

DARLING DOWNS PARISH OF THE AELC
TRINITY OAKLEY, ST PAUL'S GREENWOOD, ST JOHN'S AUBIGNY,
BETHLEHEM TOOWOOMBA

11 November 2018
Bulletin for Harvest Thanksgiving

HYMNS: 567 814 456 320 847 563

INTROIT: You receive praise in silence in Zion, O God, and vows to You will be fulfilled.

O You who hear prayer, to You all human beings will come.

Iniquitous things have been prevailing over me. You Yourself will provide atonement for our rebellious actions.

Blessed is the person whom You choose and whom You bring near, that he may dwell in Your courts! We shall be satisfied with the good things of Your house, the holiness of Your temple.

You answer us in righteousness with awesome deeds, O our saving God, the Confidence of all the ends of the earth and of the most distant sea.

He is the One who sets the mountains in place by His strength, the One who puts on strength like a waistcloth.

He is the One who calms **the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves**, and the turmoil of the peoples.

Those who live at the ends of the earth have been in awe of Your miraculous signs. You make the places where morning dawns and the places where evening fades shout for joy.

You have taken care of the land and have caused it to overflow. You have enriched it abundantly. The stream of God is filled with water. You are providing their grain. For that is how You have prepared it.

You have given its furrows their fill of drink, and levelled off the edges of its furrows. You soften it with gentle rain, and bless its growth.

You have crowned the year of Your goodness, and Your wheel-tracks drip with fat.

The pastures in the desert overflow. The hills are robed with joy.

The meadows are clothed with flocks, and the valleys are covered with grain. They are shouting for joy. Indeed, they are singing.

Psalm 146

COLLECT: Almighty God, You crown the fields with Your blessing and permit us to gather in the fruits of the earth. As stewards of Your creation, may we receive Your gifts in humble thankfulness and share Your bounty with those in need; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

READINGS: Deuteronomy 26:1-11 First fruits presented to the LORD.

2 Corinthians 9:6-15 Sowing generously.

Luke 12:13-21 The Parable of the rich fool.

SERMON: Psalm 136:1 Give thanks to the Lord!

The Lord's Supper has always been seen as a sign of unity between those who commune together at the Lord's table (1 Cor. 10:17). When Christians partake of the Lord's Supper in a church body that has a confession of faith, they thereby declare that they believe that they are one in faith with those who commune with them. Since people cannot honestly hold two differing confessions at the same time, they cannot honestly commune with those whose confession is in conflict with their own. If any do this nevertheless, they deny their own confession, and so deny Christ Himself (2 Cor. 6:14-18). **We ask visitors who are communicant members in a church not in fellowship with the AELC, or are not familiar with the AELC Statement of Faith, to refrain from communing today. If you have questions, please speak with the pastor after service.**

God preserves Christians in faith in Jesus to eternal life

Jesus said to the church in Smyrna, "Be faithful, even to the point of death [unto death], and I will give you the crown of life," (Rev. 2:10). But, how can I remain faithful? What if I am not strong enough in my faith? Years ago, an airplane crashed into an icy river after take-off. Some of the survivors managed to get out of the plane, but they fell into the icy river. People on the shore threw them lifelines. They encouraged them to "hang on" until they were pulled to shore. Some of the passengers drowned. The

icy cold of the river sapped their strength. Though they knew they had to hang on to be saved, they didn't have the strength, of themselves, to do this.

How thankful we can be that perseverance in the faith does not depend on us but on the Holy Spirit, who preserves us in the faith to life eternal. Paul wrote, "May God Himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The One who calls you is faithful, and He will do it," (1 Thess. 5:23-24; see also 1 Peter 1:5). He also wrote to the Philippians, "He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus," (1:6).

God preserves believers in the faith. He alone can bring them to faith. He alone can keep them in the faith to eternal life. How does God preserve faith? He does this through the means of grace: the gospel, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper (Rom. 1:16; 1 Thess. 2:13). We cannot expect the Holy Spirit to carry out His work of preserving us in the faith apart from the means of grace. As Luther observed: "Therefore we should and must insist that God does not want to deal with us human beings, except by means of His external Word and sacrament. Everything that boasts of being from the Spirit apart from such a Word and sacrament is of the devil," (SA III VIII:10).

Whoever neglects or despises the means of grace despises the tools through which the Holy Spirit carries out His work of preserving faith. This is why neglecting the means of grace is a serious sin. This is why we ought to be concerned about those who neglect hearing God's Word and receiving the Lord's Supper. If a person does not eat or drink, he cuts himself off from the tools by which God preserves physical life. If a Christian neglects the means of grace, he cuts himself off from the means by which God preserves faith.

Do Christians need to be warned that they can fall from the faith? Yes, because they have a sinful nature that is inclined to be spiritually smug and self-confident. Do Christians have the assurance that God will preserve them in the faith? Yes, because God clearly gives that assurance in His gospel. How can both be true, that Christians are warned that they can fall from the faith at the same time they are assured that God will preserve them in the faith? Both are true. The warning that we can fall from faith is a statement of the law. The assurance that God will preserve us in faith is a statement of the gospel. Both are needed because of the dual nature of Christians. We still have an old Adam, which needs the warnings of the law. To keep us from becoming self-righteous, the law warns us that we can fall from the faith (Rom. 11:19-20; 1 Cor. 10:12). At the same time, the gospel assures our new man that God will preserve us in faith in Jesus so that we inherit eternal life (John 10:28; Rom. 8:38-39).

Welcome to all worshipping with us today! May God bless our worship of Him by His serving of us!

Pastor Peter Ziebell, Phone 0407583922.

Email him at paziebell@gmail.com

Weekly sermons and bulletins are available at www.aelc.org.au.

Please notify pastor of anyone who is unwell or in need of a visit.

COMING SERVICES

18 November 26 Pentecost	25 November Last Sunday of the Church Year	2 December 1 Advent
8.30am OAK LR 8.30am TMBA LR 9.00am GRN LR 9.30am AUB LR	8.30am TMBA HC Harvest 8.30am OAK LR 9.00am GRN LR 10.30am AUB HC Harvest	10.00am OAK HC Parish Service
Sunday, 18 November		
READINGS: Daniel 12:1-3	Hebrews 10:11-25	Mark 13:1-13
HYMNS: 144 485 188 346		
Sunday, 25 November		
READINGS: Isaiah 51:4-6	Jude 20-25	Mark 13:24-37
HYMNS: 272 735 (tune 248) 338 219 TMBA & AUB: 567 814 456 320 (847) 563		

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Tuesday, 13 November, 7.30pm. Men's Fellowship at Oakey.

Saturday, 17 November, 1.00pm. The AELC Youth Group will meet at Daniel and Sherry Eising's home. The activity will be a lesson in mechanics.