



Alstonville Anglicans

Fifteenth Sunday of Pentecost

Sunday 5th September 2021



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

Liturgy for 5th September

Sentence of the Day

So speak and so act as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty. James 2.13.

Collect

Almighty and everlasting God,
increase our faith, hope, and love,
and, that we may receive all you promise,
make us love what you command;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Readings

Mark 7:24–37

²⁴ From there he set out and went away to the region of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know he was there. Yet he could not escape notice, ²⁵ but a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit immediately heard about him, and she came and bowed down at his feet. ²⁶ Now the woman was a Gentile, of Syrophoenician origin. She begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter. ²⁷ He said to her, "Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." ²⁸ But she answered him, "Sir, even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs." ²⁹ Then he said to her, "For saying that, you may go—the demon has left your daughter." ³⁰ So she went home, found the child lying on the bed, and the demon gone. ³¹ Then he returned from the region of Tyre, and went by way of Sidon towards the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Decapolis. ³² They brought to him

a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech; and they begged him to lay his hand on him. ³³ He took him aside in private, away from the crowd, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spat and touched his tongue. ³⁴ Then looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, "Ephphatha," that is, "Be opened." ³⁵ And immediately his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly. ³⁶ Then Jesus ordered them to tell no one; but the more he ordered them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. ³⁷ They were astounded beyond measure, saying, "He has done everything well; he even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak."

Messages

Due to COVID restrictions, the church office and building is closed until further notice. Sunday services may be viewed on the website anglicans.live.

Pastoral Care

Skills for Increasing Resilience

COVID can test and build our resilience. Resilience is the ability to bounce back after a stress or crises. With the second lock down and all the other recent challenges, perhaps our ability to bounce back is challenged. I think this is normal and healthy. I recently attended a clergy conference. Tim Deyer was the speaker, and



he was outstanding. I offer below what Tim Deyer offered us as I found it practical and helpful.

It can be worth assigning a 1 – 10 self-rating to each to enable identification of which elements you personally draw on as strengths and which to work on developing in the context of the current adversity (COVID19 and its consequences in terms of health, lockdowns, and isolation.)

1. Situational realism

This is the capacity of an individual or group to realistically assess the adversity and to understand its impact on the person or organisation. Reflect on the facts. Do not catastrophise or minimise the situation.

(Mental health, grief and loss, fatigue, stress and burnout, transition, defining the nature of the adversity)

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2. Cultivating a positive challenge mentality

Having a challenge mentality allows an appropriate level of confidence along with a commitment to learn and respond to the adversity with hope. It engages a cautious and informed optimism.

(Maintaining a careful sense of hope, willingness to learn and grow)

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3. Clear underlying values

When adversity strikes, the elements in an organisation or system (including a family) which 'carry' or 'embody' the values of the system may disappear. It is critical for the continuity of the organisation or system to re-affirm the core values and find way to re-embody them (if possible) in new maybe temporary practices.

(Re-affirm core values, rule of life, spiritual practices, re-embody them, find new ways to express them)

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4. Supportive Relationships

One of the highest-ranking elements of resilience is not an individual capacity but the ability to draw on supportive relationships, particularly from people outside the adversity or with experience of having already dealt with the adversity. There are a range of types of supportive relationships all with unique elements including professionals, family members, peers and personal friends.

(Intentionally foster and develop supportive relationships, online (zoom etc), phone, family and friends, peers and professionals)

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5. Spirituality

Finally and most importantly, research indicates meaningful spirituality is critical in times of adversity. This includes practices of prayer, finding meaning and purpose in what is occurring and enabling hope and faith.

(Cultivate new spiritual disciplines and practices appropriate to this period of sustained change and restriction – this is a good time to engage in new

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Tim Dyer The Johnmark Extension 2021 (Updated)

Good Governance

COVID LOCKDOWN

As we all know we are in lockdown, which means no meetings or church services (except online), and no Op Shop. If the lockdown finishes, then we are straight away back to as before with usual restrictions.

In breaking news ...



