

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

6 February 2022

The 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday after the Epiphany of our Lord

**HYMNS:** 501 336 120 642

**INTROIT:** I shall praise You with all my heart; I shall sing praise to You in front of the false gods.

I shall worship toward Your holy temple, and I shall praise Your name, because of Your mercy and because of Your truth. For You have made Your Word great, greater than Your entire name.

In the day when I called You answered me. You made me bold by strengthening my soul.

All the kings of the earth will praise You, O LORD, because they have heard the Words of Your mouth.

May they sing about the Ways of the LORD; for the glory of the LORD is great.

For, though the LORD is on high, He looks upon the lowly. Yet, He knows the haughty person from a distance.

Though I walk in the midst of trouble, You will keep me alive. You will stretch out Your hand against the anger of my enemies, and Your right hand will save me.

The LORD will take vengeance to protect me. Your mercy, O LORD, endures for ever. Do not forsake the works of Your hands. Psalm 138

**COLLECT:** O Lord, keep Your family, the Church, continually in the true faith, that, relying on the hope of Your heavenly grace, we may ever be defended by Your mighty power; 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:** Isaiah 6:1-13 Here I am: send me!

1 Corinthians 15:1-11 The witnesses of the risen Jesus'

Luke 5:1-11 From now on you will catch people.

**SERMON:** 1 Corinthians 14:12-20 BEING BUILT UP AS GOD'S PEOPLE

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

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

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

## **Taking up the Cause of the Family<sup>1</sup>**

For a long time, the presumption has been that the pressures and stresses upon marriage and the family were largely economic. Whether from the left or the right of politics, the solution proposed has been to offer financial incentives to marry and have children. This comes in the form of government helping with the costs of childcare or tax breaks and so on. While all these things may help, none of them will rescue either marriage or the family. It is not primarily dollars and cents that are reasons why fewer are marrying and even fewer having children (or more than one child), it is a clash of cultures, values, and desires that is at the centre of this vexing issue for church and state. It is not that people find marriage and family financially daunting (which they certainly may be) but that we live in a culture in which neither marriage nor family are highly valued or honoured as the basic shape of life in our society. There is no secret to fact that some churches have been very visible in their support of alternatives to marriage and family and thus reflect these same dangerous thoughts with a religious stamp of approval.

The first problem is marriage itself. Our culture has emphasised the individual to the detriment of nearly every form of relationship - from spousal to friendship - leaving us not only increasingly isolated but unwilling to venture out beyond the screen for personal contact. Men are stigmatised as having a toxic masculinity and women who marry are stigmatised as being oppressed or even enslaved by men or by the very institution of marriage. We have not only redefined marriage and who may be married but we have made marriage unattractive and incompatible with the modern ideals for personhood, independence, and individualism.

The next issue is children. Children are a big reason for marriage and if children are no longer on the radar of people considering marriage, it is harder to make the case for marriage. Children have come to be seen as necessary evils in our modern culture. We idealise youth but not childhood. We leave the rearing of children to day-care centres and tend to the essential family needs while trying to keep a balance in which we have time for ourselves. Watch the home shows on TV and you will hear people insist that

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<sup>1</sup> Reworking of an article written by Rev. Larry A. Peters,  
[pastoralmeanderings.blogspot.com](http://pastoralmeanderings.blogspot.com)

the must-haves are a home office for husband and wife, plenty of recreational space, informal space, and a spa-like master bath in a bedroom no longer just for sleeping. What you often do not hear is the desire for family space or space for children.

Until we are willing to see children as essential to the shape of the marriage and family life, it will be hard for financial incentives to entice unwilling people to have a child or more than one. What must happen is nothing less than the restoration of marriage and family as the most honoured of estates and essential to the hopes, dreams, and desires of the individual as well as the society as a whole. Here the Church has something to offer. Instead of trying to pander to those who turn up their noses at these traditional institutions created and ordered by God, we need to preach and teach marriage and the family more urgently and more eloquently. It is a false choice to say that our only option for avoiding irrelevance is to embrace same sex marriage, friends with benefits, domestic partnerships, cohabitation, and the ever-burgeoning array of sexual identities. In fact, this is exactly what will kill marriage and the family and the Church.

If we look into the Sunday school rooms of the average congregation and wonder where the children are, or the pews and wonder where the families are, we have no one but ourselves to blame. We thought the government could shore up the weak foundations of these vaunted institutions so essential to both church and state and failed to catechise the children generations ago into the order God established for our human lives and society AND for the Church. That failure is now unmistakable. We were so preoccupied with talking to our kids about condoms and drugs that we forgot to instil in them a positive view of marriage and the family. We were so busy telling them how bad homosexuality and gender fluidity were that we forgot to tell them how holy, godly, good, right, and salutary marriage and family are. All the money in the world from the government will not restore the tattered image we have left to our children of that which reflects God's highest good - husband, wife, parent, and child.

## COMING SERVICES

13 February 6 Epiphany	20 February 7 Epiphany	27 February The Transfiguration
9.30am OAK HC followed by Bible Study 9.00am TMBA LR 9.00am LOWOOD LR	8.30am OAK LR 9.00am TMBA HC followed by Bible Study 9.00am GRN LR 9.30am AUB LR	8.30am OAK LR 9.00am TMBA LR 9.00am GRN LR 9.30am AUB LR 9.00am LOWOOD HC
<b>Sunday, 13 February</b>		
READINGS: Jeremiah 17:5-8; 1 Corinthians 15:1-20; Luke 6:17-26		
HYMNS: 461 306 102 (315 283) 571		
<b>Sunday, 20 February</b>		
READINGS: Genesis 45:3-15; 1 Corinthians 15:21-26, 30-42; Luke 6:27-38		
HYMNS: 42 431 479 (847) 339		

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

LOWOOD: Thursday, 24 February, 10.00am. Bible Study.

Annual General Meeting dates so far:

Parish Executive:

Parish AGM:

Trinity Oakey:

St Paul's Greenwood: Sunday, February 13, 7.30pm.

Bethlehem Toowoomba: Sunday, February 20, after Bible Study.

St John's Aubigny: Sunday, 6 February, 7.30pm.

Our Saviour Lowood: Sunday, 27 February after service (tentative date)

Trinity Marburg: