



BALLINA & LENNOX HEAD ANGLICANS

An inclusive Christ-centred community, growing in our
relationship with God and the wider community

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land, the Bundjalung nation,
and pay respects to their elders past and present.

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT 6 DECEMBER 2020

Pastoral message from the Rector

Many years ago, I stumbled upon an old movie from 1965 which has now become a favourite. It is called "The Russians are coming" and it is the story about a Russian submarine that ran aground off the New England coast of America. Despite the Russians' harmless intentions, the folks in town thought a full-scale Soviet invasion had been launched. One of the locals was charged with the task of riding a horse through the town to warn the people that "The Russians are coming." Sadly, for him, his horse runs away so he spends the entire time trying to catch it. The movie ends with him finally catching his horse and being able to ride through the town warning people of the impending invasion, but he is totally oblivious to the fact that the not-so-threatening Russians have already sailed away. It is a delightful comedy and a lot of fun to watch.

I am reminded of this film each time I read about John the Baptist crying out his warning in the wilderness. He charged the people to "Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." Like the man on the horse, he had an important message to proclaim and he shouted it out loudly, so loudly in fact that 'people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him.' I sometimes wonder if I am doing a good enough job of being a messenger for Jesus. I don't stand on street corners shouting out to people to repent. I don't speak at rallies telling people how they should amend their lives. I don't preach hellfire and brimstones sermons warning people of impending doom unless they repent and change their ways.

I prefer to try and live the kind of life Jesus modelled. I don't feel called to shout out warnings, but I do feel called to practice what Jesus preached. I try to be considerate of other people's needs, I try to be a good listener and I try to care for people who are less fortunate than myself. Is this enough? I am not sure, but I am confident that God knows that I am trying. How does this Gospel reading speak to you? Perhaps you are like me and would prefer to be a quiet messenger of the Good News. Whether we are quiet, or loud, I think the important thing is that we do tell other people about Jesus. This may be with words, and it may be with actions. Either way, may God bless us as we share his Good News with those whom we meet each day.

Advent blessings

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matthew", written in a cursive style.

Matthew

Birthdays: Pip Carter.

One of the requirements for the COVID-19 Safety Plan for a service in the church is to have a team of volunteers. Could you do any of these jobs in St Mary's?:

Registration

Supervising Hand Sanitising

Pewsheets and Order of Service handout

Ushering

Reading/Prayers

We would love to hear from you - Kerry 0407 257 129 or Cathie Guest 6686 2094.

Ballina Anglican Op Shop is seeking volunteers to assist in the transfer of donations from 2.30pm – 4.00pm on Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday afternoons. The task involves transferring new donations from the front veranda to the shed and moving the donations from the shed to the sorting room to be sorted the next day. You will be working with experienced staff so no experience necessary. Interested persons can contact Ann Emery 0417259290 or Julie Harwood 0408653283 for more information.

Annual Reports for inclusion at the AGM are due to be received by the office by 29 January at the latest, sooner if at all possible. If you are responsible for preparation of a report from one of our groups can you please be giving consideration to that report at this time. If you have any questions, or wonder if you are on that list, please email Cathie at office@anglicanballina.com.au.

Ballina Christian Education Committee (BCEC) and Ritchies IGA If you want to support BCEC here is one very simple way to do it. Ritchies IGA has recently launched its new IGA Card to celebrate 150 years of service to the community. Now is the time to sign up with their online app. and nominate BCEC (formerly BSREA) as the Beneficiary. They give 0.5% of sales to nominated community groups. Every little bit helps - consider making BCEC your choice!

Also available is the BCEC Who's Who of Ballina Shire Ultimate Puzzle Book. The book is available at both of our centres at a cost of \$15 and would make a great Christmas present.

Coffee & Chat will meet again Thursday 10 December 10.30am at The Gallery Café, 46 Cherry St. To ensure a seat is booked for you, please let Kerry Johnston know that you are coming on 0407 257 129 by 2pm Wednesday. The last one will be Thursday 17 December 2020 and will resume Thursday 14 January 2021.