CHMeetings

The Parish is rolling out a new data base system designed to help manage parishioner

information. CHMeetings was chosen because it is easy to use and has stringent security measures built in to protect the privacy of your information. Parish leaders will be able to communicate with members of their teams and parishioners will be able to update their own information by downloading the app. Please be assured that there will still be printed directories available once the office reopens. If you are interested, follow the link here and learn more about the system. www.chmeetings.com

Community Engagement

Community-On-the-verge

The Anam Cara meditation group is planning to develop a community food garden on the perimeter of St Bartholomew's church. The project will incorporate permaculture and planting in garden beds. Vegetables, fruit, edible plants and herbs will be grown.

The vision is that the garden will offer a connection point for our church community and the wider Alstonville community. We hope to develop a garden that people can work on, contribute to and harvest as a community.

Local community groups will be invited to be part of the project. The first working bee is scheduled for Saturday 30th October 2-4pm. (COVID permitting). Everyone is welcome.



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 REPLACED by Play Place Zoom
9:55 to 10:30 Thursdays.

Meeting number 794 532 1277

passcode 371 870

Refashioned Storage Room



Thank you to the Parish leaders who worked so hard to clear out the storage room off the Ministry Centre.

The space will be used for:

- small meetings, mediation, counselling
- a quiet space for use as a study or an office
- to house a specialised Contemplative Library and be a reading room.

Father's Day

We acknowledge this day can be a difficult for many due to a variety of reasons. May we be mindful and prayerful towards those experiencing sadness, grief, and other emotions that this day can bring.



Creator God,
you entrusted your Son Jesus, the child of Mary,

to the care of Joseph, an earthly father.
Bless *all fathers*
as they care for their families.
Give them strength and wisdom,
tenderness and patience;
support them in the work they have to do,
protecting those who look to them,
as we look to you for love and salvation,
through Jesus Christ our rock and defender.
Amen.

Organ Platform

A huge thank you to Phill Cowie for the beautiful custom built organ platform. We appreciate your skill and generosity.



Congratulations

Heartfelt congratulations to Robin and Brian Delaney as they welcome a new grand daughter, Olive June born on the 15th August.

Worship and Spirituality



Anam Cara Earth Vigil

The Anam Cara group are organising an Earth Vigil Wednesday
3rd November 8am-8pm

Anam Cara

Wednesday 9am

Priest Anglicans is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6224874493?pwd=ZFhidWtHTHV3NUk3UE9hcXNzaHEwdz09>

Meeting ID: 622 487 4493

Passcode: 82462477

Sermon discussion

Each week a 'Thought of the Week' is uploaded to our Youtube channel. Follow the link below to catch up with Paul and Desiree as they discuss metaphors.

https://studio.youtube.com/video/s152C4P_Ubs/edit

Sermon notes on Mark 7 29th August

Rule 8: Flags are not curtains

A flag in the window is a tell-tale sign that backpackers have moved in. And if NSW tourism department is at all interested in my amateur research, I would say that based on the number of flag curtains in my area, the majority of visitors to Bondi Junction are coming from Ireland and Brazil. Welcome to you all ... now please go buy some curtains.

Rule 29: "It is what it is" actually means please stop talking.

When someone says "it is what it is" they are not being wise and philosophical. Rather, they are sick of listening to you and are trying to wrap up the conversation.

Rule 13: Replace the toilet roll

Just do it. You're a grown-up. It takes 10 seconds.

The above are from Kitty Flanagan's *488 rules for life: that thankless art of being correct* (Published in 2019 by Allen & Unwin, Crows' Nest NSW). According to the blurb, "*488 Rules for Life* is not a self-help book, because it's not you who needs help, it's other people. Whether they're walking and texting, asphyxiating you on public transport with their noxious perfume cloud, or leaving one useless square of toilet paper on the roll, a lot of people just don't know the rules. But thanks to Kitty Flanagan's comprehensive guide to modern behaviour, our world will soon be a much better place..."



Rules



I admit to having a giggle not only to Kitty Flanagan's rules, but also that our lectionary reading turns up at this place in time. We're in lockdown for the second time since 9 August and have been for three weeks. If you want to be a social pariah, try not washing or sanitising your

hands. To be a compulsive hand washer is the new norm. COVID has made hand washing Pharisees of all of us.

In Mark 7 the Pharisees challenge Jesus because his disciples are breaking rules regarding the washing of hands. Synoptic parallels to Mark 7 include Matthew 15.1-20. There are echoes of Mark 7 also in Acts 10 and Galatians 2.11-14. In Matthew 23:25 and Luke 11.39, Jesus warns: "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence".

