

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

6 November 2022

All Saints' Day

HYMNS: 501 213 392 497

INTROIT:

Praise the LORD! Sing to the LORD a new song, and His praise in the assembly of devout people!

Let Israel rejoice in their Maker! Let the children of Zion be joyful over their King!

Let them praise His name with dancing! Let them make music to Him with tambourine and harp!

For the LORD takes pleasure in His people. He will glorify humble people with salvation.

Let devout people triumph in glory! Let them shout for joy on their beds!

Let the high praises of God be in their throats, and double-edged swords in their hands, to carry out vengeance on the nations, and punishments on the peoples, to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles' feet with iron chains; to carry out the judgment that has been written against them! This is an honour that belongs to all His devout people. Praise the LORD! Psalm 149

COLLECT: Almighty and everlasting God, You knit together Your faithful people of all times and places into one holy communion, the mystical body of Your Son, Jesus Christ. Grant us so to follow Your blessed saints in all virtuous and godly living that, together with them, we may come to the unspeakable joys that You have prepared for those who love You; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

READINGS:

Revelation 7:2-17 Multitudes before the throne of God and of the Lamb.

1 John 3:1-3 The children of God.

Matthew 5:1-12 Rejoice, for you have a great reward in heaven.

Welcome to all worshipping with us today!

Pastor Peter Ziebell, Phone 0407583922.

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

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

Revelation 7:2-17

² Then I saw another angel coming up from the east with the seal of the living God. He called out with a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to damage the land and the sea, ³ saying: “Do not damage the land or the sea or the trees until we have **sealed** the servants of our **God on their foreheads!**”

⁴ Then I heard the number of those who had been sealed: “one hundred and forty-four thousand.” These were those who had been sealed were from every tribe of the people of Israel. ⁵ From the tribe of Judah twelve thousand had been sealed, from the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand, from the tribe of Gad twelve thousand, ⁶ from the tribe of Asher twelve thousand, from the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand, from the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand, ⁷ from the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand, from the tribe of Levi twelve thousand, from the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand, ⁸ from the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand, from the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand and from the tribe of Benjamin twelve thousand had been sealed. ⁹ After this, I looked and saw a large crowd that no one could count, from every **nation and all tribes, peoples and languages**, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, wearing white robes and carrying palm-branches in their hands. ¹⁰ They called out with a loud voice, saying, “Salvation belongs to our **God, who sits on the throne** and to the Lamb!”

¹¹ All the angels were standing around the throne, around the elders and around the four living creatures. They **fell** on their faces before the throne and **worshipped God**, ¹² saying: “Amen! Blessing, glory, wisdom, thanksgiving, honour, power and strength be to our God for ever and ever! Amen.”

¹³ Then one of the elders asked me: “Who are these people who have been clothed in the white robes and where have they come from?”

¹⁴ I replied to him, “My master, you know.”

He told me: “These are the people who have come out of the great tribulation. They have **washed** their **robes** and have made them white in **the blood of the Lamb**.

¹⁵ Therefore, they are before the throne of God and keep serving Him day and night in His Temple, and **He who is sitting on the throne** will shelter them with His tent.

¹⁶ **They will not be hungry any longer or thirsty any longer. The sun will certainly not beat on them or any scorching heat,** ¹⁷ because the Lamb, who is in the middle of the throne, **will be their Shepherd and lead them to springs of the water of life. God will wipe every tear from their eyes.**”

1 John 3:1-3

¹ See what great love the Father has given to us, that we are called “the children of God”! That is what we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it has not known Him. ² Dearly loved people, we are now the children of God, but it has not yet been shown what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him because we shall see Him as He is.

³ Everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

Matthew 5:1-12

¹ When Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on the mountainside. When He sat down, His disciples came to Him. ² Then He began to speak and continued to teach them:

³ “Blessed are those who are **poor in spirit!** For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴ “Blessed are **those who mourn!** For they will **be comforted.**

⁵ “Blessed are **those who are meek!** For they **will inherit the earth.**

⁶ “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness! For they will be filled.

⁷ “Blessed are **those who are merciful!** For **they will be treated mercifully.**

⁸ “Blessed are **those who are pure in heart!** For they will see God.

⁹ “Blessed are those who make peace! For they will be called ‘the children of God.’

¹⁰ “Blessed are those who have been persecuted because of righteousness! For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹ “Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you, because of Me! ¹² Rejoice and be very glad! For your reward in heaven is great. For in this way people persecuted the prophets who were before you.

WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN CLOTHED IN WHITE ROBES?

Sermon All Saints' Day Revelation 7:9-17

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 Revelation 7:9-17, that part of our Second Reading before where John sees the large crowd of people standing before the throne in heaven: **After this, I looked and saw a large crowd that no one could count, from every nation and all tribes, peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, wearing white robes and carrying palm-branches in their hands.** ¹⁰ They called out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne and to the Lamb!"

