



Alstonville Anglicans

Pentecost 5 - 5th July 2020

You are welcome to join us this
week...

**Stop
Press
9am**

- Sunday@**9am**. **Anglican Service of Worship in the Ministry Centre.** Or connect via webpage www.anglicans.live
- Sunday@6pm A conversation approach. Ministry Centre. Or connect via webpage www.anglicans.live
- Anam Cara – a meditation group. Wednesday 9am St Bartholomew's



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

Matthew reports Jesus comparing “this generation” with children in the market place complaining,

“We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we wailed, and you did not mourn

At first sight, this is a simple story about “flute playing children and the arrogance of not dancing”.

In Matthew, messengers have arrived from an imprisoned John the Baptist asking if Jesus is “the one who is to come.” Jesus’ response is to enquire what did they expect, “a reed shaken by the wind? Someone dressed in soft robes?” The *reed* was a Herodian symbol; the text a clear reference to Herod Antipas, then the ruler (Tetrarch) of Galilee and Perea.

Mark places a dance *within* Herod’s palace, when his step daughter danced at his birthday bash. In the Greek text, the daughter is called *korasion*, a term usually used for a young girl not yet a woman, or a little girl. The girl remained unnamed until the 1st century historian Josephus recorded her name as Salome, a name that evokes a sense of sensuality. Unfortunately this name has stuck, even in academic

literature.

The context of both accounts is the beheading of John the Baptist. This is, as Jean Psichari eloquently states, “the fatal turning point in salvation history – the death of the prophet and the completion of the Old Covenant.”

Mark’s account ends in tragic sadness. Herod actually enjoyed listening to John, and was mortified when he was trapped into beheading him. And an innocent girl becomes a vehicle for her mother’s evil desire. Is there a touch of misogyny here? Stepmothers carry a heavy burden.

Matthew’s account ends in grace.

“Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

Doug Bannerman



Pentecost 5

9am Liturgy

5th July 2020

Welcome and acknowledgment of country

Sentence of the Day

'Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest,' says the Lord. 'Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart.'

Matthew 11.28–29

Opening Song

1. Jesus Christ is waiting,
waiting in the streets;
no-one is his neighbour,
all alone he eats.
Listen, Lord Jesus,
I am lonely too.
Make me, friend or stranger,
fit to wait on you.

2. Jesus Christ is raging,
raging in the streets,
where injustice spirals

and real hope retreats.
Listen, Lord Jesus,
I am angry too.
In the Kingdom's causes
let me rage with you.

3. Jesus Christ is healing,
healing in the streets;
curing those who suffer,
touching those he greets.
Listen, Lord Jesus,
I have pity too.
Let my care be active,
healing just like you.

4. Jesus Christ is dancing,
dancing in the streets,
where each sign of hatred
he, with love, defeats.
Listen, Lord Jesus,
I should triumph too.
Where Good conquers evil
let me dance with you.

5. Jesus Christ is calling,
calling in the streets,
'Who will join my journey?
I will guide their feet.'
Listen, Lord Jesus,
let my fears be few.
Walk one step before me;
I will follow you.

*John Bell CCLI Song # 996498
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Reading

Matthew 11:15-19,25-30

¹⁵ Let anyone with ears listen! ¹⁶ "But to what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to one another, ¹⁷ 'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we wailed, and you did not mourn.' ¹⁸ For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon'; ¹⁹ the Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds."

²⁵ At that time Jesus said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; ²⁶ yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. ²⁷ All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. ²⁸ "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy

burdens, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Sermon

Intercessory Prayers

We pray:

for those who make decisions about the resources of the earth,

that we may use your gifts responsibly;

for those who work on the land and sea, in city and in industry,

that all may enjoy the fruits of their labours and marvel at your creation.

for artists, scientists and visionaries,

that through their work we may see creation afresh.

for all who are deprived of fullness of life,

for prisoners, refugees, and those who are sick;

for those in politics, medical science, social and relief work, and for your Church, **for all who seek to bring life to others.**

Blessing

Whichever way we turn,
O God,
there is your face
in the light of the moon
and patterns of stars
in scarred mountain rifts
and ancient groves
in mighty seas
and creatures of the deep.
Whichever way we turn,
O God,
there is your face
in the light of eyes we love
in the salt of tears we have
tasted
in weathered countenances
east and west
in the soft skin glow of the
child everywhere.
Whichever way we turn,
O God,
there is your face
There is your face among us.