The purity code of the Pharisees made rules that previously applied only to priests applicable to all Jews thereby making them the nascent priesthood of all believers. The word Pharisees means pure ones. They are the ancestors of modern-day Judaism. They believed in the *written and oral* traditions. "The tradition of the elders" is the oral tradition (Mark 7.3). The written tradition is of course the Torah which form the first five books of our Bible (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy). The oral tradition was eventually collated in a document called the Mishnah. The Mishnah gives helpful detail to the written law. For example, Exodus 20.8 says "remember the Sabbath". The Mishnah spells "remember the Sabbath" out in more detail by stating 39 **categories** of activity that are prohibited on the Sabbath. Helpful? Meh.

Jesus' response to the Pharisees

In response to the Pharisees, Jesus doesn't enter debate about the rules or traditions at all. Then, as now, fundamentalists are mostly not open to dialogue nor conversation, there is little point in debating their point of view. Instead, Jesus asks questions about the function of rules. Here Pharisees use rules to say who is in or out, good or bad, right or wrong, saved or damned. The Pharisaic traditions are used divisively, alienating people from each other, from God, from creation and tragically, alienating them within themselves. Here I am reminded of a professor (Brian Gaybba) who always said **"sin divides, and having divided, destroys what it has divided. Love unites and transforms all that it unites."** It may be that some rules/traditions are sin more than love.

Jesus teaches with a parable, making the point that it is only what comes out the body that corrupts. There is more than a double entendre here. Jesus is also referring to the corporate body and the social function of the purity code. In other words, excluding others will not protect the integrity of a community.

Scapegoating others will not protect the community. The threat to any community is often within. It is those within our tradition that may corrupt us, especially through their attitudes, and behaviours. Welcoming others outside the tradition will not corrupt us therefore we can welcome the stranger and the outsider for "You shall not wrong or oppress a resident alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt" (Exodus 22:21).

Rules, traditions, and our context

How do we feel about rules and traditions today?

Perhaps we feel that our attachment to rules and traditions is looser than that of the Pharisees in Mark 7, rendering this aspect of the Gospel moot. However, our faith fosters a society of healthy boundaries. Boundaries that protect the weak



from the abuse of the strong are desirable. I am confident that I speak on behalf of all Northern Rivers' residents when I express frustration at the individual from Rose Bay who disobeyed health orders when he visited us, thereby potentially endangering the lives and livelihood of our whole area that is now in lockdown. While we have been forced to sacrifice many freedoms, adherence to lock-down measures that protect the weak is reasonable.

A ten-minute sermon does not offer space to do justice to the nuances of the situation in Afghanistan. Nonetheless as I reflect on the Scriptures in the light of international news, the recent attack in Afghanistan is an extreme symbol of how death dealing a clash of fundamentalist traditions can be; those of so called Muslim and Christian democratic ideology.

What Jesus does for us today is put the “tradition of the elders” under the microscope. Should you wish to receive it, (and I don’t mind if you don’t), there is an invitation today to closely examine our traditions and the extent to which they heal us or rob us of our humanity. An invitation is offered for a close examination on cultural, spiritual, personal and community traditions and or rules.

Tradition under the microscope

In recent years it seems that the Anzac traditions have been sacralised. Any who ask questions about the nature and effect of the Anzac tradition on our collective consciousness are cold-shouldered. At the same time there is still a lack of momentum to honour the tradition of the First Nations people. Perhaps these cultural traditions of Anzac and First Nations people can be placed under the microscope as we question who is humanised or dehumanised by our current practices.

