

MARBURG PARISH OF THE AELC
TRINITY MARBURG, ST JOHN'S MINDEN, OUR SAVIOUR LOWOOD

10 January 2021

The First Sunday after the Epiphany

HYMNS: 823 13 831 152 842 279

INTROIT:

Give to the LORD, you heavenly beings, give to the LORD glory and strength.

Give to the LORD the glory due to His name!

Worship the LORD in holy splendour!

The voice of the LORD is over the waters; the God of glory causes it to thunder; the LORD is over many waters.

The voice of the LORD is powerful; the voice of the LORD is majestic.

The voice of the LORD breaks the cedars; yes the LORD breaks in pieces the cedars of Lebanon.

He also makes them skip about like a calf, Lebanon and Sirion like a young wild ox.

The voice of the LORD stirs flames of fire.

The voice of the LORD makes the wilderness tremble; the LORD makes the Wilderness of Kadesh tremble.

The voice of the LORD causes the fallow deer to be in labour, and brings kids to premature birth; and in His temple everyone is saying, "Glory!"

The LORD sat enthroned over the Deluge, and the LORD has for ever been sitting as King.

The LORD will give strength to His people; the LORD will bless His people with peace.

Psalm 29

COLLECT: Father in heaven, at the Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River You proclaimed Him Your beloved Son and anointed Him with the Holy Spirit. Make all who are baptised in His name faithful in their calling as Your children and inheritors with Him of everlasting life; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit one God, now and for ever. Amen.

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.**

READINGS:

Genesis 1:1-5 The Spirit was hovering over the waters at creation.

Romans 6:1-11 Dead to Sin, Alive to God.

Mark 1:4-11 The baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist.

SERMON: Genesis 1:1-5 CHAOS REIGNS – CHAOS BROKEN

The Season of Light

We now find ourselves in the season of Epiphany. Epiphany is one of the oldest seasons in the Christian Church year, second only to the Easter season. The season of light emphasises Jesus' manifestation as God and man (or epiphany, from the Greek *epiphaneia*). The earliest Christians called the feast of Epiphany the Theophany ("revelation of God"). When the Gentile wise men followed the star and came to worship Jesus, this showed that everyone now has access to God.

An astronomical phenomenon that happened early in the evening on December 21 gained worldwide attention in the media. The conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn - when the two planets appeared to be very close to each other from our earthly perspective, was labelled by some as a "rare Christmas star," and, due to its appearance a few days before Christmas, you can see why the idea got so much attention!

Jupiter and Saturn come into conjunction about every 20 years. The two previous conjunctions of these two was in 1980 and in 2000, but the latest one from a few weeks ago was the closest the two had appeared since the 13th century.

But does this have anything to do with Christmas or Christ's birth? No, it doesn't. Some have speculated that perhaps the actual Christmas star (the star that guided the wise men to Christ in Matthew 2:9) may have been a planetary conjunction (perhaps even a triple conjunction), but that idea really doesn't match with what Scripture teaches. We touched on this in a study pastor delivered to the women's guild in December. (If anyone would like a copy, please ask pastor).

For those saw the latest rare conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn, they most likely were reminded of the supernatural star that guided the wise men over 2,000 years ago - after all, it took place only a few days before Christmas, and our response must be the same as the wise men: we should fall down and

worship the King of kings and Lord of lords who has made the stars and the planets to display His glory (Psalm 19:1).

While we remember the wise men following the star to Bethlehem, we have the chance to speak and warn of something else that has quite a following today, regarding the stars. We are talking about horoscopes and astrology. The Second Commandment and Explanation from Luther's Small Catechism says, "You shall not take the name of the Lord, your God, in vain." What does this mean? We should fear and love God, so that we do not curse, swear, use satanic arts, lie or deceive by His name, but call upon Him in every trouble, pray, praise and give thanks." What is using satanic arts by God's name? It means to try, by the use of God's name, to do supernatural things such as consulting witches and psychics, speaking to the dead, practicing astrology, and other satanic works. See Deuteronomy 18:9-14.

Ancient people worshipped gods in nature. They believed in the power of nature. God revealed Himself to His people as the God who created the things that others worshipped. Genesis 1:14-18 reads, "*Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night! Let them serve as signs to mark feasts, days and years, and let them be lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth!*" It was so. God made the two great lights, the greater light to govern the day and the smaller light to govern the night. He also made the stars. God set them in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth, to govern the day and the night and to separate the light from the darkness. God saw that it was good."

Christians will use creation as God intended. The stars and the planets give us light. They help us keep track of time. While the stars may help us find our directions, they do not control our lives. Those who sincerely practice astrology or look to horoscopes sin against the First and Second Commandments. We give thanks to God for a day when the sun turned black. It was the time when darkness ruled (Luke 22:53). God put His Son on a cross. God imputed to Jesus the sins of all people of all time. The Creator of heaven and earth died in payment of all sin. God, thereby, declared us to be forgiven, justified in His sight. By faith in Jesus, we are eternal. We know and believe that He guides our way. God directs our future (read Psalm 31:15 and Ecclesiastes 7:14) – not the stars.

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 ddaelc@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

| 17 January 2 Epiphany | 24 January 3 Epiphany | 31 January 4 Epiphany |
|--|--|--|
| 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 | 8.30am OAK LR 8.30am TMBA LR 9.00am GRN LR 9.30am AUB LR 9.00am MARBURG HC |
| Sunday, 17 January | | |
| READINGS: 1 Samuel 3:1-20; 1 Corinthians 6:12-20; John 1:43-51 | | |
| HYMNS: 507 336 221 (311 335) 511 | | |
| Sunday, 24 January | | |
| READINGS: Jonah 3:1-5, 10; 1 Corinthians 7:29-35; Mark 1:14-20 | | |
| HYMNS: 45 217 361 (311 335) 459 | | |

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Downs Parish: Sunday, 17 January, 7.30pm. Parish Executive meeting at Oakey.

Congregational AGM's

OAK:

TMBA: Sunday, 24 January. 2.00pm at Pastor's place.

AUB:

GRN:

Marburg: Sunday, 31 January. We shall hold our AGM straight after service.