



Alstonville
Anglicans

Sunday 8th October 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

8th October – 15th October

8 th October	9am	Sunday Holy Communion
9 th October	9am-12pm 9am-3pm 10am 10am	Monday Parish Office Op Shop Anam Cara Deadline for bulletin items
10 th October	9am-12pm	Tuesday Parish Office Closed
11 th October	9am-12pm 9am 9am-3pm	Wednesday Parish Office Open Anam Cara Op Shop
12 th October	9am-12pm 9am-3pm 9.30am 6pm	Thursday Parish Office Open Op Shop Play Place Anam Cara
13 th October	9am-12pm 10am 3pm	Friday Parish Office Open Holy Communion Voice Study
14 th October		Saturday
15 th October	9am	Sunday Holy Communion

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](#)

The Voice Referendum

Friends,

The upcoming referendum is a matter of justice and reconciliation. Reconciliation is central to the Ministry of Jesus. Reconciliation with God produces an imperative for reconciliation between people. [Churches have been leaders](#) in the Reconciliation space for decades. This is why so many Christians in the Anglican Church are actively supporting the Voice to Parliament. Our Parish Council joins the wider Anglican Church in promoting “Yes” because the question before us concerns the dignity of people and their claim for justice.

Michael Jensen is the Rector of St Mark’s Anglican Church, Darling Point, in Sydney. He writes that:

“any Christian citizen ought to begin with a generous disposition towards the Voice proposal, even if he or she has serious questions. A very important consideration is that our constitution was drafted at a time when the prevailing thought was that Indigenous peoples would be extinct by the 1960s. This is why there is silence about recognition in the document.”

He writes further that:

“I believe that it will be a courageous decision for Australians to take. It is not without risk or complexity. But the proposal for the Voice is more than a platitude. It asks the 97% to give something to First Nations peoples—not just to see them, but to listen to them, and to enshrine this practice at the heart of our nation. After so many decades of suffering and failed attempts by governments and by churches and other agencies, I am convinced that it is a risk worth taking.

<https://au.thegospelcoalition.org/profile/michael-jensen/>

Some disagree with my encouragement for Anglican Protocol in supporting the Voice, for the reasons listed below.

“We should not have politics in the church”

We are not promoting party politics nor are we telling people how to think or to vote for one political party and not another; we are not at all political because the concern is justice and ethics. However, politics is bigger than what party you support because it is about our societal and economic systems. The Easter story entails a political crucifixion of a martyr who stood against corruption and brutal oppression. Jesus died a political death in a political manner (crucifixion was reserved for treason) at the orders of a political Pontius Pilate who represented the might of Rome. Our faith, tradition and Scriptures are profoundly political in calling for a just world. The Voice to Parliament is the first reform of the [Uluru Statement From the Heart](#), which has been described as a “powerful and historic offering of peace.” As Christians, we place a high value on peace and on Jesus as a peacemaker, as well as on unity and healing.

“We agree with reconciliation but think that there are better ways to achieve this goal”.

It has been said that when the Holy Spirit comes, those with power listen and those without power speak. It doesn't matter what we think is the best way, we are asked to listen to those who are affected. More than 80 percent of Aboriginal and Torres strait Islander people support the Voice. Glen Loughrey asks us to listen: “Listening is vital to this process. Listen to us. And listen to the majority of tribes and nations who signed the Uluru Statement from the Heart.”

“We need more information”

We would like to support you as you prayerfully consider your response to the Referendum.

Small group studies are offered on:

Friday 6th October and Friday 13th October

at 3pm in the Meeting Room.

The following websites may be helpful.

The book is "A voice in the wilderness" and is freely available here

https://www.abmission.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/VITW_August2022_electronic.pdf
https://www.abmission.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/VITW-Leaders-Guide_v3.pdf

Other resources

- <https://www.redshoeswalking.net/voice-no-obstacles/>
- <https://lens.monash.edu/@politics-society/2023/02/27/1385518/voice-to-parliament-debunking-10-myths-and-misconceptions>

God who listens,
open our hearts to hear the gentle invitation of those without a voice;
placeless and dispossessed of all that was theirs,
instead of anger, revenge or blame,
they offer in their open hand absurd generosity,
an act of transformational forgiveness
from the centre of their being to ours:
May we sense the integrity of country speaking to country, body to body;
and find within ourselves the humility to accept and journey together,
to become our nation's better future,
resolving our colonial memory, Australia's original sin.
As Jesus gave his body for ours,
help us to receive and pass on this gift of new life,
for his name's sake. Amen.

(This prayer was written by Wiradjuri Anglican Priest and NATSIAC Chair, the Rev'd Canon A/Prof Glenn Loughrey.)

