

Anam Cara Community



Waterholes: 27 April 2018



One of two remaining draw bridges on the Murray, Tooleybuc, NSW. Photo Ross Byrne

Welcome

Welcome to Waterholes, the Anam Cara Community newsletter for the week beginning 28th April 2018.

Why this newsletter? This newsletter is one of the ways by which we hope to promote community. The Anam Cara Community is intended to be much more than simply a group of likeminded people. We hope it will continue to grow into a community that is a sign of God's presence in and love for the world, a dispersed community of contemplatives whose

lives and action bring peace and healing to all of God's children. We are a Community of Prayer, and believe that as we pray together, God calls us deeper into fellowship with one another.

Who is welcome? The Anam Cara Community is proud to welcome anyone, from any background or faith community (or none!). We are an open and inclusive community that affirms the dignity and worth of all humans, the value of the environment, and seeks to model a way of living with one another and the world that points to the love and care of God for everyone. Individuals who wish to formally join the Community are welcome to become associates.

Coming events

1. Note the details at the bottom of this newsletter for:

A nourishing feast of Creativity and Fun!

With Rod Pattenden and Trish Watts

Several opportunities for Spiritual nurture and fun

THIS WEEKEND AT THE CATHEDRAL

2. MAY QUIET DAY:

God of Surprises

Led by The Rev'd Heather Toms

Saturday 26 May

Holy Trinity Anglican Church,
McFarlane St, Stratford.



9.30/10.00 am – 3.30 pm

What to bring: your lunch, pen & notepad

Tea/coffee/water & morning tea provided

Donations welcomed nil - \$15 depending on means

RSVP: Jane 0411316346 or jemacqueen@gmail.com

For your prayers

Part of the joy of the Anam Cara Community is the gift of being called to pray for others. If you would like the Community to pray for you, or for someone else, please email or call Jane ([0411 316 346](tel:0411316346) or jemacqueen@gmail.com) who will add them to the prayer list, and ensure they are included in our roster of prayers.

At present, your prayers are asked for:

- Diocesan Administrator, Philip Muston and the Board of Electors for wisdom and discernment in the selection process for our new Bishop.
- The registry staff, Philip, Brian, Annette, Kellie, Sue and David.
- Associates who have asked for prayer: Norma, June, Chris Venning, Sue Hopkins and Val Lawrence.
- For peacemakers in our world. For world leaders in their discussions and decision making.
- For all who suffer as a result of violence.
- For wise and compassionate counsel and some direction and hope for the future of refugees and asylum seekers across the globe.

Prayer of the day

O God,
form the minds of your faithful people,
that we may love what you command
and desire what you promise,
so that, amid the many changes of this world,
our hearts may there be fixed where three joys are to be found;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Reflection

5th Sunday of Easter

Offered by: The Rev'd Joan Smith, Canberra.

Introduction

Sometimes I am delighted when I find that the Gospel reading that is set is one of my favourites – and today is one of those days! What a beautiful image from Jesus, “I am the true vine and my Father is the vinegrower. Again Jesus is using something very well known to his audience, something they would see around them every day, just like last week’s image of the sheep and the shepherd.

The Gospel

Especially in the Hebrew Scriptures, grapes and a productive vineyard symbolise God's blessing, as well as God's chosen people and their work on earth. The New Testament also presumes that same symbolism. Vines, vineyards, cultivation and wine are part the culture of everyday life. Metaphors, festivals, religious practices, scripture and art spring from the Creator's life-giving gift.

The passage from John is reminiscent of “the song of the unfruitful vineyard” in Isaiah 5. Both passages affirm that the type of fruit produced becomes the basis for determining faithfulness. Obedience to God's covenantal expectations and commandments is the criteria for the continued existence of the mutually fulfilling relationship. As Jesus says in verse 10 of today's Gospel “If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love.”

I love that word 'abide' and its relationship to the word 'abode': how wonderful that we can be 'at home' in God! John uses the word to mean 'continuing', 'remaining'. Addressing believers, John declares them already cleansed (from the same Greek word for pruned). Having established the relationship of faith, the concern becomes maintaining the relationship of abiding in the Father's love. Followers of Jesus Christ stay connected to the Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer; that connection determines who we are and who we become.

As an ex Methodist, I can't resist sharing this snippet about John Wesley, the accidental founder of Methodism - he actually was still an Anglican Priest when he died. But, in life he laboured over this matter of abiding. Briefly stated, his “General Rules” for the Methodist people are these: (1) doing no harm; (2) doing good (3) attending upon all the ordinances of God. Which include public worship, ministry of the word, The Lord's Supper, family and private prayer, searching scriptures, fasting or abstinence. These disciplines put a person in a position to experience the grace of God, “the One for all”. They help develop spiritual health for all who know God's love and desire not only to stay connected but to abide.

The image of the vine and the branches is one of connection, life and growth, portraying a life rooted in Christ, our beginning point. While there is no one way to discover Christ or meet Christ or receive Christ, there is an essential need for connection to Christ. One of Paul's favourite ways to describe faith is through his use of the phrase *in Christ*. For

example, Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 5:17 “If anyone one is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see everything has become new.”

Once we lived in a vital connection with the earth. If we worked the ground, cared for the soil, nurtured growth and supported the vocation of farming, we were blessed with the fruits of the earth. Now we fill our shopping trolleys with produce and meats and canned goods and beverages. Our plastic cards are placed on scanners, and we have our daily bread. If floods come or an ecological disaster or famine strikes, another market is found. There is no longer a vital, visible connection between what grows from the earth and what feeds and sustains us.

