



Alstonville
Anglicans

Sunday 3rd December 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

3rd December – 10th December

3 rd December	9am	Sunday Holy Communion
	10.30am	Advent Life Group
4 th December	9am-12pm	Monday Parish Office
	9am-3pm	Op Shop
	10am	Anam Cara
	10am	Deadline for bulletin items
	1pm	Sew Helpful
	3.30pm	Op Shop Meeting
	5pm	Spirit Ability
5 th December	9am-12pm	Tuesday Parish Office Closed
6 th December	9am-12pm	Wednesday Parish Office Open
	9am	Anam Cara
	9am-3pm	Op Shop
	3.30pm	Property Meeting
7 th December	9am-12pm	Thursday Parish Office Open
	9am-3pm	Op Shop
	9.30am	Play Place (in recess)
	6pm	Anam Cara
8 th December	9am-12pm	Friday Parish Office Open
	10am	Holy Communion
9 th December		Saturday Advent Life Group material available.
10 th December	9am	Sunday Holy Communion
	10.30am	Advent Life Group

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

Susan Williamson

Sadly Susan Williamson passed away this week. Her funeral will be held at 10am on Monday 4th December in Canberra. We will publish the livestream link as soon as it is available. The livestream will also be shown in the church from 10am.


Spirit Ability

Christmas celebration Monday 4th December 5-8pm.



Spirit Ability
Providing Spiritual and emotional support to Christians living with a disability, their carers, families and supporters.
Monday 4th December 5-8pm
Christmas celebration!
Alstonville Anglican Hall
6-8 The Avenue, Alstonville 0428 404 783

To Make you Smile



What did one eye say to the other eye?
Between you and me something smells!

Advent Life Groups



Advent is a time to pause and reflect on life. An advent life group is on offer on the first three Sundays of Advent from 10.30am to 11.30 am. Alternatively you may choose to do it online, either

alone or with a group of friends. The films will be available at 12.35 pm on Saturdays from our

website. Our guide will be Rachel Held Evans. The film series is called "A New Family".

<https://www.theworkofthepeople.com/premieres/1559>

30th Anniversary of the Ordination of Women in the Diocese of Grafton

Saturday 2nd December 10am at Christ Church Cathedral Grafton.

Everybody welcome. RSVP via the link below.

<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/748834352707?aff=oddtcreator>

Acknowledgement of Associate Clergy, LLM's and Lyn Stuckey

On Friday 1st and Sunday 3rd of December the Associate Clergy and LLM's will be given their renewed licences. We will also acknowledge Lyn Stuckey's service as head Sacristant. Lyn will be cutting back on her sacristant duties.

Blessing of the Ballina Labyrinth

Saturday 9 December at 9.30 am, St Mary's Ballina

You're invited to the community blessing of the labyrinth at St Mary's Anglican Church, Ballina. Walk the labyrinth, and be part of the blessing with water and bubbles.

Music by the Threshold Choir

Refreshments available from the Coffee Cart

Bring a hat/umbrella/sunscreen, and a picnic rug or chair to sit on. Bring your kids and grandkids too!

The Israel / Palestine Conflict.

The link below offers a perspective on this conflict from Reverend Gregory Jenks.

<https://gregoryjenks.com/publications/one-land-two-peoples/>

Lost Property

A bright colourful umbrella has been found and is in the Parish Office awaiting collection.



Sermon Notes Sunday 26th November

Desiree Snyman

Christ the king indicates the end of the liturgical year. We imagine a time when Christ is truly all in all and the world is transformed by love. The reading for year A in the year of Matthew reflects on the final parable of a sequence of three parables that is told at the end of Jesus' ministry before his death. It is my observation that this parable has been misinterpreted. Before I offer one way of understanding today's parable, let's first talk about what Matthew does not mean.

First, when Matthew describes the kingdom of heaven, he is not referring to the afterlife. This is not heaven, a "pie in the sky when you die" utopia. Kingdom of heaven means the kingdom of God. Matthew uses the word heaven instead of God as his Jewish upbringing discourages using the name of the Lord. When Matthew uses the term kingdom of God, he refers to the here and now, what society can look like if we fashion our politics, economics, education and foreign policy so that it reflects the values of Jesus. As we have seen in other parts of Matthew's Gospel, the unknown authors use fear and urgency as a strategy to shock people into deciding to enter into the kingdom of God. Fear has its usefulness at the start.

