

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

17 July 2022

Mission Day

HYMNS: 224 219 230 333 56 239

INTROIT:

Sing to the LORD a new song! Sing to the LORD, all the earth!

Sing to the LORD! Bless His name! Proclaim His salvation from day to day!

Declare His glory among the nations, His marvellous deeds among all the peoples!

For the LORD is great and very worthy of praise. He should be feared above all gods.

For all the gods of the peoples are idols, but the LORD has made the heavens.

Splendour and majesty are before Him. Strength and beauty are in His sanctuary.

Ascribe to the LORD, families of the peoples, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength!

Ascribe to the LORD the glory due to His name! Present an offering and come into His courts!

Worship the LORD in holy splendour! Tremble before Him, all the earth!

Say among the nations: "The LORD reigns. The world also is firmly established. It will not be moved. He will judge the peoples justly!"

Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice! Let the sea, and all that fills it roar!

Let the fields and everything in them be jubilant! Then all the trees of the forest will shout with joy before the LORD.

For He is coming, for He is coming to judge the earth. He will judge the world with righteousness and the peoples with His truth. Psalm 96

COLLECT: Almighty God, in Your kindness You cause the light of the Gospel to shine among us. By the working of Your Holy Spirit, help us to share the good news of Your salvation, that all who hear it may rejoice in the gift of Your unending love; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

READINGS: Isaiah 62:1-7 The glory of God's people.

Romans 10:11-17 Faith comes through preaching Christ.

Luke 24:44-53 Our task is preaching repentance and forgiveness.

Isaiah 62:1-7

¹ For Zion's sake I shall not keep silent and for Jerusalem's sake I shall not remain quiet until her righteousness goes forth like a bright light and her salvation burns brightly like a torch. ² The nations will see your righteousness, and all the kings your glory. You will be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD will designate. ³ Then you will be a splendid crown in the hand of the LORD and a royal headband in the palm of your God. ⁴ You will not be called "Deserted" any longer, and your land will not be called "Desolation" any longer but you will be named "Hephzibah," and your land will be named "Beulah." For the LORD delights in you, and your land will be married. ⁵ For, as a young man marries a maiden, so your sons will marry you, and your God will rejoice over you as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride.

⁶ "I have stationed watchmen on your walls, Jerusalem. They will never be silent by day or by night."

You who profess the LORD, do not take any rest! ⁷ Do not give Him any rest until He establishes Jerusalem and makes it something that is praised in the earth!

Romans 10:11-17

¹¹ For the Scripture says, “The person who believes in Him will not be put to shame.” ¹² For there is no difference between Jew and Greek. For the same Lord is over them all and gives His riches to all who call on Him. ¹³ For “Whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” ¹⁴ How then are they to call on Him in whom they have not believed? Moreover, how are they to believe in Him of whom they have not heard? How are they to hear without a preacher? ¹⁵ How are they to preach unless they are sent? As Scripture has said: “How beautiful are the feet of those who tell good things as Good News!” ¹⁶ However, they have not all obeyed the Good News. For Isaiah asks: “Lord, who has believed our message?” ¹⁷ Therefore, faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the Word of Christ.

Luke 24:44-53

⁴⁴ He told them, “These are the very words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, namely, that everything written about Me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.”

⁴⁵ Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures. ⁴⁶ He told them, “This is what Scripture has said: ‘The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷ and, based on His name, repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.’ ⁴⁸ You will testify to these things.

⁴⁹ “I am sending you what My Father has promised. Wait here in the city until you are armed with power from above!”

⁵⁰ He led them out to where Bethany lay ahead of them. Then He raised His hands and blessed them. ⁵¹ While He was blessing them, He left them and was taken up to heaven.

⁵² They knelt in worship of Him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. ⁵³ They stayed continually at the Temple, praising God.

JESUS OPENED THEIR MINDS

Sermon for the 6th Sunday after Pentecost (Sermon for Mission Day) 2022

Luke 24:44-53

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is Luke 24:44–53: **He told them, “These are the very words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, namely, that everything written about Me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.”**

⁴⁵ Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures. ⁴⁶ He told them, “This is what Scripture has said: ‘The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷ and, based on His name, repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.’ ⁴⁸ You will testify to these things.

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⁵² They knelt in worship of Him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. ⁵³ They stayed continually at the Temple, praising God.

