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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Twenty-First Sunday after Pentecost
18th October 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 readings this week bring together two powerful and complementary ideas. In the continuous Old Testament reading, we are invited with Moses to seek God's glory and to rely on God's presence to empower and guide us as we interact with our world. In the Gospel Jesus challenges us to "render to God what is God's and to Caesar what is Caesar's". In the intersection of these two ideas lies an amazing call – to enter the world in intimate connection with God, such that God's glory is revealed through us in all times and places, even as we seek to discern as clearly as we can what is "God's" and what is "Caesar's" – in other words, maintaining a clear distinction between our role as people of faith, and our role as citizens of the world. The struggle for us is to work out how to maintain an appropriate separation between "church" and "state" while still operating in our world completely as followers of Christ. May God reveal God's glory to us and through us as we worship, and may we learn, a little more, to give God what is God's and Caesar what is Caesar's this week.

Sentence
Give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's. *Matthew 22.21*

Collect
Almighty and everlasting God, in Christ you have revealed your glory among the nations: grant that your Church throughout the world may persevere with steadfast faith in proclaiming the cross to be the way that leads to life eternal; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

First Reading **Exodus 33.12-23**

(Moses pleads with God for God's presence to go with the Israelites, which is what will distinguish them from other nations, and God promises to do so. Then Moses asks to see God's glory and God agrees to pass by Moses, speaking God's name, while hiding Moses in a cleft in the rock, and then to then allow Moses to see God's back, but not God's face.)

Moses said to the Lord , 'You have been telling me, "Lead these people," but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. You have said, "I know you by name and you have found favour with me." If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favour with you. Remember that this nation is your people.' The Lord replied, 'My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.' Then Moses said to him, 'If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us? What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?' And the Lord said to Moses, 'I will do the very

thing you have asked, because I am pleased with you and I know you by name.' Then Moses said, 'Now show me your glory.' And the Lord said, 'I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the Lord , in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. But,' he said, 'you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live.' Then the Lord said, 'There is a place near me where you may stand on a rock. When my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by. Then I will remove my hand and you will see my back; but my face must not be seen.' *Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.* **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 99

(A call to honour and worship God, because God is holy and mighty, and has answered Moses, Aaron and Samuel when they prayed, and has shown that God is forgiving and just.)

The Lord is king, let the nations tremble: he is enthroned upon the cherubim; let the earth quake.

The Lord is great in Zion: he is high above all nations.

Let them praise your great and terrible name: for holy is the Lord.

The Mighty One is king and loves justice: you have established equity, you have dealt righteousness and justice in Jacob.

O exalt the Lord our God: and bow down before his footstool, for he is holy.

Moses and Aaron among his priests, and Samuel among those who call upon his name: they called to the Lord and he answered.

He spoke to them from the pillar of cloud: they kept to his teachings and the law that he gave them.

You answered them, O Lord our God: you were a forgiving God to them, and pardoned their wrongdoing.

O exalt the Lord our God: and bow down towards his holy hill, for the Lord our God is holy.

Second Reading **1 Thessalonians 1.1-10**

(Paul expresses his joy and gratitude for the Thessalonian church, for their faith, hope and love, and for the way they have witnessed to Christ in their part of the world, spreading the word they received in the Holy Spirit's power, in spite of their suffering.)

Paul, Silas and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace and peace to you. We always thank God for all of you and continually mention you in our prayers. We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labour prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. For we know, brothers and sisters loved by God, that he has chosen you, because our gospel came to you not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake. You became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you welcomed the message in the midst of severe suffering with the joy given by the Holy Spirit. And so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. The Lord's message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia – your faith in God has become known everywhere. Therefore we do not need to say anything about it, for they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us. They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead – Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath. *Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.* **Thanks be to God.**

Alleluia Alleluia

Gospel **Matthew 22.15-33**

(The religious leaders try to trap Jesus by asking him whether it is lawful to pay taxes to Caesar. Jesus responds by asking for a coin, and asking whose inscription is on it. When they reply that it is Caesar's, Jesus tells them to give Caesar what is Caesar's and to give God what is God's)