The vine nourishes the branches and and is essential to their growth and life. In the same way, a relationship with Christ is at the heart of our lives. We draw strength from this relationship as we pray, as we read the scriptures and as we follow him in our daily lives. A relationship with Christ is not a status symbol. Rather, to live *in Christ* is to be part of a dynamic process of growth. That was, after all, the divine intention: “I have come that they may have life, and have it abundantly” as we read in John 10:10.

Sometimes we think we are strong – we like to be in control and at the centre. Maybe being strong is about survival, about perseverance, about doing what needs to be done. But at times we realise that our strength resides not in God but in self! When the illusion of our strength is made plain, we acknowledge our pride and our need to live by faith. When the illusion of our control becomes apparent, we acknowledge our uncertainty and our need to live by hope. When the illusion of our being at the centre of all things is before us, we acknowledge our pride & our need to live by love.

Conclusion

Jesus also said “I am the vine and you are the branches ... apart from me you can do nothing.” In stark contrast to self-sufficiency or self-help, the Christian life assumes our need for God. To acknowledge Christ as our Saviour is to admit our limitations, our failures, our incompleteness, our brokenness. The good news is that our need for One who can forgive, complete, and save is met, prior to our asking, by God's offer of grace through Jesus Christ. He feeds us with his bread his body, He nourishes us with the cup of his blood. He sustains us with the reminder that both convicts and comforts: “Apart from me you can do nothing.”

I will conclude with a Michael Leunig prayer:

We pray for the fragile ecology of the heart and the mind. The sense of meaning. So finely assembled and balanced and so easily overturned, The careful, ongoing construction of love. As painful and exhausting as the struggle for truth and as easily abandoned. Hard fought and won are the shifting sands of this ecology.

Easy to desecrate and difficult to defend, this vulnerable joy, this exposed faith, this precious order. This sanity. We shall be careful. With others and with ourselves.

Photo Reflection



Wood Wood, Victoria, just upstream from Tooleybuc (our first photo). Photo Ross Byrne

Further opportunities for Spiritual Nurture

1. St Paul's Cathedral, Sale.

- **A nourishing feast of Creativity and Fun!
27-29 April 2018.
With Rod Pattenden and Trish Watts**

2pm-5pm Saturday 28 April 2018 **"Play with the 5 Freedom Paths- storytelling, movement, singing, silence and connection"** \$25

Sunday 8 and 10am Services:

'Sparks of Life': ...sustaining creative lives

Sunday 730pm -9pm: **'Sanctuary': Where heaven touches earth - uplifting & peaceful songs for inspiration, meditation & community joy.** *Entry by donation*
To register interest, contact Susanna: 0418 637 469 Susanna.pain@gmail.com

- **Christian Meditation**

-[7.45am - 8.15am](#) every [Wednesday](#) AND

- [5.30 - 6.00 pm](#) every [Thursday](#)

Christian Meditation is a spiritual wisdom and a practice leading from the mind to the heart. It is a way of simplicity, silence, stillness and openness to God. It can be practised by anyone, wherever you are on your life's journey. It is only necessary to begin – and to keep on beginning. Contact: Susanna Pain susanna.pain@gmail.com

This practice is in the tradition of the World Community for Christian Meditation <http://www.wccm.org/>

- **Evening Prayer with focus on intercession 5.15pm Mondays**

2. Meditation - the chapel of St James, Traralgon

A group of people who are exploring the inner journey regularly meet for prayer and meditation together. We meet twice a month on the 2nd and 4th Monday mornings [at 10 am](#). During the hour we spend together we share the reading of scripture, prayer and music. There is a long period of silent meditation. To sit in silence together before God helps us to recognise God in the complexities of our lives. In the depth of our being there is always a sanctuary filled with God's presence. We can go there in silence to be and to listen. All are welcome.

3. Bass Hill Hermitage

Thinking about making a silent Retreat?

Bass Hill Hermitage is on the Bass Coast, near Phillip Island. The Hermitage has its roots in the traditions of Christian Spirituality. It is a perfect place to reflect, pray and deepen your relationship with God. Beginners, as well as experienced retreatants are welcome.

They offer **directed and self-guided retreats as well as on-going Spiritual Direction and Supervision.**

NEW OPPORTUNITY: Zena will soon be offering Spiritual Direction and Supervision from the Anglican Church in Drouin. Contact Zena via the website below.

The Hermitage can also be booked for a 'Quiet break' or some 'Time Out'. Visit the informative website:

www.basshillhermitage.com.au for more information.

Support on the journey

The Anam Cara Community's ministry is to be a support to those who are on the inner journey into God. Each person's journey is different, and we recognise that there are some for whom the Christian tradition is difficult or not supportive. We're committed to finding ways to hear the needs of each Associate, and support them as we can.

Contacts:

- Website: www.anamcaragippsland.org
- To subscribe to or unsubscribe from the mailing list contact Jane
- Soul carer (Community Leader): Jane ([0411 316 346](tel:0411316346) or jemacqueen@gmail.com)
- Secretary / Librarian: Sue [03 5182 5542](tel:0351825542)
- Treasurer: Kate
- Postal mail: Anam Cara Community c/o PO Box 928, Sale, VIC 3850
- Diocesan Director of Professional Standards (to make complaints or express concerns about our ministries): Ms Cheryl Russell [0407 563 313](tel:0407563313), cherylr@gippsanglican.org.au

Love and prayers

Jane Macqueen

On behalf of the Servant Leaders

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