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth, Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

As evening came on that first Easter Sunday, among all the dizziness of recent events, the eleven apostles and other followers of Jesus, men and women, were becoming a little more convinced that the grave was empty because Jesus had indeed risen. But they had little understanding as to just what that meant because people in those days generally believed that the souls of the dead were able to roam the earth. There was a great fear of ghosts. However, it was unthinkable that a dead person could make bodily appearances.

Yet that is exactly what Jesus did: with His glorified body, He had appeared to Mary Magdalene, to Peter, to the Emmaus disciples, and others. Now He appeared again to the group that had assembled. His greeting was the familiar “*Peace be with you.*” It was a word they all needed to hear, for they were understandably still filled with fear. However, when Jesus appeared to His disciples on this occasion, He did not simply show Himself to be a living person, but “**He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.**” Today we do not have the privilege of seeing the body of our risen Lord face-to-face, but we do have the Old and New Testament Scriptures, which bear witness to Him. These are sufficient for our faith and our witness.

With the disciples gathered, Jesus summarised His teaching. “**He told them, “This is what Scripture has said: ‘The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day,⁴⁷ and, based on His name, repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.’⁴⁸ You will testify to these things.**” Jesus was going to soon depart and leave the great work of mission to them; however, they would not be alone in this work - they would be “**armed with power from above,**” namely, the Holy Spirit, whose power would make their witness *effective*. Jesus had taught them, and now they were to teach others and bring them into the kingdom of God - a realm of righteousness, peace, and joy.

Jesus **“opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.”** The word *open* occurs twice in the New Testament in a literal sense. One is in Mark 7:34, where Jesus put His fingers into the deaf man’s ears and said, “*Be opened,*” and they were opened. The other is in Luke 2:23, where it says, “*Every male who first opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord.*” In our text for today, the word is used in the figurative sense: “to open the mind,” but the action is the same. When Jesus explains the Scriptures, He creates faith inside His hearers. Like the ear, something goes in - the Word of God, and like the womb, something comes out - the new birth. Those who believe are born again, saved, and filled with the Holy Spirit.

As Jesus taught the disciples, the Word was becoming clear to them. Now they understood how the horrible sentencing and execution of Jesus had taken away all their sins - *ours too*. His astonishing resurrection was a public acquittal for Jesus - also for them and for us. Now they were born again, as we are, when God impregnates us, as it were, through the ear by His Word of truth. Jesus opened their minds by teaching them His Word, organised under three heads: **the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.**

Let’s look at each of these.

The **Law of Moses** teaches us about Jesus.

Think of the Passover and how Christ is our Passover. On the eve of the exodus¹, every man was to take a lamb without blemish, kill it for his household, and put the blood on the doorpost, against the visitation of the angel of death, and then eat its flesh. This is fulfilled in Christ. He is the Lamb of God, sinless and holy, who has been sacrificed on the cross for our sins. His blood cleanses us from all sin. When the angel of death comes, he sees the blood and passes us by.

¹ Exodus 12

There is a missionary aspect to all this. At the time of Moses and the Israelites, a provision was made for Gentiles to become members of the house of Israel. Exodus 12:48 says, “*When a foreigner is living with you and wants to celebrate the Passover of the LORD, all his males shall be circumcised! Then he may approach to celebrate it and shall be like any citizen who has full rights in the land!*” (Exodus 12:48). If a foreigner living among the Israelites wished to keep the Passover, he was first to be spiritually incorporated into the nation through circumcision.

Today, people become children of God not through circumcision, as Paul writes in Galatians 5 that “*in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything*” (v. 6), but through Holy Baptism. Today, God establishes a covenant with us through baptism, receiving us into the fellowship of His family. Again, as the Passover strengthened fellowship with the Lord, so today the Lord’s Supper strengthens our fellowship. They are not the same, of course. In their respective dispensations, however, there are strong similarities. The risen and ascended Christ gives us His true body and blood to eat and to drink - a sacrament that gives us the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation.

Not only Moses but also the **Prophets** teach us about Jesus.

Isaiah shows us a Suffering Servant who was “wounded, struck down by God and afflicted... He was pierced for our rebellious acts. He was bruised for our wrongdoings. The chastisement that brought us peace was on Him, and through His wounds we have been healed. ⁶ We have all gone astray, like sheep” (Isaiah 53:4-6). We are all sinners, but Jesus was brought like a lamb to the slaughter, and in His sinless death, God gives us the free gift of everlasting life. There is a missionary aspect here, too, for Isaiah also writes how this Suffering Servant “will sprinkle many nations” (Isaiah 52:15) with His atoning blood and will bring the Gentiles into the kingdom of God.

