



# Alstonville Anglicans

**Pentecost 18**

**Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> October 2022**

**Welcome, to the Season of Creation**



## **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](http://www.anglicans.live)**

**Bank account: BSB 705 077 / Acc:00032931**

## Dates 9<sup>th</sup> October to 16<sup>th</sup> October

9 <sup>th</sup> Oct	<b>Sunday</b>
9am	Holy Communion
10 <sup>th</sup> Oct	<b>Monday</b>
9am-12pm	Parish Office Open
9am-3pm	Op Shop
11 <sup>th</sup> Oct	<b>Tuesday</b>
	Parish Office Closed (No office access)
4pm	Singalong group (contact Susan)
12 <sup>th</sup> Oct	<b>Wednesday</b>
9am-12pm	Parish Office Open
9am	Anam Cara (contact Charlie)
9am-3pm	Op Shop
13 <sup>th</sup> Oct	<b>Thursday</b>
9am-12pm	Parish Office Open
9am-3pm	Op Shop
6pm	Anam Cara (contact Charlie) Followed by a shared meal.
14 <sup>th</sup> Oct	<b>Friday</b>
9am-12pm	Parish Office Open
10am	Holy Communion
16 <sup>th</sup> Oct	<b>Sunday</b>
9am	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.**

[https://anglicans.live/s/welcomeBooklet\\_v2.pdf](https://anglicans.live/s/welcomeBooklet_v2.pdf)

## Community engagemnet

### Dancing Pipes Organ Concert

St Mary's Ballina Music program Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> October 3pm.  
Organ Duet featuring Marius Mulder and Hamsa Arnold. Entry by donation.

### A.R.E.A. Fundraiser

A Sausage Sizzle at Ballina Bunnings on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> October. Five volunteers from the Anglican community are needed from 1-4pm. A jobs sheet is available. Please contact John Noble 0414 285 132 if you are able to help out.

### Ballina Region for Refugees Fundraiser

This fundraiser will assist with the settlement of refugees in the Ballina and Byron Shires.

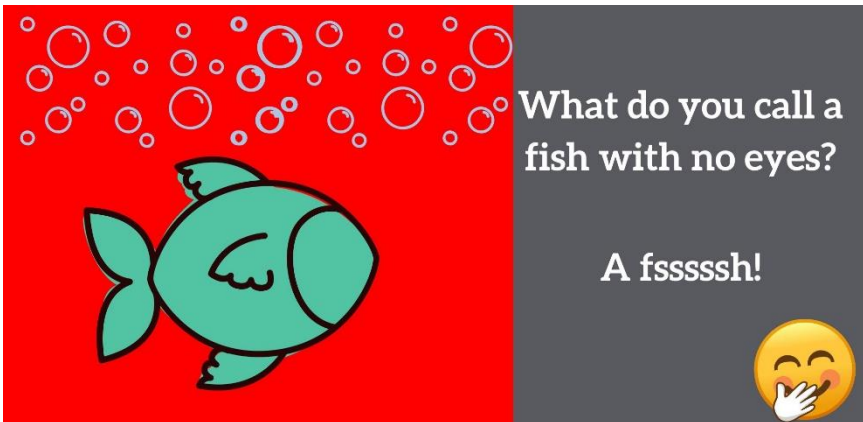
Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> November

Tintenbar Hall, Tintenbar 2487

\$25 or \$20 for BR4R members

<https://events.humanitix.com/swing-with-acid-bleed-a-ballina-region-for-refugees-fundraiser-8ldi2c2m>

### To make you smile!





Sat. 8th Oct 4pm

# VERGE GARDEN MEETING

*SPECIAL GUEST  
KAREN GROSS  
FROM THE  
PADDOCK PROJECT*

**JOIN US!  
ALL WELCOME**

Community-On-the-Verge,  
a food garden in Alstonville,  
will meet at 6 The Avenue to  
plan and develop our garden together.