Second, when Matthew refers to the Gehenna or the place where there is fire and gnashing of teeth, he is not referring to hell. Concepts of heaven



and hell as we imagine them today are not based on Scripture but on medieval Christianity influenced by Milton and Dante. Gehenna was the rubbish dump outside Jerusalem. The kingdom of God offers a life worth living, it offers the good life, a life of authentic joy, peace and connection. The opposite of the good life is like living in a rubbish dump, Gehenna, with smouldering fires, smoke and gnashing of teeth. It is a rhetorical device, a metaphor, to illustrate the fundamental option that faces us as we build our lives either on love or self-interest.

Third, this parable is not about individuals who are either good little sheep that through enough good deeds "get into heaven." It is not about naughty not nice goats who are not only crossed of Santa's list but not allowed into heaven. It is a judgement of the nations, *ta panta ethne*, not individuals. It also reflects on what well governed countries look like when people can thrive. The good life is shared and honoured by all. More of this later.

The parable is not a poem, it is also not George Elliot's *Animal Farm*, and it is not allusion. The sheep do not allude to Israel and the goats do not allude to other Palestinians. The parable is just that a parable, and not a literal foreshadowing of events to come.

The parable is also not about separating people based on good deeds and bad deeds. There are no good people and bad people. In other parables Jesus resisted our desire to separate the world into categories. For example, in the parable of the wheat and the chaff when the workers wanted to separate the wheat from the tares, i.e. the good from the bad, they were challenged not to. The line between good and bad is not between people but within people.

The judgement of the nations emphasises how there is more at stake for us than our own individual lifestyles and decisions. We are invited to reflect how each of us is located in the broader flow of culture and history. We are offered a new way to measure the success of society beyond economic growth, inflationary targets and GDP.

Instead, the measurement from Christ the King is a call to resist all that is not gentle, generous, loving, merciful, graceful, just. All that does not look after the least, the last and lost is to be resisted. Society is to be built on



the basis that if the most vulnerable can flourish all can flourish. The blessed ones are the ones left behind; the ones who are poor, who mourn, who hunger and thirst for what is right, the ones who are cast out for resisting injustice, for resisting greed.

In our own context what does this look like? Imagine a world of a just, well-resourced and well-functioning NDIS. Imagine a youth detention centre that does not seek to punish children in medieval ways but lays the foundation for holistic healing and wholeness for trauma that is so often at the basis of youth crime. Imagine a world where we have moved beyond the myth of “the deserving poor” and people on Centrelink are respected and honoured rather than treated like second rate citizens. I wonder if in Australia today the transcendent lordship of the free market economy of neo liberalism is starting to lose some of its shine?

The Gospel reading highlights the choices that we are already making. Those nations that honour the intelligence of the victim are those nations that thrive in safety and prosperity. Both Denmark, America and New Zealand have suffered terrorist attacks. Denmark called for a society of more justice, more hospitality to the foreigner, more kindness. New Zealand’s then prime minister called for solidarity, donning the garb of the Muslim victims and embracing them in their pain. America called for total vengeance. Those nations that are victim making will continue to live with violence and instability. The parable invites us to consider the unjust systems humanity has created that widen the gap between the rich and the poor. We know from research that the wider the gap between rich and poor the more unstable and violent a country is. According to the world bank, South Africa is the world’s most unequal society. In Australia the gap between rich and poor is widening as cost-of-living pressures and unequal access to housing effect the most vulnerable. As that gap widens, Australia will journey down the path of instability, violence and crime.

Whatever interpretation you choose, we would all do well to remember the scriptural depictions of the judgement of God, that it is utter kindness and generosity. We who judge ourselves and each other critically welcome the kindness of God who knows what God has made and whose judgement of us is extravagant grace and mercy. The final judgement seat of God is revealed in John, two angels sit on either side of the empty place where Jesus lay – evoking the memory of the seat of mercy – judgement.

Sentence of the Day

'Heaven and earth will pass away,' says the Lord, 'but my words will not pass away.' Mark 13.31

Collect

Eternal God,
through long generations you prepared a way
for the coming of your Son,
and by your Spirit
you still bring light to illumine our paths:
renew us in faith and hope
that we may welcome Christ to rule our thoughts
and claim our love;
to whom be glory for ever. **Amen.**

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.'