One tradition that deserves further scrutiny is the place of authority and Scripture in our evolution as humans. Many scholars argue convincingly that Jesus himself was a Pharisee. Yet Jesus’s use of tradition and Scripture is ... well... dodgy. Here in Mark 7.1-23 and Matthew 23 Jesus seems to disagree with Scriptures that place too much weight on non-essentials. Jesus also openly and brazenly breaks Scriptural rules by working on the Sabbath, partying with gentiles, touching lepers, touching the dead, teaching women and refusing to stone a woman caught in adultery. In other places in the Gospel Jesus just plain ignores punitive aspects of Scripture (e.g., Luke 4.18-19 Jesus omits part of Isaiah 61.2). It is the place and authority of Scripture that lies at the heart of much church division and debates around the exclusion or inclusion of LGBTQIA+ people in marriage, and women into the college of bishops. I suggest that the use of Scripture be scrutinised under the microscope

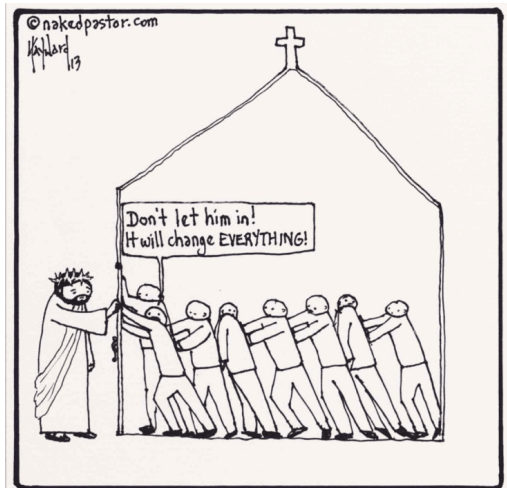
and like Jesus we no longer present Scripture as a divine command.

Liturgical or worship traditions hit close to the bone for many. Churches dance between the polarities of adherence to tradition or adapting to cultural relevance. While some argue passionately for the use of the rites and customs of tradition, they forget that the very rites and customs they are arguing for were once the progressive adaptations that frightened the conservative.

In the constant balance between engaging community and honouring tradition that makes us more human we want to closely examine what aspects open our minds and hearts to freedom, inclusion, and compassion. What part of our worship allows others to feel loved? Either in our time-honoured tradition or our modern adaptations is there anything that makes us judgemental, fearful, bored, and stingy? What gravitates us towards courage, creativity and a deeper experience of God?

Our traditions have much to answer for. We have excluded too many too often too much. Is it any wonder that our churches are empty? We have changed, but we have not changed enough. Without a spiritual and social revolution our church, heavy with tradition, will sink like the Titanic.

In sum, there is an invitation to examine all our traditions: cultural, personal, and spiritual. When examining our traditions under the microscope, the gaze is love. We reflect on what enhances



our inner experience of the divine and what is dehumanising. The Spirit gives us courage to surrender what is no longer life giving.

ANGLICAN PARISH OF ALSTONVILLE

OUR VISION

Our vision and purpose is:

Sharing the Good Life.

Sharing the Good Life means:

we partner with God in creating heaven on earth.

OUR MISSION

In sharing the Good Life, we cultivate:

- **Invigorating, diverse** worship and **transforming** spirituality.
- **Outstanding** community engagement
- **Nourishing pastoral care.**
- **Empowering & visionary servant** leadership
- **Good Governance** of property, finances, administration and a Safe Church Culture.

OUR STRUCTURE

Portfolio	Purpose
Pastoral Care	To show Christ’s love in action.
Worship & Spirituality	To glorify God, proclaim the good news and pursue peace and reconciliation through personal and social transformation.
Community engagement (outreach and communication)	To respond to human need by loving service. To have communication that is caring, clear, concise, correct and that connects people with each other.
Op Shop	To respond to human need by loving service.

Leadership	To implement the vision, mission, values and to work towards strategic goals.
Good governance: Finance, Admin, Safe Ministry and Property	To have outstanding facilities and sustainable resources for mission & ministry.

Ministers all the baptised!

Rector The Reverend Dr Desiree Snyman
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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 5th September to 12th September

5 th September	Sunday 9am Holy Communion ONLINE
6 th September	Monday 10am Anam Cara Praying for You CANCELLED Parish Office CLOSED Op Shop CLOSED
7 th September	Tuesday Parish Office closed (Please avoid going to the office)
8 th September	Wednesday 9am Anam Cara ONLINE Parish Office and Op Shop CLOSED
9 th September	Parish Office CLOSED Op Shop CLOSED Play Place 9.30am-11.30am ONLINE
10 th Sept	Friday 10am Holy Communion CANCELLED Parish Office CLOSED
12 th Sept	Sunday 9am Holy Communion