



BANGALOW/BYRON BAY UCA

Why is there suffering?

One of the biggest questions when it comes to a lived faith is related to suffering. Why is there suffering if God is loving, just and all powerful? In theology this concept is called *theodicy* (this term comes from the Greek root words, *theos*- God and *dikē*- justice). Theodicy is the wrestling with this big question, which put simply is: Why does a good God let bad things happen?

Over these past few weeks in our worship gatherings we have been considering the Old Testament Book of Job, which has long been held up as a 'go to' read for Christians (or anyone) experiencing suffering. This is for good reasons, as it has much to say about this theme of suffering and theodicy. It also has much to say about pastoral care and supporting people in our community who are experiencing the effects of suffering. Job, the main character of the story, undergoes a dramatic and tragic season of life where all that he has is lost and for no apparent reason. His journey sees Job continue to trust in and worship God, despite the enormity of his sufferings. Helpfully, this includes Job wrestling with God in an open, authentic and honest way as he seeks to discover why this has happened. Job's friends come to offer some support and their advice ends up not being overly helpful, as they too wrestle with the question of suffering and try to find answers as to why this has happened to their friend Job.

During my reflections on the opening of the Book of Job I shared this quote from John Wyatt, that resonated for me:

'Suffering is not a question that demands an answer. It is not a problem that demands a solution. It is a mystery that demands a presence.' - John Wyatt

Often when it comes to our faith and negative experiences we seek to make sense of things by trying to find a solution, an answer to the problem. Far too often, when we seek to support loved ones and those undergoing deep experiences of pain, suffering and turmoil we attempt to do this as well, as we reach out to support them in a difficult time. The above quote and a consideration of the story of Job, reminds us that in this life, what we truly need in our sufferings is presence. We need the support of a community who recognise that simply being present with someone without any words or attempted answers, can be more than enough. The other deeper aspect that I hope and pray we all become more aware of is our awareness of God's presence with us in the midst of our sufferings. God in Christ experienced pain and suffering - "*The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.*" God has walked the path of pain and identifies with us fully in our human experience and this is highlighted by Christ's experience on the cross. God is with us in each and every sacred moment of life and this includes those periods and seasons of suffering that we would prefer never to have happened.

So as we continue to consider suffering as an aspect of our faith and reflect upon the ancient

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We acknowledge the Arakwal people of the Bundjalung nation, the original custodians of this place. We acknowledge their deep spiritual connection to these lands and waterways upon which we live and gather, and honour their elders past, present and emerging.

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Book of Job, may we remember that we are a people of presence. May we be present with those who are in need and may our eyes be opened to the Divine Presence that surrounds us and that lies within each and every sacred moment.

Grace and peace, Rev Phil

MISSION AND MINISTRY

Please contact us to find out more about any of our programs and activities.

Every Week...

Men's Cooking @ Bangalow Uniting Church: 10am Fridays (Not yet running)

Scripture at Byron Bay PS: Rev Phil Thursday 12-2pm

Open Church: Tuesday 9-11am @ Bangalow, Wednesday 9-11am @ Byron Bay

Now Operating...

Byron Bay Uniting Church Op Shop: Op Shop will be closed from Monday 11th October due to the required vaccination and COVIDSafe requirements from this time and the potential effects of this on our volunteers and community. We will reopen from December 1st, once those requirements are lifted.

Uniting Sewing and Social Group @ Byron: 9am-3pm and 6pm-9pm, Mondays

Growing Young Bookclub: every fortnight (details below)

Upcoming events...

Growing Young Bookclub: Monday 1st November Gathering & Discussion with Pastor Molk, Time: TBA

Bangalow Harvest Service: TBC

Bangalow Fair Trade Fair: Postponed. Date to be advised.

Banking Details:

Giving your offering or tithe by Direct Debit or EFTPOS is a helpful way of engaging in this important act of worship.

If you would like to do this the banking details for our church are:


BSB:634-634

Account Number: 100 018 564

Speak to our Treasurer George Graham for more details on offering, gifts or bequests.

Bangalow Byron Bay Uniting Church: 6601 2010

<https://byronshireunitingchurches.uca.org.au>

 <https://www.facebook.com/BangalowByronBayUnitingChurch>

Minister: Rev. Phil Dokmanovic

Phil: 0425 291 955 // phild@nswact.uca.org.au

(Minister's Day Off: Friday)

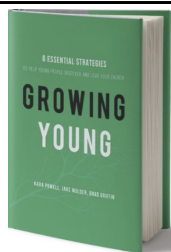
Church Council Secretary: Corinne Nash 6629 1692

email: allthenashes@gmail.com



Frontier Services Gathering & Baptism - Sunday 14th November 5pm @ Bangalow UCA

On Sunday 14th November, after rescheduling a few times due to lockdown, we will be gathering for a combined service at the Bangalow Church. During this gathering we will consider the ministry of Frontier Services and raise funds for their important work, so please come prepared to give generously. We will also share in the baptism of Matilda & William Jarrett, the children of Luke and Courtney (and great grandchildren of Kevin & Edna). Please mark this on your calendar and join us for this special celebration.



