

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

6 June 2021

2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

**HYMNS:** 159 204 386 791 286 175

**INTROIT:** Out of the depths I have cried to You, O LORD; Lord, hear my voice! Let Your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications.

If You, LORD, should observe iniquities, O Lord, who would stand?

But with You there is forgiveness, so that You may be feared.

I am waiting for the LORD; my soul is waiting, and in His Word I am putting my hope.

My soul is waiting for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning, more than watchmen wait for the morning.

O Israel, wait for the LORD; for with the LORD there is mercy, and with Him there is very great redemption, and He Himself will redeem Israel from all his iniquities. Psalm 130

**COLLECT:** Almighty and eternal God, Your Son Jesus triumphed over the prince of demons and freed us from bondage to sin. Help us to stand firm against every assault of Satan, and enable us always to do Your will; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

**READINGS:** Genesis 3:8-15 The consequences of the Fall into sin.  
2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1 The glory to come far exceeds our troubles.  
Mark 3:20-35 Questions about Jesus' power.

**SERMON:** Genesis 3:8-15 **WOMEN HAVE AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN REDEMPTION – NOT IN LEADERSHIP**

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.**

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

Email him at [pziebell@gmail.com](mailto:pziebell@gmail.com) or to the church office at [ddaalc@gmail.com](mailto:ddaalc@gmail.com).

Weekly sermons and bulletins are available at [www.aelc.org.au](http://www.aelc.org.au)

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

### **Smart phones and the death of conversation**

If a few decades ago you had turned on the television and found yourself watching some drama in which the entire human race walked around utterly engrossed in the little slabs of metal and glass they held in their hands, you would have assumed it was some sort of science-fiction nightmare in which aliens had taken over the world. You would have called it fantasy; we have come to recognise it as normality. Psychologists and social scientists are beginning to realise that since the first iPhone in 2007 unleashed an unstoppable flood of smartphones, human culture has begun to change. For many of us, our smartphone is now a fundamental part of our existence. We check it immediately on waking and before closing our eyes at night. We use it to email, communicate by text, take photographs, read maps and engage in Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp and whatever the latest cult app is. From our smartphone comes our music, advice for living, directions for driving, appointments and, increasingly, much of our life. Smartphones have woven themselves inextricably into who we are and how we live. We cannot imagine life without one. While the usefulness of smartphones is beyond question, you don't have to look hard to start to suspect that there may be a price to pay. Reading books has clearly suffered: anyone with any time on their hands now simply engages with a smartphone. Equally, many people now struggle to handle silence: they are never alone with their thoughts, or, it seems do they want to be. Few people now seem able to sit quietly staring into space or gazing at nature without succumbing to an irresistible urge to check the phone or take a selfie.

One particular aspect of concern is the impact of smartphones on conversation. We've all seen the classic and sad manifestation of this: the young couple sitting in a restaurant deeply engrossed, not with each other but with their phones. But the problem occurs more widely. How many of us have tried to have a serious discussion with someone and failed because they seemed more interested in checking their phone? This erosion of conversation is important because it is surely one of the things that makes us human.

I want to suggest that while smartphones give us communication — and do so very well — they do not allow us to take part in conversation in any real sense. Think for a moment about what a traditional, old-fashioned, flesh-and-blood conversation involves. It's not just words: there are silences, hesitant exploratory phrases, eye contact, facial expressions, laughter, hand gestures and possibly even physical touches

of reassurance or encouragement.

The fact that there is no technological intermediate means that such conversations are spontaneous. They can spread free and wide, bouncing one moment into a joke, sliding the next into some subtle expression of regret or even be coming one of those silences that says more than words. In an authentic conversation, unconstrained by technology, there can be a richness that gives rise to both empathy and intimacy. Indeed, real conversations can be dangerous you can easily find yourself saying more than you meant to say. Is the fact that you stay in control one of the strongest attractions of smartphone communication? Smartphone communication promises us so much more yet, in reality, delivers so much less. We end up with a pale shadow of a real conversation, the equivalent of junk food for the mind.

There is, I think, a clear perspective on all this. We were made by God to communicate in the deepest and richest possible way. Famously, John's Gospel in the Bible begins "*In the beginning was the Word*" (1:1). We know that the Word is Jesus, however, historically, some renderings of that phrase have been "In the beginning was the conversation." There is some truth in that. The Christian belief that God is a Trinity – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – is that, from eternity, there was conversation within God. Before the universe was created, at the heart of the eternal God, there was conversation. At the creation of man, God said, "*Let Us make man in Our image, in Our likeness*" (Gen. 1:26).

To be made in God's image is to be made for conversation. We can go further. In the second chapter of Genesis we read that God decided that it was 'not good' for man to be alone and so created woman for him. We have been endlessly preoccupied with what that means in terms of sexuality but we should not ignore the implication that we were meant not for isolation but for conversation.

There are many rules and guidelines we could come up with for not letting smartphones dominate our life. Ultimately, however, they boil down to the key idea that we must always put direct conversation above digital communication. Short of an outright emergency, conversation with flesh and blood human beings around us should always take priority over any form of smartphone communication with those at the distance.

The truly scary thing about the global smartphone epidemic is not merely that we are losing the richness of conversation, but that we may be losing the very ability to achieve it. Having a serious conversation face to face rather than tapping away at the screen is far better, and more likely to achieve something. Unless we take care to guard our use of technology in general, and smartphones in particular, the fear is that in the end we shall become nothing more than zombies talking to each other via a screen, showing no emotion whatsoever, and that is not helpful in our walk together as brothers and sisters of the Lord.

## COMING SERVICES

13 June 3 Pentecost	20 June 4 Pentecost	27 June 5 Pentecost
8.30am OAK LR 8.00am TMBA Bible Study & 9.00am HC <u>9.30am</u> GRN LR 10.30am AUB HC 9.00am LOWOOD LR	8.30am OAK LR 8.30am TMBA LR 9.30am GRN LR 9.30am AUB LR 9.00am LOWOOD HC Confirmation Service	8.30am OAK HC 8.30am TMBA LR 9.30am AUB LR 10.00am GRN HC 9.00am MARBURG LR
<b>Sunday, 13 June</b>		
READINGS: Ezekiel 17:22-24; 2 Corinthians 5:1-10; Mark 4:26-34		
HYMNS: 507 267 442 (839 840) 515		
<b>Sunday, 20 June</b>		
READINGS: Job 38:1-11; 2 Corinthians 6:1-13; Mark 4:35-41		
HYMNS: 524 149 616 341 LOWOOD: 301 149 297 299 847 341		

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

Tuesday, 8 June. Men's Fellowship at Oakey. Opening devotion: Barry.