Do you have photos of some of the things that have been different about this year? We are hoping to have a vision of the strange year that was for this year's Annual Report, so if you have anything that reflects Parish life since January can you please send it to Cathie at office@anglicanballina.com.au, or if you bring it in she can scan it and return it to you?

Wearing of Face Masks Bishop Murray has advised of an update from NSW Health, who now only recommend masks where social distancing is not possible (e.g. public transport). The Minister and his medical advisor have both agreed that if congregational members are physically spaced at 1.5m, with no singing of course, then the risk of infection is so minimal, that the wearing of masks need no longer apply. Of course, some may wish to continue to wear masks to exercise caution and to show love to others. We should not discourage them, The Archbishop of Sydney continues to liaise on our behalf with Ministers and senior Health Department Advisers.

Financial Giving to the Parish

Whilst the Op Shop with successful trading during the COVID pandemic has been able to catch up on its budgeted transfers to the Parish funds there is still a shortfall in offertory giving, a major source of funds required to run the Parish.

You are encouraged to support the Parish through regular giving in one of the following ways:

Direct deposits through AfGD (Anglican funds Grafton Diocese) known as Parish Provider: Application Form is available from the Parish Administration Office. Complete and post it to: PO Box 4, Grafton NSW 2460; alternatively scan or photo the completed form and send it as an attachment to AfGD email address: office@afgd.com.au; or

Direct deposit to the Parish of Ballina Working Account: this method enables you to use your bank to electronically direct transfer funds into the following account.

Account: Parish of Ballina Working Account: *BSB:* 705-077 *Account Number:* 00040134.
Use Reference: Offering; or

At Sunday Services: there is a box set aside for giving at St Mary's and St John the Baptist if you are attending Sunday worship and wish to give this way; or

At the Admin Office: giving by cash or EFTPOS can also be processed at the Admin Office during the week from 9.00am to 3:00pm.

Thank you.

Hugh McIntosh - Parish Treasurer

Special COVID-19 Appeal To help maintain Parish ministry and the jobs of paid churchworkers through this crisis, the Diocese has opened a special appeal. Contributions to this fund will go first to maintaining paid roles of churchworkers across the Diocese, whether located in Parishes, the Registry or special ministries such as chaplaincies. Click here to find out more and learn about ways to donate: [The Anglican Diocese of Grafton COVID-19 Support Fund](#)

FACT Heavenly Lord, the advent season has begun and we are reminded of the prophets like John the Baptist who warned us to repent of our sins and those who foretold of the innocent birth of the Lord Jesus who would bring his message of peace and hope.

As we contemplate the year behind us we have had to learn to be patient and to trust you. Help us to be steadfast in our faith in our daily lives, accepting of our circumstances and willing to work for the betterment of all.

With our baptism you pardoned us from sin, so we can be comforted in the knowledge that you will find us waiting peacefully ready for your next coming. **Amen.**



Thought for the Week from Mothers Union Australia

Proclamation

O Living Word,
proceeding from the mouth of God,
penetrating to the ends of the earth,
come and pierce us,
with the sword of truth.

Jim Cotter 'Cries of Advent' No 1. From *Prayer in the Morning*, Cairns Publications 1989.

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns." Isaiah 52: 7

Improving communication and leadership development are priorities for members in the province of York, UK. May their voices and actions proclaim the Good News of Jesus' love for all.

EAC Prayer Points

As we come to the last week of term we give thanks for the year that has been.

We continue to pray for:

- members of our community who were impacted by the fires in the early part of the year;
- and uphold members of our community who lost family and friends to the Covid-19 pandemic, for our international students - some who were stranded here and some we had to get home quickly; for family and friends whose livelihoods were lost and who had to find different ways ahead;
- our End of Year Assemblies, Whole College Chapel (filmed) and our Picnic Day events; and
- our staff as they finish up this years work, looking to the new year in planning, and undertake some professional learning during the break time.

We give thanks for:

- the ongoing resilience of staff and students, for the new ways and skills learned;
- the wise leadership of our College Executive in a difficult and confusing year.

We pray for safety, relaxation and refreshment for all.



CONTACT US

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“COUCH CHURCH”: WORSHIPPING GOD AT HOME

6 DECEMBER 2020

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Don't forget to click on the link in your email to watch this service online.

