 While Jesus was still talking to the crowd, his mother and brothers stood outside,

wanting to speak to him. 47 Someone told him, "Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you." 48 He replied to him, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" 49 Pointing to his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers?" 50 For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother."

Chapter ending at 13:53...
13:53 When Jesus had finished these parables, he moved on from there. 55 "Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother's name Mary, and aren't his brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Judas? 56 Aren't all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things? 57 And they took offense at him.

Matthew 13.44 emerges out of a continuous sermon that begins at Matthew 12.46 and ends at 13.53. The theme of the sermon captured in Matthew 13 is family life in the kingdom of God. Notice how the section is framed with family at the beginning and family at the end. This whole sermon consists of 7 parables. After the first parable, the parable of the weeds, the parables are broken into two sets of three. Matthew 13.44

deals with the second of two sets.

The choiceless choice

Each of the parables describes how something is given up for the sake of the kingdom of God. The parables imply that the brilliance of the Kingdom of God is so immense that there is nothing that can compare with it. The kingdom of God is the ONE thing that we MUST have so we are prepared to give up everything else. The parables present us with a choiceless choice, the kingdom of God is so magnetic that we cannot resist its pull and will choose to give up anything in order to have it.

Paul is one example of a choiceless choice for the kingdom of God. He writes

whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.



For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ.

So, in each of the parables, something is given up for the sake of the kingdom of God:

- Treasure
- Pearl
- Fish

The parable of the fish caught in the net is interesting, or disconcerting. A possible interpretation of the parable is helped by a similar saying in the Gospel of Thomas. (The Gospel of Thomas was discovered in Nag Hammadi in 1945. Some scholars date it around 60 AD, others 140 AD). Logion 8 says:

8. Then he says: "Man is like a skilled fisherman who cast his net in the sea. He brought it up out of the sea full of little fishes, and among them the skilled fisherman found one that was big and excellent. He threw all the little fishes back into the sea; without hesitating he chose the big fish. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

The themes expressed in the Logion 8 of the Gospel of Thomas continues the themes expressed in the parable of the treasure and the pearl, namely the joyful renunciation of all else

in favour of the Kingdom of God.

I suggest that this is not an external renunciation, but an internal renunciation. Our choiceless choice is to renounce our dependency on things that are passing and find security in the eternal. It is the ego or the false self that is renounced for the sake of the kingdom of God.

The point of the story you heard earlier has this as its message: that we renounce our false identity for our true identity, in the same way that the boy renounced his identity as a shepherd to claim his identity as a prince, the son of a King. When one finds oneself in the presence of God, or when we experience unity with God, we realise that we have been living as a shepherd, not as a child of the king. We must renounce our identity as a shepherd and accept our identity as a child of God. We renounce our false identity for the sake of our real identity.

The kingdom of God challenges



our security and particularly the security we have in our religious traditions, our religious laws, and our beliefs. The ministry of Jesus tells us that the law and temple are not absolute and only have relative value. It is God who is absolute and eternal. Laws and religious traditions are not eternal.

The kingdom of God invites you to a higher relationship God. If people are not open to this invitation to a deeper unity with God, then the kingdom can become a threat and good news can become bad news. If people have chosen to build their spiritual houses on religious laws and traditions, then the kingdom of God can be seen to be a threat.

Religion and church have a place, but they are meant to be a womb, not a tomb. Religion is meant to be a nest and not a cage. The symbol for the invitation to deepen faith comes in the next episode where Jesus walks on water, leaving his astonished disciples on the boat. Note that no footprints are left by walking on water. The boat has a long history of being a symbol for the church or religious traditions. In participating in a deeper unity with Jesus, we leave the safety of the nest/womb/boat for the

adventure of life in the kingdom of God.

Housekeeping

Our notices are organized under our mission goals.

Worship & Spirituality Question and Answer Series August



Liturgically, the season after Pentecost is a time of growth. The feast of Pentecost is a time when we celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit given to all creation. After Pentecost the Holy Spirit (the breath of God's love) assists our growth in faith; a growth that is symbolized in the church with green garments, green decorations and flower arrangements.

One way that we can develop more confidence in our faith is through asking questions. Thus, every August, during the season of growth, members of the church are invited to pose questions.