ANGLICANS.LIVE



## Sound Sauna & Healing Experience 6pm

Community Meal 7pm

Thursday 13th October

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



Alstonville  
Anglicans  
6 The Avenue  
Alstonville  
anglicans.live

## **The Visit of the Archbishop of Canterbury to Grafton Diocese**

The Archbishop will give a public lecture entitled Building Peace in Robust Diversity at Emmanuel Anglican College on Thursday night 13 October. This will be the first visit of an Archbishop of Canterbury to Grafton Diocese since the visit of Archbishop Geoffrey Fisher in 1950. It will be an honour to welcome Archbishop and Mrs Welby to the Diocese and I'm sure the visit will be a great encouragement to Anglicans on the North Coast.

Dr Murray Harvey Bishop of Grafton

Link for tickets to the lecture below:

<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/an-evening-with-the-archbishop-of-canterbury-the-most-reverend-justin-welby-tickets-420088394697>

### **Worship & Spirituality**



**Messy Church**  
**Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> October 4pm**  
**All welcome**

### **Pastoral Care**



Do you have a passion for helping people? Do you have some time to give? The Pastoral Care team is looking for new members. Their ministry involves visiting, transportation, home communion, home help tasks and whatever else is needed.

Please contact Lynne Watt if you are interested.

**Sermon Notes**  
**Preached on 2<sup>nd</sup> October**



**Habakkuk 1.1-4, 2.1-4 and Luke 17.5-10**  
**God is waiting for us.**

Elton John wrote the following, about 40 years ago (listen here: <https://youtu.be/WnoadNUs1gQ>)

**"If There's A God In Heaven (What's He Waiting For)"**

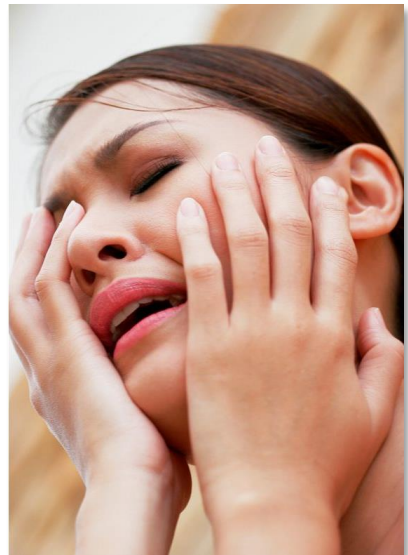
Torn from their families  
Mothers go hungry  
To feed their children  
But children go hungry  
There's so many big men  
They're out making millions  
When poverty's profits  
Just blame the children



If there's a God in heaven  
What's he waiting for?  
If He can't hear the children  
Then he must see the war  
But it seems to me  
That he leads his lambs  
To the slaughter house  
And not the promised land

Dying for causes  
They don't understand  
We've been taking their futures  
Right out of their hands  
They need the handouts  
To hold back the tears  
There's so many crying  
But so few that hear

If there's a God in heaven  
What's he waiting for? ...



Myanmar. Yemen. Ukraine. Nuclear threat. Syria. Kabul. Social media and the rampant increase of teenage suicide. The incarceration of children. The lack of rights for refugees. LGBTQIA+ discrimination. Race discrimination. The rape of children because of the myth that sex with a virgin cures HIV... With the prophet we might also say:

"<sup>2</sup> O Lord , how long shall I cry for help,  
and you will not listen?  
Or cry to you 'Violence!'  
and you will not save?"

Alternatively, we might say with a prophet from 40 years ago, Elton John:

"If there's a God in heaven  
What's he waiting for?  
If He can't hear the children  
Then he must see the war  
But it seems to me  
That he leads his lambs  
To the slaughterhouse  
And not the promised land"

Think about the ways we continue to safeguard polluters in an age of unprecedented fires and floods where governments have either ignored or at worst buried warnings on impending natural disasters. According to the Australia Institute, gas companies paid us about 2 billion for our gas in royalties but then sold it back to us for 68 billion, excellent profit. Add to that 2/3 of the taxes were not paid on the gas exported from WA. In other words, they were getting the gas for free AND not paying income tax or resource rent tax. Those of us who paid income tax last year, paid more than Shell, Chevron, Santos, Exxon, Inpex and APLNG paid on a combined 50 billion income. Last year the government spent more money subsidising fossil fuels than it spent on the public school system. With the prophet we might also say:

<sup>3</sup> Why do you make me see wrongdoing  
and look at trouble?  
Destruction and violence are before me;

strife and contention arise.

