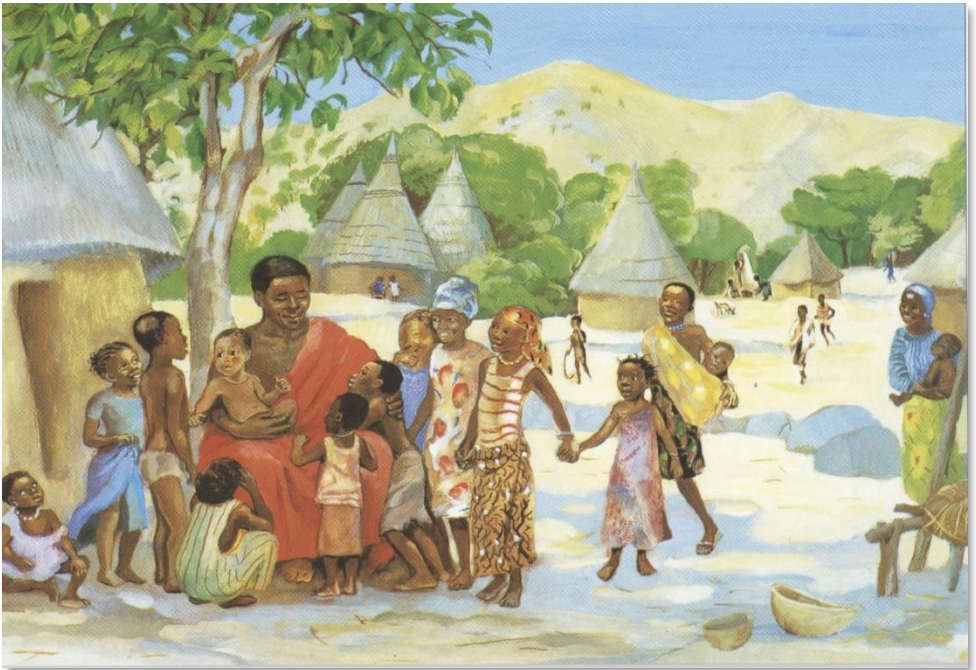




# Alstonville Anglicans

**Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> July 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](http://www.anglicans.live)**

**Bank account: BSB 705 077 / Acc:00032931**

## 2<sup>nd</sup> July – 9<sup>th</sup> July

2 <sup>nd</sup> July		<b>Sunday</b>
	9am	Holy Communion
		<b>NAIDOC Week commences</b>
3 <sup>rd</sup> July		<b>Monday</b>
	9am-12pm	Parish Office
	9am-3pm	Op Shop
	10am	Anam Cara
	10am	Deadline for bulletin items
	1pm	Sew Helpful
	3.30pm	Op Shop Meeting
	6pm	Spirit Ability
4 <sup>th</sup> July		<b>Tuesday</b>
	9am-12pm	Parish Office <b>Closed</b>
5 <sup>th</sup> July		<b>Wednesday</b>
	9am-12pm	Parish Office Open
	9am	Anam Cara
	9am-3pm	Op Shop
	3.30pm	Property Committee Meeting
	4pm	Messy Church Meeting
6 <sup>th</sup> July		<b>Thursday</b>
	9am-12pm	Parish Office Open
	9am-3pm	Op Shop
	9.30am	Play Place
	6pm	Anam Cara
7 <sup>th</sup> July		<b>Friday</b>
	9am-12pm	Parish Office Open
	10am	Holy Communion
8 <sup>th</sup> July		<b>Saturday</b>
9 <sup>th</sup> July		<b>Sunday</b>
	9am	Holy Communion
		<b>John Kidson Celebration and Blessing of the window</b>

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. [../../welcomeBooklet\\_v3.pdf](#)

## Messy Church

Thank you to all the families who attended and the volunteers who organised our Messy Church film night. It was a very enjoyable event.

## AREA Bunnings BBQ Fundraiser

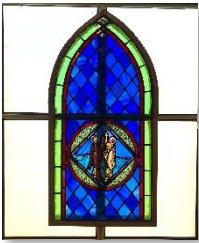


A great team of volunteers from 3 churches helped 'fire up the barbie' last Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> June at Ballina Bunnings, raising valuable funds for Bruce Fleming's special mission to

Alstonville teenagers at the high school. So...thanks to Paul, Graham, Des, Anthony, Don, Bruce, Mary & Jenny.