¹¹ All the angels were standing around the throne, around the elders and around the four living creatures. They fell on their faces before the throne and worshipped God, ¹² saying: "Amen! Blessing, glory, wisdom, thanksgiving, honour, power and strength be to our God for ever and ever! Amen."

¹³ Then one of the elders asked me: "Who are these people who have been clothed in the white robes and where have they come from?"

¹⁴ I replied to him, "My master, you know."

He told me: "These are the people who have come out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and have made them white in the blood of the Lamb. ¹⁵ Therefore, they are before the throne of God and keep serving Him day and night in His Temple, and He who is sitting on the throne will shelter them with His tent. ¹⁶ They will not be hungry any longer or thirsty any longer. The sun will certainly not beat on them or any scorching heat, ¹⁷ because the Lamb, who is in the middle of the throne, will be their Shepherd and lead them to springs of the water of life. God will wipe every tear from their eyes."

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth, Your Word is truth. Amen.
Dear friends in Christ,

Today, on this first Sunday in November, we observe All Saints' Day. On All Saints' Day, we rejoice that we are part of that great communion of saints that is the church of Christ, both the church on earth and the church in heaven. All the saints, all those who have been made holy by the blood of Christ. Saints, holy ones, who have been set apart to belong to God alone. All saints, all of us who have been baptised into Christ and clothed with His righteousness.

On All Saints' Day, we commemorate the faithful departed, those saints who have fallen asleep in the Lord and joined the Church Triumphant.

Today, through the words of John's vision, we shall see that there is a strong connection between a person's baptism into the new life in Christ and the sure hope of the resurrection unto the eternal life we have in Christ. We see this connection reflected in the white gown a child usually wears at his or her baptism and in the white liturgical colour of the paraments we use for All Saints' Day.

Today, then, there is a "perfect storm" of heavenly grace coming together. Think about it: Today is Sunday, the Lord's Day, the day when our Lord Jesus Christ rose from the dead. It's a great day for remembering our baptism. In fact, we began our service with the words, "*In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,*" reminding us right from the start of our baptism. And today is All Saints' Day when we remember the faithful departed and look forward to joining them in the resurrection on the Last Day. So today, let's draw a line connecting these three events: Christ's resurrection on Easter Day; our baptismal day, when we were raised to newness of life; and the day of Christ's return when our baptism will be consummated in the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting in the age to come. Easter Day, Baptism Day, and the Last Day: The common theme is resurrection, and the common thread connecting the three is seen in the liturgical colour white.

This colour and this connection are found in our reading today from Revelation 7, where John writes: "**Then one of the elders asked me: "Who are these people who have been clothed in the white robes and where have they come from?"**

¹⁴ I replied to him, "My master, you know."

He told me: "These are the people who have come out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and have made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

"Who are these people who have been clothed in the white robes"? These are the saints, baptised into Christ's death and resurrection and thus assured of their own resurrection unto the eternal life and bliss of heaven. For us, Easter Day and the Last Day have their connecting link *in the day of our baptism*.

Easter Day is the foundation and basis for everything that follows. Without Easter, without Christ's saving death and victorious resurrection, there is no salvation, no baptism, no hope of heaven, no resurrection of the body, and no life everlasting. Without Easter, there are no saints, only sinners, sinners condemned to death and damnation.

Everything depends on **“the blood of the Lamb.”** The saints in white robes are saints, holy ones, precisely because **“they have washed their robes and have made them white in the blood of the Lamb,”** who is Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, *“who takes away the sin of the world”* (John 1:29). Christ Jesus is the Lamb who was slain as the perfect sacrifice for all our sins.

Our sins, our violations of God’s word and will, weighed heavily against us. We were born in sin, born with a sinful nature, inclined to walk our own way and not in the way of our Creator. Our lack of love, a lack of love for God, a lack of love for our neighbour - this is evidence of our sinful condition. Sins of thought, word, and deed - our failure to do the right thing, our tendency to do the wrong thing – honestly, this is who we are! The misery and death we all experience in this sinful world - this is our common lot. All sinners, not all saints - this is who we are by nature. *“What a wretched person I am! Who will rescue me from this body, which is bringing death?”* (Romans 7:24).

“Thanks be to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord!” (Romans 7:25). For God’s own Son, Jesus Christ, has come down from heaven for us men and for our salvation. He has come into our fallen world and taught and walked the way of righteousness. He is pure and holy, doing the will of God as man was intended to do. And yet this holy, pure, and righteous One was rejected by men and condemned as a criminal. He suffered death, even death on a cross, shedding His blood in the process. Christ suffered this willingly for us in our place, taking our sins and their punishment on His sinless shoulders. The precious holy blood of the Lamb is the price He has paid to win our forgiveness so that our sins are no longer held against us.