PRAYER FOR THE LIFE OF THE WORLD

By John Philip Newell

On this day
the blessings of heaven.
On this day
the blessings of earth.
On this day
the blessings of sea and of sky.
To open us to life
to ground us in life
to fill us with life and with wonder.
On those we love this day
and on every human family
the blessings of heaven
the blessings of earth
the blessings of sea and of sky.

From Praying with the Earth: A Prayer book for Peace by John Philip Newell

Final Song

1. Christ's is the world
in which we move;
Christ's are the folk
we're summoned to love;
Christ's is the voice
which calls us to care,
and Christ is the one
who meets us here.

*To the lost Christ shows his face,
to the unloved he gives his
embrace,
to those who cry in pain or
disgrace,
Christ makes, with his friends,
a touching place.*

2. Feel for the people we most avoid
strange or bereaved
or never employed.
Feel for the women
and feel for the men
who fear that their living
is all in vain.

To the lost Christ shows...

3. Feel for the parents
who've lost their child,
feel for the women
whom men have defiled,
feel for the baby
for whom there's no breast,
and feel for the weary
who find no rest.

To the lost Christ shows...

4. Feel for the lives
by life confused,
riddled with doubt,
in loving abused;
feel for the lonely heart,
conscious of sin,
which longs to be pure
but fears to begin.

To the lost Christ shows...

*John Bell and Graham Maule
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Pentecost 5 6pm Sunday 5th July 2020

Solidarity The Fifth Conversion

The **Fifth Conversion** to solidarity is a choice to walk with the poor and oppressed, to be taught by them, and to love them as equals, each of us bearing the Divine Indwelling Spirit within.

Although he was raised Roman Catholic and worked with many religious organizations, Paulo Freire rarely used religious language or metaphors to make his point. Yet his teaching on solidarity is fully aligned with the ministry of Jesus: "Conversion to [solidarity with] the people requires a profound rebirth. Those who undergo it must take on a new form of existence; they can no longer remain as they were." [1]

In his work teaching literacy skills in Brazil and Chile, Freire employed a method of dialogue that created solidarity and transformed systems of injustice. The

dialogue enables the “helper” to let go of any personal agenda and allows the needs of the “helped” to be fully told. Eventually a movement towards liberation is born.

Dialogue further requires an intense faith in humankind . . . faith in their vocation to be more fully human. . . . Founding itself upon love, humility, and faith, dialogue becomes a horizontal relationship of which mutual trust between the dialoguers is the logical consequence.

[2] I hope you can see how living out the Gospel is always a process of what Freire calls *humanization*, [3] a movement toward greater freedom, dignity, inclusivity, and possibility. We are one, and through solidarity we more clearly identify and name the systems that separate us. We find in ourselves and in the other the true “image of God” in which we are created and connected.

The dialogue that leads to solidarity is a way that oppressors and oppressed begin to recognize each other as *subjects* in their full humanity, as both learn and

teach in this active encounter of faith and love. Here is Freire, in his own words: Dialogue cannot exist without humility.

How can I dialogue if I regard myself as a case apart from others—mere “its” in whom I cannot recognize other “I”s? How can I dialogue if I consider myself . . . The owner of truth and knowledge? How can I dialogue if I am closed to—and even offended by—the contributions of others? Self-sufficiency is incompatible with dialogue. At the point of encounter [in dialogue] there are neither utter ignoramuses nor perfect sages; there are only people who are attempting, together, to learn more than they now know. [4]

We are all on this journey together and we are all in need of liberation (which might be a better word than salvation). God’s intention is



solidarity with, and universal responsibility for, the whole. As Paul taught, "If one part is hurt, all parts share in the pain. If one part is honoured, all the parts share in the joy" (1 Corinthians 12:26). Think of Christianity as a giant act of solidarity with the marginalized, and all of creation.