Pastoral Care

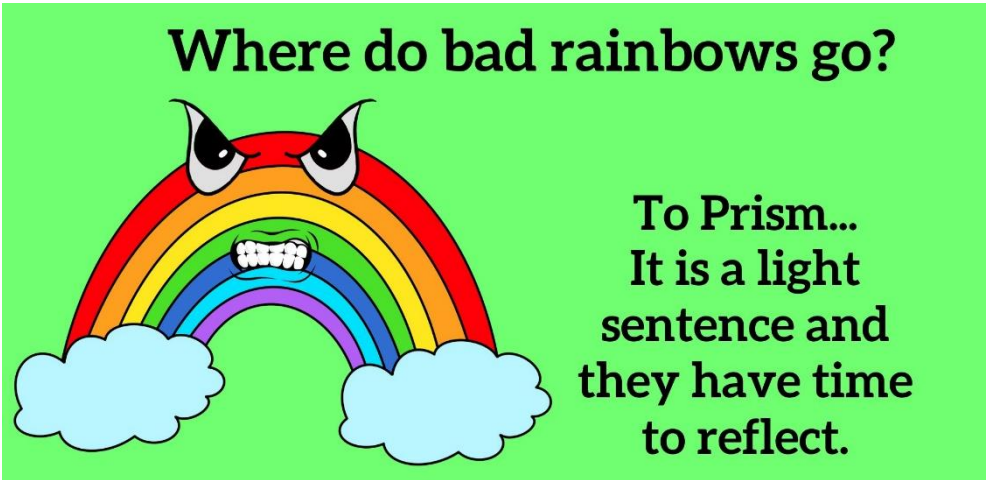
If you are in hospital or are aware of any parishioners who are in hospital and would like to be visited, please let the office know.

Make sure that you inform the hospital that you would be happy to receive visitors from the church.

Play Place

Welcome back to term 4 at Play Place. We are looking forward to a fun filled term.

To Make you Smile



'A Voice in the Wilderness' Study Group

Friday 6th & 13th October 3pm in the Ministry Centre.

Sermon Notes Sunday 1st October Doug Bannerman

Exodus 17.1-7 Matthew 21.23-32

Warren Carter¹ reads Matthew's Gospel as a work of resistance written mainly for a Jewish religious group who survived

¹ Warren Carter *Matthew and the Margins: a Sociopolitical and Religious Reading* (New Delhi: Rekha Printers 2007)



Rome's defeat of Jerusalem in 70 CE ... although we may note in passing that this gospel does indicate some openness to Gentiles (Matthew 2.1-12; 8.5-13; 15.21-28; 28.19-20).

Carter locates the gospel's audience in Antioch, the capital of the Roman province of Syria. Consistent with Roman practice, the city was a key unit in maintaining control over a much larger area. Also typical of the empire's practice, Rome cooperated with, and utilised, the local elite in exercising control. The Legate or Governor was responsible for the administration of Roman law, and appeal to him, at least in theory, meant access to legal process and rights; but as numerous ancient authors have stated, judges and verdicts could be bought.

The city's social structure comprised a small elite (5%-10% of the population) who controlled city life to their advantage. The non-elite, who served the needs of the elite, included a spectrum of the very poor to somewhat wealthy. In this structure, the elite's social dominance rested essentially on economic and political power, considerable wealth derived from the land at the expense of day labourers, and public repute.

Chapter 21 begins with, in Carter's words, 'Making an Ass out of Rome' as Jesus enters Jerusalem on a donkey (Matthew 21.1-11). Then follows ructions in the Temple (Matthew 21.12-17) and the episode of the cursed and withered Fig Tree (Matthew 21.18-22); thence to our gospel reading for today - Jesus' Authority and the Parable of the Two Sons.

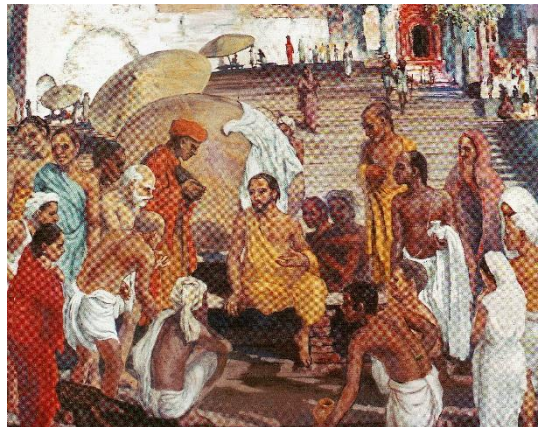
Grand entrances in the Greco-Roman world expressed the imperial mind-set, a demand for public recognition of brute

power gained by military or political means. Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, the centre of power, is in contrast, a prophetic sign, a choreographed piece of street theatre. He adopts some of the trappings of Greco-Roman entrance processions and triumphs but reframes them in a very different context – an empire that seeks not to dominate, but to serve.

Similarly, the Fig Tree episode. A fig tree with fruit signified God's blessing (Numbers 20.5; Deuteronomy 8.7-8; 1 Maccabees 14.12) a withered fig tree symbolized judgement (Isaiah 34.4; Jeremiah 8.13, 29.17; Hosea 2.12, 9.10, 16). The withered fig tree is an omen that represents the judgement Jesus has pronounced upon the Temple, upon the religious leaders, and on their Roman allies.