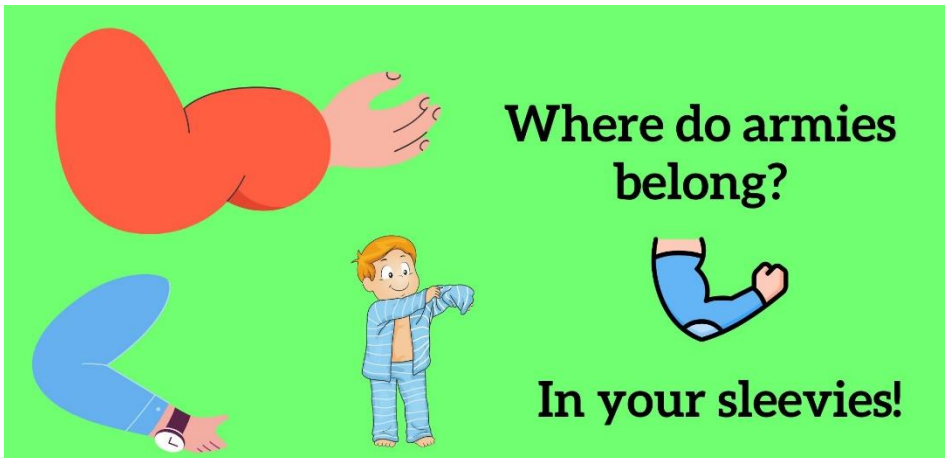
John Noble your AREA rep.

## Celebration of the Ministry of John Kidson and Blessing of the Window.

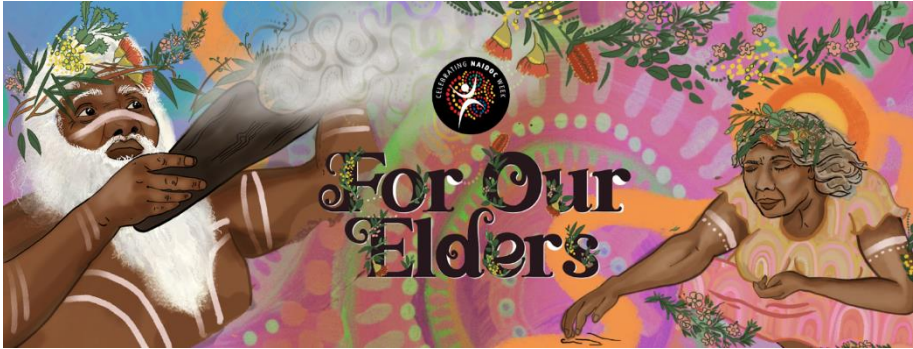


Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> July at the 9am service we will be celebrating John Kidson's Ministry and contribution to the Parish as well as Blessing the stained-glass window from St Peter & St Paul's that has been installed into the St Peter & Paul's room in the Ministry Centre.

## To Make You Smile



**NAIDOC Week 2023 commences on the 2<sup>nd</sup> July.**



**The theme this year is 'For Our Elders'.**

Across every generation, our Elders have played, and continue to play, an important role and hold a prominent place in our communities and families. They are cultural knowledge holders, trailblazers, nurturers, advocates, teachers, survivors, leaders, hard workers and our loved ones. This NAIDOC Week we celebrate them.





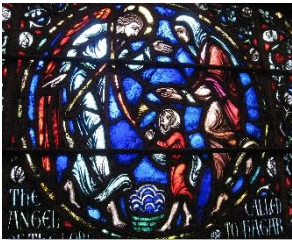
# Spirit Ability

Spirit Ability is a fellowship group for Christians living with a disability.

Monday 3rd July 6-8pm  
The evening will include a meal & sharing time.

## Sermon Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> June By Doug Bannerman

### Genesis 21.8-21



The story of Hagar is heart wrenching to say the least. Hagar is an Egyptian slave who has sought asylum in the land of Canaan. She is a refugee.

Abram has also recently arrived in Canaan from Egypt, and his part in the story pivots on two women – Sarai, his wife, and Hagar her maid.<sup>1</sup> As the wife of a wealthy herdsman (Genesis 13.2), Sarai has privilege and power, although she does not escape the limitations of strong patriarchal social structures. She is, however, barren, a terrible affliction for the couple – to be without a family was to be without identity. So, Sarai tells Abram to secure a child through Hagar.