Not only Moses and the Prophets but also the Psalms teach us about Jesus.

Take, for example, a Psalm that we all know and love, Psalm 23. There, David sings, “*The LORD is my Shepherd, I shall not want*” (v. 1). Jesus is the Good Shepherd who leads and feeds His own. He knows each one of us by name. He has laid down His life for us. He has a firm grip on us and will never let us go. There is a missionary aspect here, too, for when Jesus says to His disciples, “*I also have other sheep, which are not in this fold*” (John 10:16), He means to say that the Gentiles, too, will be saved, and not Jews alone.

So we see that Moses and the Prophets and the **Psalms** *all speak of Jesus*. They all agree in saying that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day for us, that we might live forever in His kingdom. There can be no doubt whatsoever that the resurrection of Christ validates His Word.

Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms all agree that “**repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.**” Had God not made this provision, we would be lost.

Jesus made this clear to His disciples. He told them that they would “**testify to these things.**” They were to be His witnesses in Jerusalem and Judea and Samaria and the uttermost parts of the earth.² They were to stay in Jerusalem until they received the promised Holy Spirit. Then, gifted with power, they would preach Jesus to the Jews and also to the Gentiles *because Jesus is for everybody.*

Dear friends, the same Holy Spirit that God sent to the disciples has been given to us. The same message of salvation that Christ had given to the disciples has been given to us. The same mission that Jesus charged His disciples to fulfil has now come down to us. They were His witnesses, and now, we are to be His witnesses. They testified to what they had seen and heard, and so do we. *We are to proclaim the same things that Scripture says.*

² Acts 1:8

Jesus **“led them out to where Bethany lay ahead of them. Then He raised His hands and blessed them. ⁵¹ While He was blessing them, He left them and was taken up to heaven.”**

As a divine High Priest in the tabernacle and by the liturgy of heaven, Jesus presented His own blood to God the Father for the atonement of the sins of the whole world, as it is written: *“not through the blood of goats and calves but through His own blood He entered once for all into the Most Holy Place, when He obtained eternal redemption”* (Hebrews 9:12). Then He sat down at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty. Now King of kings and Lord of lords, He rules and reigns over all things in heaven and on earth. He directs the course of human events; He raises up one ruler and sets down another. Under His direction, civilisations rise and fall, nations come and go, but still, the Gospel spreads. Still, men heed the call into the ministry. They preach the Word. Congregations form. People believe. Even Gentiles come to faith. The mission is fulfilled.

The mission is fulfilled because of God’s promise, not our own efforts. His promise is sure, as Isaiah writes, “For, as the rain and the snow come down from the sky and do not go back there without watering the earth and causing it to bring forth and to sprout, so that it gives seed to the sower and bread to the eater, ¹¹ so My Word will be, which goes out of My mouth. It will not return to Me without results but will accomplish what I desire and be successful in what I have sent it to do” (Isaiah 55:10-11). Sometimes the harvest is great, sometimes the harvest is small, but always there is a harvest. Sometimes the Church grows rapidly, while other times it is hard-pressed and persecuted. Yet Christ’s promise is always sure; His Word is always fruitful.

And so, with this mission and this promise, the disciples **“knelt in worship of Him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. ⁵³ They stayed continually at the Temple, praising God.”** That is, they participated in the formal liturgical worship of their church. Why? Because they knew that worship was not a matter of indifference that could be altered at will. Their liturgy on earth reflected the liturgy of heaven. The temple, with its

sacrifices, showed them what the ascended Christ was doing in heaven. That's why we worship the way we do. That is why we find ourselves in God's house, feeding on Him and growing in our love for Him and each other.

As the resurrection validates the Word of Christ, the ascension validates, forms, and determines the worship of Christ. Neither one is a matter of indifference that can be changed to suit the times. And both work together, as it says in the Augsburg Confession: "*The chief purpose of all ceremonies is to teach the people what they need to know about Christ*" (AC XXIV 3).

When the Holy Spirit came, the disciples began to preach. What Jesus had told them, they now told others. They declared the full counsel of God, centred in Christ's atoning death and resurrection, and the proclamation of justification by grace through faith. They did not add to the Word or take away. Their message and their worship pointed to God, not man. Their substance and style were consistent. Their word was Christ's Word. Their worship was like the worship of the heavens, *with angels and archangels and all the company of heaven*.

