



Alstonville Anglicans

Pentecost 9

Sunday 7th August 2022

Welcome, so good to see you.



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

Dates 7th August to 14th August

7 th Aug		Sunday
	9am	Holy Communion
8 th Aug		Monday
	9am-12pm	Parish Office Open
	9am-3pm	Op Shop
	10am	Anam Cara
9 th Aug		Tuesday
		Parish Office Closed (No office access)
	4pm	Singalong group (contact Susan)
10 th Aug		Wednesday
	9am-12pm	Parish Office Open
	9am	Anam Cara (contact Charlie)
	9am-3pm	Op Shop
11 th Aug		Thursday
	9am-12pm	Parish Office Open
	9am-3pm	Op Shop
	6pm	Anam Cara (contact Doug)
12 th Aug		Friday
	9am-12pm	Parish Office Open
	10am	Holy Communion
14 th Aug		Sunday
	9am	Holy Communion

This bulletin contains current announcements and the weeks 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.

Good Governance



COVID and Mask Wearing Update



Proper mask wearing more than halves the risk of getting or transmitting COVID

The Parish COVID Committee recommends that we all wear masks in Church Services and volunteering at the Op Shop. Mask wearing is, of course, not mandatory, but is strongly recommended.



Have you downloaded our App? 'Alstonville Anglicans'

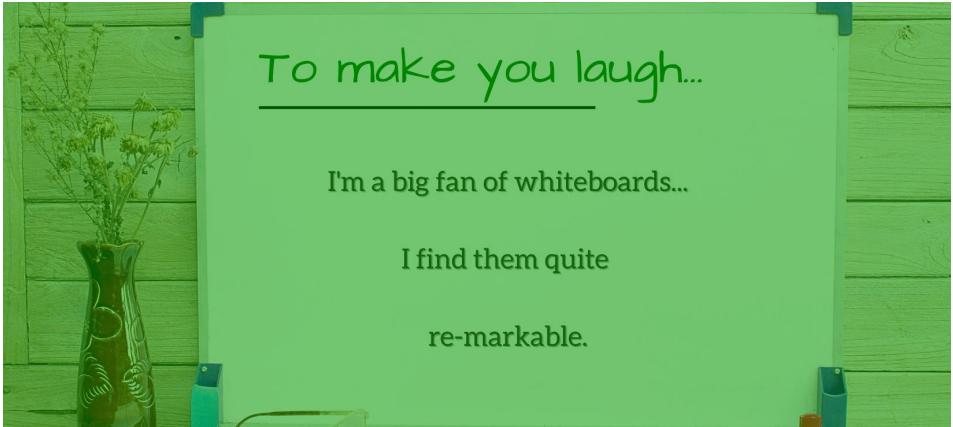
1. Download the app from the app store or google play.
2. Sign-up to create an account.
3. Update your profile.
4. Access the member directory.

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LET'S MAKE SOME
JOYFUL NOISE!

Sing-a-long Group

Tuesdays 4pm
St Bartholomew's
Church

All Welcome!

Alstonville
Anglicans
6 The Avenue
Alstonville
anglicans.live



Professional Room

The professional room is now
rented by Katie from
Alstonville Psychology
Tuesday - Friday 9am - 5pm.

The space is available for rental on
Saturday, Sunday and Monday and
after 5pm the rest of the week.

You are invited to share afternoon Tea



Lee and Rachel Shirvill are visiting from the UK with their children Molly, Benjamin and Elijah.

You are invited to share afternoon tea with them on

Thursday 11th August at 2.30pm in the Ministry Centre.

Please bring a plate of sandwiches, cakes, or slices to share.

If you are able to help set up and clear away please come to the Centre at 2.00pm on 11th.

Gail Burley will take names of those able to attend or help after the Sunday morning service.

Any questions please call Barbara Swain on 0400 736 815



AREA appreciates your ongoing support for Bruce Fleming's 'mission' at Alstonville High School

Financial statements now available in the church or office.

Contact: John Noble 0414 285 132

Worship & Spirituality



**Sound Sauna Healing
Experience 6pm**

Community Meal 7pm

All welcome. Cost by donation.
BYO: wine/drinks, meal
provided (vegetarian, gluten &
dairy free

Alstonville Anglicans
6 The Avenue Alstonville
anglicans.live

Thursday 11 August



Messy life church Sunday 14 August 5pm (Games from 4pm)



Messy Life Church

W orship



T eaching



F riendship



2nd Sundays@5pm

Come as you

Shoes optional

(no previous experience required)

Alstonville Anglicans
6 The Avenue Alstonville
anglicans.live

Sermon Notes Matthew 20.20-28

Preached on 31st July

Feast day for St James

The story we heard from Matthew this morning begins with a contradiction of Mark's version. Whereas in Mark, James and John themselves ask to sit at Jesus' right and left hand, Matthew blames it on their mother. Why the patriarchal interjection? Matthew, whoever he was, wrote at a time when the Apostles were becoming notable and august figures. So it could be that rather than sully their names he chose to blame a woman.

So we will go with Mark, whose narrative has two hot headed disciples, appropriately nicknamed the *Sons of Thunder*, asking to sit at Jesus' right and left hand.

They thereby define themselves, not only as Sons of Thunder, but also as Sons of their generation, of their culture, of their world. Their request is, in its essence, to occupy positions of power. They have not understood that the realm of God which Jesus heralds is one that rejects ambition, power, prominence and domination.



Jesus' response to them implicitly refers to the hierarchical and oppressive power of the elite in the imperial world of the Roman Empire, whose domination was achieved by military power, taxation, and a remarkably small decision-making group that

structured society for its own benefit.¹

Hierarchies, power grabbing, law keeping and a form of taxation, similarly dominated the structures of Jewish society, as they do in our own society. Not much has changed since then and now.

