



Alstonville  
Anglicans

Pentecost 14 on Sunday 6th September 2020

## This week...

- Sunday@9am Anglican Service in the Ministry Centre
- Sunday@10am online via webpage [www.anglicans.live](http://www.anglicans.live)
- Wednesday 9am & Thursday 6pm at St Bartholomew's
- Friday 10am Anglican Service in the Ministry Centre



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

## Fake News



How do you know the truth? How do you see the world? These are key questions in today's world of *fake news* - your truth and my truth. Matthew establishes truth along modern scientific and legal lines when a dispute about the truth occurs. First there is the evidence; "two or three witnesses" and then the community peer reviews the evidence and if that fails to establish the truth then you throw it out. Yes, Matthew is talking only about disputes within the community of the local church. However, the principle holds and is central to our

modern democratic way of life. The truth is not what a president or dictator decides it will be. It is not a conspiracy theory, based on a string of circumstantial evidence (that is rejected by most thinking people whether that be in academia, among journalists, most scientists or the judiciary). The truth may be immutable (doesn't change) in an ultimate sense. However our grasp of the truth is limited and so we need to always stay open to new evidence. For example in physics, the principals of Newton's physics were the truth till Einstein showed that Newton's principles only applied in a narrow set of circumstances, at low speeds here on earth. Einstein's theory of relativity better explained things on the macro level of space and time, stars, and galaxies.

Similarly, in our social systems, when new evidence comes to light we review and weigh it up- altering our thinking accordingly. For the present, democracy seems to work the best. In a world of vested interests including our own, it behooves the Christian to seek the truth based on evidence and ideas and resulting actions be reviewed by the community.

## Liturgy for 6<sup>th</sup> September

### Sentence of the Day

'Where two or three are gathered in my name,' says the Lord, 'I am there among them.' Matthew 18.20

# Opening Song

**Where wide sky rolls down and touches red sand,**  
where sun turns to gold the grass of the land,  
let spinifex, mulga and waterhole tell  
their joy in the One who made everything well.

Where rain-forest calm meets reef, tide, and storm,  
where green things grow lush and oceans are warm,  
let every sea-creature and tropical bird  
exult in the light of the life-giving Word.

Where red gum and creek cross hillside and plain,  
where cool tree-ferns rise to welcome the rain,  
let bushland, farm, mountain-top, all of their days  
delight in the Spirit who formed them for praise.

Now, people of faith, come gather around  
with songs to be shared, for blessings abound!  
Australians, whatever your culture or race,  
come, lift up your hearts to the Giver of grace.

Together in Song 188  
Words © E.J. Smith TIS 188

## Reading

### **Matthew 18:15-20**

<sup>15</sup> 'If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. <sup>16</sup> But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be

confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. <sup>17</sup> If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax-collector. <sup>18</sup> Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. <sup>19</sup> Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. <sup>20</sup> For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.'

## Prayers

### **Season of Creation 2020 Prayer**

Creator of Life,

At Your word, the Earth brought forth plants yielding seed and trees of every kind bearing fruit. The rivers, mountains, minerals, seas, and forests sustained life. The eyes of all looked to You to satisfy the needs of every living thing. And throughout time the Earth has sustained life. Through the planetary cycles of days and seasons, renewal, and growth, you open your hand to give creatures our food in the proper time.

In your Wisdom, you granted a Sabbath; a blessed time to rest in gratitude for all that you have given; a time to liberate ourselves from vicious consumption; a time to allow the land and all creatures to rest from the burden of production. But these days our living pushes the planet beyond its limits. Our demands for growth, and our never-ending cycle of production and consumption are exhausting our world. The forests are leached, the topsoil erodes, the fields fail, the deserts advance, the seas acidify, the storms intensify.

We have not allowed the land to observe her Sabbath, and the Earth is struggling to be renewed.

During this Season of Creation, we ask you to grant us courage to observe a Sabbath for our planet. Strengthen us with the faith to trust in your providence. Inspire us with the creativity to share what we have been given. Teach us to be satisfied with enough. And as we proclaim a Jubilee for the Earth, send Your Holy Spirit to renew the face of creation.