Let's watch the video (link below) of Meyne Wyatt from ABC's Q&A.

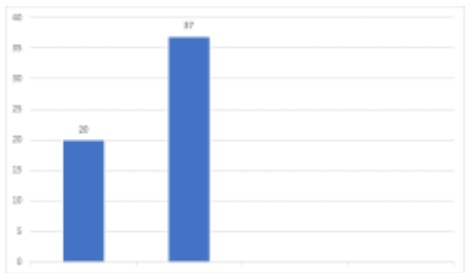
<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-06-09/actor-meyne-wyatt-delivers-monologue-on-racism/12334392?nw=0>

Questions?

- What purpose is there in Acknowledgement of Country, is the phrase 'land always was and always will be Aboriginal land' just empty rhetoric? Some groups use the phrase 'sovereignty was never ceded' as part of their Acknowledgement, is there benefit in that?
- What responsibility do we currently have for what happened in history?
- Does it help to see European settlement as a war with winners and losers? Is it possible to see that war from a First Nation perspective? ANZAC's lost the war but still we have real sense of national pride in it. Does this hold a clue to moving on from loss?

- Is there any point in a Treaty with First Nation People? What do we make of the Uluru Statement from the Heart <https://ulurustatement.org/> ? How do some of these answers fit with Richard Rohr's Fifth Conversion and where do we see our position on that?

Did you know?
STOP PRESS



75% of Parishioners have requested a 9am service.

Thank you to everyone who responded to the survey.

COVID Team

We are very grateful to the COVID 4 who have worked so hard to put in place safety measures that make it possible for us to meet and worship together.

Thank you!



Rev Desiree would like to express her thanks to the people of the Parish. She has been greatly encouraged by the support and appreciation she has felt during this time of isolation.

NAIDOC

The theme for 2020 is: **'Always Was, Always Will Be.'**

Always Was, Always Will Be recognises that First Nations people have occupied and cared for this continent for over 65,000 years.



In recognition of NAIDOC we will be flying the Torres Strait Islander, Aboriginal and Australian flags during July.

Our Sunday@6 services will reflect NAIDOC this month.

Paul Earner very kindly erected the flagpole structure to support the 3 flags. We caught his efforts on film and would love your ideas on captions for these images!! Please email your ideas to the Parish Office.



Questions

August is the month set aside for answering your questions of faith, life, the universe and everything in between.

There will be a box in the hall and the office. Please drop your questions in or email them through to the office.

Wanted

We are looking for an old or spare washing machine in good working order for a new resident in the area. If you are able to help please contact Rev Desiree.

Sermon Notes

Introduction

Magnified, sanctified be thy holy name

Vilified, crucified in the human frame

A million candles burning for a help that never came

You want it darker, we kill the flame

"Hineni, hineni;

I'm ready, my lord."



Hineni is Hebrew. Hineni means "here I am." The quote is from Leonard Cohen's last album, from the song "you want it darker."

This is a complex song where Cohen wonders about the mystery of suffering.

Hineni is from the Hebrew prayer for mourners, the Kaddish, a prayer that continues to affirm faith in the God of Life when faced with death. Hineni is also the response that Abraham gives when God calls on him to sacrifice his son Isaac.

Hineni meaning "Here I am" is the reply we make to God when we know something important is about to happen, when our lives are about to change forever. When we are asked to partner with God in some great adventure.

The Hebrew word Hineni is how I suggest we approach the story of Abraham's call to sacrifice his son Isaac.

The Rabbi's teach that the Scripture has 70 faces.

What does this mean? The Rabbis felt that there were many layers of interpretation to the Scriptures. When we are open to the text, when we allow the Bible to read us even as we read the Bible, multiple readings emerge.

We do well to remember the 70 faces when reading and understanding Genesis 22,

the sacrifice of Isaac. Let us first indicate which interpretations are NOT one of the 70 faces of approaching.

Genesis 22 is NOT...

Very obviously, Genesis 22 is NOT a request or an endorsement from God that we sacrifice children as an act of worship. Literalist, fundamentalist readings of Scripture are rarely helpful. In so many other places of Scripture, child sacrifice is condemned. There is also the ten commandments - do not murder. There is no fine print to "do not murder" that says - except in the case of child sacrifice.