As the disciples preached and the Church grew, a new birth of civilisation came to pass - a Christian civilisation with laws and arts and education all influenced by the Christian faith. Though beset by heretics and persecuted by governments, the Church brought forth astonishingly beautiful cultures, the Byzantine in the East, the Medieval in the West. But as time went on, these Christian civilisations came to an end. The Byzantine world was overrun by the Muslims while the Middle Ages gave way to a secular Europe.

Well, now the wheel has turned again, and we find ourselves living in a changing world. The old Australia, perhaps the one you remember growing up in, with its freedoms and so on, is no longer. It used to be that the only thing open on a Sunday morning were the churches in the district! Shops were closed and almost everyone attended church. Even those that did not attend church still had respect for those that did. Now it's all changed. There is a considerable

decline in attendance. Atheism is on the rise while faithful churches are stagnant or declining, and more in the world are showing hostility to real Christianity. Today, too, many churches have been infiltrated with false teaching, even going so far as to teach that Christ is not the only way to eternal life! We are reminded of the words of Jesus, who says, “*When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?*” (Luke 18:8).

In the face of these challenges, some say we should change our message, making it more relevant to people’s “felt needs.” Others say we should change our worship, making it more entertaining to attract large crowds.

To all this, we must say no. Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms say no. Jesus says no. The apostles say no. The mission of Christ’s Church is the same yesterday, today, and forever. We don’t need gimmicks. We have the Word of God. We have the Holy Sacraments. Through these, as through means, we have the Holy Spirit. We have the promise of God that the means of grace will bear fruit, sometimes in a greater harvest, sometimes less, as God wills.

So, we let these things suffice - the things of God - to fulfil the mission. For above all else, we have a risen, glorified, ascended, ruling, and soon-to-return Lord Jesus Christ, whose words of promise ring down the ages in good times and in bad, namely, “*I shall build My church, and the gates of Hades will not overpower it*” (Matthew 16:18). To Him be all glory and honour and praise. Amen.

The peace of God which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

PRAYER FOR MISSION FESTIVAL

Loving God and Father, we praise You for Your great mercy in looking on the sin and misery of a fallen world and giving Your only Son Jesus Christ as the Saviour of all people. We thank You especially that You have called us into the kingdom of grace, and brought us to know the truth. We rejoice that by faith in Your Son we have forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation, and we are members of Your eternal family, the Church.

Have mercy, O Lord, on the millions of our fellowmen still living in darkness and under sentence of eternal death. Since You have commanded Your Church to testify to Jesus' fulfilment of the Old Testament, that the Messiah had to suffer and rise from the dead, give us and all Your children increased love and zeal for the task of spreading the message of forgiveness in Jesus' name throughout the world. Fill us with Christ-like compassion for all who are helpless and hopeless, outside Your kingdom. Teach us to love them not merely in words, but in deeds of true service. Make us willing to give both of ourselves and of the blessings You have poured on us. Do not let us grow weary in well-doing, but enable us to work while it is still day, before the night comes when all work must cease. Give us the courage to speak on the basis of Jesus' resurrection as the apostles did.

O Lord, truly the harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few. Send out labourers into Your harvest, and uphold all those whom You have sent. Open new doors for the spreading of the Gospel, and give success to all earnest efforts to share it with others. Pour out Your Spirit so that many may acknowledge the joyful message of life in Christ.

Bless the work of our Church. We especially commend to You this day our congregations' outreach in the community, and our ministry of welfare love and concern. If it is Your gracious will, do not take this work from us, but give us the courage and strength we need to fulfil Your mission purposes.

We commit ourselves and all our fellowmen to Your fatherly care and mercy. Be gracious to us in every need, and do not withdraw Your saving love from us.

Direct us by Your Spirit that we may daily grow in grace, until we finally come to perfect happiness and full redemption in Your eternal kingdom of heaven, and with all Your chosen people praise Your name for evermore. Hear us because of Your limitless love in Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

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.**

Article: THE HEART OF MISSION WORK

This desire to go tell others about Jesus is the result of the Holy Spirit's work in each believer, and it is at the heart of the Church's mission.

The basis for Christian mission to the world, then, is the universal dimension of the Gospel. By that we mean the reality that the work of Christ was effective for all people, everywhere. This is seen most explicitly in the "Gospel in a nutshell," John 3:16: "*For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son...*" we believe that we can tell anyone, no matter how serious his or her fault or errors, that "Christ has died and risen for you."

