

## **PARISH NEWSLETTER & HOME WORSHIP SUPPLEMENT**

**Twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost, 8<sup>th</sup> November 2020**

*Dear Parishioners,*

With the reopening of the churches for Sunday worship, I had indicated that the Home Sunday Worship Supplement would cease (to reduce duplication of work). However, a small number of people have requested through Samantha that they continue receiving it.

Personally, I found joy in putting it together each week and felt very connected with you all through it. And the opportunity that it gave me to provide messages as well as the short notices, was very useful.

Therefore, I have decided to reinstate a parishioner wide email-out (and letter box drop) as we had when we were closed. It will take a slightly different form – I see it being mainly a newsletter, but also providing support for those who wish to continue to worship at home.

Please keep an eye on your emails each Thursday when Sam will email the Parish Newsletter and Home Worship Supplement to you. Letter box drops will usually occur on Fridays or Saturday morning.

*Defence Sunday*

Today is Defence Sunday! It is an opportunity for the whole church to pray for the ministry that occurs within and to the Australian Defence Force.

Defence Sunday is important. Whilst Remembrance Day recalls the tragedy of World War 1 and the hope for peace which came with the Armistice on 11 November 1918, the experiences of the 20ths and now the 21st Century reveal that this hope remains unfulfilled.

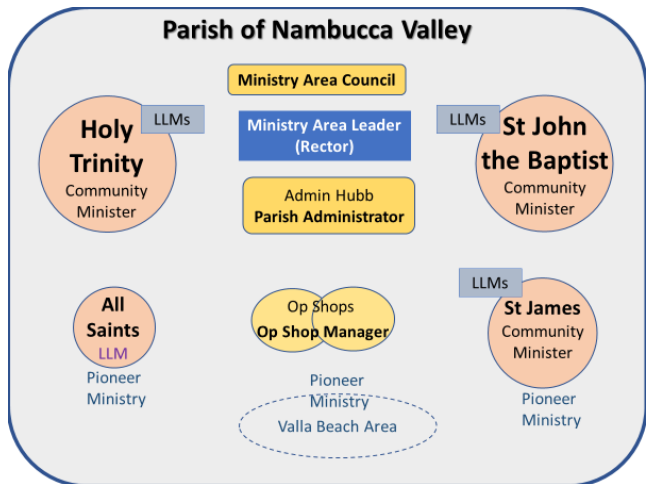
Tragically, Australian service personnel continue to die in combat in the Middle East and the numbers of physical, psychological and spiritual casualties continue to increase. Our church has a responsibility to provide ongoing pastoral and spiritual care to serving military personnel. The greatest support that the church can provide to its chaplains engaged in this mission is prayer and understanding. Please join with me in praying the prayer for Defence Chaplains that is provided elsewhere in this bulletin.

### *What's happening with the Parish Restructure?*

You may recall that the Model that we are setting up with the restructure is a team ministry model.

Here's a model of how I envisage the Parish of Nambucca Valley will be set up.

The Ministry Area Leader (also called the Rector) oversees a team which may have in it Licensed Lay Ministers (LLMs), Community Minister/s, and Pioneer Ministry (or Pioneer Minister).



In addition, there will be two other key team members: a paid (probably not full time) Op Shop Manager to manage the two Op Shops, and a Parish Administrator. The Parish Administrator will have more authority and responsibility than our past Office Assistant/Administrators have had. I will explain this in a future newsletter.

Clearly, we will need to embrace change! As I have said often while I've been with you, we can't keep doing things the way we have done in the past and expect a different outcome. The past ways of doing 'outreach' no longer work!

My main concern is that we might amalgamate the two parishes into one but not effectively implement this model. The implications if this occurs could lead to failure of the restructure, burnout and resignation of the new Ministry Area Leader, and lasting damage to future ministry and mission opportunities.

I know that we all find change difficult! I was amused by this quote from Jim Bright, Professor of Career Education and Development at ACU:

'Change, it seems, is something we have no difficulty embracing as long as it doesn't cause us to have to do anything differently.' 😊

Nevertheless, I am encouraged as I perceive God working in our parish restructure. I anticipate bringing you exciting developments in the near future.

Now here's a question:

*“What's the difference between a Licensed Lay Minister (LLM), and a Community Minister, and a Pioneer Minister?”*

I will give you my understanding of the differences in our next newsletter. It will help you to see how the model can, and will, work!

### ***What's coming up?***

I am currently negotiating a date for students from Bishop Druitt College to come and sing to us during a Sunday service. The BDC

school chaplain will join me in celebrating and probably preach. We are developing the relationship between our Parish and BDC.