Genesis 22 is NOT...

It follows on then that Genesis 22 is ALSO NOT an explanation for the death of Jesus. No, God did not sacrifice Jesus as Abraham was asked to sacrifice Isaac - there is no straight line between the sacrifice of Isaac to the death of Jesus. It makes no sense in the text. Note that it was a ram that was caught in the thicket, not a lamb. Jesus is the Passover lamb, not the Passover ram - because there is no such

thing as a Passover ram. There is also no logic to this. Nowhere in the Bible is this link made. It is bad theology communicated through our liturgies based on medieval theology that does not stand up to critique.

Possible "faces"

Abraham says "Hineni" three times in today's lectionary reading, offering us at least three "faces" of meaning making in the story.

Awe and intimate relationship with God

Abraham says Hineni to God. Here we discern the stance of deep prayer and connection, mutuality, and respect between God and Abraham. What is implied is Abraham's immediate Hineni to God is habitual because God has said Hineni to Abraham so many times before. It points to the ways in which Abraham in dwells God and God in dwells Abraham. In



this mutual indwelling Abraham is asked to sacrifice Isaac. My instinct is that this is symbolic, metaphorical, and poetic, as all truly religious, and mystical encounters are. In relationship with God we give our absolute all, we hold nothing back. The word detachment is overused, but it describes what is happening here. As we fall more and more in love with God, we cling to nothing but God.

Isaac was the much loved, much hoped for son, on whom Abraham had based his entire legacy. Isaac represented the entire reason for Abraham's existence. To grip a dream too tightly is to squeeze the life out of it so we must learn not to cling. We must learn not to give finite things infinite worth. There is a great psychology in this. We do not own our careers, our goals, our partners, our friends, our children or their dreams and future. How many frustrated musicians and artists, forced by well-intentioned parents to have reliable careers, have been sacrificed on the altars of their parent's ambitions?

Now we all have 'Isaacs' in our life that we are asked to loosen our grip on. The best explanation of this experience I think is Merton who by turning increasingly, intently, and insistently to Christ through contemplation, is stripped clean of the false ways of the world and the self. Merton is promised solitude and silence with God to the point he becomes the brother of God and learns to know the Christ of the burnt men.

Solidarity

While they are walking Isaac calls to his father to which Abraham respond "Hineni beni - I am present - my son". So, the second face of or meaning of Genesis 22 could be the ways we are present to each other. Hineni means we are ready to respond.

Hineni means here I am, or I am present.



When Abraham says to his son "Hineni" he is offering what every child wants from the adults in their lives - undiluted attention and focused presence - without a mobile device in the hand.

In the parent to child relationship, sometime all we can offer our children is our presence, we cannot always fix things or make them right. One of the awful realities of life is witnessing desperately ill children or children's whose futures are uncertain. The 'Hineni' - I am present - is heavy - it says - I cannot fix this, but I am still here for you.

When Leonard Cohen was interviewed and asked about his song he said,

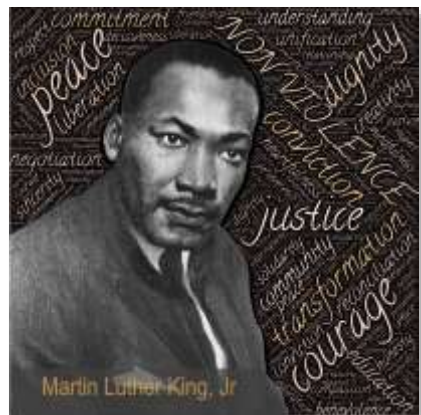
'That declaration of readiness, no matter what the outcome, that's apart of everyone's soul. We are all motivated by deep impulses and deep appetites to serve, even though we may not be able to locate that which we are hoping to serve. So this is just a part of my nature and I think everybody else's nature to offer oneself at the critical moment when the emergency becomes

articulate. It is only when the emergency becomes articulate that we can locate that willingness to serve. [pause] That's getting too heavy. I'm sorry. Strike that!' <https://medium.com/vocation-vocation-vocation/hineni-hineni-imready-my-lord-lc870e8de792>

Like Martin Luther King: *"There comes a time when one must take a position that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular, but he must take it because conscience tells him it is right."*

Like Martin Luther himself: 'Here I stand, I can do no other.'