Ironically, when Hagar finds that she has conceived, she has the insight that she is other than a tool; she is a real person,

<sup>1</sup> Later God renames the couple Abraham and Sarah.

with identity. She has experienced a new reality that challenges the power structure. So, in the face of Sarai's jealousy, Hagar takes command of her own life and runs away to the wilderness, a hospitable place symbolized by a spring on the way to Shur.<sup>2</sup>

An angel of the Lord comes to her, declaring that if she returns to her mistress, her son, who is to be named Ishmael, will give rise to innumerable descendants (21.10 – 11). For the first time, a character addresses Hagar by name; and for the first time, Hagar speaks. 'You are El-roi' [the God of seeing] ... 'Have I really seen God and remained alive after seeing him?' (21.13). A unique encounter in the OT – to see and be seen by the Divine.

The encounter has the threefold character of Annunciation – that is to say the prediction of a male child, naming the child and foretelling his future life. As the first to receive an annunciation, Hagar, the Egyptian refugee, becomes the prototype of special mothers in Israel.

The name Ishmael, however, has two meanings; comfort and suffering. The divine promise of Ishmael means a life at the boundary of *consolation* and *desolation*. Hagar returns.

And Hagar bore to Abram a son,  
and Abram called the name of *his* son,  
whom Hagar bore, Ishmael.

Now Abram was eighty-six years old  
when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram. (16.15-16)

We note, that the very first word of this part of the story was Sarai (16.1); but the last is Abram, an ending that continues to undermine Hagar. It may restore her name, but it silences her voice. It stresses not her *motherhood* but Abram's

<sup>2</sup> Very different from Israel's Exodus when 'Moses led Israel onward from the Red Sea, and they went into the wilderness of Shur, they went three days into the wilderness and found no water' (Exodus 15.22).

*fatherhood*. The report that *Abram* named the son *Ishmael* obliterates the power that God gave to her. And *Sarai* receives no mention at all. Both *Hagar* and *Sarai* are sidelined.

Following this, *Sarai* and *Abram* become *Sarah* and *Abraham*, symbolic of the promise of a new covenant, that *Abraham* will become the 'ancestor of a multitude of nations'. *Hagar* disappears but her story remains. *Ishmael* now becomes the object of divine rejection because *Hagar*, not *Sarah*, is his mother (17.15-21).

We have arrived at today's reading. *Sarah*, observing the healthy growing boy *Ishmael* at play with her son *Isaac*, is vexed. She does not want *Ishmael* to share *Isaac's* inheritance; and so, she commands *Abraham* to cast out the foreign woman and child.

*Abraham* is unhappy on several counts, both personal and legal;<sup>3</sup> but God reassures him; 'Do not be distressed because of the boy and because of your slave woman ...' (21.12-13). God diminishes *Hagar* by calling her 'this slave woman', and further diminishes her when, in the wilderness, does not appear in person, but speaks remotely from heaven:

What troubles you, *Hagar*? Do not be afraid; for God has heard the *voice of the boy* where he is. Come, lift up the *boy* and hold him fast with your hand, for I will make a great nation of him (21.17-18).



*Hagar* cries out in distress, but God hears the voice of 'the boy'. *Hagar* loses her God given identity as mother and as

<sup>3</sup> Normally, if a slave-wife had borne children, she was not to be expelled or sold (so, *Hammurabi's laws*, § 146), thus *Abraham's* unwillingness to do so. See *Kenneth A Kitchen The Bible in its World: The Bible and Archaeology Today* (Exeter: The Paternoster Press, 1977 Pbk.) pp168

one whom God sees, to become once more 'slave woman' – an object, a refugee with no identity.

Read in the light of contemporary issues and images, Hagar's story depicts oppression in three familiar forms: nationality, class and gender.

'Hagar the Egyptian is a maid; Sarah the Hebrew is her mistress. Conflicts around these two women revolve around three males. At the centre is their common husband. To him belong Ishmael, child of Hagar, and Isaac, child of Sarah. Through their husband and his two sons, these females have clashed. From the beginning, however, Hagar is powerless because God supports Sarah. Kept in her place, the slave woman is the innocent victim of use, abuse, and rejection.

