The Anglican Diocese of Wangaratta

Christ Church Tallangatta
&
The Mission District of St John's Thurgoona

The Reverend Canon Maryann Leonard

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Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost
27th Sept 2026



We are a community of Christian Faith and Worship.

We are welcoming of all: and are inclusive of all. We offer fellowship and support in our Parish and the wider community
By the grace of God, we seek to increase our spiritual awareness, love of others and foster Christian values by example.

Introduction
The Lectionary changes tack a little this week – at least from the perspective of the Gospel. While the continuous Old Testament readings continue to follow the Israelites in the desert (with a similar story to last week's, but focussed on water and thirst, rather than food and hunger), Matthew describes a moment of confrontation between Jesus and the religious leaders, in which two questions are raised – where Jesus' authority originates, and who is finding their way into God's Kingdom. The water image becomes a captivating one for this week's worship – because like water that flows into any crack it can find, and that is not easily controlled or contained, God's reign appears in surprising places, and flows into the lives of those that we might prefer to keep out of God's kingdom. May we be challenged and inspired by the radical, offensive inclusivity of God's reign this week.

Sentence
Come, let us return to the Lord, that we may live before him. Hosea 6.1a, 2b

Collect
Let us pray. Grant, O merciful God, that your people may have that mind that was in Christ Jesus, who emptied himself, and took the form of a servant, and in humility became obedient even to death. For you have highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, Jesus Christ, the Lord; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, in everlasting glory. **Amen.**

FIRST READING **Exodus 17.1-7**

(The Israelites complain that they have no water, and Moses takes their complaint to God. God instructs Moses to strike the rock at Horeb with his staff and water flows out for the people to drink.)

The whole Israelite community set out from the Desert of Sin, travelling from place to place as the Lord commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. So they quarrelled with Moses and said, 'Give us water to drink.' Moses replied, 'Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you put the Lord to the test?' But the people were thirsty for water there, and they grumbled against Moses. They said, 'Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to make us and our children and livestock die of thirst?' Then Moses cried out to the Lord , 'What am I to do with these people? They are almost ready to stone me.' The Lord answered Moses, 'Go out in front of the people. Take with you some of the elders of Israel and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. I will stand there before you by the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it for the people to drink.' So Moses did this in the sight of the elders of Israel. And he called the place Massah and Meribah because the Israelites quarrelled and because they tested the Lord saying, 'Is the Lord among us or not?' *Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.* **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM **Psalm 78.1-4, 11-16**
Thurgoona Psalm 25

(A teaching psalm reminding God's people of all that God has done, bringing God's people out of Egypt, leading with a pillar of fire by night and cloud by day, and splitting open the rock to give them water to drink.)

Give heed to my teaching, O my people: incline your ears to the words of my mouth;

For I will open my mouth in a parable: and expound the mysteries of former times.

What we have heard and known: what our forebears have told us,

We will not hide from their children, but declare to a generation yet to come: the praiseworthy acts of the Lord, his mighty and wonderful works.

For he did marvellous things in the sight of their ancestors: in the land of Egypt, in the country of Zoan.

He divided the sea and let them pass through: he made the waters stand up in a heap.

In the daytime he led them with a cloud: and all night long with the light of fire.

He cleft rocks in the wilderness: and gave them drink in abundance as from springs of water.

He brought streams out of the rock: and caused the waters to flow down like rivers.

But for all this they sinned yet more against him: and rebelled against the Most High in the desert.

SECOND READING **Philippians 2**

(The apostle encourages the Philippian Christians to be united and to be like Christ in their humility, service, and self-sacrifice, quoting the ancient hymn of the Church. He reminds them that they are to live out their salvation, trusting God who gives them the will and the power to do it)

Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and

compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: who, being in very natureGod, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death – even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed – not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence – continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfil his good purpose. Do everything without grumbling or arguing, **15** so that you may become blameless and pure, 'children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.' Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky as you hold firmly to the word of life. And then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labour in vain. But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you. So you too should be glad and rejoice with me. I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you. I have no one else like him, who will show genuine concern for your welfare. For everyone looks out for their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel. I hope, therefore, to send him as soon as I see how things go with me. And I am confident in the Lord that I myself will come soon. But I think it is necessary to send back to you Epaphroditus, my brother, co-worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger, whom you sent to take care of my needs. For he longs for all of you and is distressed because you heard he was ill. Indeed he was ill, and almost died. But God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me, to spare me sorrow upon sorrow. Therefore I am all the more eager to send him, so that when you see him again you may be glad and I may have less anxiety. So then, welcome him in the Lord with great joy, and honour people like him, because he almost died for the work of Christ. He risked his life to make up for the help you yourselves could not give me. *Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.* **Thanks be to God.**