A reading from the Holy Gospel According to Matthew

Glory to you Lord Jesus Christ

Then the Pharisees went out and laid plans to trap him in his words. They sent their disciples to him along with the Herodians. 'Teacher,' they said, 'we know that you are a man of integrity and that you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. You aren't swayed by others, because you pay no attention to who they are. Tell us then, what is your opinion? Is it right to pay the poll-taxto Caesar or not?' But Jesus, knowing their evil intent, said, 'You hypocrites, why are you trying to trap me? Show me the coin used for paying the tax.' They brought him a denarius, and he asked them,

‘Whose image is this? And whose inscription?’ ‘Caesar’s,’ they replied. Then he said to them, ‘So give back to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s.’ When they heard this, they were amazed. So they left him and went away. That same day the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him with a question. ‘Teacher,’ they said, ‘Moses told us that if a man dies without having children, his brother must marry the widow and raise up offspring for him. Now there were seven brothers among us. The first one married and died, and since he had no children, he left his wife to his brother. The same thing happened to the second and third brother, right on down to the seventh. Finally, the woman died. Now then, at the resurrection, whose wife will she be of the seven, since all of them were married to her?’ Jesus replied, ‘You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God. At the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven. But about the resurrection of the dead – have you not read what God said to you , “I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob”? He is not the God of the dead but of the living.’ When the crowds heard this, they were astonished at his teaching. *This is the Gospel of the Lord,* **Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.**



Praise the Lord for He is good. Sing to God with thanksgiving.

King of love, all things come from you and belong to you. Take our lives and consecrate them in your service. Keep your church focused on our hope and you and your hold on your creation. in your mercy, **hear our prayer**

King of love, in your Christ’s response to those seeking his entrapment he reminded them not to put you to the test. Open our hearts to truth and justice. We pray for all who call political leaders to account. in your mercy, **hear our prayer**

King of love, you provide for that we need to sustain our life. Give us faith to place our money completely at your service. Make us wise stewards of this currency of action. in your mercy, **hear our prayer**

King of love, proclaim your release to all in grip of debt and poverty. Give consolation to the anxious and desperate, to the sick and suffering. Remembering; *Alan(P), Natalie, Alison, Wendy and Olga.* Restore our true fortunes, oh Lord. in your mercy, **hear our prayer**

King of love, the fullness of your glory is hidden from our sight. Draw into the bright splendour of your presence all who have died and who’s years minds occur at this

time……..You call us by name and we rejoice with you forever. 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…**



One of the most important questions we face as we seek to follow Christ and manifest God's reign in our world in some way, is how we respond to the God we're seeking to serve. All of the readings this week challenge us to keep God in the place in our lives and thoughts that is rightfully God's. Moses asks for God's presence to go with God's people, and for himself to see God's glory, revealing a recognition of his and Israel's need for God to be acknowledged and worshipped and responded to as God. In Isaiah a prophecy of hope for God's exiled people reveals God's sovereignty and God's gracious action, as God, on behalf of God's people. In both Psalms people of all nations are called to honour and worship God as God deserves, and in the epistle, the Thessalonian Christians are celebrated for their faithful worship and service of God and God's purposes which reveals their true acknowledgement of God. In the light of all this, Jesus' response to the attempted entrapment of the religious leaders is a powerful and challenging word. Where they have missed God and God's new, creative work among them, and have fallen into domesticating God to their purposes, Jesus challenges them to put God into the proper place of sovereignty and majesty in their lives. Essentially Jesus turns their question on its head and bypasses the tax question, confronting the leaders with the insignificance of things like taxation in the face of God's greater claim on our worship and our lives. In a faith culture in which it is often popular for God to be reduced to simply a divine friend, or "the man up there", or a "higher" part of ourselves, this call to recognise God's transcendence is important and life-giving.

GLOBAL APPLICATION: As we attempt to engage with some of the challenging issues of our time, the question of where we place God in our lives and priorities may seem insignificant, even self-indulgent. The quest to "see God's glory" may, likewise, appear to be far too "otherworldly" to have any practical relevance for us. However, as we begin to dig a little deeper, we discover that it may well be one of the most important questions for us to engage. To begin with, the ability to discern what is God's and what is Caesar's, and to ensure that the two don't get mixed up or intertwined, is crucial. This may be one of the few dualisms that it is important to

