



Alstonville Anglicans

Nineteenth Sunday of Pentecost

Sunday 3rd October 2021



Image by Enlightenme Images from Pixabay

Liturgy for 3rd October

Sentence of the Day

Whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it. Mark 10.15

Sharing the Good Life

We acknowledge the Bundjalung people,
traditional custodians of the Land.
Our doors are open: LGBTQIA+ welcome here.
Streaming licence: One License A-738115

Collect

O God,
your Son has taught us
that we must receive your sovereign rule like a little child:
help us to turn to you in faith and simplicity of heart,
so that we may receive your blessing
and enter the kingdom your Son has promised;
through the same Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord. **Amen.**

Readings

Mark 10:2–16

² Some Pharisees came, and to test Jesus they asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?" ³ He answered them, "What did Moses command you?" ⁴ They said, "Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of dismissal and to divorce her." ⁵ But Jesus said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart he wrote this commandment for you. ⁶ But from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female.' ⁷ 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife,⁸ and the two shall become one flesh.' So they are no longer two, but one flesh. ⁹ Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate." ¹⁰ Then in the house the disciples asked him again about this matter. ¹¹ He said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her; ¹² and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery." ¹³ People were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them. ¹⁴ But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. ¹⁵ Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it." ¹⁶ And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.

Messages

Pastoral Care

Family Crosses

On Sunday 26 September, the Family Cross is being given to Judy & Denis Thompson.

Pastoral visits Remember!

If you or anyone you know is ill or in hospital, please let the office or Lynne Watt our Pastoral Care Coordinator know. Also, if you do visit anyone could you email Lynne? wattlg@bigpond.com.

Mothers Union

Meetings are 3rd Monday of each month. Contact joyce@stephanies.com.au.

Prayers

This week we remember in our prayers the Thompson & Noble Family.

Good Governance

COVID

- 4sqm rule applies so 9am services are still in the Ministry Centre
 - No singing
 - Masks worn indoors
 - Ventilation is important – windows and doors open.
- PS There is an update from the Bishop on page 11.

Community Engagement



COMMUNITY ON-THE-VERGE

1. This Food Garden is For All
2. Food is Free
3. Take what you need
4. You too can plant, water and tend.
5. Consider your safety... slip, slap, slop and sip

COMMUNITY ON THE VERGE

Alstonville Anglicans
anglicans.live

Everyone is invited to participate in the first working bee scheduled for Saturday 30th October 2-4pm. (COVID permitting).

If you would like to be involved in the planning and management of the project, or have any ideas to contribute please contact Alan Larsen on 0409 655 123 or Barbara Fewtrell 0429 385 713



Play Place

Play Place 9.30-11.30am Thursday 7th October.

Online ministry

Head to Anglicans Live YouTube channel to catch up with Margaret Brown and Desiree digesting who are the vulnerable in our society and how do we all benefit from caring for them.



Have you subscribed? Get your friends and family to subscribe at: PS There is no charge for subscribing.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d79-JQ5_KVc



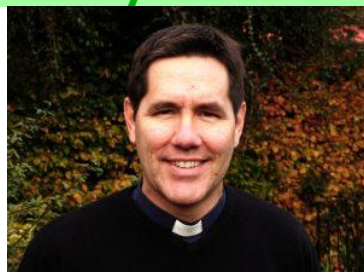
Sew Helpful

Sew Helpful is in recess for the holidays and will meet Monday 4th October 1pm in the Ministry Centre. Please note this day is a public holiday but we are still planning to meet if COVID regulations allow.

Worship and Spirituality

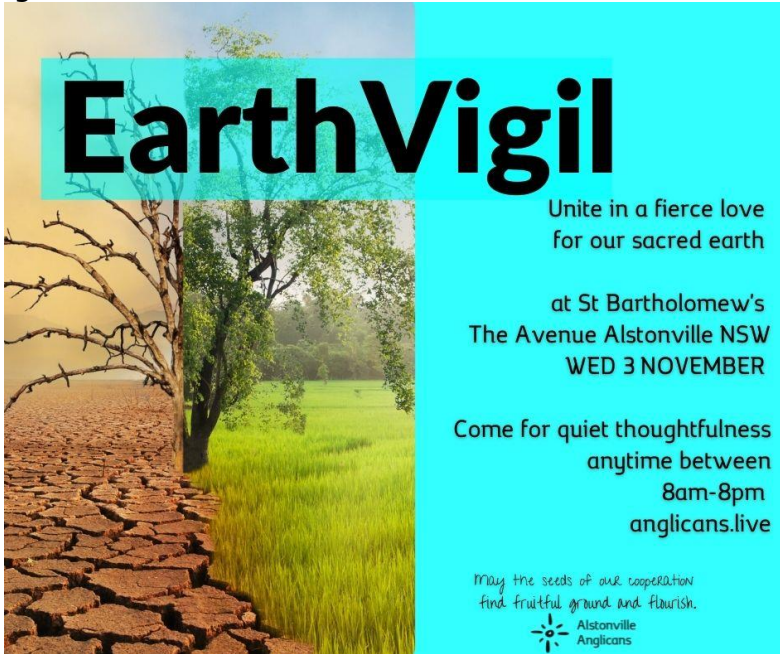
Save the date! 7 November

Bishop Murray will be visiting the parish on the 7th November 2021. The Bishop will preach and celebrate at the 9am service and will lead a confirmation service at 5pm where we will also be receiving young friends in First Communion.



Anam Cara Earth Vigil

Planning meeting Wednesday 13th October 11am in the meeting room.




EarthVigil

Unite in a fierce love
for our sacred earth

at St Bartholomew's
The Avenue Alstonville NSW
WED 3 NOVEMBER

Come for quiet thoughtfulness
anytime between
8am-8pm
anglicans.live

*May the seeds of our cooperation
find fruitful ground and flourish.*



Alstonville
Anglicans

Anam Cara

Wednesday 9am

Thursday 6pm

Messy Life Church?!

Messy Life Church?! is in recess during
the school holidays.

Next Meeting will be Sunday 17th October
2021

Messy Church

Messy Church planning meeting Wednesday
6th October 4pm in the Ministry Centre



LLM Application

Susan Fitzpatrick intends to offer herself as an Licensed Lay Minister to the Bishop of Grafton. Protocols require that this be announced at the service on Sunday. Please support and pray for her.

Leadership

Points from the last Parish Council Meeting:

1. A [contemplative library room and professional office](#) has been prepared for hire. This room can be rented by professionals looking for a quiet space to work, counsellors and service providers needing to offer counselling or mediation, and it will be open at set times for a specialised library to be accessed.
2. A **management plan** for the community verge food garden was approved.
3. A pastoral care database was discussed – soon you will all receive an invitation to [chmeetings.com](#). This database management system has good security. Chmeetings.com is an easy and professional application to organize members, events, follow-ups, and more. Our church management software is used in managing more than 2000 churches and ministries. It is [GDPR compliant](#) in all perspectives and we make all efforts to ensure data security by privacy industry best standards & practices.
4. The Op Shop has received a donation of a new sign that will be updated and installed.

Sermon notes on Mark 9 for the 26th Sept

Introductory image



She cannot buy you anything. She will expect *you* to buy her ice-creams, or milkshakes from MacDonald's. She will not remember your birthday. She will not invite you over for dinner with friends. She will expect you to laugh (authentically) at all her dumb

jokes. She will demand your closest attention; you may not scroll through Facebook when talking to her. She can be innocent and loving. But she can also be noisy, needy, clingy, self-centred, surprisingly cruel; and she can throw the most spectacular screaming tantrums when she doesn't get her own way, her meltdowns are epic. If you have something she wants

she may just take it without asking. She can embarrass you in public. She has no status, nor influence, no income. She relies almost entirely on others for her well-being. If you desire to experience God, she must be your best friend. If you want the keys to the kingdom of God, she has them. For it is only in being her friend that you can live a good life.

She is of course a child, one of the little ones who symbolise the message of Jesus and what it means. Beware though, if you cause her any difficulty, if you make life more difficult for her in any way, you will regret it so much it will feel like drowning (“If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were hung around your neck, and you were thrown into the sea”). Who are the little ones? Children, of course. Any who are the least, the lost or the last in society, are the little ones, including outsiders. Outsiders are little ones too.

Deeds not creeds

Mark 9:38–50 is a collection of aphorisms, pithy, pointed sayings that have a sharp end. The theme of the little ones having a privileged perspective on the kingdom of God continues from Mark 9.36. Among the sayings in Mark 9.38-50, outsiders are included as “little ones.” The introduction to the collection



of aphorism or pithy sayings is an all too familiar scenario. John points out someone outside their group who is copying their work without a license and needs to cease and desist. It is not written in the text, but I can imagine Jesus rolling his eyes, grinding his teeth, and doing



the first century equivalent of a face palm 🙄. For a change, it is not Peter getting it wrong, but John. Just as John wanted to control who was in and who was out, we do the same. At its best, a license empowers people in a healthy community for servant leadership. At its best a license is practical, it

offers a community confidence that those they trust with a license are accountable, trained and operate within beneficial boundaries. Yet these licenses can easily degenerate into the situation depicted with John in Mark's Gospel 9.38, a way to put up fences and establish power and control.

There is much evidence and anecdote to indicate that 2000 years later, we are not well taught by Jesus. John is operating according to the usual human dualisms, us vs them, in vs out, right vs wrong. Many theorists surmise that religion developed to hold a group together. The origin of religion is that it is a cultural marker that offered tribal identity. Survival is dependent on group cohesion and cooperation and religion originated to support and promote group identity. How much has changed since the origin of religions? We still use religion to build "tribes". Those that go to heaven and those that go to hell. Protestant vs Catholic. Christian vs Muslim. Muslim vs Jew. Hindu vs Christian. Within Anglican circles there are definite divides between evangelicals and progressives, high church vs low church, conservatives and liberals; too much of "us" vs "them".

Jesus offers a realistic response to the disciples and to us; **to presume the best of everybody** unless they state

categorically, they are against you. **Jesus validates the liberating practice of outsiders** (Whoever is not against us is for us). Jesus goes further in saying **that anyone who offers hospitality and compassion to another, is, at that moment, serving Christ** (whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ will by no means lose the reward). It is deeds that matter, not creeds.