We already know that the chief priests and the scribes are allied against Jesus; but here, there is a different alliance. The elders are members of wealthy powerful lay families allied with the priestly elite and Pharisaic scribes in the Sanhedrin. This is the ruling body in Jerusalem, which has religious, economic and legal jurisdiction under Roman sanction. These dudes want to kill Jesus, by whatever means.

Now, the Temple is a place of worship, not teaching, which normally happens in the synagogue. Yet here is Jesus in the Temple, bold as brass, teaching. The religious elite interrupt, asking who gives him authority to do so. *Their* authority stems from their social status and power



over others, and is based on birth (chief priests), training (scribes), wealth (elders), and political alliances.

And their question is a trap. If he claims his own authority, Jesus admits to having no institutional or cultural legitimacy, and appears to act against God's purposes; if he claims God's authority, he blasphemes (9.3) and violates the jurisdiction of the Sanhedrin.

Jesus, however, outwits them. The questioners become the questioned. Jesus says to them, 'I will also ask you one question: if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. Did the baptism of John come *from heaven*, or was it of *human origin*?'

This question about John's baptism evokes John's whole ministry and *his* challenge to the religious and political elite (Matthew 3.1-12; 14.1-12). *From heaven*, the abode of God (Matthew 5.34), denotes God-given authority; *human origin* means its absence. So, asking about John is astute. In Matthew, John and Jesus are closely linked (Matthew 3.1-12; 3.13-17).

Their answer 'We do not know', is not the fruit of genuine ignorance – it is avoidant – and by choosing a path of non-commitment, they unwittingly *betray* their real commitment. By refusing to say that John's ministry comes from God; they reject the idea that John and Jesus have God given authority. Again, that refusal reveals their own lack of validation. Like the Pharisees and their tradition, they are not God's planting (Matthew 15.1-9, 13-14), but are of human origin.

Jesus thus exposes and discredits the whole religious leadership, saying, 'Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.'

He then introduces the parable of the Two Sons. The use of the word *son* invokes household relationships in which children honour their father by obeying him in all things. The first son declares that he will *not* obey, but in the passing of time, he changes his mind and does his father's bidding. The second son declares that he *will* go to work, but in the passing of time, *he* changes his mind and does not go.

'Which of the two did the will of his father?' The religious leaders answer correctly. The first son does what his father wants; the second son does not. But the focus on *father* and the *father's will* calls to mind *God* and *God's will* (c.f. Exodus 20-23; Deuteronomy 5; Matthew 6.9-10; 7.21; 12.50) and, with that answer, they condemn *themselves* for not doing God's will.

Not only have the elite rejected the justice and righteousness for which Jesus stands, but even when they have been offered time to change their mind, they do not – like the second son.

Now, all of this should not be generalized as condemnation of the various movements supposedly represented by members of the Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin, elites of the prevailing religious culture, were a race apart. The main body of pharisees, scribes and priests devoted themselves faithfully to their craft, and as best they could, represented God's will for justice, mercy and peace.

To conclude, we might ask ourselves if anything has changed? We also live in a world in which social and political power is exercised by wealthy, corrupt elites who do not have a clue about the lot of



those who serve their purposes, who do not listen. And we are faced with the same conundrum faced by the early Christians – how do we effectively proclaim the values enunciated and lived out by Jesus?

The short answer to that is *to enunciate* and *live out* those values. Not so easy. But each individual effort to do so matters and is augmented when we do so from within the body of a like-minded community.

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Sentence of the Day

Forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, let us press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus. Philippians 3.13b–14

Collect

Almighty God,
your Son Jesus was the stone rejected by the builders,
and, by your doing,
he has been made the chief cornerstone:
grant that, by the power of his Spirit working in us,
we may become living stones
built up into your dwelling place,
a temple holy and acceptable to you;
through Jesus Christ, our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Matthew 21:33-46

33 'Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a wine press in it, and built a watch-tower. Then he leased it to tenants and went to another country.

34 When the harvest time had come, he sent his slaves to the tenants to collect his produce.

35 But the tenants seized his slaves and beat one, killed another, and stoned another.

36 Again he sent other slaves, more than the first; and they treated them in the same way.

37 Finally he sent his son to them, saying, "They will respect my son."

38 But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, "This is the heir; come, let us kill him and get his inheritance."

39 So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him.

40 Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?'

41 They said to him, 'He will put those wretches to a miserable death, and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the harvest time.'

42 Jesus said to them, 'Have you never read in the scriptures:

"The stone that the builders rejected

has become the cornerstone;

this was the Lord's doing,

and it is amazing in our eyes"?

43 Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces the fruits of the kingdom.

44 The one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and it will crush anyone on whom it falls.'

45 When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they realized that he was speaking about them.

46 They wanted to arrest him, but they feared the crowds, because they regarded him as a prophet..