Whether it is a call to care for refugees, the lonely, to offer your gifts for the world, to stand up for truth in a post-truth world, to support



the food bank down the road,
to just show up, or to
stand-up against injustice,
the response is the same:
Hineni, here I am.

A new direction, a new perspective

The third and final Hineni is when the angel prevents Abraham from murdering his son and he notices not a lamb, but a ram caught in the thicket. When Abraham says hineni to the angel he is ready to see God in a new way. Angel means messenger. From time to time, angels or messengers come our way inviting us to see things in a different way, asking us to broaden our perspective or simply to change our minds. I hope when a messenger comes your way, inviting you to deepen your experience and knowledge you would be ready - hineni.

Concluding comments

I end with the last verse of a poem by Rabb Shefa Gold:

*And when it's time to come
down that mountain,
I must become a blessing.
Even with my scars, doubts,
and questions.
I breathe in blessing and*

breathe it out.

*Even when that blessing is
difficult or unfathomable.*

*To be a blessing means to
know in my bones*

*the absolute truth of the
goodness of Life,*

no matter what.

*To be a blessing is to shine
that simple truth.*

Shabbat Shalom

Akeidah Torah Meditation By Rabbi Shefa Gold

*Even after all we have been
through,*

still each of us is tested.

Through trial,

*we are called into our power,
potential, compassion,
and vulnerability.*

*We are called to expand
beyond our rigid beliefs
in order to embrace paradox.
Hineni, Here I am.*

And here is the challenge:

*Take what is precious to you,
what you've been counting
on,*

*what you have held
impervious to the forces of
change,*

*even that — your bottom line
— and lift it up as your
offering.*

And here 's the paradox I

must embrace:
I have G/D's promise of
wholeness, continuity,
meaning, connection, and
prosperity...
and then I am called by life 's
challenges —
illness, divorce, the death of
my loved ones,
the loss of fortune and
meaning.

I hold these both as I walk up
the mountain,
taking one step after the
other,
carrying the wood, the fire,
the knife.
With each step, I say Hineni,
Here I am.

Here I am not knowing.
Here I am walking in the
Mystery,
expanding to embrace this
paradox,
trembling before the
awesome contradiction
of my faith and my suffering.

Hineni. The first challenge is
just showing up,
being completely present
to receive whatever Life has
to offer me...
Blessing, loss,
praise, blame.
Carrying the wood, the fire,
the knife...
only G!D will see the ram.

There at the peak of Mount
Moriah,
the mountain of seeing,
I offer everything.
I finally surrender.
I admit that I don 't really
know or see
how all this will work out.
But still, I say, Hineni.

And that's when it happens:
The power of my complete
presence
calls forth G!D's Presence.
Against all odds, a ram
appears in the thicket.
By some unimagined miracle,
I survive the vicissitudes of
being human, and even
thrive,
sparkling on as the stars of
the sky.
Like the sand of the shore,
I am touched again and again
by the infinite ocean.

And when it's time to come
down that mountain,
I must become a blessing.
Even with my scars, doubts,
and questions.
I breathe in blessing and
breathe it out.
Even when that blessing is
difficult or unfathomable.
To be a blessing means to
know in my bones
the absolute truth of the
goodness of Life,

no matter what.
To be a blessing
is to shine that simple truth.

Foot note: the word 'God' is not written in the Jewish faith. It is instead spelt 'G!D' in this text.

Shabbat Shalom

ANGLICAN PARISH OF ALSTONVILLE

Ministers	all the baptised!		
Rector	The Reverend Dr Desiree Snyman 0402 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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The Anglican Op Shop 1 The Avenue, Alstonville Tel: 6628 8777

**We give thanks to God for all people making offertories to
the vision of God's Kingdom here on earth.**

Option 1

Parish Provider these are the details: **BSB: 705 077 / Acc:
00032931**

Option 2

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

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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