That He was successful in His saving mission is shown forth, most gloriously, on Easter Day. Our Lord’s victorious resurrection on Easter shows that the Father has accepted the Son’s sacrifice as being perfect and complete. The Lamb who was slain is now raised from the dead, and He lives forever in the glories of heaven.

Now how does Christ’s victory over sin and death by His death and resurrection get applied to us? In Holy Baptism. Our baptism day is when Easter gets delivered to our doorstep with our name on it. The saints are saints because **“they have washed their robes and have made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”** All our sins are washed away in the waters of our own baptism. God is doing His work here, His saving work of turning sinners into saints.

That's why the white garment is the traditional clothing for those being baptised since, in baptism, we are clothed with Christ, clothed with the pure, sinless robe of Christ's righteousness that covers all our sin. **“Who are these people who have been clothed in the white robes”?** They are you and me and all the saints, all the holy ones made holy by the blood of Christ.

Our baptism day is our own personal Easter Day. We have been baptised into Christ's death and resurrection, and that is saving and wonderful and glorious! This is a cause to celebrate and rejoice! The old Adam of sin and death is drowned and buried, and the new man in Christ is raised to newness of life. Every day we live in our baptism. We have a new life to live now, a life of faith and hope and love. This dying and rising with Christ happen each new day. This is the daily life of His saints.

Our baptism into Christ not only has meaning and power for our everyday life, but it also points us ahead to the Last Day and our own resurrection and the life of the world to come. That is why in a funeral service, we begin by saying, *“In Holy Baptism, such and such was clothed with the robe of Christ's righteousness that covered all his or her sin.”* And then this passage from Romans 6 is read: *“Do you not know that all of us who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into His death? Therefore, we were buried with Him through baptism into death, so that, as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might begin to live a new life”* (v. 3-4).

Do you see it? Do you see the connection between Easter and baptism and resurrection? In baptism, Christ's righteousness becomes our righteousness. In baptism, Christ's resurrection becomes our resurrection - a rising to new life now, and the physical resurrection of our bodies on the Last Day when Christ returns. The white colour of Easter Day, the white garment of our baptismal day, and the white colour of All Saints' Day make the connection for us most vividly.

“Who are these people who have been clothed in the white robes”? *These are the saints, baptised into Christ's death and resurrection.* **“Who are these people who have been clothed in the white robes”?** *These are all our loved ones who have died in the faith.* **“Who are these people who have been clothed in the white robes”?** *These are you and me and all of us baptised saints right now who have been assured of our own resurrection unto eternal life and the bliss of heaven.*

And what bliss that will be! Revelation tells us: **“These are the people who have come out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and have made them white in the blood of the Lamb. ¹⁵ Therefore, they are before the throne of God and keep serving Him day and night in His Temple, and He who is sitting on the throne will shelter them with His tent. ¹⁶ They will not be hungry any longer or thirsty any longer. The sun will certainly not beat on them or any scorching heat, ¹⁷ because the Lamb, who is in the middle of the throne, will be their Shepherd and lead them to springs of the water of life. God will wipe every tear from their eyes.”**

Dear friends, this promise is for us! **“Who are these people who have been clothed in the white robes?”** Dear friends, these are us, the baptised saints of God! Amen.

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

PRAYER FOR ALL SAINTS' DAY

Almighty God and Father, in wisdom You have made the world and all things, seen and unseen. We praise You for the gift of life, for the wonderful creation of our bodies, for our moral and spiritual capacities, and for the marvellous gifts of intelligence and reason. But, above all else, we thank and praise You for the gift of faith, by which we know You and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent. We praise and worship Him for showing us Your great love by dying the death that enables sinners to live for ever. We praise You for the gift of the Holy Spirit, who has brought us to faith in Jesus, and has changed our hearts from rebellion against You to love and praise for You.

Today we thank you for all the saints remembered and forgotten, for those dear souls who are now standing in Your presence. We thank You for calling them in this life to be Your children, and we thank You that we too, have been called by You to be saints.

Therefore, let us clearly recognise what it means to be called the children of God, and to remember that we are your saints not by our own inclination nor strength, but simply by Your gracious call and forgiveness that we have freely received through our Saviour, Christ Jesus.

In mercy, pour out Your Spirit on us anew each day, so that our love, knowledge, and spiritual power may keep on growing, and our lives may be filled with the truly good qualities that only Jesus Christ can produce. Lead us by Your Spirit to love one another with brotherly love, and to forgive one another as You have forgiven us for Christ's sake.

Keep Your church in the true fellowship of the Gospel, that it may stand firm in the faith. Protect it against all its enemies, that it may serve You freely. We ask you to continue to bless the ministry of the AELC and ULMA, and to raise up men to be pastors to Your flock. Let Your light continue to shine that we may be witnesses to You.