May you be blessed and encouraged today,

*Rev Clyde*

## Psalm 78: 1-7

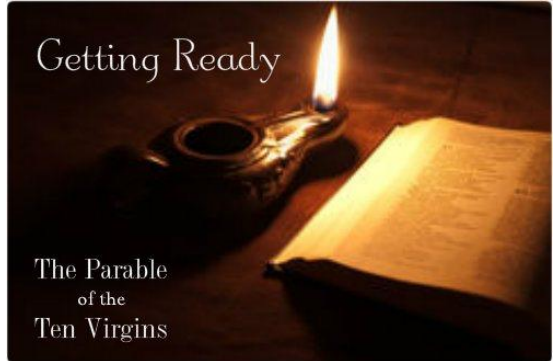
- <sup>1</sup> Give heed to my teaching, O my people:  
     incline your ears to the words of my mouth;
- <sup>2</sup> For I will open my mouth in a parable:  
     and expound the mysteries of former times.
- <sup>3</sup> What we have heard and known:  
     what our forebears have told us,
- <sup>4</sup> We will not hide from their  
 children,  
     but declare to a generation yet  
 to come:  
     the praiseworthy acts of the  
 Lord,  
     his mighty and wonderful  
 works.
- <sup>5</sup> He established a law in Jacob  
     and made a decree in Israel:  
     which he commanded our  
 ancestors  
     to teach their children,
- <sup>6</sup> That future generations might know,  
     and those yet unborn:  
     that they in turn might teach it to their children;
- <sup>7</sup> So that they might put their confidence in God:  
     and not forget his works, but keep his commandments,



## Bible Reading

*Please take your bible and  
read:*

**Matthew 25: 1-13,**  
*The Parable of the Ten  
Virgins.*



### **Reflection on Matthew 25:1-13** – Thanks to Sue Noble

Have you ever been in a situation where you have felt unprepared? Perhaps turning up for an exam or meeting to find that you haven't done the necessary study; or brought the right material. Have you ever felt as though you were on the outside of a gathering looking in; or feeling left out or excluded?

I had a dream in my late teens of walking around the outside of the church building that I attended in Lismore, peering in through the stained glass windows wondering how to get inside to be with others, but not being able to find the access. The poignant message of that dream to me at the time, was that one couldn't have a relationship with God by association with others. We don't inherit membership into God's kingdom from our parents, by being good or from attending church alone, it is only by knowing and accepting what Christ has done for us personally. There is no other access point.

Our reading today is about ten virgins or bridesmaids who found themselves ill prepared for the bridegroom's arrival and locked out of

a wedding banquet - symbolic of the gathering of God's people by Christ, when He returns again.

Michael Green (a commentator) sets the context for us: The background to this parable is a Jewish wedding custom. The wedding is not only a joyful but a protracted affair. The couple would not go away on honeymoon, but stay at home and welcome all comers. It was a relaxed affair; there was **no set time** when the bridegroom would come to the house of his bride, either to eat the wedding feast there, or more frequently to take her to his own home for the wedding feast. The festivities lasted for a week or even two and were marked by great joy, feasting and music. The virgins waited to escort the bridegroom into the house. Once he arrived and went in the door was shut, and there was no possibility of late access. So the foolish virgins in this parable will have missed the whole week, not just one supper, in being shut out.

The parable speaks of two groups of bridesmaids; five who were wise and five who were foolish. On face value there doesn't seem to be much to differentiate the two groups. They were **all** invited to the celebration, they **all** knew the groom, they **all** took lamps for keeping watch and **both** groups fell asleep when the party was delayed. What marks them as being different is that the wise bridesmaids were **prepared for a delay; they had extra oil**. But this lack of preparedness by the foolish bridesmaids, led the groom to say; "**I don't know you.**"

Jesus tells this parable to clarify what it means **to be known by God** and **how to prepare** (how to live) **whilst he seems delayed in coming**.

Jesus could have been directing his teaching to the Jews of his time, who had **not** recognised him as the Son of God. He was warning them that paying lip service is of no use. Unless they recognised him

as the Messiah, they would have no entry into His kingdom. They were the chosen people; their whole history should have been a preparation for the coming of the Son of God; they ought to have been prepared for him when he came. Instead they were quite unprepared and therefore were shut out. Here in dramatic form is the tragedy of their unpreparedness. (Barclay)

But the scripture passage also has a universal meaning that applies to you and me. In trying to find that meaning the first question we need to ask ourselves is “Do I know the groom?” “Do I belong to Christ?”

What distinguished the foolish virgins from the wise, was that they didn't have sufficient oil for a long wait. Throughout the Bible oil is symbolic of the Holy Spirit. And so we can infer that for us **to know Christ** we must receive him as God's Son, accept him as our Saviour and have the **Holy Spirit dwelling within us**. We must be born of God. When Jesus was speaking to Nicodemus he said: “I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God, unless he is born of water and the spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the spirit gives birth to spirit.”

We don't enter the kingdom by living a good life, but by being spiritually reborn. And we will be **known by God**, when Christ returns, if we have **believed in Jesus** and received Him as our Saviour. The Holy Spirit dwelling within us is our guarantee that we belong to his family and kingdom.

