

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

23 January 2022

The 3rd Sunday after the Epiphany of our Lord

HYMNS: 4 217 100 267

INTROIT: The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament displays what His hands have made.

One day pours out information to the next, and one night announces knowledge to the next.

There is no talking, there are no words, and their voices are not audible. Their measuring line has gone out into all the earth, and their messages to the end of the world. He has set a tent in them for the sun, and it comes out of its bridal-chamber like a bridegroom. Like a champion, it rejoices to run its course.

It rises from one end of the heavens, its turning point is at their edges, and nothing is hidden from its heat.

The Law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul. The Reminder of the LORD is reliable, making the simple person wise.

The Directions of the LORD are correct, making the heart rejoice. The Commandment of the LORD is pure, giving light to the eyes.

The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever. The Decisions of the LORD are true and altogether righteous.

They are more desirable than gold, even much pure gold. Moreover, they are sweeter than honey, than honey from honeycomb.

Your servant is also warned by them. There is great reward in keeping them. Who understands his errors? Declare me exempt from hidden faults.

Restrain Your servant also from presumptuous sins. Let them not have control over me. Then I shall be blameless, and I shall be innocent of great rebellion.

May the words from my mouth and the thinking of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my Rock, and my Redeemer.

COLLECT: Almighty and everlasting God, mercifully look upon our infirmities and stretch forth the hand of Your majesty to heal and defend us; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

READINGS:

Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10 Ezra reads the Law to the returned exiles.

1 Corinthians 12:12-31a We have been given to drink of that one Spirit.

Luke 4:16-30 In the power of the Spirit Jesus went back to Galilee.

SERMON: ONE BODY, MANY MEMBERS

Be Still and Know.... What?

There is a thin veil of spirituality cast over our land. We see it on bumper stickers, t-shirts, bible covers, and memes all over social media.

One such text is the passage, “*Be still, and know that I am God,*” Psalm 46:10a (ESV).

When you see this passage, it’s usually covered with flowers and butterflies. It’s meant to instil peace and a sense of wellbeing. It’s used in inspirational calendars. Sometimes we’ll see this passage used for a month at a time, but pondering what?

Using the verse of Psalm 46 this way comes to us from the movement founded by Mary Baker Eddy. It’s one of a short list of passages cited as their central teaching. The teaching is an expression of peace, found in pursuing the father-mother god in the Christian Scientist Church.

The Christian Scientist Church is a non-trinitarian, christian-ish heretical sect founded in the 1870s in Boston, MA by Ms. Eddy. They are part of a group of metaphysical Christian offshoots centring on the “divine mind” and the unreality and/or escape-ability of the physical world.

There is nothing new under creation. These ideas have been with mankind since the beginning. One more notable case is that of the gnostic heresy of the earliest centuries of Christianity. The Gnostics also viewed the physical world as an evil to escape. They shared the same the notion of divinity as an essence we aspire to join.

Our creeds all speak of God in substance and personhood, in direct opposition to these ideas.

The metaphysics intend for us to hear those words, “*be still, and know,*” and find a new understanding and a new revelation within our own minds and the stillness thereof. This does not fit the context of Psalm 46 very well at all.

Psalm 46 is the scriptural basis of Martin Luther’s reformation battle hymn, “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God.” Not surprisingly, the Psalm is rich with imagery relating to battle and warfare. There is a stillness, but not an internal one. We look to God for peace and protection. In the midst of all we are about to hear, He is our Fortress.

“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling” (Psalm 46:1-3).

The presence of God here is immediate, not distant. He is not a God who can, may, or will be our refuge. He is. That's the same answer He gave to Moses from the burning bush, "*I am has sent Me to you.*" Jesus says the same, "*before Abraham was, I am*" (Gen 3:14; John 8:58).

The roaring of the seas and the destruction of the mountains are the image of uncreation. The disorder that rises out of the good order of creation after the fall into sin is that raging. All creation groans for redemption.

"There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God will help her when morning dawns. The nations rage, the kingdoms totter; he utters his voice, the earth melts. The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress" (Psalm 46:4-7).

The seas are an image of disorder and sin. The river is an image of new life, forgiveness, and new creation. In the prophets and in the Revelation of Saint John, the river flowing into, through, and from the city of God is the source of restoration. The peace and restoration isn't cowardly though. She cannot be moved. She, the city, is resolute. The Lord is with her.

The Lord of Hosts, Lord God of Sabaoth, Lord of battle-tested armies, this is not a weak, peaceable image of our God. He, who commands the armies of victorious angels, that Lord of host is with us, our fortress.

"Come, behold the works of the LORD, how he has brought desolations on the earth. He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; he breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the chariots with fire. 'Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations! I will be exalted in the earth!'" (Psalm 46:8-10).

The enemies of the Lord: sin, death, and the devil are defeated and bound for destruction. That battle is already won. But yet the complete destruction of our old evil foe awaits Him and his minions. Beyond victory, the Lord will break and destroy even the implements of that warfare. With your weapons broken, shattered, and burning before you, now be still before the Lord.

Primarily an accusation to the vanquished: be still. Those who would not cease in speaking against the Lord: be still. Those who accuse the children of God: be still. Those who serve the adversary: be still and know that I am God. I shall be exalted in the earth! Let all mortal flesh keep silence.

Why?

Because "*The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress*" (Psalm 46:11).

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.

COMING SERVICES

30 January	6 February	13 February
8.30am OAK LR 9.00am TMBA HC 9.00am GRN LR 10.45am AUB HC 9.00am LOWOOD LR	8.30am OAK LR 9.00am TMBA LR 9.00am GRN LR 9.30am AUB LR 9.00am MARBURG HC	9.30am OAK HC followed by Bible Study 9.00am TMBA LR 9.00am LOWOOD LR
Sunday, 30 January		
READINGS: Jeremiah 1:4-19; 1 Corinthians 12:31b-13:13; Luke 4:31-44		
HYMNS: 377 239 354 (71 292) 822		
Sunday, 6 February		
READINGS: Isaiah 6:1-13; 1 Corinthians 14:12b-20; Luke 5:1-11		
HYMNS: 501 336 120 (852 71) 642		

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Wednesday, 2 February, 10.00am. Women's Guild at the Toowoomba church. Opening devotion: Margaret. Choose a Bible verse from Exodus Chapter 1. Item: Transport related.

Tuesday, 8 February, 7.30pm. Men's Fellowship at Oakey.