In the name of the One who came to proclaim good news to all creation, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

## Final Song

### 1. **God is our strength and refuge**

Our present help in trouble  
And we therefore will not fear  
Though the earth should change  
Though mountains shake and tremble  
Though swirling floods are raging  
God the Lord of hosts is with us evermore

### 2. There is a flowing river

Within God's holy city  
God is in the midst of her  
She shall not be moved  
God's help is swiftly given  
Thrones vanish at His presence  
God the Lord of hosts is with us evermore

3. Come see the works of our Maker  
Learn of His deeds all-powerful  
Wars will cease across the world  
When He shatters the spear  
Be still and know your Creator  
Uplift Him in the nations  
God the Lord of hosts is with us evermore

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## Reflection

(from Sunday 31 August 2020 Question and answer)

### On the meaning of the Eucharist

Can you explain the significance of why we are taught it IS Christ's body and blood rather than in symbolic remembrance (a way of remembering) "not the real thing?"

In our authorised Anglican liturgy, all are invited to receive the body and blood of Christ with the words: "Draw near with faith. Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ which he gave for you, and his blood which he shed for you. Eat and drink in remembrance that he died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith with thanksgiving."



Much history is behind this simple invitation and its simplicity belies a complex theological controversy. In the Reformation, there was debate as to whether the bread and wine were the real presence of Christ or whether it was merely a symbol. The phrase “feed on him in your hearts by faith” is the classic *via media* that defines Anglicanism; it allows for a wide range of spiritual options. Beliefs about the Eucharist range from transubstantiation to consubstantiation to the idea that the bread and wine are merely a symbol.

Transubstantiation is the belief that the bread and wine literally become the body and blood of Christ. I can’t find a reference for it, but I have heard it said that according to Aquinas, at the moment of consecration when the bell rings, two miracles are observed:



1. The bread and wine are changed into the body and blood.
2. The body and blood of Christ still looks like bread and wine.

Consubstantiation is the belief that the body and blood of Christ coexist with the bread and wine. The idea of consubstantiation is that the bread and wine that you see are at the very same moment both bread and wine and the body and blood of Christ.

For some people, the bread and wine is a mere symbol of the body and blood of Christ. Zwingli, who had influence in the Reformed traditions, based interpretation of Scripture above the influence of church tradition, ecumenical councils, and the writings of the church fathers. Thus, following Zwingli's teaching, many believe that the bread and wine has only symbolic value.

In my spirituality I have found Karl Rahner's theology of a real symbol helpful. Karl Rahner explains that a real symbol makes present that which it signifies. The best example of a real symbol is a photograph. When one gazes at a photograph of a loved one, the feelings of warmth and affection arise. This is because the photograph makes present for you the person it represents or symbolises. In the same way Christ is a real symbol of God's grace, making present the reality of God's extravagant love. Bread and wine are for us a real symbol of Christ that makes present our connection to Christ and our connection to each other.

## On heaven and hell

**“Jesus said those who cause people to sin and all others who do evil things will be gathered and thrown into the fiery furnace, a punishment that is complete, consuming and unending,”... Could you please speak to this passage and in particular how this relates to the notion that God is loving, gracious and forgiving?**

**“This week’s message is, God is in control, people who have allegiance to the landowner should be confident that there will be a harvest. We are to wait for this harvest with hopeful hearts.” What happens to those people who don’t have allegiance to the landowner?**

The question above can really be summarised by asking if Scripture, Tradition and Reason compel belief in hell and damnation.

### **Scripture**

The concept of hell as we have it today is largely absent from the Old Testament. Besides the book of Revelation, references to a fiery furnace and weeping and gnashing of teeth are mostly in Matthew. Paul and John do not mention hell. Luke and James mention it once each. In Matthew’s Gospel, two words are used that are translated as hell. Sheol means the place of the dead and the word appears in

Matthews Gospel and in a few places in the Old Testament. The abode of the dead is simply that – a place where the dead live. No judgement or punishment is presumed in speaking of Sheol. The other word the Gospel of Matthew uses is Gehenna. In the time of Jesus Gehenna was the rubbish dump outside the walled city of Jerusalem. Below is a picture of Gehenna, you can visit it today.



Ian Scott / CC BY-SA (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0>)

We take the Bible seriously, but not literally. Many problems and much pain is caused by literal and fundamentalist interpretations of Scripture. Jesus uses the **metaphor** of Gehenna in contrast to the walled city of Jerusalem to shock people into making a choice.

We can live according to the kingdom of God which is compared to a feeling of safety living in a walled city. Or we can live according to the kingdom of selfishness and self-righteousness which is like living in a rubbish dump. The use of the metaphor implies that neither heaven nor hell are geographical places. Heaven is a state of being in friendship with God while hell is the refusal of God's love.



