

The Home Sunday Worship Supplement

Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost, 4th October 2020

Dear Parishioners,



Linda and I are pleased to be back with you following a most enjoyable four weeks of leave during which we celebrated our 48th wedding anniversary. We are anticipating a very busy remainder of 2020.

Bishop's Visit. Bishop Murray is scheduled to visit with us on Sunday 11th October. During his visits, he likes to have an opportunity to meet parishioners. Therefore, I intend that we will have a service of Holy Communion in Holy Trinity commencing at 9:30 am. COVIDSafe requirements will apply including 1.5m physical distancing (except for people from the same household), no singing, and communion in-one-kind (the bread brought to you in your seats. Holy Trinity is able to have a maximum of 23 worshippers. To avoid the embarrassment of having to turn anyone away, I ask you to register your intention to come by sending an email to the parish office (macksang@bigpond.com) or telephoning the parish office and leaving a message (6568 1035) before midday on Thu 8th Oct.



Synod Outcomes. Give thanks to God! We have been granted a two-year reprieve on the closure of All Saints, Stuarts Point. This is because of the connections with the community and the pioneering ministry opportunities that are arising from the Art House project. Now we need to look at how we can build on this first step. Please pray for direction on this. I will produce a summary of relevant Synod outcomes for Parish Council – copies will be available upon request. The Bishop's address and other reporting on Synod will be printed in the electronic North



Coast Anglican. Limited paper copies will be available later upon request.

Re-opening of Holy Trinity. Holy Trinity will be re-opened to offer a 9:30 am service each Sunday commencing 11th October. These services may not always be services of Holy Communion. Special COVIDSafe arrangements for these services, including 1.5m physical distancing (except for people from the same household), will apply. Samantha will produce a roster for readers, intercessors, LLMs and computer operators – please let her know if you are available.

Home Worship. For those unable to join with us in Holy Trinity, we will still produce a Sunday Supplement for Home Worship whilst sufficient need exists. Please advise Samantha in the Parish Office if you wish to remain on the email list to receive Sunday Supplements for Home Worship.

Parish Restructuring. Following the Synod, we can now begin preparations to form **The Parish of Nambucca Valley** in earnest:



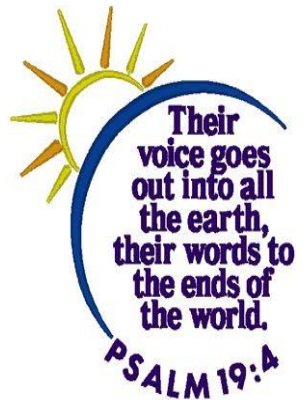
- Meetings with our Mission Companion (Archdeacon Gail Hagon) to assist both parishes to continue *moving forward together* with a combined vision and goals commenced 1st Oct. It is attended by those who will, on 1 Jan 2021, form an ‘interim parish council’ I will report outcomes of these meetings as they occur.
- Both parishes worked together to produce a **Parish Profile** which is on the Diocesan Website for interested persons to view.
- A 16-point letter has been received from Bishop in Council which outlines the steps that are necessary for us to prepare for and to conduct the first AGM for **The Parish of Nambucca Valley** in Feb 2021. Archdeacon Stuart Webb is overseeing this part of the process.

- From the Bishop in Council Resolution, I have produced a 'tracking sheet' to guide our progress and am happy to provide a copy of this to any parishioner who requests a copy from myself.

*May you be encouraged and blessed,
Rev Clyde*

Psalm 19

- ¹ The heavens declare the glory of God:
and the firmament proclaims his handiwork;
- ² One day tells it to another:
and night to night communicates knowledge.
- ³ There is no speech or language:
nor are their voices heard;
- ⁴ Yet their sound has gone out through all the world:
and their words to the ends of the earth.
- ⁵ There he has pitched a tent for the sun:
which comes out as a bridegroom from his chamber,
and rejoices like a strong man to run his course.
- ⁶ Its rising is at one end of the heavens,
and its circuit to their farthest bound:
and nothing is hidden from its heat.
- ⁷ The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul:
the command of the Lord is true,
and makes wise the simple.
- ⁸ The precepts of the Lord are right,
and rejoice the heart:
the commandment of the Lord is pure,
and gives light to the eyes.
- ⁹ The fear of the Lord is clean, and endures for ever:
the judgements of the Lord are unchanging,
and righteous every one.
- ¹⁰ More to be desired are they than gold,
even much fine gold:



sweeter also than honey,
than the honey that drips from the comb.

¹¹ Moreover, by them is your servant taught:
and in keeping them there is great reward.

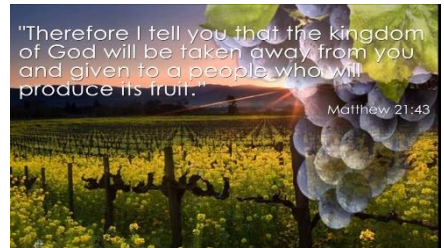
¹² Who can know their own unwitting sins?:
O cleanse me from my secret faults.

¹³ Keep your servant also from presumptuous sins,
lest they get the mastery over me:
so I shall be clean, and innocent of great offence.

¹⁴ May the words of my mouth and the meditation
of my heart be acceptable in your sight:
O Lord, my strength and my redeemer.

