

**PARISH NEWSLETTER & HOME WORSHIP SUPPLEMENT**  
**Second Sunday of Advent, 6<sup>th</sup> December 2020**

*Dear Parishioners,*

I am so very much encouraged by the cooperation and efforts of our team of LLMs at this busy time in the life of this parish. Our First Sunday in Advent service in Holy Trinity was a blessing to us and the first of our Wednesday Advent Studies in Holy Trinity last Wednesday was most enlightening and enjoyable.

First Sunday in Advent was also special for the congregation in Nambucca Heads who enjoyed a visit from Bishop Murray. The Bishop announced that the Rev'd Ron Spindler will join us in January for three days per week for three months as locum Priest. Ron will be assistant priest under my direction and will minister in Holy Trinity Macksville, St John's Nambucca Heads and St James' Bowraville.

**Advent** this year has an extra meaning for you and me. Not only are we looking forward to celebrating Jesus' first coming at Christmas, and looking forward to his second coming, but we are also looking forward to a new era for the Anglican Church in the Nambucca Valley as we move into a new and different structure.

At a meeting last week with all the LLMs for the Nambucca Valley, we allocated each Worship Centre to one of our LLM2s to be the point of contact for worship and activities in that Centre. This will facilitate our transition into the new Parish Model for ministry (Model 1) in 2021. I'll give you more detail on this in a future Newsletter.

Last Friday we had the last of the Interim Parish Council meetings to prepare for the 31<sup>st</sup> Dec/1<sup>st</sup> Jan changeover. We have essentially completed all required preparations and are in a good position to transition, so I trust that it will proceed relatively smoothly.

I would however, like to emphasise the need for each and every one of us to embrace the changes that will be required. No matter what I and the Interim Parish Council set up and do, the success of the new model for ministry and mission in the Nambucca Valley will ultimately be determined by each of you.

There will be some things that will be different to the way they were in the past, and some things may not be the way that you individually would like it to be. But we cannot keep doing things the way we have in the past! For the future of God's church in the Nambucca Valley, we must each be prepared to both accept change and to change ourselves.

To quote Professor Jim Bright,<sup>1</sup> 'Change, it seems, is something we have no difficulty embracing as long as it doesn't cause us to have to do anything differently.' I pray that this will not be our attitude. Prof Bright also pointed out that, 'You know you are changing if it is initially uncomfortable.'

It will be a tragedy if we just amalgamate the two parishes into one but do not effectively implement Model 1. Failure to embrace change could result in burnout of the leaders (especially the Ministry Area leader) and lasting damage to ministry and mission opportunities in the Valley.

Unity between and within the different congregations will also be important. We need to see ourselves as part of the Anglican Parish of Nambucca Valley, not just of one of our congregations. We must support and encourage one another, share in our blessings and struggles, and be prepared to join together as a unified body of Christ from time to time.

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<sup>1</sup> Jim Bright, Professor of Career Education and Development at ACU. Opinion columnist SMH Oct 10-11 2020

As we look forward to 2021 and our restructure, I encourage you to adopt the attitudes of Discipleship that are our focus of Advent:

be Hopeful .....

be prepared .....

be Expectant .....

be Trusting .....

You might like to complete each one of these statements with words that express what you would pray for our Parish of Nambucca Valley in 2021.

*Be encouraged, be blessed – God is at work in our Parish!*

*Rev Clyde*

### **Psalm 85: 1-2, 8-13**

#### **Prayer for the Restoration of God's Favour**

<sup>1</sup> LORD, you were favourable to your land;  
you restored the fortunes of Jacob.

<sup>2</sup> You forgave the iniquity of your people;  
you pardoned all their sin.

<sup>8</sup> Let me hear what God the LORD will speak,  
for he will speak peace to his people,  
to his faithful, to those who turn to him  
in their hearts.

<sup>9</sup> Surely his salvation is at hand for those  
who fear him,  
that his glory may dwell in our land.

<sup>10</sup> Steadfast love and faithfulness will  
meet;

righteousness and peace will kiss each other.