Growing Young Project

The Growing Young Project has continued over recent months, and the group's journey through this resource is nearing the end, as we have reflected upon ministry to the younger generations. The next session is scheduled for Monday 1st November and with all going well will involve Pastor Molk joining us to facilitate a session. If you are in the Bookclub Group please mark this date in your diary and a time will be arranged soon.

Minister's Leave

Due to the recent lockdown Rev Phil was unable to take his planned leave back in August. Instead, he is now taking leave for the period of 11th-31st October. During this time please contact the Church Council or Elders if you have any pastoral concerns and in the event of emergencies, contact our Church Council Secretary Corinne Nash to advise you. Please pray for a great time of refreshment, reflection and rest for Rev Phil during this leave.

Congregational AGM - Sunday 21st November

It has been difficult to organise meetings in this past season due to the uncertainties of lockdown and COVID. On the **21st November** we will be holding a Congregational Meeting (AGM) following each of our gatherings. This is an important time to review the previous twelve months, to consider the governance of our church and it will also include a ballot/reaffirmation for positions on the Church Council and Eldership.

Church Council & Eldership Nominations

Our current governance structure requires a functioning Church Council and Eldership to administer the spiritual and administrative life of our congregation. Church Council focuses more on governance and administration and Eldership focuses more on spiritual and pastoral aspects of our communal life. Those selected for both Church Council & Eldership combine to form our Church Council. However, in practice, elders are not all required to attend every Church Council meeting, which generally occur once a quarter. If you would like to nominate someone to be part of our Church Council and/or Eldership then please submit a nomination (with a seconder) to our Church Council Secretary Corinne Nash before November 3rd, so our community can be notified before the upcoming Congregational Meeting on November 21st.

ECUMENICAL PRAYER CYCLE

Week of 17 October: Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico

Week of 24 October:

The Caribbean: Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, St Kitts-Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago

Prayer Points

- Those recovering from operations, procedures and treatments in this time. May they be healed and receive the loving support of our community.
- A commitment from Australian and global leaders to take action on climate change and make decisions that will protect the future of all God's creation.
- Those still trapped in Afghanistan who are fleeing danger. We pray they find safe passage, protection and welcome, especially here in our own country.
- Kieran, Darielle & Ambrose Chew as they make their way back to WA and with the upcoming birth of their daughter and sister. We are thankful for their short but important time with our community.

BYRON SHIRE UNITING CHURCHES

Let us PRAY

Gathered Worship

Sunday 17th October	5pm Bangalow	- Rev Peter Overton
Sunday 24th October	9.30am Byron Bay 5pm Bangalow	- George Graham
Sunday 31st October	5pm Bangalow	- Tania Hudson
Sunday 7th November	9.30am Byron Bay - Communion 5pm Bangalow- Communion	- Rev Phil

Worship Gatherings & NSW Roadmap Out Of COVID

At our recent Church Council Meeting we considered the Synod Guidance for our churches based on the NSW Government's Roadmap out of COVID. The requirements that will come into place from Monday 11th October mean that only those who are fully vaccinated can attend a Place of Worship until the state reaches 80% double vaccination.

This may effect some of our regular attenders or visitors and may also be troubling news for some. The Church Council has decided to continue our worship gatherings during this likely two-week period (between 70% and 80% double vaccination). After this, the Government has indicated this restriction will be lifted. So we are asking that for at least Sunday 17th October and Sunday 24th October you only join us for gathered worship if you are fully vaccinated (and be prepared to be asked about this status). This could extend to October 31st and we wait on the NSW Government's advice on when the 80% situation is enacted. Similar conditions and situations will be present in many of our other community facilities and establishments. If you are unable to join us in this time, please remain connected online and as always we will do our best to support you.

Lectionary Readings

17 October	Job 38:1-7,(34-41)	Psalm 104:1-9,24,35c	Hebrews 5:1-10	Mark 10:35-45
24 October	Job 42:1-6,10-17	Psalm 34:1-8,(19-22)	Hebrews 7:23-28	Mark 10:46-52
31 October	Ruth 1:1-18	Psalm 146	Hebrews 9:11-14	Mark 12:28-34
7 November	Ruth 3:1-5, 4:13-17	Psalm 127	Hebrews 9:24-28	Mark 12:38-44

Newsletter Items If you have an event or item for the newsletter, please email Phil the full details by the Tuesday before release, so that we can keep people informed and up to date.