Call to Worship

God, you called and prepared your people through John,
a strange man in a strange place.

May we, sometimes strange, sometimes not,
all worship you, O God,
turning towards the eternal Word
that does not fade, that welcomes all,
making strangers friends for ever.

Amen.

Hymn: On Jordan's Bank

On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry
announces that the Lord is nigh;
come then and hearken, for he brings
glad tidings from the King of kings.

Then cleansed be every heart from sin;
make straight the way for God within;
prepare we in our hearts a home
where such a mighty guest may come.

For you are our salvation, Lord,
our refuge and our great reward;
without your grace we waste away
like flowers that wither and decay.

To heal the sick stretch out your hand,
and bid the fallen sinner stand;
shine forth, and let your light restore
earth's own true loveliness once more.

To him who left the throne of heaven
to free us all, let praise be given;
and praise be to the Father done,
and Holy Spirit, Three in One.

Charles Coffin (1676 – 1749)

TiS 270

Gathering Prayer:

People went to deserted places
to hear what was most important:
pilgrims seeking a new way.
Today we light a second candle
as a symbol of our pilgrimage
towards the things that will last for ever:
righteousness, loving-kindness,

peace and an eternal home in you, O God,
who calls all things towards the fullness of life.

Amen.

Confession:

*Comfort, comfort all my people
with the comfort of my Word.
Speak it tender to my people:
all your sins are taken away.*

We have looked at the rough,
and judged it for not being smooth.

*Every valley shall be lifted,
every mountain shall be low,
every rough place will be smoother:
comfort, comfort*

*Comfort, comfort all my people,
with the comfort of my Word,
speak it tender to my people:
all your sins are taken away.*

We have looked at the valley,
and thought it could not be raised.
We have observed the mountain,
believing it would be unscalable,
and in so doing, we have become complacent.

*Every night will have its morning,
every pain will have an end,
every burden will be lightened:
comfort comfort*

*Comfort, comfort all my people
with the comfort of my Word.
Speak it tender to my people:
all your sins are taken away.*

Forgive us, God,
for our complacency and our judgements.
Make us see with the eyes of a pilgrim,
knowing that you,
who have called us on this way,
will make a pathway before us.

*Every wall will crack and crumble,
every stranger will be friend,
every one embrace another:
comfort, comfort*

*Comfort, comfort all my people
with the comfort of my Word,
speak it tender to my people:
all your sins are taken away.*

Amen.

Absolution

Sentence:

Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. For the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together.

Luke 3:4; Isaiah 40:5a

Prayer of the Day:

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 for ever and ever.

Amen.

Readings:

Isaiah 40:1-11

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins. A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken." A voice says, "Cry out!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the Lord blows upon it; surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever. Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!" See, the Lord God comes with might, and his arm rules for him; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.

Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13

Cantor: 'Dona nobis pacem, Domine'

Choir: 'Dona nobis pacem, Domine'

1 O Lord you were gracious to your land:
you restored the fortunes of Jacob.

2 You forgave the iniquity of your people:
and covered all their sin.

Choir: 'Dona nobis pacem, Domine'

8 I will hear what the Lord God will speak:
for he will speak peace to his people
to his faithful ones whose hearts are turned to him.

9 Truly his salvation is near to those that fear him:
and his glory shall dwell in our land.

Choir: 'Dona nobis pacem, Domine'

10 Mercy and truth are met together:
 righteousness and peace have kissed each other;
11 Truth shall flourish out of the earth:
 and righteousness shall look down from heaven.

Choir: 'Dona nobis pacem, Domine'

12 The Lord will also give us all that is good:
 and our land shall yield its plenty.
13 For righteousness shall go before him:
 and tread the path before his feet.

Choir: 'Dona nobis pacem, Domine'

A.P Watt, London
TiS 713

Gospel Acclamation:

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

 Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths:
 all people shall see the salvation of our God.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

TiS 51

The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to Mark.

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, "See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.'" John the baptiser appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptised by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptised you with water; but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit."

Mark 1:1-8 (NRSV)

Sermon

Hymn: Like the Murmur of the Dove's Song

Like the murmur of the dove's song,
like the challenge of her flight,
like the vigour of the wind's rush,
like the new flame's eager might:
come, Holy Spirit, come.

To the members of Christ's body,
to the branches of the Vine,
to the church in faith assembled,
to its midst as gift and sign:
come, Holy Spirit, come.

With the healing of division,
with the ceaseless voice of prayer,
with the pow'r to love and witness,
with the peace beyond compare:
come, Holy Spirit, come.

Carl P. Daw (1944 -)

Advent Creed:

We believe in God the Father, creator of heaven and earth.
The one who is full of patience,
who is not afraid of silence,
who does not need to fill each moment with activity and noise.
The one who is beyond bluster and flurry,
and who does not jostle for attention.

We believe in God the Son, Saviour of creation,
who slipped into Bethlehem one night, mostly unnoticed,
who lived thirty years without headlines or hurry,
who frequently took time alone with his patient Father,

who waited for the right time to become the suffering servant,
who stood quietly before the noise of his accusers,
whose silence overpowered their words,
who died, then rose again on a quiet Sunday morning.

We believe in God the Holy Spirit,
who strengthens, empowers, renews and refreshes,
sometimes arriving with obvious power,
sometimes with the quiet breath of a whisper.

We believe in one God
who patiently waits for us,
and who longs for us to do the same. Amen.

Intercessions:

As John the Baptist came calling for people to repent and prepare for the coming of the Messiah, may we also prepare for Jesus' Advent.

We pray for peace for the places of the world where there is war and civil unrest, and for those who live in places of injustice and cruelty, that they may live in hope and peace.

Come, Lord Jesus, **and in your mercy, hear our plea.**

As we wait for your Advent, speak through your worldwide church. Let your message of love and forgiveness be shared with all who would listen.

We give you thanks for the faithfulness of those within our parish who give up their time to ensure we can worship safely, and we look forward to the day we can worship you in church with songs of praise.

Come, Lord Jesus, **and in your mercy, hear our plea.**

We give thanks for those who staff our nursing homes, and for the staff of our Ballina Hospital. We pray for our schoolteachers as they come to the end of this academic year, may they find refreshment in you.

Come, Lord Jesus, **and in your mercy, hear our plea.**

Jesus, you brought healing and wholeness to those who sought you out. We bring to you all in need of your comfort and care: those whom we may have neglected and those who cannot care for themselves. We remember those whom we love and those of this parish who are ill, especially those who have asked for prayer for healing: Ria Mars, Joy Swinbourne, Malcolm Streher, Josh Stanley, Margaret Waller, Lynda Garde, Rachael Hampton, Alton Rowe, Karen and Ben Shaw, Ron Roder, Rose Fox, Alex Arrighi, Gerri White's granddaughter, Phil Ross, and Milton Colburt. Comfort those who are mourning loved ones whose anniversary falls during this Advent season.

Come Lord Jesus, **and in your mercy, hear our plea.**

We give thanks for the ministry of John the Baptist and all those through the ages who spoke of your coming. May we repent of all that is displeasing in your sight, that, with your faithful people of ages past, we may be gathered into the joy of your presence.

Come Lord Jesus, **and in your mercy, hear our plea.**

Accept our prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord who taught us to pray,
Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.

Hymn: There's a Light

There's a light upon the mountains, and the day is at the spring
when our eyes shall see the beauty and the glory of the King;
weary was our heart with waiting, and the night-watch seemed so long,
but his triumph day is breaking, and we hail it with a song.

There's a hush of expectation, and a quiet in the air,
and the breath of God is moving in the fervent breath of prayer:
for the suffering, dying Jesus is the Christ upon the throne,
and the travail of our spirit is the travail of his own.

He is breaking down the barriers, he is casting up the way,
he is calling for his angels to build up the gates of day:
but his angels here are human, not the shining hosts above;
for the drum-beats of his army are the heart-beats of our love.

Henry Burton (1840 - 1930)
TiS 276

Sending Out Prayer:

We have gathered around stories of strange people in wild places. For you, O Lord, no desert is a desert only. It is a place where you nurture us, because you see life and light where we do not. And so we follow your light into all places.

Amen.

Blessing

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