How shall these questions be 'answered'?

Q & A reflections are not answers to the questions, but rather a structure in which to reflect on the questions asked. The structure is three-fold: **reason, tradition** and **scripture**.

By **reason** we mean any knowledge we produce through the active use of our minds. Reason also includes the role that reflected experience plays in pondering God and life

questions. Self-reflective awareness presumes some knowledge of one's own context, blind spots and assumptions. Wherever possible we hope to use as a deliberate assumption the perspective from the margins. Jesus offers a preferential option for the poor and thus we practice this virtue as much as possible, aware that we fail before we have begun. Why? Our context as educated



westerners, consuming most of the world's resources, means that our wealth prevents us from noticing information that is clear to the outsider or the marginalized.

By **Tradition** we mean post biblical theological resources of the early church from the past to

the present. Why use tradition? The conviction is that the Spirit continues to be present and at work in God's community beyond Scripture. Tradition literally means "handed down" and refers to how we treasure insights valued and preserved in previous generations.

By **Scripture** we mean the canon of the Old and New Testament books. We can briefly mention that the word Scripture means different things to communities. The Roman Catholics, Anglicans and Protestants generally have different "versions" of Scripture. We can also briefly note the influence of differing translations from alternate sources whether the Greek New Testament (NIV, NRSV), the Latin Vulgate, the Septuagint (Greek version of the Hebrew Scriptures) and looser more dynamic translations (CEV or Good News Bibles). These few sentences hint at the fraught nature of Scripture as a source and we haven't yet mentioned the opposing ways in which Scripture is interpreted. Perhaps at this point we pause and state that for our purposes we hope to read the Scripture through the "eyeglasses" of Jesus. Those parts of Scripture that are "in tune" with Christ's vision of God's kingdom come clearly into

focus. Those aspects of Scripture that are against the Spirit of Jesus fade into the background. In summary, we reflect on the questions our community poses through **the tension of reason, tradition and Scripture**, as Anglicans have done since the time of Richard Hooker onwards. As we use **the tripod of reason, tradition and Scripture**, the invitation is offered to receive the reflections presented as further questions to ponder and not as a definitive answer.

Questions are best submitted at: anglicans.live or left for the person delivering your bulletin or posted at the church

These are the questions we have received.. How would you answer the following?

Question: It is often extremely hard to understand the meaning of parables, why would Jesus have chosen this way to explain things? They have often been misunderstood and the true meaning lost.

Question: In the 'Parables' etc, what view did the early followers of Jesus understand when the word 'devil' was used? What is today's understanding of "devil" in contemporary Theology?

Question: Since suffering and 'dark night of the soul' seem to

be a path to refinement and enlightenment can we assume God suffers or has suffered and that could mean God is being perfected.

Question: I've always thought the basic theme of Christianity is that God is an all loving God. What is the "evidence" for this, in that the same God sits by while dreadful things happen to beautiful people - both Christian and non-Christian.

Sundays @ 6

Sunday@6 is currently in abeyance with a view to relooking at the situation in the New Year.

Messy Church

A big thank you to all who helped with the Messy Church celebration on Sunday. 14 families were contacted and invited to access the online service.

Friday Service

Friday 10am services have recommenced in St Bartholomew's. We look forward to seeing you there.

St Peter and St Paul's Tregeagle

St Peter and St Paul's will recommence services from 30th August at 10am.

Prayer

Monday morning prayer where we pray for our church and the community will recommence in the church 7th September at 10am. You are welcome to pray with Rev Desiree at St Bartholomew's or join in pray from home.

Good Governance Parish Finances June 2020

We all know how COVID-19 has impacted us personally, and that many are experiencing job loss and financial constraints, so how is Alstonville Anglicans faring in the current climate?

We are most grateful to all those who have changed their method of offertory to regular electronic banking, and also to those who regularly "post" their offertory. Thank you. Fortunately too, the Diocese secured Jobkeeper for our staff as well as reduced payroll expenses till the end of September, and waived the Diocesan Pledge payments. This means we are able to maintain our ministries, albeit in a different /distanced format. Regrettably, our Mother's Day Fete went by the way, and due to the Op Shop closure, our overall income has been

dramatically reduced. However, it is very pleasing to report that the first three days of Op shop operations (6,9,13 July), approximately \$5,000 was received. Great work gals/guys!