maintain. When we allow Caesar into the place of God (allowing faith/religion and politics/government to become enmeshed for example) we always end up with weak religion and over-reaching human institutions. When we allow God into the place of Caesar, we find ourselves on a misguided attempt to create a theocracy on earth, with inquisitions and witch-hunts (of various kinds) the inevitable result. As we work in the world as people of faith, and as we bring our faith with us into human institutions and organisations, it is important that we learn to keep both God and Caesar in their "rightful" places. The paradox, though, is that it is as we journey in the world that we seek and discover God's glory – even in Caesar's territory, or Caesar's very person. In practical terms, this means that we must be careful never to lose our identity as people of God as we work for justice, peace and the well-being of the most vulnerable. We must never allow ourselves to become nothing more than just another welfare organisation. And we must seek to avoid the temptation to cynicism, expediency and cold pragmatism that comes from losing sight of God's glory in both those we seek to serve and those we may be called to confront. When we remember that we are those who live and act out of relationship with God (out of having seen God's glory), we are able to engage in the world's challenges with hope, energy and creativity, trusting in God's Spirit to empower and guide us. When we remember that everywhere we live and act we do so in Christ's name and in God's presence, we no longer need to "impose God" on situations where religious practice, ethics or control is inappropriate. When we remember our faith, hope and love (as the Thessalonians did) we are able to render to God what is God's – our lives, our devotion and our commitment to reflect the character and purpose of Christ – and we are able to render to Caesar what is Caesar's – our commitment to live as good citizens, to pay our "dues" whatever they may be, in service of the country where we live, and our voice to challenge what is unjust and to support and strengthen what is good, and just and peaceful. While at times these ways of being will overlap, in our hearts and minds we do well to keep the distinction clear, and to seek to act and interact appropriately according to the "realm" in which we find ourselves.

LOCAL APPLICATION: It is unfortunate, but all too common that the presence of the Church in many communities is one in which "what is God's" and "what is Caesar's" is confused. When we allow ourselves to believe that we must impose our standards of morality, organisation, belief and behaviour on our neighbourhoods, cities and societies, we have confused "what is God's" and "what is Caesar's". When we believe it is God's will for us to denigrate, exclude or judge those who believe or behave differently from us, we have confused "what is God's" and "what is Caesar's". When we believe that we deserve some sort of privileged treatment in society because of our faith, we have confused "what is God's" and "what is Caesar's". Unfortunately, we do this all too often, and the result is that we alienate people, and turn them away from the Gospel which could bring them life and joy. There is no question that followers of Christ have a calling to be "salt and light" to "witness to Christ" in the power of the Holy Spirit, as the Thessalonians did. There is no question that we are to

be distinguished from others by the presence of God in our lives and the practices of following Christ that define how we live. However, this witnessing, this distinguishing, is best done by living in ways that are attractive, serving, contributing and just, not by pointing fingers, "Bible-bashing" or demanding our way. In addition, as we work for justice, we must be careful not to allow our work to fall into a religious oppression of others, but must rather be driven by commonly-held values of human rights, human dignity and justice. This means that it is not only appropriate, but necessary, that we align with other organisations, communities and people that hold to the same values of justice and peace, even though they may differ from us theologically or religiously. It means that we hold ourselves to the high standard of Christ's character and purpose ("what is God's") but hold others to the standards of law and justice that all people agree on ("what is Caesar's"). In this way we can champion those who are marginalised, oppressed or vulnerable without seeking to impose our belief on society. In our own churches and families, similar principles can also be applied. Rather than seek to force those we associate with to take on our beliefs and standards, we can live the gracious and just life of Christ ("what is God's), and call others to live in ways that honour one another and are just, peaceful, respectful and equitable ("what is Caesar's"). Finally, we can also learn to recognise God's glory in those with whom we live, worship and even disagree. and we can seek to allow God's glory, grace and compassion to be revealed to them through us. https://sacredise.com/proper-24a/





Our P.A.M will be held straight after our Eucharist in Thurgoona on the **8th November.** This is where you hear what has been happening in our parish over the last 12 months. You also get to register as an official member of this congregation. We do not have to change our office bearers this year, however, Rev'd Maryann still can ask for another Parish Councillor as we do not have a full compliment on Parish Council. After this short meeting we will gather for a light luncheon and share fellowship.

Tallangatta's PAM will be on the the 24th November at 3:30pm after Bingo in the Hall.