Image by [pilgrimpassing](#) from [Pixabay](#)

Associated with the metaphor of Gehenna as hell, a state of noncooperation with the Divine, which is like living in a rubbish dump, is the term “weeping and gnashing of teeth.” A close reading of the Gospel of Matthew shows that the term is a literary device,

shock language used to wake us up to the urgency of the message. The term weeping and gnashing of teeth is used strategically in Matthew's Gospel when the listener needs to be alarmed into seeing life differently and acting another way.

## **Tradition**

Some early church tradition continued the belief in hell. The reality of hell as it is imprinted in our imaginations today is greatly influenced by Dante and Milton. Heaven and hell as a reward or punishment is preached in some 'Christianities' (plural used deliberately), especially of the conservative, white evangelical fundamentalist variety. Of concern is that biblically, Jesus uses the literary device of hell and the weeping and gnashing of teeth to warn **religious** followers **and believers** that they are cast out. In Matthew's Gospel it is the "outsiders" who are given the kingdom of heaven while the "insiders," the doctrinally pure, are left gnashing their teeth in anger, alongside the fiery furnace.

Most Anglican and Catholic approaches acknowledge the reality of hell as a state of separation from God and that Jesus descended into hell before rising on the third day. Article III of the 39 articles of the Anglican Church states: As Christ died for us, and was buried, so also is it to be believed, that he went down into Hell. Pope Benedict XVI explains that if Jesus went down to hell, hell is annihilated since Jesus and hell cannot coexist.

## Reason

Empowered by tools of literary analysis and knowledge of historical context, many people have misgivings about hell. What started out as a literary tool to invite people to make a decisive choice has debased Christianity and the central message of love, to one of fear. However, one of our fundamental beliefs is that we are created in love, by love, for love, yet with the capacity not to love. Hell must therefore be a logical possibility, otherwise we are not totally free. When directly asked, Theresa of Avila admitted that hell existed, but that it was empty. The mystics argue that once any person has glimpsed the ultimate love of God it would be impossible to say no to God. God desires us as God desires God; the urgency of God's intimate love uniting with us totally is a reality that we can experience right now, right here and moment by moment, every moment.

## The Gospel of Matthew

**From your sermon 27th July you mentioned something about the 8th parable. Can we hear more about this?**

In a sermon on Matthew 13 I explained that the gospel of Matthew is divided into 5 books to correlate with the 5 books of the TORAH (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy). These

five 'books' in the Gospel of Matthew, the new Torah, are bookended by a prologue – the birth of Jesus, and an epilogue – the death and resurrection of Jesus. Each of the five "books" of Matthew's Gospel has a narrative and a sermon. Furthermore, the Gospel of Matthew is structured such that "book" one and five are related to each other, book two and four are related and the central book is a pivotal or interpretive key. Since chapter and verse headings had not been invented, the community who gave us the Gospel in Matthew's name indicated the beginning and end of each of these 5 chapters with the use of the phrase... when Jesus had finished saying these things.

#### Chapter beginning at 12.46...

12.46 While Jesus was still talking to the crowd, his mother and brothers stood outside, wanting to speak to him. 47 Someone told him, "Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you."

(Sermon)

#### Chapter ending at 13.53

13. 53 When Jesus had finished these parables, he moved on from there... 55 "Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother's name Mary, and aren't his brothers James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas? 56 Aren't all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?" 57 And they took offense at him.





Matthew 13 emerges out of a continuous sermon that begins at Matthew 12 and ends at 13.53. The theme of the sermon captured in Matthew 13 is family life in the kingdom of God. Notice how the section is framed with family at the beginning and family at the end. This whole sermon consists of 7 parables. After the first parable, the parable of the weeds, the parables are broken into two sets of three. The final comment in Matthew 13 functions as an eighth parable and is related to the eighth beatitude and the eighth woe statement.



The two diagrams following depict the framework for Matthew's Gospel as described above.

Chapters 1 & 2

Genesis

Narrative 3-4 Launch of the Kingdom

Sermon 5-7 Life in the kingdom sermon on the mt

Exodus

Narrative 8-9 The power of the kingdom in 10 miracles

and Sermon 10 The mission of the church

**Narrative 11&12 Why some accept the kingdom and others do not**  
**Sermon 13.1-52 The mystery of the kingdom in 7 parables**

Numbers

Narrative 13.53-17 The fruits of the kingdom

Sermon 18 – life in the church

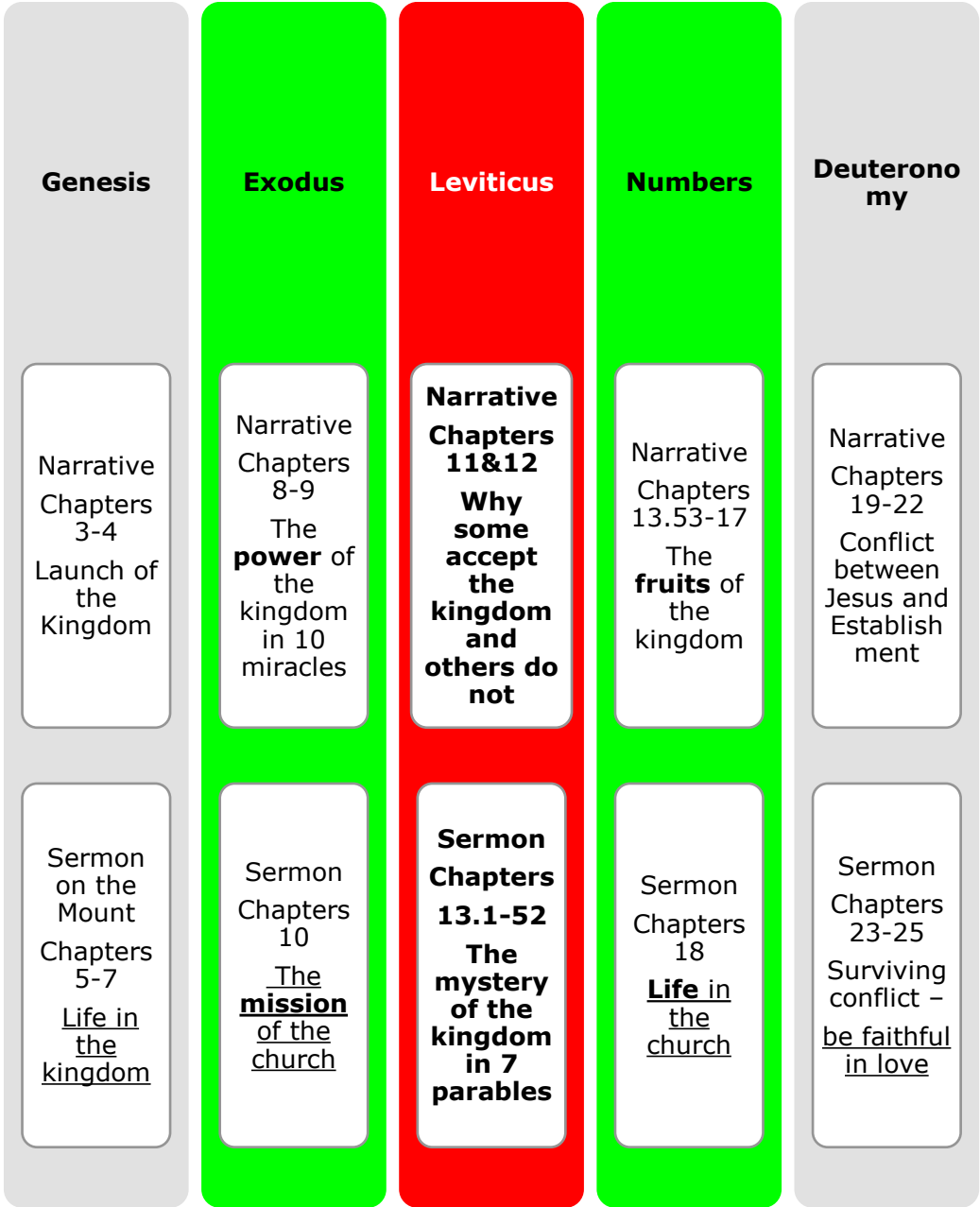
Deuteronomy

Narrative 19-22 Conflict between Jesus and Establishment

Sermon 23-25 – surviving conflict – be faithful in love

Chapters 26-28 Death

In the above diagram section 1 and section 5 are related and section 2 and 4 are related. The third section is the hinge. Thus, chapter 5 -7 is related to chapters 23-25.



