

Australian Evangelical Lutheran Church
BETHLEHEM TOOWOOMBA, OUR SAVIOUR LOWOOD, ST JOHN'S AUBIGNY,
ST PAUL'S GREENWOOD, TRINITY MARBURG, TRINITY OAKEY,

9 May 2021

Ascension Day Service

HYMNS: 108 771 115 377 285 106

INTROIT: All you peoples, clap your hands! Shout to God with the sound of joyful shouting!

For the LORD Most High is awesome; He is the great King over all the earth. May He subjugate peoples under us, and nations under our feet.

He chooses our inheritance for us, the pride of Jacob, whom He has loved.

God has gone up with a joyful shout, the LORD, with the sound of a ram's horn.

Sing praise to God, sing praise! Sing praise to our King, sing praise!

For God is the King of all the earth; sing a psalm of praise!

God has been reigning over the nations; God has been sitting on His holy throne.

The nobles of the peoples have gathered together as the people of the God of Abraham. For the shields of the earth belong to God.

He is greatly exalted.

Psalm 47

COLLECT: Almighty God, as Your only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, ascended into the heavens, so may we also ascend in heart and mind and continually dwell there with Him, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

READINGS: Acts 1:1-11 Jesus' ascension, promise, and commission.

Ephesians 1:15-23 Christ the supreme Lord over all things.

Luke 24:44-53 Jesus commissions and blesses the disciples.

SERMON: Acts 1:1-11 WE ARE NOT ALONE

Welcome to all worshipping with us today! Pastor Peter Ziebell, Phone 46333604 or 0407583922.

Email him at paziebell@gmail.com or to the church office at ddaalc@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.

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.**

Christ's Church will Endure Forever

The church is imperishable which means it will endure forever. Here on earth and as long as the earth lasts, the church is called the *church militant*. That is, it is a church at war. The warfare is not a warfare like that between visible kingdoms. It is a spiritual warfare. St. Paul tells us that it is a battle against the devil (Ephesians 6:10, 11; cf. also 1 Peter 5:8-9). St. John says that our battle is with the allure of the world and the gods of wealth and pleasure; these lie to us with false offers of peace and pleasure in this life. To see their lie, we need only look at the times in life when we have fallen for the lie and brought ourselves to sin by which we did damage to both ourselves and others. Thus, ultimately, the warfare is a battle against our own sinful self (Romans 7:14-16; Galatians 5:17-21).

Jesus assures us that that battle, the battle of the church militant, our battle with the world, will often become violent on the part of the world. For the devil and the world will strive to exterminate the Gospel and those who proclaim it (John 15:18-21; Revelation 6:9-11). That violence began shortly after the creation of the world, when Cain murdered Abel (Genesis 4), and has continued to this day. But all of the daunting power of the foes arrayed against us, against the rule of Christ in us, against faith in Him and His redeeming work, do not drive us to despair and cannot destroy the church. The weapons at hand for opposing and defeating the powerful alliance of the devil, the world, and our own sinful flesh are greater than the weapons arrayed against us. St. John says that we overcome by faith (1 John 5:4); that is, our triumph, the triumph of the church, is in the continual trust that comes from the Word and Sacraments, the trust in Jesus as Saviour. The faith thus armed struggles, not alone but with Jesus Himself and His Holy Spirit at our side (John 16:33; Romans 8:12-39).

Eventually the battle is over and done with for the individual Christian. Eventually the individual believer in the church militant becomes a member of the *church triumphant*.

The church triumphant is the church in heaven, where there are no more battles to be fought but rather an unending enjoyment of the victory won for us by Christ in His resurrection from the dead. Jesus spoke of that ultimate and ever-lasting victory for each believer often in the parables about the kingdom of heaven. Always the picture in those parables is one of victory after struggle. The struggle is a life and death struggle; it is what life is all about for the believer while in this world. At the same time the victory is always and purely a gift of God that is received by all in the church triumphant as a gracious gift which no one could ever deserve, no matter how severe or difficult the struggle on earth (cf. especially each of the parables in Matthew 25 and the song of the saints in heaven in Revelation 19:1-19).

So we have the great paradox: Our salvation is altogether a gift of God, but those who refuse the struggle of faith in the church militant eventually cast aside that gift of salvation and lose the goal of eternal life in the church triumphant. However, for those engaged in the struggle, there is the assurance that on Jesus' side there is always the desire and the power to save us and bring us to that blessed and eternal goal (Luke 12:32; John 6:37-40).

The confidence of the believer is a confidence in Christ who has already given us eternal life - that life is not a life yet to be won or earned by us but a life assured by Christ's victory for us.

May we never find ourselves among the number of those who abuse Christ and disgrace His bid, the church, by thinking or teaching anything other than Christ and Him crucified! Instead, may our love for Christ and our devotion to the church, His mystical body on earth and His bride, ever grow as we through Word and Sacraments come to know Him ever better and cherish His church and kingdom in us ever more faithfully!

COMING SERVICES

13 May Ascension Day	16 May 7 EASTER	23 May PENTECOST
(Thursday)		
7.30pm OAK HC	8.30am OAK HC 8.30am TMBA LR 9.30am AUB LR 10.00am GRN HC 9.00am LOWOOD LR	8.30am OAK LR 8.30am TMBA HC 9.00am GRN LR 10.30am AUB HC 9.00am LOWOOD LR
Thursday, 13 May		
READINGS: Acts 1:1-11; Ephesians 1:15-23; Luke 24:44-53		
HYMNS: 108 771 115 377 285 106		
Sunday, 16 May		
READINGS: Acts 1:12-26; 1 John 5:9-15; John 17:11b-19		
HYMNS: 500 191 357 (320 289) 510		
Sunday, 23 May		
READINGS: Ezekiel 37:1-14; Acts 2:1-21; John 15:26-27, 16:4b-15		
HYMNS: 164 121 116 (774 289) 123		

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Tuesday, 11 May, 7.30pm. Men's Fellowship at Oakey. Opening devotion: Barry.

BIBLE STUDIES:

Today, after church at LOWOOD.

Friday, 14 May, 7.30pm GRN.

Friday, 28 May, 7.30pm AUB/OAK at Aubigny.