'As a symbol of the oppressed, Hagar becomes many things to many people who find their stories in her: she is the faithful maid exploited, the black woman used by the male and abused by the female of the ruling class, the surrogate mother, the resident alien without legal recourse, the other woman, the runaway youth, the religious fleeing from affliction, the pregnant young woman alone, the expelled wife, the divorced mother with child, the ... bag lady carrying bread and water, the homeless woman, the indigent relying on handouts from the power structures, the welfare mother, and the self-effacing female whose own identity shrinks in service to others.

'Hagar is a pivotal figure in biblical theology. She is the first person in scripture whom a divine messenger visits and the only person who dares to name the deity. Within the *historical* memories of Israel, she is the first woman to bear a child. This conception and birth make her an extraordinary figure in the story of faith: the first woman to hear an



Annunciation, the only one to receive a divine promise of descendants, and the first to weep for her dying child ...

'Beyond these ... distinctions, Hagar foreshadows Israel's pilgrimage of faith ... As a maid in bondage, she flees from suffering. Yet she experiences exodus *without* liberation, revelation *without* salvation, wilderness *without* covenant, wanderings *without* land, promise *without* fulfilment, and unmerited exile *without* return. This Egyptian woman is stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted for the transgressions of Israel. She is the Suffering Servant of Isaiah, bruised for the iniquities of Sarah and Abraham; upon her is the chastisement that makes them whole.<sup>4</sup>

'Hagar is Israel, from exodus to exile, yet with differences. And these differences yield terror. All who are heirs of Sarah and Abraham, by flesh and by spirit, must answer for the terror in Hagar's story. To neglect the theological challenge [that] she presents is to falsify faith.'<sup>5 6</sup>

Miraculously, Megan McKenna salvages some hope from the debris. McKenna used to work with a group of maids in a local motel, where they watched soaps and read scripture together during their breaks. They were absolutely delighted to hear the beginning of Hagar's story. One woman, an illegal immigrant from El Salvador, said in her halting English: 'Oh, now Sarai gets a taste of her own medicine. Now she knows what it is like to be a slave and be treated like dirt all the time. Serves her

<sup>4</sup> cf Isaiah 53.5 *But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.*

<sup>5</sup> *Op cit* Phyllis Trible *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press 1984) p28

<sup>6</sup> *Shocking as this tale may be, equally shocking is the manifest evidence that the narrators have deliberately attempted to make the male, Abraham, the dominant figure. For example, the narrators rob Hagar of her grief by changing the unambiguous feminine form of the verb forms to masculine constructions. Such alterations make the child lift up his voice and weep. But such masculine emotions cannot silence Hagar. A host of feminine verb forms throughout this section witness unmistakably to Hagar's tears. See Phyllis Trible *op cit*.*

right. She doesn't like it – well, we don't either. We don't live just to clean toilets, iron, and clean up after others and to be pushed around'. When they got to the bit when Hagar runs away, the women at the motel cheered Hagar on. But then, when Hagar is told to go back to her mistress, they 'cried out loudly against this'<sup>7</sup>. But then one of them said, 'She has to. She has to think of her child not herself.' There is a time to rebel, a time to run and a time to endure.



Consolation and desolation.

The magic of this little group is that, 'what followed at the motel were their own stories – of being maids in the houses of the rich, getting pregnant by the husband ... and being thrown out ...' Such is the lot of refugees around the world – and even worse for those who are unable to flee from their places of affliction because rich nations close their borders.

As we come to the close of Refugee Week, may we consider our part in their stories of alienation and desperation.

Amen.

Doug Bannerman 2023

<sup>7</sup> Megan McKenna *Not Counting Women and Children: Neglected Stories from the Bible* (New York: Orbis Books 1994) P177

## Sentence of the Day

The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 6.23

## Collect

O God,  
your Son has taught us that those who give a cup of water in his  
name  
will not lose their reward:  
open our hearts to the needs of your children,  
and in all things make us obedient to your will,  
so that in faith we may receive your gracious gift,  
eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## Matthew 10.40-42



<sup>40</sup> 'Whoever welcomes you  
welcomes me, and whoever  
welcomes me welcomes the one  
who sent me. <sup>41</sup> Whoever  
welcomes a prophet in the name  
of a prophet will receive a  
prophet's reward; and whoever  
welcomes a righteous person  
in the name of a righteous person  
will receive the reward of the  
righteous; <sup>42</sup> and whoever gives

even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a  
disciple—truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward.'



COVE garden's winter  
abundance.