Alleluia Alleluia Alleluia. **Alleluia Alleluia Alleluia**
For John came to you to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did. And even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe him. **Alleluia Alleluia Alleluia**

GOSPEL **Matthew 21.23-32**

(The religious leaders question Jesus' authority, but Jesus refuses to answer them because they can't answer his question about John's authority. Then he tells them a parable about two sons whose father asks them to work in the vineyard. One says no, but then does, and the other says yes, but doesn't. Jesus explains that like this, religious people are missing out on the kingdom, while outcasts are finding their way in.)

A Reading From The Holy Gospel According to Matthew
Glory to you Lord Jesus Christ

Jesus entered the temple courts, and, while he was teaching, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him. 'By what authority are you doing these things?' they asked. 'And who gave you this authority?' Jesus replied, 'I will also ask you one question. If you answer me, I will tell you by what authority I am doing these things. John's baptism – where did it come from? Was it from heaven, or of human origin?' They discussed it among themselves and said, 'If we say, "From heaven", he will ask, "Then why didn't you believe him?" But if we say, "Of human origin" – we are afraid of the people, for they all hold that John was a prophet.' So they answered Jesus, 'We don't know.' Then he said, 'Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things. 'What do you think? There was a man who had two sons. He went to the first and said, "Son, go and work today in the vineyard." '"I will not," he answered, but later he changed his mind and went. 'Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. He answered, "I will, sir," but he did not go. 'Which of the two did what his father wanted?' 'The first,' they answered. Jesus said to them, 'Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did. And even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe him. *This is the Gospel of the lord,* **Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ**



Lord of faith and truth. we bless your holy name.

Lord, your kingdom reaches from the heavens embracing the whole of creation. You call your Church to assist with your harvest, schooling people in your love. Give us will hearts, hands and voices with which to response to your summons. in your mercy, **hear our prayer**

Lord, you search the secret motives of those called to leadership, and reveal hypocrisy and virtue alike. We give

thanks for Clarence our Bishop, Michelle, Maryann, John, our clergy and people. Give us courage to scrutinise those who rule, and their integrity. in your mercy, **hear our prayer**

Lord, your see fully into our hearts and all that can we can become. We thank you for those who affirm and encourage our growth and development. Bring us to flourish in the warmth of your regard. in your mercy, **hear our prayer**

Lord, you know our needs and concerns before we ask. Hear us as we bring before you all who are ill or in special need. We pray for the safe return of those who have gone missing in the community. We hold those who have requested prayer. *Alan(P), Natalie, Alison, Wendy and Olga.* Bless them and ring them to rejoice in you. in your mercy, **hear our prayer**

Lord, there is no darkness that can extinguish your eternal light. In this faith we entrust to you those who have died and whose years minds occur this week; ……Raise us with them to your eternal Kingdom. in your mercy, **hear our prayer**

God our companion on the way, you walk behind, beside, beyond; you catch us unawares; break through the disillusionment and despair that can cloud our vision; hear us as we pray for ourselves .....; so that with wide-eyed wonder, we too may find our way and journey on as messengers of your good news. Let us pray the prayer that Jesus taught us. **Our Father in heaven…**



<u>REFLECTIONS ON THEME</u>:
The image of water can be a helpful way into the theme for this week. Although it is only mentioned in the Moses reading in Exodus and in the related Psalm, it is reminiscent of Jesus' words in John that he offers living water. In Matthew's Gospel Jesus' response to the question of authority and his parable both indicate that, like the water from the rock, God's living water cannot be contained or controlled. Though the religious leaders would like to be the gatekeepers for God's reign, Jesus indicates that in the very act of doing this, they exclude themselves, while those who would seem to be excluded find their way in. This openness, inclusivity and welcome is characteristic of Jesus and his ministry, as described by Paul in his letter to the Philippians. This ancient hymn which describes Jesus' servanthood and self-sacrifice is Paul's call to treat one another with love and welcome. Finally, in the Ezekiel reading, and its related Psalm (25) God's ways are offered as the doorway to God's abundant, irrepressible life. Like water that finds the smallest of cracks to flow through, and that bursts out in even the most surprising places (a rock in the wilderness), so God's life – God's living water – flows into any life that has even the smallest crack open to it, and brings life