The goal of mission from a Lutheran perspective is expressed in the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13), taught by Jesus Himself, who said one should pray, "*Thy kingdom come.*" When we pray that petition of the Lord's Prayer, we are asking that God's kingdom would come not only to us, but that the Gospel would be preached to all the world so that others who do not know of the depth of God's love for them may hear that news and trust in Christ.

The source of Christian mission, however, is to be found in God Himself; therefore, when we speak of missions, we often use the term *Missio Dei* because it points to the primary source of Christian mission: it is the mission of God. But God carries out His mission through the men and women who make up the Church. For example, God sent the reluctant disciple Ananias to Saul of Tarsus, informing him that Saul (later known as Paul) was going to be His (God's) "*chosen instrument*" whom He would send to carry His name "*before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel*" (Acts 9:15). "*You Will Be My Witnesses*"

A useful paradigm for how Lutherans understand mission today is the outline that Christ Himself gave to the disciples: "*You will be My witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth*" (Acts 1:8). Like a ripple from a stone that is cast into a pond, the Gospel message travels outward in ever-expanding concentric circles. Today, this means that Lutherans recognise that mission begins locally, with individual Christians speaking the Gospel to those around them, especially their friends and neighbours. "*Judea and Samaria*" today means that Lutherans recognise that

there are people who, while they may live nearby geographically, are still distant culturally or linguistically.

“To the end of the earth” is what happens when Lutherans become a part of mission work around the world. Some larger Lutheran congregations even commission, send, and support missionaries to go to *“all nations”* (Matthew 28:19). Some of those missionaries are ordained ministers who proclaim the Gospel and help to establish worshipping communities. Their evangelistic work is often carried out together with others, such as doctors, dentists, and nurses who are involved in medical work; agronomists who work in agricultural development; and linguists who specialise in translating the Bible into one of the thousands of living languages that do not yet have the Word of God in their language.

Because they affirm, as the apostle Paul did, *“we also believe, and so we speak”* (2 Corinthians 4:13), Lutheran churches from around the world send continue to send their emissaries to locations near and far to announce the Good News of God’s love to a world that is in need of hope and life, to establish new congregations, and to train clergy from the local membership.

While sending off missionaries to other countries may be beyond our ability, nevertheless, we can proclaim the Gospel in our own backyard. There are many in our country who are yet to hear the Good News that Christ has died and risen for them, or who let their faith cool.

Let us continue to be the missionaries God wishes us to be! Let us continue in our work of pointing people to Jesus who is the Saviour of the world!

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

**PLEASE ALWAYS CHECK YOUR BULLETINS FOR ANY LATE CHANGES –
THEY CAN HAPPEN!!!**

| 24 July 7 Pentecost | 31 July 8 Pentecost | 7 August 9 Pentecost |
|---|--|---|
| 8.30am OAK HC 9.00am TMBA LR 9.30am AUB LR 10.15am GRN HC 9.00am MARBURG LR | 8.30am OAK LR 9.00am TMBA HC 9.30am GRN LR 10.45am AUB HC 9.00am LOWOOD LR | 8.30am OAK LR 9.00am TMBA LR 9.30am GRN LR 9.30am AUB LR 9.00am MARBURG HC & Bible Study |
| Sunday, 24 July | | |
| READINGS: Genesis 18:17-33; Colossians 2:6-19; Luke 11:1-13 | | |
| HYMNS: 420 421 v:1-4 421 v:5-9 (352 839) 426 | | |
| Sunday, 31 July | | |
| READINGS: Ecclesiastes 1:2, 12-14; 2:18-26; Colossians 3:1-11; Luke 12:13-21 | | |
| HYMNS: 520 388 384 (847 286) 459 | | |

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Tuesday, 19 July, 7.30pm. Men's Fellowship at Oakey. Opening devotion: John.

Saturday, 30 July, 10.00am. COC/Sem meeting at Marburg. Please ensure there is representation from all congregations – these meetings are important.

Pastor is preparing to start the next confirmation class, beginning early August. If any parents have children of confirmation age, please contact him so he can get the class organised.

Pastor would like for readers in our bookclub to begin meeting. For those reading, can you please see me with suitable days and times that would suit, so we can set a time and place?

BIBLE STUDIES for JULY:

Greenwood. Friday, 22, 7.30pm.

Mar/Lowood. Thursday, 28, 10.00am at Marburg.

Aub/Oak. Friday, 29, 7.30pm at Aubigny.

FUTURE AELC SERVICE DATES:

September 4 at Greenwood.

October 30 at Toowoomba.