

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

5 December 2021

The 2nd Sunday in Advent

HYMNS: 9 13 256 181 291 508

INTROIT: Shout joyfully to God, all the earth!

Sing the glory of His name! Make His praise glorious!

Say to God: "How awesome are Your deeds! Because of Your great power, Your enemies will pretend to be obedient to You.

All the earth will worship You and sing praise to You. They will sing praise to Your name."

Come and see what God has done! He is awesome in what He has done for the descendants of Adam.

He turned the sea into dry land. They crossed the river on foot. There let us rejoice in Him!

He rules by His power for ever. His eyes observe the nations. Let rebellious people not be haughty!

Bless our God, you peoples, and cause the sound of His praise to be heard!

He is keeping our souls among the living and has not allowed our feet to slide.

For You have tested us, O God. You have refined us as silver is refined.

You have brought us into the net. You have laid hardship on our backs.

You have let men ride over our heads. We have gone through fire and through water. Nevertheless, You have brought us out to abundance.

Psalm 66:1-12

COLLECT: Stir up our hearts, O Lord, to make ready the way of Your only-begotten Son, that by His coming we may be enabled to serve You with pure minds; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

READINGS: Malachi 3:1-7 Who can endure the day of His coming?

Philippians 1:2-11 Pure and without blame until the day of Christ.

Luke 3:1-20 Prepare the way for the LORD.

SERMON: Psalm 23 OUR SHEPHERD IS ALWAYS WITH US

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

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

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

The Federal Government's Religious Discrimination Bill

The Federal Coalition Government has introduced a religious discrimination bill into federal Parliament. What does this mean for us?

As it stands, it is currently okay for anti-Christian activists to vilify the church, but if the church speaks out against homosexuality, genderfluidity, marriage as between male and female only, etc., Christians can get hauled before a government commission.

We need to keep this in mind as Labor and the “modern Liberals” go into overdrive to kill off the Morrison Government's attempt to re-balance freedoms in the wake of the same-sex marriage debate.

The reality is that freedom of religion and freedom of speech have been lost over decades through creeping anti-free speech anti-discrimination laws at state and federal level. It's been death by a thousand cuts, or amendments.

Section 18C of the federal Racial Discrimination Act is the most famous because the Abbott Government had a good go at removing subjective clauses which allow people with hurt feelings to sue.

A severe backlash from woke cultural elites and the mainstream media forced Abbott into retreat and the law was never reformed so free speech could be restored.

Speech inciting violence should obviously be outlawed, but how is “vilification” and “hatred” defined and policed?

Similar 18C-type subjective clauses exist in other state and federal anti-discrimination instruments making freedom of speech and religion a minefield for anyone challenging elite orthodoxy on gender, sexual identity and race.

Tasmania's law is the worst because “offence” is all that's needed for an upset activist to embroil a fellow citizen in years of litigation.

Lyle Shelton, a former councillor of the Toowoomba Region, and also the former managing director of the Australian Christian Lobby, now actively involved in the Christian Democratic Party, was recently forced to attend two compulsory “conciliations” and spend \$70,000 in legal fees because two LGBTIQ+ drag queens lodged a complaint with the Queensland Human Rights Commission alleging vilification and incitement of hatred because Shelton had said they were “dangerous role models for children.”

Both drag queens promoted genderfluid ideology, which has harmful outcomes, and one was an advocate for the pornography industry. Shelton was seeking to protect children by warning their parents about Drag Queen Story Time being given pride of place in council libraries. This warning was apparently seen as “hate speech”.

It is unclear whether the Religious Discrimination will protect people who wish to warn others of the dangers of genderfluid ideology.

However, any concern we have as Christians about drag queens who flout genderfluidity to children and promote the porn trade are not exclusive to religious people. No doubt, “modern Liberals” will be doing all they can to make sure the bill

impacts as little as possible on flawed anti-discrimination law as it is shunted off to a Senate Inquiry for further watering down.

But what's concerning about the debate is the mainstream media's mischaracterisation of what is sought.

According to a headline recently made in *The Australian*, the bill is now about protecting gay children.