Metaphorical language



Jesus uses scary imagery to make the point that we should not build fences around who is in and who is out, that can cause difficulties for others (and if your eye causes you to stumble, tear it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and to be thrown into hell, where their worm never dies, and the fire is never quenched). The powerfully symbolic language forbids the erection of rigid social boundaries around the community of faith. I have every confidence that Jesus did not mean for his disciples to amputate the legs and hands of wrong doers. The aphorisms Jesus uses are poetic and metaphoric and not meant to be taken literally. The image of hell is precisely that, an image, a metaphor and not meant to be taken literally. What we call hell the Bible calls Gehennem in Arabic and Hebrew, the Valley of Hinnom. Today on the Northern slopes of Gehenna are gentrified townhouses for the rich, cinemas and a concert hall. In the time of Jesus, the Valley of Hinnom was remembered as the place where children were willingly sacrificed by their parents to the god Molech. A valley outside the Jerusalem's walls, Gehennem was the rubbish dump, a place of constantly burning trash fires, and in some places untreated sewerage. Strong imagery for an

assertive teaching on welcoming outsiders: not offering a welcome to outsiders is like living in a rubbish head.

Interpreting the metaphors

How do we best interpret the strong imagery and metaphors Jesus uses? My reflection is that Jesus is saying that evil or hell is not out there or over there. Evil, sin, corruption is not in those people in the out group. Corruption is here, within, in the in group. In fact, corruption is as close as your eye, as close as your hand and closer than your feet. Your greatest enemy is not over there, out there. Your greatest enemy is here, in here. Don't try to change 'those' people 'over there'. Focus on your issues, focus on your 'stuff'. Let the salt and fire purify you. Often good comes from the outside and betrayal from the inside

Concluding image

This week the fence around the Alstonville Anglicans Church came down. This is because we are building a vegetable garden for the community on our verge. I come from South Johannesburg where we know about fences and walls. Fences are a minimum of 2.5m high and topped up with barbs and electric wires. Some even have security cameras and distress alarms. The little picket fence around St Bartholomew's is about 40cm high – hardly worthy of the term fence. However, I was surprised at how open and inviting the church property now seems. I suspect that it is not only the physical barrier that was dismantled, but God willing, it is symbolic of the breakdown of any psychological, social, invisible and spiritual boundaries too.



Wednesday, 29 September 2021

Dear Sisters and Brothers

Vaccination Status and Public Worship from 11 October

By now you will have heard the government's announcement that from 11 October unvaccinated people will not be allowed to participate in public worship.

While this will be for a short period, from 11 October until such time as NSW reaches the vaccination rate of 80% (of the 16+ Population) - probably about two or three weeks, it will mean that we will sadly need to exclude the unvaccinated from our churches during this time.

I ask that you communicate this clearly and widely amongst your people as soon as possible so that they are well advised in advance, that unless they are fully vaccinated, compliance with Public Health Orders means that they will not be allowed to participate.

Please be sure to make it clear that this is to comply with Public Health Orders and is not a policy of the Diocese or of the Anglican Church of Australia. However, we have complied with every public health order so far and this will be a continuation of our commitment to fully comply with this forthcoming Public Health Order.

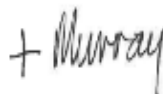
I hope that those who, either through choice or through the difficulty of obtaining a vaccine, will be able to join your ministry unit through online worship during this short time.

Worship leaders such as LLMs and clergy and any others on rosters in the worship space such as musicians, churchwardens, readers, sidespersons and so on, will also need to have been vaccinated by 11 October if they are to participate in public worship. Please ensure that your rostering from 11 October reflects this.

The question of how we are to ascertain people's vaccination status is a difficult one and we are awaiting further clarification of this from NSW Health. It is possible that the check-in App will not have this added capacity by 11 October. The NSW Bishops have expressed the view to the government, via the Metropolitan, that it would not be appropriate to expect volunteers at the church door to be responsible for the checking of vaccination certificates.

I will write again soon once more details are available.

Yours in Christ



Dr Murray Harvey
Bishop of Grafton

ANGLICAN PARISH OF ALSTONVILLE

Ministers all the baptised!

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Associates 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

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The Anglican Op Shop

1 The Avenue, Alstonville **Tel:** 6628 8777

Dates 3rd October to 10th October

3 rd October	Sunday 9am Holy Communion
4 th October	Monday 10am Anam Cara Praying for You Parish Office open 9am-12pm Op Shop open 9am-3pm
5 th October	Tuesday Parish Office closed (Please avoid going to the office)
6 th October	Wednesday 9am Anam Cara Parish Office open 9am-12pm Op Shop open 9am-3pm Messy Church Planning Meeting 4pm
7 th October	Parish Office open 9am-12pm Op Shop open 9am-3pm Thursday Anam Cara 6pm
8 th October	Friday 10am Holy Communion Parish Office open 9am-12pm
10 th October	Sunday 9am Holy Communion Sunday 10am St Peter and St Paul's