

PARISH NEWSLETTER & HOME WORSHIP SUPPLEMENT

Twenty-fourth Sunday after Pentecost, 15th November 2020

Dear Parishioners,

The Lectionary readings today, again focus on Christian living whilst we await Jesus' second coming. We are exhorted to be engaged in faithful service and to encourage one another so that we will not be found lacking when Jesus does return.

We all struggle to be consistently faithful to God, particularly given that we don't know when Jesus will come again. The Israelites struggled with faithful covenantal living. Psalm 123 is one of the 'pilgrim songs' that preserve many moods reflecting something of the turbulent history of Zion. It is particularly easy to fall away from our church attendance, prayer and bible reading during times of crisis and struggle. In crisis (such as we have with the COVID-19 pandemic) we must focus on God.

In the New Testament reading (1 Thessalonians 5:1-11), Paul exhorts us that we must always be prepared for the return of Christ because we do not know when it will occur. And in the Gospel passage (Matthew 25:14-30), Jesus says that God will ask for an account of how well we have used the resources that he provides for us while we wait.

This week, I have invited David to give us his reflections on The Parable of the Talents.

Parish Restructure

So, what is the difference between a Community Minister, a Licensed Lay Minister and a Pioneer Minister? I will try to give you my understanding based upon the Diocesan foundational document '*Restructuring for Mission and Ministry – Daring to Live into God's Future for Us*' which we received in 2019.

But before we look at the new structure, let's refresh our understand of some of the terminology and roles of the current parish structure. Under the existing model, you have an 'Incumbent' called the Rector (that's me, 😊)

and Licensed Lay Ministers licensed at two levels (LLM1 and LLM2).

Incumbent.

The Incumbent, or Rector has responsibility for multiple worship centres under existing parish structures. His/her role includes being a priest (celebrating, attend to sacraments, baptisms, funerals, weddings, etc), being an administrator (like a Chief Executive Officer of a large business organization), and also being a pastoral carer, liturgist, preacher, teacher/trainer, leader, marketing manager, parish missionary, and of course spouse and parent (in summary, everything!). The admin responsibilities, particularly, have grown over the years to become a major part of the role.

The Incumbent under Model 1 will be known as the **Ministry Area Leader** (still with title of Rector) and will still have oversite of all worship centres in the Ministry area. However, Model 1 seeks to relieve the Rector of some of the weekly worship and local mission role (see Community Minister below) and also much of the Parish administration burden by the employment of a **Parish Administrator**. The Parish Administrator would have much greater authority and responsibility than current parish Office Administrators/Assistants. I'll have more to say about Parish Administrator in a future Newsletter.

Licensed Lay Ministers.

The current Diocesan Ordinances state that the role of the LLM1 is to lead and conduct services (except those parts which may be offered by a Deacon if present, or are designated to a Priest) and to assist the Priest in the ministration and distribution of the Holy Communion.

In addition to the LLM1 ministries, a LLM2 may preach sermons, conduct funerals under the direction of the Incumbent and enable sacramental needs to be provided for, under the direction of the Bishop (i.e services using the Reserve Sacrament and home communions). LLMs may also baptise, but only in cases of extreme emergency in the absence of a priest or deacon.

LLMs are licensed to minister across the entire Parish, i.e. they may implement or facilitate worship in any of our worship centres (churches). Under Model 1, they will assist the Community Minister, but are not

expected to shoulder all the responsibilities of a Community Minister.

So essentially, the role of the LLMs under Model 1 does not change; although, I am currently delegating our team of LLMs greater authority and responsibility for the organization and conduct of worship in the various worship centers. This is to release me to attend more to the administration required to set up the new structure of the Parish of Nambucca Valley by 1 January 2021; and also to explore the viability of having one or more of the Community Minister roles met by a team of two or three LLMs dedicated to one worship centre.

Community Minister.

Ideally, under Model 1 we would have three Community Ministers - one for each worshipping community of Macksville, Nambucca Heads, and Bowraville. This person will be the focal point for ministry in their worship centre, the key point of contact for worshippers and the 'face of the church' in the surrounding community. A community minister may be ordained clergy or lay, for example, a Priest, Deacon, Ordained Local Minister or a specially licensed and focused Lay Minister.

Important differences between a Community Minister and the current role of an Incumbent (Rector) is that the Community Minister has responsibility for only one worship centre and its associated community, and is not expected to shoulder all the burdens of an Incumbent. For example, The Community Minister would not have responsibility for parish administration such as chairing Parish Council, ordinances, procedures, compliance, reporting, overseeing parish bodies such as the Parish Administration Hub and the Op Shops, licensing and training of LLMs etc. The Community Minister is to be free to focus on the worship services and provision of pastoral care and local mission in his/her worship centre – much like the role of the ‘village Vicar’ in past Church of England days (but not parish council responsibilities as in the Vicar of Dibley 😊).

The Interim Parish Council has determined that, in addition to the Rector, we should seek to bring in one more ordained clergy (a Deacon or Associate Priest) to be one of the Community Ministers. However, we will not be able

to afford to bring in three Community Ministers, at least in the early years of the Parish of Nambucca Valley. Therefore, the Ministry Area Leader may fill this role in one of the worship centres, and we will be looking to find the third Community Minister (or a team) among our existing lay leaders.

It is clear in all of this that Community Ministers and having a Parish Administrator who will relieve the Rector and Community Ministers) of much administration is very important for the success of this Model. I should also point out that the Diocesan Strategic Planning Group is currently working to further define the roles and responsibilities of the various team members in Model 1. The above is my understanding, but it could change.