<b>Matthew 5</b>	<b>Matthew 13</b>	<b>Matthew 23</b>
Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.	<b>The sower</b>	Woe to you....who lock people out of the kingdom of heaven
Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.	<b>Weeds</b>	Woe to you who devour widows' houses
Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.	<b>Mustard seed</b>	Woe to you who make a convert and then turn him into a child of hell
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.	<b>Yeast</b>	Woe to you who say "swearing by the sanctuary does not bind but swearing by the gold of the sanctuary does.
Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.	<b>Treasure</b>	Woe to you who tithe mint, dill etc and neglect justice and mercy and faith
Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.	<b>Pearl</b>	Woe to you who are clean on the outside but inside are full of greed and filth
Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.	<b>Dragnet</b>	Woe to you who like tombs, beautiful outside but inside full of death
Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.	<b>Prophets are not accepted in their own country</b>	Woe to you who build tombs for the prophets

## JESUS TAKES A SELFIE



Matthew 23 is the negative parallel for Matthew 5. Matthew 13 is like a pivotal bridge between Matthew 5 and Matthew 23, inviting reflection on the part of the listener. Are you a seed sown in the kingdom of God? Or are you a weed that chokes the life out of widows and children by claiming their homes as forfeiture for debt? Are you a humble mustard seed providing hospitality and positive growth? Or are you the yeast of corruption? Does your righteousness exceed that of the pharisees by focussing on justice and mercy, the true treasure? Or are you too focussed on the details of the law and is this where your treasure lies? The final statement about prophets being without welcome acts like a parable and knits together the themes across chapters 5, 13 and 23.

# Housekeeping

Our notices are organised under our mission goals.

## Worship & Spirituality



### Messy Church

Next Service Sunday 13th September at 10am

Alongside, Cathy Ryan shows the Face masks Messy Church made on 23<sup>rd</sup> August.



### St Peter and St Paul's

Next Service Sunday 13th September at 10am



### Prayer

Monday morning prayer where we pray for our church and the community will recommence in the church tomorrow, 7<sup>th</sup> September at 10am. You are welcome to pray with Rev Desiree at St Bartholomew's or join in prayer from home.



### Season of creation 2020

Each year from **September 1 to October 4**, the Christian family unites for this worldwide celebration of prayer and action to protect our common home. This year, the theme for the season is "Jubilee for the Earth". We invite you to consider the

integral relationship between rest for the Earth and ecological, economic, social, and political ways of living. We yearn for the moral imagination that accompanies the Jubilee.

## Leadership

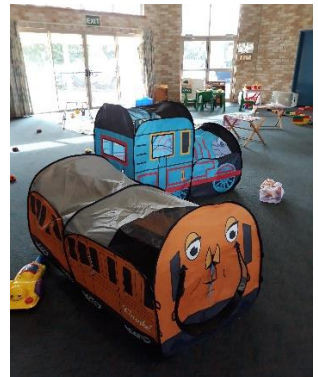
### Thank you

The wardens, parish council and clergy offer heartfelt thanks for your generosity to the parish. Thank you for your giving through electronic channels and through the offertory.

## Community Engagement

### Play Place

After an extended time of only being able to meet on Zoom, the Play Place Team is excited to advise that has recommenced meeting in the Ministry Centre Hall on Thursday mornings, 9.30am to 11am.



## **Sew Helpful Group**

Many thanks to all the generous people who knitted beanies for the soup kitchen. We are delighted to announce that the emergency is passed but we are happy to receive more in preparation for next year. So far, we have received over 150 beanies.

## **Good Governance**

### **Safe Ministry**

To comply with our church / state regulations, John NOBLE (our Safe Ministry officer) will be completing a 6-month review - by 15<sup>th</sup> Sept. If YOU have recently completed any training (e.g. First Aid certificate, Working with Children certificate, Criminal Records Check etc), please let John know (email : [jnoble2477@gmail.com](mailto:jnoble2477@gmail.com)) AND provide a copy of those certificates to our office. THANKS for being part of our team and demonstrating to our community that Alstonville Anglicans is making positive efforts to provide a "safe place for all".

## **Pastoral Care**

If you are aware of anyone who has needs or would appreciate Pastoral Care of ANY type (home communion, visits, meals, contact) please contact Lynne Watt on 66286751 or the office. Our Pastoral Care Team is here to care for you but can only do so when we know your need.

## **Property**

Last week we saw an awesome gathering of church men to help clean the exterior of St Peter and St Paul's at Tregagle. Talk about a spring clean, the little church looks a real picture and ready for the future. Thank you to all involved.



## ANGLICAN PARISH OF ALSTONVILLE

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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

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