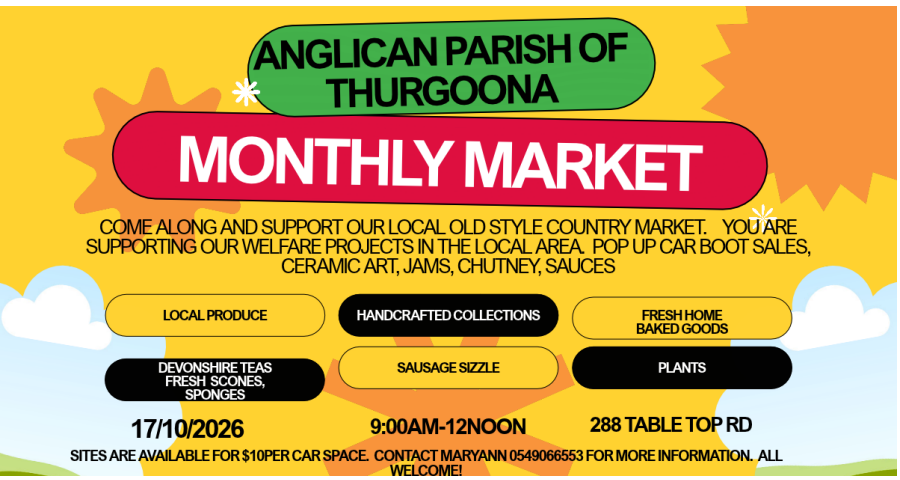
Please come along and support your Parish on these days. By thee PAM's we will have a clear direction in moving forward.



Gillian Baker and David Mitchell Memorial Diocesan Environment and Sustainability Trust Award 2026

In the next couple of weeks Felicity, myself and in consultation with the green thumbs of the Parish, we will embark on shopping for our garden requirements and supplies for Playgroup and our Parish community.

A proposed area has been suggested. Exciting times ahead.



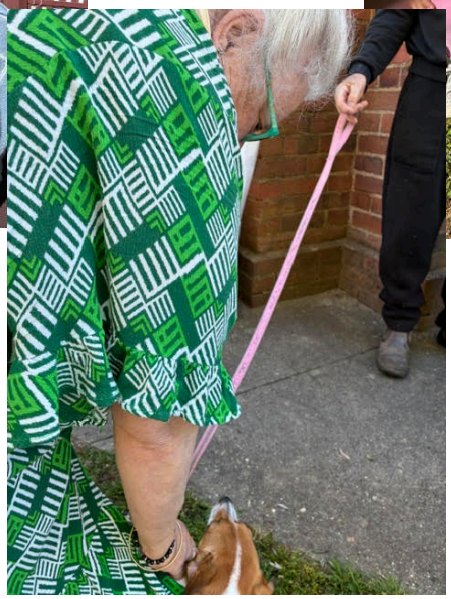
To everyone who helped in anyway for our Market yesterday, thank you! It is a team effort. Of course I left the exact figures at the Cottage, but they are pretty right. **The Market, $950 & Bingo $295.** Not bad for 3 hours and 2 hours 'work' respectively. **Total $1,265**

Blessings of Pets

Although a couple of weeks late, I thought it would be a wonderful outreach to bless pets at the market, to give the wider community a chance to have their pets blessed. Seven pets were blessed throughout the day. Praise be to St Francis!







Messy Church is NOT only for kids!!!!! It is Multigenerational. After the success of our first Messy Church in Thurgoona, our next one will be the **25th October 4-6pm**

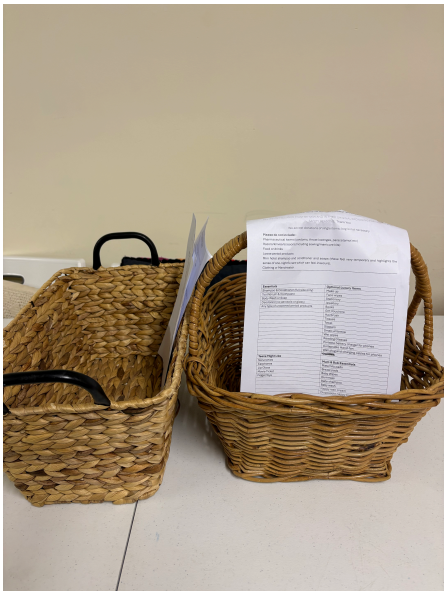
We are learning about Abraham. Abraham is the foundational patriarch in the Bible whose faith and obedience to God established the covenant and lineage leading to the nation of Israel and Jesus Christ.