We have kept a careful watch on our expenses. However, you will have noted that solar panels were installed on the ministry hall. This was organised late last year. Whilst an initial large expense, it does considerably reduce ongoing electricity costs, and is important environmentally. You will also have noticed that work has finally commenced on the Op Shop expansion. This has taken several years of planning and will provide a better storage and display of goods and result in increased sales. This work is being paid for from Term Deposits that had been put in place by the faithful stewardship in years gone by. Thank you. Some other expenses have been unexpected, like new computer technology to enable strong, quality on-line transmission of our Sunday services to you and the wider community. Our on-line reach through Facebook, Website, Instagram, Youtube has been most successful and very gratifying. Well done!

So, how are we faring financially?

Total **Income** to 30 June was \$94,311.33, being approx \$85,938.67 below budget forecast for this period. Offertory received was \$43,975.45, being \$9,000 below budget, but only \$5,000 less for the same time in 2019. Op shop income was \$33,152.50, being \$62,348 below budget, and \$50,000 less for the same time in 2019.

Total **Expenses** to 30 June was \$150,900.19, being approximately \$24,349.81 below budget forecast for this period.

So, whilst we're not flying high, we're not sinking either. We all need to keep a very careful watch on what we spend as to what we receive. It is hoped the regular EFT offertory process will continue as this provides a more steady stream of income. It is also hoped that deferred commitments, like some mission support, will be upheld in coming months. And, we will continue to reduce expenses where practicable to ensure our ongoing financial viability.

If you have questions about our financial situation I would welcome an opportunity to chat with you.

Thank you for your continued prayerful and financial support.

**Susan Fitzpatrick,
Warden/Treasurer.**

Leadership

A Clergy Rendezvous will be held on Monday 31st August from 10am–2pm. We are studying 'Holy Envy' by Barbara Brown Taylor.

The next Parish Council Meeting is 19th August 6pm.

Pastoral Care

The next Pastoral Care Meeting will be Wednesday 5th August at 11.00am. Lynne Watt is the Pastoral Care Coordinator

Safe Ministry

Alstonville Anglicans is now registered as a COVID Safe business in keeping with Government regulations

Thank you to all parishioners for your diligence in adhering to COVID Safe practices. Your care with social distancing, hand sanitising and in particular hand washing before food handling are helping to keep us all safe and well.

Op Shop

Our Op Shop is now open Mondays and Thursdays. Thank you to all the staff and the COVID safe monitors who are working hard to keep our community safe.

Communication & Community Engagement

AREA

Thank you to all those who have continued to financially help AREA support Bruce Fleming in recent months. Thanks especially to those who have now chosen to make Direct Credit to our bank. We chose not to purchase new 2020-21 envelopes so if you still wish to use envelopes until June 2021, please contact John Noble 0414285132

Bulletins

We are currently printing a limited number of bulletins for those who are unable to access electronic copies. This will continue. If you would also like to have a printed copy of the weekly bulletin can you please email or ring the office and a copy can be made available for you to collect on Sundays.

The bulletin is now a much more comprehensive document. The work and time involved in preparing it has increased. This has meant some extra hours on Wednesday for Anne. To help ease this situation we would ask

that all notices for the bulletin be submitted by 10am on a Monday. Any notices received after this time will be held over for the following week's bulletin. Thank you for your help and understanding with this.

ANGLICAN PARISH OF ALSTONVILLE

Ministers	all the baptised!	
Rector	The Reverend Dr Desiree Snyman 04 02 764 969 priest@anglicans.live	
Associate	The Reverend John Kidson	0411 394 213
	The Reverend Geoff Vidal	0447 645 456
	Life Groups Chaplain	
	The Reverend Greg Ezzy	0412 660 742
Parish Office:	The Ministry Centre, 8 The Avenue, Alstonville	
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website:	anglicans.live	

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

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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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

Or

Cheques can be posted to the address above or placed in our locked letterbox. Before 12pm Fridays.

Messy Church used bubbles to represent the breathe of God



Photos used with permission 'Shorty Brown', clown and children's entertainer.