

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

21 November 2021

Last Sunday of the Church Year

HYMNS: 562 487 563 839 840 219

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 65

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 Offerings of Firstfruits and Tithes.

2Corinthians 9:6-15 The Cheerful Giver.

Luke 12:13-21 The Parable of the Rich Fool.

SERMON: Luke 17:11-19 RETURNING THANKS

Welcome to all worshipping with us today! A special welcome to Thomas Steinhardt, who is being confirmed today. Pastor Peter Ziebell, Phone 0407583922.

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

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.**

We have Peace in the Lord Jesus Christ

True peace, thankfulness, and joy are not things that can be bought or taken away from others. As another church year comes to a close, and we move closer to the end of another calendar year, we ask, "How did things go this past year?" Perhaps there has been plenty to be thankful for, but maybe not. Everyone is different. One thing, however, that has not changed is our peace with God.

There is no call to be worked up or frustrated, but rather the opposite. Indeed, the Word of God says, "*Do not worry about anything*" (Phil. 4:6). Why? **Because of the lasting peace our God has given in Christ.** His death has conquered all the enemies we face - sickness, worry, death, and fear. His resurrection in the body is our peace. It signals the end of punishment and divine warfare. All accounts are settled - we are just to God - righteous. We have been baptised into Christ. Now, eternal death has been take off the menu - we shall live beyond the sleep of death. We shall rise to glory - this is true no matter what happens to our bodies in this life. "*The peace of God, which is beyond all understanding, will also guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus*" (Phil. 4:7). We hear these words every Sunday. We can be safe in Christ in our hearts and minds, while our body is subject to tribulations, weaknesses, and vulnerabilities.

The source of all thanksgiving is God's Word, not our feelings or physical welfare. We are not thankful, though. Although we receive daily bread and a multitude of gifts - we ignore them, focusing instead on what we don't have. Therefore, we must turn

from false forms of security - what we crave on earth will not give life. We must never think that we can grab peace by the throat - we are not the source of life. Our sacrifices are selfish and sinful and can earn nothing but death.

We are called to focus on what is good - not just for the moment, but for all eternity. Eat not just food for the body, but feast on the gifts that come in the Word. "*Foods are for the stomach, and the stomach is for foods*" (1 Cor. 6:13) - and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. We must read and learn Scripture and live by it. God will not lead us away from Him. We must ponder the Word, pray it, and heed it - God's will is food to satisfy broken hearts and distraught minds. Jesus speaks to us - wanting us to grow in knowledge and understanding. The Apostle Paul writes, "*Do not conform to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, that you may approve of what God wants, namely, what is good, pleasing and perfect!*" (Romans 12:2).

Our minds and thoughts are not to be ruled by the world and its deathly news, but by our Lord who lives to bless us. We turn away from anything that offers no hope, to our God, who is our refuge. He cares for us and protects us as our kind and good Father. Much thanks to Him! There is always never-ending thanks to be given.

But our thanks is not to be like the selfish child who only thanks because he must. We are to live lives of thankfulness to Christ, our Lord. We are called to present our bodies as "*living sacrifices*" (Romans 12:1) - not concerned about our own welfare, but safe from death and hell - not fearing earthly ruin but living for a heavenly inheritance.

Practice these things in your life, walk in the Spirit, abiding in the Word. Our lives in Christ are ones of service and patience, not selfishness. Without the Spirit there is no real thankfulness. We can't make a sinful heart generous and full of gratitude. Without the true God we have no one to thank, but are left with ourselves and our sin. Why is thanksgiving connected to prayer?

Prayer is our response to the Father for His saving Word and salvation. Without the Spirit there is no prayer heard. But our Father wants us to treat Him like a dear Father. So don't be afraid to talk to Him constantly, with thanksgiving. Satan does not rest - he is working hard to make us worry, disturbed, and not at peace in our minds. There will be no lack of problems and trials, there is no peace in this world for any of us. Rather, our peace is with God. We are to trust at this moment: "*He who is righteous by faith will live*" (Romans 1:17). Chew and ruminate on peace with God now that is offered by Christ. This is to have peace with the holy God, and to be right with Him.

"*Faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the Word of Christ*" (Romans 10:17). We either believe or disbelieve; we can't put God on hold or give faith to another. We must be thankful for what we have - to God the Father who has given His Son for us.

If you do not have many earthly gifts, the heavenly gifts are always abounding and overflowing to you. The riches of forgiveness shower you in Baptism. You are new and your guilt is removed. It is done - just as Christ is risen - the sin of the world has been conquered, including yours. Grace is always abounding for you - in Christ. Thanks be to God.

COMING SERVICES

| 28 November 1 Advent | 5 December 2 Advent | 12 December 3 Advent |
|---|--|---|
| 8.30am OAK LR 9.00am TMBA HC Harvest 9.00am GRN LR 10.45am AUB HC Harvest 9.00am MARBURG LR | 8.30am OAK LR 9.00am TMBA LR 9.00am GRN LR 9.30am AUB LR 10.30am MINDEN HC | 10.00am AUB Downs Children's Christmas Program 9.00am LOWOOD LR 7.30pm Carols Evening at Toowoomba |
| Sunday, 28 November | | |
| READINGS: Jeremiah 33:14-16; 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13; Luke 19:28-40 | | |
| HYMNS: 2 10 86 19 TMBA & AUB: 2 562 (tune OLD 124) 563 839 840 219 | | |
| Sunday, 5 December | | |
| READINGS: Malachi 3:1-7b; Philippians 1:2-11; Luke 3:1-20 | | |
| HYMNS: 9 13 6 515 MINDEN: 9 13 256 181 291 508 | | |

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Thursday, 25 November, 10.00am Bible Study at Lowood.

Please take home with you a copy of the latest CoC minutes.

Dates to remember for the Christmas Season:

12 December, 10.00am. Downs Children's Christmas Program at Aubigny.

12 December, 7.30pm. Carols Evening at Toowoomba.

19 December, 7.00pm. Marburg Children's Christmas Program.

25 December: 9.00am Greenwood HC; 9.00am Toowoomba LR; 9.00am Lowood LR