With this in mind let us take a look at Jesus' final words in Matthew's little story.

"... just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Matthew 20.28).

This, of course, refers to Jesus' death and resurrection. I have some issues with the whole business of resurrection; but whatever one may make of resurrection, whether one views it as physical reality, myth or metaphor, does not matter a great deal in terms of the thrust and depth of its meaning.

Here, Jesus employs the term to express something about a new world with which he is associated, "a new way of living", as Stephen Sondheim's lyric in West Side Story so movingly put it.²

There's a place for us,
Somewhere a place for us.
Peace and quiet and open air
Wait for us
Somewhere.

There's a time for us,
Some day a time for us,
Time together with time spare,
Time to learn, time to care,

1 See The New Interpreter's Study Bible footnote for Matthew 20.25-27

2 In West Side Story

Some day!

Somewhere.

We'll find a new way of living,

We'll find a way of forgiving

Somewhere . . .

There's a place for us,

A time and place for us.

Hold my hand and we're halfway there.

Hold my hand and I'll take you there

Somehow,

Some day,

Somewhere!

We are, as always, confronted with mystery when we weigh in to such matters. The engineer in me wants hard facts, accurate analysis, tight solutions, and a nice boat to sail in at the end of it all. But such is not available in the realms our persistently dualistic world.

Let me step sideways, for a moment, into the world of the Pharisaic movement. The Pharisees were, in general, a very sincere bunch of people for whom adherence to the letter of the law was the path to salvation. Most views of Jesus' dispute with the Pharisees "fail to appreciate the extent of its challenge to a dualistic understanding of good and evil, and hence a challenge to their moral imagination."³ As Sarah Bachelard has commented,

"Jesus criticises not only the *object* of the Pharisees' moral concern, but also the very *structure* of their desire to do good. When the Pharisees test him on the law, he refuses the terms in

3 Sarah Bachelard (2014) *Resurrection and Moral Imagination* Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, p65.

which the questions are posed. Their framing of what is at stake presupposes the [very] conception of goodness and of God that he [Jesus] is seeking to undo.”⁴

The nub of what I am getting at here has to do with Law. We often speak of the “Rule of Law” as being fundamental to a decent, democratic society. The imperial Roman Empire held similar ideals, and the Pharisaic movement almost grimly held to a Rule of Law as an article of salvation.

But as moral philosophers are wont to suggest, laws are implicitly dualistic, in the sense that they demand an articulation of absolutes, right and wrong, good and bad, light and dark and so on. The trouble with such systems is that we human beings come to define our very *selves* and *each other* by the same absolute precepts, and inevitably we fail to measure up to our own standards.

The dualistic nature of a rule of law defeats its own purpose.

The radical thing about Jesus is that he subverts this dualism of dividing the world into good and bad, righteous and unrighteous. “Jesus understands God to be unconcerned with our division of each other into such categories,”⁵ for God “makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on



⁴ ibid
⁵ ibid

the righteous and on the unrighteous” (Matthew 5.45). Moreover, as we know, he refuses to allow himself to be designated as good. “Why do you call me good?” he says to the rich man, “No one is good but God alone.” (Mark 10.18).

Jesus is not simply proposing a new principle of moral life, a new norm of judgement within an alternative system of goodness. He is making available a far deeper way of *being* Good.⁶ A totally new way of living, a *grace-ful* way of living, one might say

Dietrich Bonhoeffer once remarked that the humanity God loves and *becomes* in Christ is not “an ideal human, but human beings as they *are*; not an ideal world, but the real world”.⁷ And since *real* human beings are alienated from God, and from each other, *that* is the humanity that Jesus takes on. So, to quote again Sarah Bachelard, God does not just love us *as we are*, but (daringly) God *becomes who we are*,⁸ to which I would add, we *become* who God is.

As Maria Skobstova put it, all persons in the world are icons, “true images of God that have the holiness of the Living God within them”.⁹

I dare say that could be the most concise expression of the Gospel that I know, in which there is an ineffable harmony, the harmony of the Holy Trinity.

There *is* a place for us. So be it. Amen.

Doug Bannerman © 2022

6 *ibid*

7 Bonhoeffer, Dietrich, *Ethics*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works, Vol 6, ed. Clifford J Green, trans. Reinhard Krauss, Charles C West and Douglas W. Stott (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2009), cited by Sarah Bachelard, *op cit* p83

8 Sarah Bachelard, p78. *My italics*.

9 Maria Skobstova, “The Mysticism of Human Communion,” in *Mother Maria Skobstova: Essential Writings [= MMS:EW]* (Maryknoll NY: Orbis, 2002), 78-9.

Sentence of the Day

Watch and be ready, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. Matthew 24.42, 44

Collect

Kindle in our hearts, Father,
the same faith that impelled Abraham
to set out from his home
and to live as a pilgrim in a foreign land.

As we, like him, look for the city
that none but you can design and build,
keep us watchful for your Son's coming,
that we may be found faithful stewards
of all that you have entrusted to us.

We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Luke 12.32-40

³² 'Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. ³³ Sell your possessions, and give alms. Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. ³⁴ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. ³⁵ 'Be dressed for action and have your lamps lit; ³⁶ be like those who are waiting for their master to return from the wedding banquet, so that they may open the door for him as soon as he comes and knocks. ³⁷ Blessed are those slaves whom the master finds alert when he comes; truly I tell you, he will fasten his belt and have them sit down to eat, and he will come and serve them. ³⁸ If he comes during the middle of the night, or near dawn, and finds them so, blessed are those slaves. ³⁹ 'But know this: if the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁰ You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour.'