- <sup>11</sup> Faithfulness will spring up from the ground,  
and righteousness will look down from the sky.
- <sup>12</sup> The LORD will give what is good,  
and our land will yield its increase.
- <sup>13</sup> Righteousness will go before him,  
and will make a path for his steps.

## Bible Reading

*Please take your bible and read:*

**Mark 1: 1-8**



## Reflection on Mark 1:1-8, by Sue Noble

### “PREPARED”

Unlike the gospels of Matthew, Luke & John which begin with either the birth of Jesus, his family lineage or his connection with the beginning of creation, the opening of the gospel of Mark commences with Jesus’ ministry. It begins like an athlete out of the starting blocks. The first three verses give a clear, short, proclamation, like a trumpeter heralding the coming of a king. This is a book of good news about Jesus Christ, God’s Son!

We find Jesus bursting onto the Judean stage, somewhere west of the Jordan River in which he is baptized by John. It reminds me of rugby league players who run onto the field and split open the huge banner to denote the beginning of the grand final. You sense

the urgency and excitement in John's words as he announces that Jesus ***IS*** the Son of God.... the Saviour, long awaited and foretold by the prophets of Israel.

Why should we pay attention to John on this important occasion?

John, a rugged and unorthodox looking prophet, had a simple, clear and revolutionary message for the people of the time, ***repent*** and ***prepare yourself*** for the Saviour has come. This is why this morning's reading is so relevant to us during Advent. It is a time when we should look to see if our hearts and lives *are* prepared for Christ, not just for his coming again, but during this season... and today.

What did John announce to those around him and how does he tell us to prepare?

John the Baptist's role was to announce the coming of Jesus, the most important person who ever lived. He was the messenger who prepared Christ's way; he **pointed people to Jesus**. With striking humility he saw himself as nothing more or less than the vessel through which God was addressing his nation. He was simply his Master's voice. "Prepare the way for the Lord. Make straight paths for him." Just as the local inhabitants of the day would need to get the road in order, for the king to journey through their land, so John was saying to the people they should do the same, in preparing their hearts for Jesus.

The way for this preparation is through **repentance**. He announced: "***Repent*** for the kingdom of heaven is near."

Although the message is unpalatable, it has at its seat...God's mercy and His deep sacrificial love for man that led to Jesus identifying himself through his baptism with our sin... and three years later laying down his life for mankind.

John offered baptism to the repentant, as a symbol of a change of heart, attitude and life. Now baptism *was* familiar to the Jews who often baptised gentiles wishing to convert to Judaism. But to baptise a Jew as a sign of **repentance** was a **radical** departure from Jewish custom! In John's ministry baptism was a visible sign that a person had decided to give up a sinful and selfish way of living and turn to God. He took a *known* custom but he gave it **new meaning**. John was demonstrating and saying that religious observances and pedigree were not enough. If there is no heartfelt repentance, there will be no spiritual life for you in the kingdom of the Messiah.

When John challenged people to **individually** confess sin, he signalled the start of a *new way to relate to God*. Repentance is radical. It's a radical concept in our day and age! Repentance involves an individual, personal response to God; the establishment of a new and beautiful relationship based on God's mercy, through Christ. John was talking of an inner change. He didn't mean the confessing of an individual sin, or of multiple individual sins, but of that place we find ourselves in without Christ... where we stand before God...broken people, utterly unworthy, disconnected from God, demanding of our right to ourselves,... helpless.

John was clear in his outreach to people.. **he** could not heal their hearts... but Jesus who was to come, would establish this new

relationship with the believer through the baptism and work of the Holy Spirit. “After me (John said) will come one more powerful than I, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I baptise you with water, but He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit.” Our baptism in Christ has at its core, repentance, but the change offered to us is made possible through the Holy Spirit and God’s mercy, forgiveness and love for us.

What John began... Jesus finished. What John prepared... Jesus fulfilled.

And so, some years later, Paul, after his repentance and confession of Jesus as Lord, was able to write in a letter to the church in Galatia, “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” (Galatians 2: 20)

So, at this time of Advent how can we prepare our hearts for Christ?