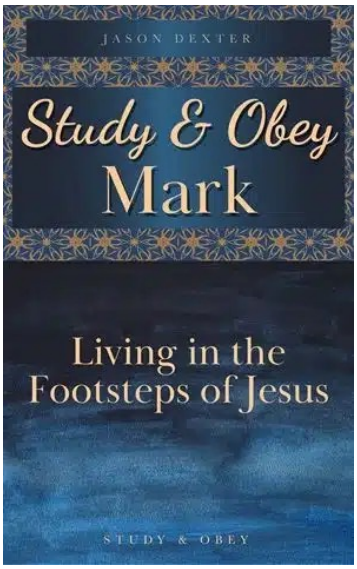
and refreshing and welcome and inclusion.

GLOBAL APPLICATION: Who is 'in' and who is 'out' is the essential question of political and economic systems. Who gets to decide how things like debt and immigration and war get decided? On a global scale the question of who gets to share in processes and resources become even more difficult and important. As we face real issues with thirst through contamination of water sources, real issues of hunger, disease, displacement and hatred, the need for greater levels of inclusivity and transparency, and greater participation by ordinary citizens becomes increasingly important. In the Moses story the challenge is that water is provided freely for all, in spite of their grumbling, doubt and complaining. In the Gospel, Jesus makes it clear that God's grace is available to all, and that even those who are least likely to find a place belong, in spite of the attempts of the elite to keep them out. Ultimately, the world and its resources belong to all people. The challenge this week is how to live out of this truth in real and practical ways. Perhaps it begins by simply recognising that all people are our neighbours and are as deserving as we are to have their needs met and provided for. Then, this realisation must find its way into our conversation, our civil participation and our routines of spending, consuming and discarding the things we use each day. It must also find its way into a life of radical hospitality in which we welcome all in Christ's name in whatever small, practical ways we can, while celebrating our differences and sharing God's grace. Ultimately, we have learned that the system of control by the few doesn't work – it inevitably gets undermined by ordinary citizens. We've seen this in music, publishing, dissemination of information and places of tyranny. So, the more we can open the doors – both of faith and of distribution of the world's resources – the closer we get to experiencing God's reign, and the closer we get to a peaceful, hospitable planet.

LOCAL APPLICATION: The radical inclusivity of Christ, and the constant, consistent merciful care of God for the fickle Israelite people, can be tough for us to swallow. We wrestle with the uniqueness of Christ, and the challenging message he preached, on one side, and the seemingly indiscriminate welcome he offered on the other. We like to feel like we are 'chosen', that we are 'in', and that we have the 'right way', but we need to be careful of becoming like the religious leaders who tried to be gatekeepers for God's reign and ended up excluding only themselves. We need to be careful of judging others by their doubts or complaints, and trying to keep God's blessing for ourselves, only to find the living water flowing out to them in the most unexpected ways. We may think we find life by "protecting" ourselves and our faith, by keeping out those whom we consider "unsavoury", but in fact these are our ways, not God's (as Ezekiel describes) and they do not lead us to life. Rather, it is in radical grace (like God in the wilderness and like Christ) and radical hospitality that life is found. These are God's ways, and they always lead us into the abundant life God's promised. So, the questions the Scriptures raise for us this week are these: Who would we prefer to keep out? Who do we allow to have authority and from whom do we withhold grace and authority? Who might be finding their way into God's reign in

spite of us, and how can we change to become helpers rather than hinderers? And, finally, how can a greater openness to the unpredictable flow of God's living water, of God's grace, lead us deeper into God's life (in spite of our fears that it might somehow 'compromise' God's life)? God's authority, it is clear, does not need the recognition of the powers that be – thank God. But, this means, we had better be careful of becoming too friendly with any system or community that centralises power, authority or resources too much. https://sacredise.com/proper-21a/





Bible Study

Wednesdays 1pm @ Cottage

Would Like An Evening Study. Let Rev'd Maryann know if you have a day and time in mind.

We will be studying Mark this Term. This is in preparation for Year B, the Year of Mark. Everyone will receive the pictured study and other resources. Again David Suchet will read the Gospel of Mark as we journey through this fascinating and enriching Gospel.

We are an informal group, who likes to asks questions, have opinions and discussions, and learn and digest the WORD. Come and spend an hour or so delving into scripture and have a wonderful time of fellowship.