4 So the law becomes slack  
and justice never prevails.

The wicked surround the righteous—  
therefore judgement comes forth perverted.

Alternatively, with Elton John we might lament,

“We've been taking their futures  
Right out of their hands  
They need the handouts  
To hold back the tears  
There's so many crying  
But so few that hear”

Have you ever asked Elton John's question? Where is God when it hurts? Where is God? Why doesn't God show up? While Habakkuk is an obscure prophet writing in a time when Israel was about to be conquered by the Babylonians in the war of 585, there are echoes for us in 21<sup>st</sup> century Australia, not least because of the war in Ukraine with the worry that it will either turn nuclear or spill over into a world war with the West supporting Ukraine and China and North Korea supporting Putin.

According to the prophets, faith is what sustains us amidst the trials and tribulations of the dark side of history... “but the righteous live by their faith.” But what is faith? And how do we speak of faith and love and mercy without making a mockery of those who have suffered unimaginable cruelty?

At some point in the evolution of Christianity faith took a wrong turn and hit a dead end. Some might blame St Paul, or Augustine, or Thomas Aquinas or the Councils of Chalcedon and Nicaea, but we reached a point where faith changed. Instead of faith being a living breathing connection, a resting in the oneness of the divine, faith became an ascent to a set of beliefs. As Anglicans, those belief statements are summarised in the creed. As a Methodist, belief is that we are justified by grace through faith not works, that all people can be justified by grace through faith and that people can be sanctified to the uttermost – what Wesley called Christian



perfection. But is belief enough for faith? If belief = faith, I'm in big trouble. Although I have a thick lever arch file on sermons describing being saved by grace through faith I'm not sure what that means any more. As for the creed, well, I had to agree with it at the time of my ordination, but really, Christianity flourished for 400 hundred years without the Nicene Creed and in our post, post-modern era I'm wondering if it isn't time to rethink the whole thing? Whatever faith is it has to be more than ascent to a set of beliefs.

"Increase our faith," say the apostles. What does that mean? And how do you measure an increase in faith? Might one pray: "Lord I have only three kilograms of faith please can you increase my faith, and can I have four kilograms more?" Or is faith measured in litres ? in which case one might pray: "My faith is just 300 ml Lord please can I have a litre more?" How do you increase faith anyway?

In Luke 15 and 16 Jesus has been addressing the pharisees and challenging their acquisition of wealth that leads to them dehumanising others. In Luke 17 Jesus addresses the disciples, who listened to Jesus' teaching in Luke 15 and 16. While the disciples may not be piling up money, they are still in a reward and punishment mindset. The disciples clearly don't get it, and their plea disguises their unease at the thought of being gracious, merciful, and forgiving 7 times 77 times. The kingdom of God is not about acquisition and attaining more of anything – quite the opposite – it is about surrender, letting go and allowing the self to die. The disciples may have listened to the teaching Jesus offered the pharisees and learnt the lessons and given up on mammon, greed, and accumulation of wealth. To replace the accumulation of wealth with the accumulation of faith still misses the point as it is still part of a mindset that expects a reward for work. This is what Jesus means when he says if you had the faith of a mustard seed you could do many things. In other words, you don't need "more" faith, you have what you need, the tiniest amount is enough. In fact, I would go so far as to say less will do – less trying, less piety, less moral judgement, less intensity, less belief, less faith even so that there is more space, more nothing, more surrender, more forgiveness. The example Jesus gives of not rewarding slaves for what they were already doing is a further challenge to meritocracy. The

system of reward and punishment is what Jesus wants to abolish for grace to flourish.

