



Who is my neighbour?...

"And who is my neighbour?" - Luke 10:29

A few weeks ago in our gatherings we considered one of Jesus' most famous stories, the parable of The Good Samaritan. For those who have spent time in the church, this is a very familiar story. In some sense it is like a good Christmas Carol. Many of us love to hear this story again and feel like we know it so well. But just like a good Christmas Carol, which we often sing without even reflecting on the powerful lyrics, through familiarity we come to stories like this one without pausing to reflect and to allow the story to speak into our current situation or in fresh ways. The story comes as Jesus answers the question: Who is my neighbour? As it unfolds, the story reveals that the Samaritan, an enemy and hated by the Jewish people, is the one who acts in a neighbourly way. The Samaritan is the one who stops to assist the man left for dead in a generous and loving way, not the religious leaders.



To the original audience this would have been a disturbing story. Disturbing because it turns "upside down" the expectations of how God is present and active in the world. The person who showed mercy and compassion was the enemy, outcast and the stranger. God worked through the neighbourly action of an enemy to bring compassion and mercy! Loving and defining our neighbour in this way will always be challenging, forcing us to change our attitudes and actions. It turns us from being people of self-service to serving and loving others, even our enemies.

The Good Samaritan has become the ideal for going beyond typical expectations to care for others. So, on the one hand, we might think we know all there is to know about this parable that Jesus tells. Yet on the other hand, by taking another look, I hope that we can see not only a powerful example of neighbourly love for us to follow, but also a renewed glimpse of the wide scope of God's restoration and inclusion of all people.

I also leave us today with a challenging question: Is this the impossible task?

I wonder if Jesus is reminding his audience and us today that in actual fact, we are incapable of living up to this standard. Maybe one of the realisations from this story is that if eternal life relies upon us being a good neighbour like this...then we will fall short. Who can live up to this standard in today's world where we have global neighbours? Who can show this sort of love, compassion and mercy throughout life? Maybe this is where the idea of grace becomes so important to us. Of course we seek to apply this style of living to our own lives, but we recognise that we will fall short and in Christ we are offered grace.

I hope and pray that we remain open to familiar parts of scripture like this story, still speaking to us today. I believe this parable of the Good Samaritan offers an insistent call to us, the people of God. It calls to us to emulate this compassionate Samaritan as a way of living out our identity as God's people in our world and to recognise that God's grace is given to us, so that we in turn can show grace, mercy and compassion to others. In the words of Growing Young, may we seek to ***'be the best neighbours'*** and to neighbour well in our community.

Grace & peace, Rev Phil

MISSION AND MINISTRY

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

Every Week...

Open Church: Tuesday 9:30am-11:30am Byron Bay UCA

Cuppa & Conversation: Wednesday 10:00am-11.30am @ Bangalow UCA (On a pause until September)

Talking About Salt: Wednesdays starting on 20th July, 10am @ Bangalow UCA

Scripture: Thursday 12pm-2pm @ Byron Bay PS during the School Term (Rev Phil)

Byron Bay Free Feed (YWAM): Wednesday 12pm-2pm @ Byron Bay UCA

Now Operating...

Byron Bay Uniting Church Op Shop:

Open Monday-Friday from 9am-1pm

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

Growing Young Group: every fortnight (details below)

Upcoming events...

Saltbush Gathering: Saturday 23rd July @ Ballina UCA

Family Gathering: "Fire": Sunday 24th July, 5.00pm @ Bangalow UCA

Talking about Salt: Wednesday 27th July, 10am @ Bangalow UCA

Synod Property Inspection: Wednesday 27th July, 11.30am

Hamlin Fistula Soup Lunch: Sunday 31st July, 10.00am @ Byron Bay UCA

Growing Young: Monday 1st August, 3pm @ Bangalow UCA

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

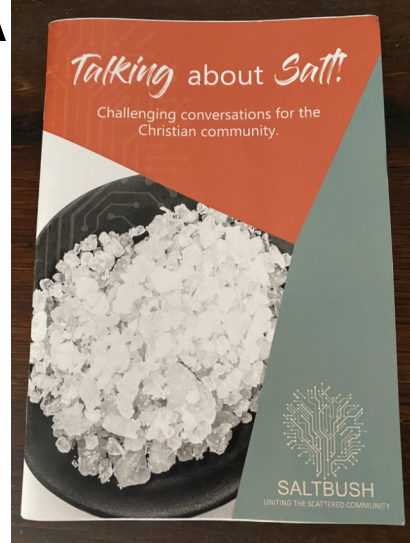


"Talking About Salt" Started 20th July 10am @ Bangalow UCA

The Saltbush Team have designed a fantastic resource called "Talking About Salt" to encourage congregations and individuals to consider their missional calling and who they want to be as a Christian community, through some important conversations.