Free Meal: Patriarchal Parma Chicken, Messy Mash Potato, Three Nation Carrots, Mystical Peas, Tribal Cauliflower & Cheese, Wild Chocolate Self Saucing Pudding.

Some pics of Messy Church last Sunday. The lion was very scary indeed, his mouth was waiting to eat it's prey. We just had to put a sock in it! We had very faithful and prayerful Daniels! Thank you to the Messy Church Team.

'16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence'

The 16 Days is an annual international campaign that begins on 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and runs until 10 December, Human Rights Day. The World Wide Mothers Union have supported this campaign for many years. There will be more about these 16 days in upcoming Pew Sheets. St John's will be very active in this campaign. A poster is being created for our front fence. As a church community of love, justice and care, we must at times take a stand on issues that affect our community at large. Some would say to keep politics and things controversial out of the church. One must use discretion and not use party politics, but sometimes we must be up front to support issues for the better of human kind. Many organisations Church, United Nations and secular organisations will be joining this event to promote awareness of gender based violence and where to seek help and how to support those who need it. Please support our 'gift bags' by donating goods set out on the baskets on the chairs on your way out of the church.







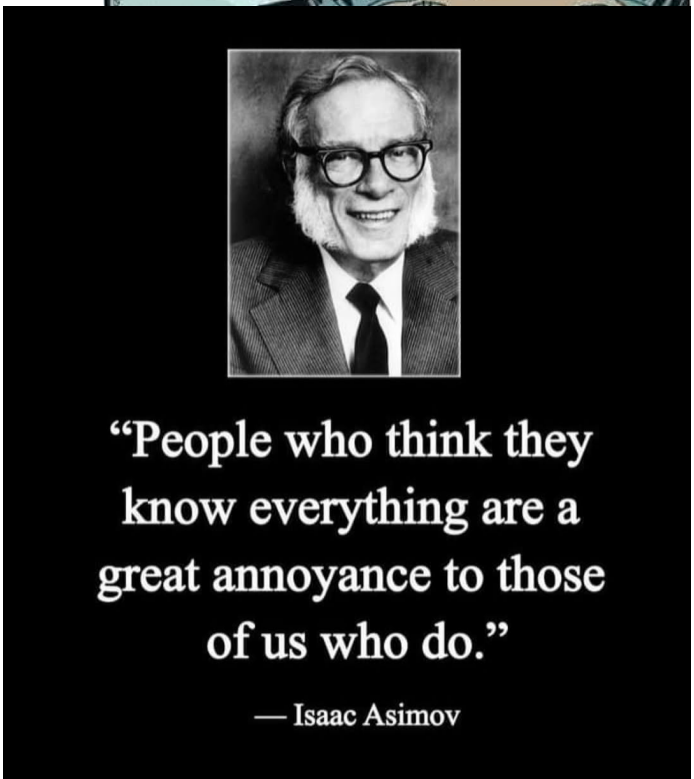
Why science teachers should not be given playground duty.











THIS WEEK

Sunday 18th:	2:30 pm House Blessing
Monday 19th:	Rev'd Maryann & John seeking solitude
Tuesday 20th:	1:00pm Bingo Tallangatta
Wednesday 21st:	10:00am Craft @ Cottage 1:00pm Bible Study
Thursday 23rd:	10:30am Playgroup Tallangatta Parish Hall 2:30 Rev'd Maryann Meeting with Chaplain of MU Wang 5:00pm Rev'd Maryann Meeting cathedral Chapter.
Friday 24th:	9:30am Playgroup Thurgoona 11:30am St John's Website finalisation
Saturday 25th:	11:00am Singing Practice Thurgoona 1:00pm Bingo
Sunday 26th:	9:00am Tallangatta 10:30am Thurgoona 4:00pm Messy Church

Date	Welcomer	Reader 1	Reader 2	Prayers	Morning Tea	Sacristy Eucharist Assistance	Flowers	Cleaners
18/10/2026	Sylvia	Elaine	Sue	Glenda	Greg	John	Jill	Leonard
25/102026	Elaine	David	Karen	Glenda	Scott	David	Jill	Narell

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

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