The second thing we need to ask ourselves as we reflect on the meaning of this parable is: “Am I preparing for His coming?” What did Jesus mean by ‘keeping watch’? I believe it means keeping our relationship with Him **close** and **vital**; keeping deeply connected. In fact, in John, Jesus prayed for us, that we would be so connected to Him, that we would be one with him, just as he is with the Father. (John17:20).

Keeping our relationship vital and being vigilant doesn't mean standing on a mountain top, gazing up in expectation of His return, or paying lip service, but learning to live IN Christ in the small details of our life. And this is not something we can do ourselves, without the help of Holy Spirit.

To watch with Christ, to keep our eyes fixed on him; this is not a passive theoretical exercise but a living relational one. It is a daily work. It means knowing you are God's child and that you are in His presence, when you are peeling the veggies, worrying about family members, and driving from A to B. It is believing that it is God who orchestrates the circumstances of our lives and we can trust Him in all matters. It means seeking him in prayer and being obedient to the Holy Spirit; allowing God access to all parts of our lives so that our spirit is changed by His. To keep watch and remain IN Christ will include the mundane, the routine and the tedium.

The devotional booklet, "**Sacred Space**" encourages us with these words:

This parable helps us to focus on the here and now. It helps us to learn to live totally in the present, to seek and find God there. If we can do that, then all the rest will take care of itself. Whether the Groom arrives early or late, it will not matter as he has been constantly part of my everyday life.

If I learn to take the small things to God in my daily living, then when the big moments come, I will be ready. It also means being a disciple; an imitator of Christ.

A Lutheran theologian puts it beautifully: "To live in vigilance means for the disciples to do the tasks that they have been appointed to do in preparation for the Master's coming. Those tasks include bearing witness to God's kingdom by welcoming the stranger, feeding the



hungry, visiting the sick and imprisoned (25:31-46), and making disciples in all the world (28:19-20)".

**Although the Groom may seem delayed in coming, let us keep faithful and deeply connected to Jesus, until His return.**

*Amen.*

## Collect

Eternal God,  
 you have taught us that the night is far spent  
 and the day is at hand:  
 keep us awake and alert, watching for your kingdom,  
 so that when Christ, the bridegroom, comes  
 we may go out joyfully to meet him,  
 and with him enter into the marriage feast  
 that you have prepared for all who truly love you;  
 through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
 who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
 one God, now and for ever. Amen.

### **Prayers for 8<sup>th</sup> November 2020** – Thanks David Jones

Ever loving God, in every generation you have cared for your children, and your mercy is everlasting; hear the prayers we bring for your world and your church.

We pray for the peoples of every land, for all who suffer the horrors of war, the dreaded corona virus and starvation as well as the refugees who escape their homeland to find a peace loving country they can in time call home.

We give you thanks for those who work to bring an end to oppression and suffering, remembering especially those who have given their lives so that others might live.

Loving God we wait for your coming, for your reign of justice and peace. *Lord In your mercy, **hear our prayer.***

We pray for your church throughout the world, for all priests, pastors, LLM's, SRE teachers and youth workers; for the newly baptised and for those whose faith has grown cold; and for all who worship in this parish.

We give you thanks for those who bring to others your word and gospel of salvation, remembering especially those who work in places that are dangerous, remote or unresponsive. Loving God, we wait for your coming, for your reign of righteousness and truth. *Lord In your mercy, **hear our prayer.***

We pray for the communities in which the corona virus has taken hold, causing people to lose their jobs, their health and those who have lost everything they have worked hard for. We pray for those who are forgotten, our families and friends, the unwanted and abused. We pray for Bishop Murray, Archdeacon Tiffany, Rev'd Clyde and those responsible for guiding us through the merging of various parishes as we continue to adhere to the health guidelines to keep our parishioners safe during church services. *Lord In your mercy, **hear our prayer.***

We give you thanks for all who bring comfort, hope and relief to your people, especially the medical staff, chaplains, and pastoral workers. Loving God, *in your mercy, **hear our prayer.***

We remember those who have served you faithfully to their life's end. Keep us ever watchful and ready for the day of your coming, that we may hear with joy the archangel's call, and with all who have died in Christ, rise to meet you.

Loving God, we wait for your coming in glory; *Lord In your mercy **hear our prayer.***

## A Prayer for Defence Chaplains

Lord God of Hosts,

We pray for your clergy whom you have called to the ministry of uniformed chaplaincy, and for those who proclaim your love and compassion in battle areas and defence establishments where Australian military personnel serve.

Lord, strengthen their faith as they seek to witness to you in a secular world.

Protect them from all dangers and comfort them in the long separations from families and the familiar things of church that they must endure.

Lord who blessed the peacemakers, bless especially those chaplains serving overseas, helping to bring peace to the nations new and old which are struggling to find their identity and place in the world.

We ask in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and forever. **Amen**

Weekly Notes and Reflections

Mindfulness tip from Sam

**Tread Softly**

“Walk as if you are kissing the earth with your feet”

*Thich Nhat Hanh*