Our Church Council has decided to engage in this resource, focused around Christian community and connection to our contemporary context. All of our Church Council are committed to engaging in this group and we are inviting anyone from our congregation who wants to join us to be part of this journey. The 5 session engagement will be facilitated by Rev Tim Jensen from the Saltbush Team. Although Talking About Salt began on

Wednesday 20th July, it will run each Wednesday for 5 weeks beginning at 10am at the Bangalow Church. Please let Rev Phil know if you are still interested in participating, even if you missed the first session.



Family Gathering & Meal: "Fire" - Sunday 24th July, 5pm @ Bangalow

Our next Family Gathering is being held on Sunday 24th July at 5pm at Bangalow UCA. The theme for this gathering is "Fire." This gathering will take place outside in the carpark, so be sure to dress warm. During the gathering we will have some fire pits safely set up and will be reflecting on an ancient story of people trusting God in the midst of adversity.

Following the gathering we will be sharing in a meal which will include a BBQ, Garlic Pizzas and marshmallows of course! We encourage you to invite any families and young people you have connections with to enjoy this gathering with us.

Catherine Hamlin Fistula Soup Lunch - Sunday 31st July, 10am @ Byron Bay UCA

Our annual Soup Lunch Fundraiser is just a few weeks away. On Sunday 31st July we will join together for a combined worship gathering at our Byron Bay Church starting at 10am and the Soup Lunch will follow from 11am. This is a great event to invite friends and family, as we seek to raise funds for the life-changing work of the Catherine Hamlin Fistula Foundation with women in Ethiopia. A selection of soups and desserts will be served free of charge, so please come prepared to donate generously and enjoy time with our community.

Lectionary Readings

24 July	Hosea 1:2-10	Psalms 85	Colossians 2:6-15 (16-19)	Luke 11:1-13
31 July	Hosea 11:1-11	Psalms 107:1-9, 43	Colossians 3:1-11	Luke 12:13-21
7 August	Isaiah 1:1, 10-20	Psalms 50:1-8, 22-23	Hebrew 11:1-3, 8-16	Luke 12:32-40
14 August	Isaiah 5:1-7	Psalms 80:1-2, 8-19	Hebrew 11:29-12:2	Luke 12:49-56

Gathered Worship

Sunday 24th July	9.30am Byron Bay 5pm Bangalow - Family Gathering & Meal: "Fire"	- Rev Phil
Sunday 31st July	10am Byron Bay - Combined Gathering, Soup Lunch & Hamlin Fistula Fundraiser	- Rev Phil
Sunday 7th August	9.30am Byron Bay - Communion & Morning Tea 5pm Bangalow - Communion	- Rev Phil
Sunday 14th August	9.30am Byron Bay 5pm Bangalow - Family Gathering: "Fair Trade"	- Rev Phil

Flood Relief Funds Distribution

It is now a few months on from our wonderful Harvest Festival & Flood Relief Fundraiser. Our community gave so generously to support the recovery process for local people. During this time, the Church Council has considered how to distribute the funds raised into local organisations and ministries. The funds have gone to two main groups: *The Winsome/Lismore Soup Kitchen*, who provide wonderful support and services for local people who are struggling and sleeping rough and *Coraki Uniting Church*, which has been provided infrastructure as a community hub ministering in their area and to local indigenous people. A small amount has also been set aside to distribute to individuals in our community who are in need.

ECUMENICAL PRAYER CYCLE

Week of 24 July: Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda

Week of 31 July: Republic of Congo, Gabon, São Tomé and Príncipe



Prayer Points:

- Innovative Uniting Church ministries growing faith, hope and meaningful connection in our communities.
- Peace and stability in Sri Lanka amid economic crisis and protests.
- The *Talking About Salt* conversations and that they may encourage us to reflect on our ministry as individuals and as a congregation.
- The ongoing and long process of recovery for those affected by floods in our region earlier this year.

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.