Matthew 21:33-46

³³ ‘Listen to another parable: there was a landowner who planted a vineyard. He put a wall round it, dug a winepress in it and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and moved to another place. ³⁴ When the harvest time approached, he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his fruit. ³⁵ ‘The tenants seized his servants; they beat one, killed another, and stoned a third. ³⁶ Then he sent other servants to them, more than the first time, and the tenants treated them in the same way. ³⁷ Last of all, he sent his son to them. “They will respect my son,” he said. ³⁸ ‘But when the tenants saw the son, they said to each other, “This is the heir. Come, let’s kill him and take his inheritance.” ³⁹ So they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. ⁴⁰ ‘Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?’ ⁴¹ ‘He will bring those wretches to a wretched end,’ they replied, ‘and he will rent the vineyard to other tenants, who will give him his share of the crop at harvest time.’ ⁴² Jesus said to them, ‘Have you never read in the Scriptures : ““The stone the builders rejected has become the



cornerstone ; the Lord has done this , and it is marvellous in our eyes”? ⁴³ ‘Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit. ⁴⁴ Anyone who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; anyone on whom it falls will be crushed.’ ⁴⁵ When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard Jesus’ parables, they knew he was talking about them. ⁴⁶ They looked for a way to arrest him, but they were afraid of the crowd because the people held that he was a prophet.

Reflection on Matthew 21:33-46

While on leave, I was watching birds bathing and drinking at a bird bath in our garden in Port Macquarie. As birds drink, they lift their heads to allow the water to run down their throats by gravity.

In a book called ***The Birds Our Teachers***, John Stott revealed that the people in Ghana on the coast of West Africa have turned this action into a proverb that expresses their conviction that they should constantly show gratitude to God. They say, ‘*Even the chicken, when it drinks, lifts its head to heaven to thank God for the water.*’ Stott concluded, ‘Gratitude is a virtue which should characterize all the people of God.’ ‘If we have even tasted the grace of God, gratitude should arise spontaneously within us.’

Gratitude towards God (or rather the lack of it) is the subject of *The Parable of the Ungrateful (Wicked) Tenants*, that we read today.

The parable was originally directed towards the Israelite nation. It gives a potted history of the Israelites and a prophecy of Jesus’ crucifixion orchestrated by the Jewish leaders. Can you identify who the characters in the parable represent?

We remember the story. God rescued the Israelites from slavery, placed his trust in them and had established a covenant with them. They were to live in obedience to God and were to bless other nations

by taking the message of God's love for all people to the other nations. He gave them all that was necessary to enable them to bring forth the fruit.

But the Israelites complained and rebelled against God. In his infinite patience, God sent prophet after prophet to call the Israelites back to him, and to the original purpose for which he had made them the privileged nation. Regardless, down through history the Israelites rejected God's prophets. Finally, (Jesus prophesied) God's Son would be rejected and killed.

When Jesus spoke this parable, the chief priests and the Pharisees recognised that he was speaking about them, so they wanted to arrest him.

But this parable is not just a history lesson! It applies to us today just as much as the Jewish religious leaders back then.

Like the Israelites, we too have been rescued from slavery (to sin and death) and blessed with the provision of a world full of all that is required for abundant life. And for those who accept Jesus' lordship, we have the promise of forgiveness from God, the joy of a restored relationship with our heavenly Father, and the assurance of eternal life and an inheritance awaiting us in heaven.

But, just like the ungrateful tenants, people today are denying God's rightful ownership of his creation and his rightful claim on their lives. So instead of giving back to God the fruit of lives that recognise his authority over us, many people are rejecting God and his Son.

Jesus finished by prophesying how God would reverse the theme of rejection. From being the one rejected, Jesus was to become the one who would judge those who had rejected him. Those who reject God's Son will forfeit their position in God's vineyard, and lose their life, just like the ungrateful tenants.

What then should be our response to this parable? I suggest it should be threefold. Firstly, we should respond with gratitude to the one who rightfully owns it all; secondly, we should respond with a life of obedience to God in the way we live; and thirdly, just as the tenants in the parable had been placed in the vineyard to produce fruit, we should seek to produce fruit.

The fruit includes the fruit of character listed in Galatians 5:22-23 that we develop through maintaining a life of obedience. It also arises from seeking to be a blessing to others through our generosity in supporting the charitable work of the church and by offering the love of God and the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ.

In our liturgy of the Eucharist, as we prepare ourselves to receive the body and blood, we recall all that with which God has blessed us, and are exhorted to “lift up your hearts” to God in gratitude for what he has done for us. So today, let us lift up our heads in gratitude, along with the Ghanaian people, and seek to live a life of obedience to God. And let us daily seek to develop in our lives the fruit to offer back to God.

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.

Re-opening of Holy Trinity

Holy Trinity will be re-opened to offer a 9:30 am service each Sunday commencing 11th October.

These services may not always be services of Holy Communion. Other options are, Morning Prayer, Communion using Reserved Sacrament, or Praise Prayer & Proclamation.



Special COVIDSafe arrangements for these services including 1.5m physical distancing (except for people from the same household), will apply.

Hand sanitiser must be used before entering the church.

Prayer Books will not be available; however, you may bring a personal copy of APBA if you so desire.

Singing is not permitted. Some DVDs or CDs of reflective music will be played.

Communion in-one-kind (bread only) is permitted and will be brought to you in your seats.

Gatherings inside the building after the service are discouraged because of difficulty maintaining physical distancing requirements. Therefore, morning tea will not be available

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