I stated earlier that for me faith is not an assent to belief. I hinted at my own experience of faith as being connection with God, resting in God, surrender in God, an ultimate meaning that is beyond the relative circumstances of history. I compare this experience of faith as connection, resting and surrender to floating in water – one of the most relaxing and energising experiences I enjoy. One of the hardest aspects of teaching someone to swim is encouraging them to trust the buoyancy of the water enough to float. The irony with learning to float is that the harder you try the worse it against, the harder you want to float the less able you are. Floating happens through non-effort and surrender. Here then is my experience of faith. In order to float in the arms of faith, I have to let go a little, give up on certainty, give up on doubt even, give up on understanding everything and just put my arms out and float. What do I mean by this? You may have heard me describe before the difference between faith and belief with reference to the tight rope walker Charles Blondin. Charles crossed the Niagara Falls between Canada and the USA on a tight rope several times, including backwards and returning with a wheelbarrow. When he asked the audience if they believed he could carry a person in the wheelbarrow across the tightrope of course the crowd shouted yes. When he asked for a volunteer, no one trusted enough. While the crowds had belief in Charles ability, none had faith enough to sit in the wheelbarrow while being pushed across. Denise Levertov paints in poetry the faith I sometimes struggle to articulate:

**As swimmers dare  
to lie face to the sky  
and water bears them,  
as hawks rest upon air  
and air sustains them,  
so would I learn to attain  
freefall, and float  
into Creator Spirit's deep embrace,  
knowing no effort earns  
that all-surrounding grace.**

(This poem is from *Oblique Prayers*, copyright ©1984 by Denise Levertov, and also appears in Levertov's *The Stream and the Sapphire: Selected Poems on Religious Themes.*)

**P.S:**

1. For research on the link between social media and increased teenage suicide read:

- Social media and the rampant increase of teenage suicide (see Memon AM, Sharma SG, Mohite SS, Jain S. The role of online social networking on deliberate self-harm and suicidality in adolescents: A systematized review of literature. *Indian J Psychiatry*. 2018 Oct-Dec;60(4):384-392. doi: 10.4103/psychiatry.IndianJPsychiatry\_414\_17. PMID: 30581202; PMCID: PMC6278213.).
- Sedgwick, Rosemarya,b; Epstein, Sophiea,b; Dutta, Rinab,c; Ougrin, Dennisa,b. Social media, internet use and suicide attempts in adolescents. *Current Opinion in Psychiatry*: November 2019 - Volume 32 - Issue 6 - p 534-541. doi: 10.1097/YCO.0000000000000547

2. Information on how the government were briefed about impending flood disasters can be found here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PvFy2TuPDaw>

3. For action on the incarceration of children sign a petition here:

<https://action.amnesty.org.au/act-now/raise-the-age>

4. A summary on research analysis by the Australia Institute indicating the exploitation of Gas companies can be watched here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RCFMy7rXlgw>.

5. Podcasts by Juice Media at <https://www.thejuicemedia.com/>, The Australia Institute Website at <https://australiainstitute.org.au>, and their Spinbin YouTube videos are also useful avenues of information.

## Sentence of the Day

What shall I return to the Lord for all his bounty to me? I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord, I will pay my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people. Psalm 116.12-14

## Collect

O God,  
you have made heaven and earth and all that is good:  
help us to delight in simple things  
and to rejoice always in the richness of your bounty;  
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.

## Luke 17.11-19

<sup>11</sup> On the way to Jerusalem Jesus was going through the region between Samaria and Galilee. <sup>12</sup> As he entered a village, ten lepers approached him. Keeping their distance, <sup>13</sup> they called out, saying, 'Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!' <sup>14</sup> When he saw them, he said to them, 'Go and show yourselves to the priests.' And as they went, they were made clean. <sup>15</sup> Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice. <sup>16</sup> He prostrated himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him. And he was a Samaritan. <sup>17</sup> Then Jesus asked, 'Were not ten made clean? But the other nine, where are they?' <sup>18</sup> Was none of them found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?' <sup>19</sup> Then he said to him, 'Get up and go on your way; your faith has made you well.'