It is also important that we remember that the Diocesan Strategic Plan looks ahead twenty years. So, we cannot expect Model 1 to be fully in place on 1 January 2021. Nevertheless, we will become the Parish of Nambucca Valley on 1st January and we must be continuing to move ahead towards full implementation of the Model, in due course.

Next week I will talk about the concept of Pioneer Ministry, how it is different to the way we did 'outreach' in the past and what a Pioneer Minister (if we were to have one) might look like.

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

Rev Clyde



Psalm 123

¹ To you I lift up my eyes:
**you who are enthroned
in the heavens.**

² As the eyes of servants look to
the hand of their master:

or as the eyes of a maid toward the hand of her mistress,

³ So our eyes look to the Lord our God:

until he show us his mercy.

⁴ Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy upon us:

for we have had our fill of derision.

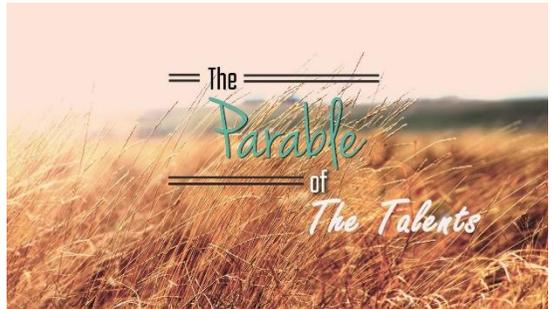
⁵ Our souls overflow with the mockery of those at ease:

and with the contempt of the proud.

Bible Reading

Please take your bible and read:

Matthew 25:14-30



Reflection on Matthew 25:14-30 by David Jones

In the Gospel passage for today, Jesus relates the Parable of the Talents. We read that the master has gone into another country far away; but he is going to return. Before going away, he has given talents (i.e. money) to his slaves to trade for him in his absence. This they do with various degrees of success.

When the master returns, he questions the slaves on how well they used the money given to them. He commends those who have invested the money wisely and condemns the slave who failed to invest the money.

The master in this parable represents Jesus. The slaves represent you and me, i.e. all people who await Jesus' return at his second coming.

Just as the slaves were given resources to invest while the master was away, we too are given resources with which to live our life while we await Jesus' return. These resources are the natural resources found in God's creation (the trees, the water, the seas, the land), the qualities and abilities that he has given us, and the blessings that he gives us in our daily life.

God gave us these resources so that we can live lives that will bring glory to him - they are not there to be wasted or left idle. If we use the resources the way they were meant to be used, the blessings that God has given us will be returned to God with interest in terms of us being good witnesses for Christ and bringing glory to God in the way that we have lived our life.

All three slaves were given a task to do, two of them doubled the talents they were given, and were rewarded according to their opportunities. The third one did not invest the talents wisely and was judged harshly.

The point of the parable is that we are to be engaged in faithful service for the Lord while we await his return - using whatever we have been given for God's purpose.

Like the slaves who were given different amount to invest, we too do not have all of the opportunities that others may have. We are given different gifts & skills to use, such as abilities, family connections, social positions, and education.

It is really about how we use what we are given. And we will be rewarded accordingly. So, it is most important to use whatever talents we have been given to the best of our ability for God's glory, and when we have done that, we will be able to have confidence that we have been faithful and trustworthy servants of God.

An example of someone who faithfully served God using the talent

and ability that he had given to her was Deborah, who was empowered with the Holy Spirit and became one of six Judges, a prophetess and a wife all at the same time.

Deborah was multitalented. She depicted the finest possibilities of a gifted God-fearing woman who allowed the Spirit of God to develop her full capacities to impact the world around her.(Judges 4:4-5) Deborah was not afraid to make the hard decisions because she knew God would be with her and her army. She knew that she was engaged in faithful service for the Lord and that her actions would bring glory to God.

Like Deborah and the servants in Jesus' parable, we too are resourced and equipped for the life that God desires us to live. How we use these God given blessings, will be judged when Jesus returns. We don't know when that will be, but meanwhile, we are encouraged to examine ourselves and ensure that we are using our talents, abilities and resources wisely for the glory of God as we seek to serve him wherever and in whatever circumstances he has placed us. Amen.

Collect

Ever living God,
before the earth was formed,
and even after it shall cease to be, you are God.
Break into our short span of life
and show us those things that are eternal,
that we may serve your purpose in all we do;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you in unity with the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Prayers for 15th
November 2020 –

Thanks Judith Thomson



On the day of Pentecost you sent Your Spirit on the peoples of many nations: we pray for all the peoples of the world, for all whose lives are destroyed by war, oppression, disaster, disease and the corona virus. Fire of God, come, warm our cold hearts, that we may burn with a passion for justice. Come, and in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

By Your Spirit you empowered your disciples to proclaim your gospel: we pray for your church, Bishop Murray, Reverend Clyde and our LLM's and our congregation, for all who worship in this place. Power of God, come, strengthen our desire to be your witnesses in the world. Come, and in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We give thanks that you are the God who brings mercy and wholeness, comfort and heal, we pray, all who are in sorrow, need, sickness, or any other trouble, soothe our pains and calm our terrors. Give to those who care for them wisdom, patience, and gentleness and to us all, your peace. Come, and in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

By your Spirit you makes us your adopted daughters and sons and heirs to glory: we pray for all who have gone before us to eternal life, for the faithful people of the parish. Spirit of God come, inspire us, warm us, blow through us, possess us, until we are wholly yours, that with all your saints we may dwell forever in your presence. Come, and in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We make this prayer through Jesus Christ our Lord who taught us to pray: Our father.