The same-sex marriage campaign, which morphed into a well-funded standing political advocacy machine after it won the 2017 plebiscite, has characterised the religious freedoms debate as a crusade to beat up on gays.

Nothing could be further from the truth, but Equality Australia's advertisements are powerful propaganda.

All that is sought by faith organisations is the freedom to preserve and promote their beliefs. Yes, often these beliefs clash with the LGBTIQA+ prescriptions for marriage, family and gender. But why can't we have diversity?

That means being free to employ staff who support the idea of marriage between one man and one woman and the scientific view of gender and to decline employment to those who don't.

Christian people want to be free to preach the Bible's vision of human flourishing, even if it is "controversial" in the way Israel Folau expressed it. But alas, the "modern Liberals" killed the "Folau clause" in the bill.

Will their watering down of the bill to "protect gay kids" mean that Christian schools have to put up with boys taking their boyfriends to the school formal in defiance of the school community's wishes? Does it mean that a year 12 boy identifying as a girl can't be disciplined for entering the girls' toilet at school?

Media reports breathlessly label the bill "controversial". Yet it's the so-called "moderates" who think forcing schools to destroy girls' sport by allowing boys who identify as girls to compete with girls who are the true radicals.

Sadly it seems the Morrison Government's religious discrimination bill will do little more than protect statements of religious beliefs, but will not take away the possibility of an activist feeling "vilified" and therefore able to initiate legal action through a kangaroo commission for so-called equal opportunities.

Institutions may be allowed to retain some freedom in hiring staff but the provisions, as reported so far, look anaemic.

No one expects political parties to employ people who are opposed to their beliefs, yet even under the religious discrimination bill it will be difficult for religious organisations to exercise the same freedom.

Sadly the LGBTIQA+ political activists are well-funded, have the ear of the media and cultural elites and have no intention of allowing plurality to exist. Everyone must bow to their ideology, even within private organisations. RIP freedom of association.

COMING SERVICES

12 December 3 Advent	19 December 4 Advent	25 December Christmas Day
10.00am AUB Downs Children's Christmas Program 9.00am LOWOOD LR 7.30pm Carols Evening at Toowoomba	8.30am OAK LR 9.00am TMBA HC 9.00am GRN LR 10.45am AUB HC 7.00pm MARBURG Children's Christmas Program	9.00am TMBA LR 9.00am GRN HC 9.00am LOWOOD LR
Sunday, 12 December		
READINGS: Zephaniah 3:14-20; Philippians 4:4-7; Luke 7:18-35		
HYMNS: 11 1 4 623		
Sunday, 19 December		
READINGS: Micah 5:2-5a; Hebrews 10:5-10; Luke 1:39-56		
HYMNS: 7 21 17 (327 282) 452		

ANNOUNCEMENTS

12 December, 10.00am. We shall be holding our Downs Children's Christmas Service at Aubigny. Following the service will be a shared lunch. Could each family please provide a shared lunch and/or dessert?

12 December. After the Children's Service, pastor would like to meet with the chairmen of each congregation for a quick meeting to submit and discuss the service schedule for the next 12 months.

12 December. A cup of tea and light supper will be offered after the carols evening. Could each family please provide some biscuits etc?

The Lighting of the Second Advent Candle:

R: Today we light the candle for the second Sunday in Advent. This is the candle of PEACE.

As we prepare for the coming of Jesus, we remember that Jesus is our hope and our peace. Isaiah 6:9 says: *For a Child will be born for us. A Son will be given to us. The government will be on His shoulder, and His name will be called: "Wonderful Counsellor," "Mighty God," "Everlasting Father," "Prince of Peace",* and John 14:27 says, *"Peace I am leaving with you. A peace that is My own I am giving to you. I am not giving it to you as the world gives it. Let not your hearts be troubled or afraid!"*

Let us pray: **Gracious God, Grant that we may find peace as we prepare for our Lord's birth. May divisions in ourselves and in our families be peacefully resolved. May there be peace in our cities and in the countries of our world. Help us to see the paths of peace in our lives, and then give to us courage to follow them. Lord, let us remember that You only are the giver of lasting peace and that You are always with us. Amen.**