Repentance is the inescapable beginning of our relationship with Jesus. But as we continue our journey with God, repentance becomes a daily grace. John calls for a good cleaning of our spiritual houses, we need to make room for Jesus in our lives. We are encouraged to bring to Him the grudges we bear toward others, the possessions or time we don’t want to share, the gossip we repeat, and the ill thoughts. And we are encouraged to turn our attention to those in need, not be captive to our culture and its misguided values... all the things that grieve Him. We should ask ourselves, “Am I in the habit of preparing and making room for Jesus?”

The beautiful thing about God is that he doesn't ask us to put things right. He asks us to accept his word - and he puts things right. Out of LOVE he cleanses us from sin, He restores the relationship, He comes and makes His home within us.

“Emmanuel” – God with us.

Words and inspiration from Michael Green, Oswald Chambers and the NIV Bible have contributed to the formation of this homily.

## Collect

Merciful God,  
 You sent your messengers the prophets  
 To preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation:  
 Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins,  
 That we may greet with joy  
 The coming of Jesus Christ our Redeemer  
 Who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
 One God, now and for ever Amen.

## **Prayers for 6<sup>th</sup> December 2020** – Thanks David Jones

We wait, O God, for your glory to be revealed,  
 for the angels' message of peace and joy.

We pray for the peoples of your world and for all your creation:  
 for those in places of war and civil unrest; for those in places of  
 injustice and cruelty.

Speak peace to your people, O God.

Come, and in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We give thanks for leaders who serve the common good, our  
 Premier, our Prime Minister and various other leaders. Give

wisdom to those who have responsibility and authority in every land, that we may share with justice the resources of the world, and work together in trust.

Come, and in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We wait, O God, for your glory to be revealed, for the good news that salvation is at hand.

We pray for your churches throughout the world:

for leaders of our church, Bishop Murray, Archdeacon Tiffany, Rev'd Clyde;

for our LLM's and SRE teachers and the people of this parish:

For prophets who call your church to repentance today.

Speak salvation to your church, O God.

Come, and in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We wait, O God, for your glory to be revealed,

for the Christmas message of reconciliation and love.

We pray for our communities of Nambucca, Macksville, Bowraville & Stuarts Point;

for our homes and our neighbours;

for our schools, our hospitals and our workplaces,

Speak tenderly to your people, O God.

Come, and in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We give you thanks for your prophets of old, and for all who call us to follow your ways of righteousness and peace.

May we repent of all that is displeasing in your sight, that, with

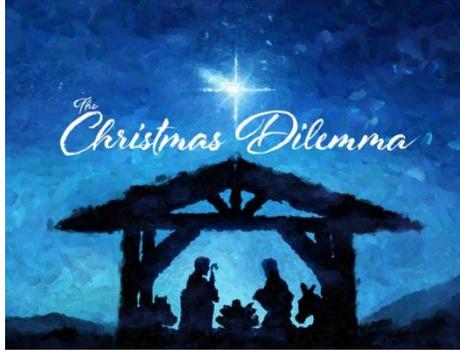
your faithful people of all ages past, we may be gathered into the

joy of your presence, inhabitants of a new heaven and a new earth.

Come quickly to your people, O God.

Come, and in your mercy, **hear our prayer**

# Christmas Services



Theme: Out of Darkness into the light

Christmas Eve:

All Saints, Stuarts Point, 5pm, Holy Communion

Holy Trinity, Macksville, 11.30pm, Holy Communion

Christmas Day:

Holy Trinity, Macksville, 9.30am (non-eucharistic)

\*\* Information on Nambucca and Bowraville Christmas service coming soon.

**OUR NEW SOCIALS**  
**to be officially ready by 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021**

Follow us on Facebook to be kept up to date on information (if you were already following the Macksville Facebook, no need to do anything – I have just changed the details):

Anglican Parish of Nambucca Valley  
@anglicanparishofnambuccavalley

Macksville Anglican Op Shop  
@macksvilleanglicanopshop



Search Facebook

The Website is being upgraded as quickly as it can with the combining of both Parish's. Keep an eye out for all the information to be available on here also.

[www.nambuccavalleyanglicans.com](http://www.nambuccavalleyanglicans.com)