ANGLICAN
MOTHERS UNION
AUSTRALIA

Our monthly AMUA meeting is on **Thursday 1st October 1pm @ the Cottage.** Everyone is welcome to attend. Our focus will be on Domestic Violence and preparing for 16 Days of Activism, our project for the remainder of 2026.

Hopefully we will have some footage of the 150th Celebrations in Durban South Africa. We can also become more familiar with the Website & FB pages. Afternoon Tea to follow.



The Anglican Parish of Thurgoona Debutante Ball 2027.

Yes that's right. We must make plans for 2027.Again in September. We will try and gain some form of sponsorship as well. This will indeed be a fundraiser, but affordable for participants and guests. Watch the socials.



Our Bless-ed Shed Update

All has been signed sealed and delivered from the DoW and sent to Ultimate Sheds. We now are waiting for a commencement of construction. We had to pay another $5000.00 for concrete, as we were originally a 9A but are now a 9B. More concrete as it will have people habituating the building, so needed to change. Oh Gee Whiz! Glory Glory Alleluia! lol. We have money set aside for electricity connection and air-conditioning. It will happen my friends, it will happen.



Market Saturday 3rd October Wangaratta.

Thurgoona & North Albury are joining together. We are offering plants and a fuel card raffles and baked goods.

ALL monies raised will be going towards the Bishop's Ministry Fund. This is **not part** of the Bishop's Episcopal purse. This is a separate account for Ministry resources for parishes.

We will be benefitting from this fund. The Cathedral is our 'Mother Church'. Many years ago, we had picnic days, where no parish services were held on a specific Sunday and we went to the Cathedral for Mass then a picnic on the Green.

Please consider coming along. We can car pool if necessary. Please see Rev'd Maryann if you require a lift. Another highlight will be the announcement of the Environmental Award Winners and handing over of Cheque. We have applied for this wonderful grant.

If you have never been to the Cathedral it will not disappoint.



Alter Servers/ Eucharistic Assistants

Each week, at Thurgoona, we are blessed to have so far, two Sacristans (those who set up the Alter & keep an eye on supplies etc), two Eucharistic Assistants and three servers. We will soon be adding to this number. I am hoping a day in school holidays for ALL who serve, will be able to come together for a learning session, followed by Morning or Afternoon Tea. This will constitute a group called a 'Server's Guild'. This is a very exciting time. Thank you to those who have offered to serve.



We are an Anglo- catholic Diocese. We can call it a Mass or Eucharist. I am proposing a Eucharist in Thurgoona at 1pm Thursdays. This will include AMUA meetings. Beginning 1st October.

Messy Church is NOT only for kids!!!!! It is Multigenerational. After the success of our first Messy Church in Thurgoona, our next one is today **27th September @ 4-6pm.**

We are learning about Daniel. Prophet and hero. Sooo many great activities for young and young @ heart.

Free meal: Our Lions Share of Lasagne, the goodness of salad, the Den's Pizza Delight, followed by the courage dessert, made up by freshly baked apple cake with custard and ice cream.



Parish Annual Meeting Thurgoona. Sunday 8th November after our Eucharist. It will be held in the church. Followed by a delicious luncheon in the Cottage. Please set aside this date. Arrange all friends and family to visit after. lol 😜 This is an important meeting. We will also be revealing our Mission & Action Plan.



Think carefully about this one people.









THIS WEEK

Monday 28th:	Rev'd Maryann & John. Day of rest.
Tuesday 29th:	1pm Bingo Tallangatta
	4pm Rev'd Maryann appointments
Wednesday 30th:	John's Birthday
	9:30am Estia
	10:00am Craft Thurgoona
	1:00pm Bible Study
Thursday 1st:	1:00pm Mother's Union
Friday 2nd:	Website Planning Rev'd Maryann
Saturday 3rd:	125th Market @ Wangaratta

Date	Welcomer	Reader 1	Reader 2	Prayers	Morning Tea	Sacristy Eucharist Assistance	Flowers	Cleaners
27/09/2026	Sylvia	Lyn	Elaine	Glenda	Someone Special	David	Jill	Leonard's
04/10/2026	Karen	David	Karen	Glenda	Leonard's	John	Jill	Narell

Daylight Saving begins 2am 4th October. Pour your clocks forward one hour.

Anglican Parish of Tallangatta BSB 803070 (WAW) Acc No: 100151216

Anglican Parish of Thurgoona: BSB: 640 000 (Hume) Acc No:1113-34891