We remember those of Your children who are being persecuted because of their faith. Uphold them by Your Spirit, and give them patient endurance, that they may witness to Your saving power. Move those who oppress them to turn to You. Free Your people from all falsehood and error and lead them along the road of truth and godliness.

Bring shame and discredit on those who advocate abortion, homosexuality and single-sex marriage. Fill the leaders of the nations with Your light and dispel the darkness of sin and spiritual ignorance, giving wisdom and strength to all in authority in our country, that they may serve according to Your direction, and our people may live in unity and uprightness. Lead people everywhere to enjoy peace and happiness as they learn to love and follow You.

Move parents to sow Your Word in the hearts of their children, that the young may be raised in the ways of Christ and live lives that are a blessing to church, country, and mankind. Give parents the understanding and patience they need for their God-given responsibilities.

Watch over the sick, the sad, and the troubled. Stand by them in their various sufferings and help them in all their burdens. Protect all who are in any danger of body or soul and save them by Your wise love. Help us in all times of need to look to You for pardon, peace, and healing.

These, and all other things that we may need, give us for the sake of Jesus Christ our Saviour, who, together with You and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

The Gospel in its Narrow Sense

What is the gospel in its narrow sense? It has often been described as “*the good news of our salvation in Jesus.*” It could also be described as *the good news of what God has done, is doing, and will do for our salvation.* The good news of what God has done is that “*God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son*” (John 3:16). God sent Jesus to redeem us. By His sinless conception and birth, He atoned for our sinful conception and birth. By His holy life, He carried out God’s will for us. By His substitutionary death, He suffered the punishment for our sins. God has declared the world not guilty for the sake of Christ.

The gospel always has a tone of completeness about it. It doesn’t announce to us what we must do. It rather speaks to us of what God has done for us. Jesus said to the paralytic, “*Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven*” (Matthew 9:2). The synergist and the Arminian (Roman Catholic Church, Orthodox Churches, Anabaptist Churches and Methodist Churches) would have said, “Take heart, son, for if you make the right choice or do the right thing, then your sins will be forgiven.” The Calvinist (Reformed churches like the Anglican and Uniting) would have said, “Take heart, son, if you can figure out whether your sins were forgiven.” Jesus said, “*Your sins are forgiven.*” There are no conditions. There are no questions. The message is simple. God has forgiven us for Jesus’ sake. Jesus said on the cross, “*It is finished*” (John 19:30). There is no further need for any sacrifice for sins (Hebrews 10:10-14).

What is God doing for our salvation? He has brought us to faith in Jesus and is preserving us in faith in Jesus. He does this through the means of grace, for the gospel is the “*power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes*” (Romans 1:16). Through the gospel the Holy Spirit brings us to faith and preserves us in faith in Jesus. Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, “*We also thank God continually because, when you received the Word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the Word of God, which is at work in you who believe*” (1 Thess. 2:13).

What will God do for our salvation? “*Whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life*” (John 3:16). On the day of judgment, believers will hear Jesus say, “*Come, you who are blessed by My Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world*” (Matthew 25:34). Then believers will see the fulfilment of the vision John saw in Revelation:

“These are the people who have come out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and have made them white in the blood of the Lamb. ¹⁵ Therefore, they are before the throne of God and keep serving Him day and night in His Temple, and He who is sitting on the throne will shelter them with His tent. ¹⁶ They will not be hungry any longer or thirsty any longer. The sun will certainly not beat on them or any scorching heat, ¹⁷ because the Lamb, who is in the middle of the throne, will be their Shepherd and lead them to springs of the water of life. God will wipe every tear from their eyes” (Revelation 7:14-17).

The Formula of Concord describes the gospel in this way: *As a result, the gospel in its strict sense teaches what people should believe, namely, that they receive from God the forgiveness of sins; that is, that the Son of God, our Lord Christ, has taken upon himself the curse of the law and borne it, atoned and paid for all our sins; that through him alone we are restored to God's grace, obtain the forgiveness of sins through faith, and are delivered from death and all the punishments of our sins and are saved eternally.*

For everything that provides comfort-everything that offers the favour and grace of God to those who have transgressed the law - is and is called the gospel in the strict sense. It is good news, joyous news, that God does not want to punish sin but to forgive it for Christ's sake. (FC SD V:20,21)

Weekly sermons and bulletins are available at www.aelc.org.au.

Weekly Sunday School lessons are also now available in the Members section.

If there are any late changes to be made to divine services, these will be listed immediately on the website. If you are unsure, please contact pastor.

COMING SERVICES

13 November 23 Pentecost	20 November Last Sunday of the Church Year	27 November 1 Advent (Year A)
8.30am OAK LR 9.00am TMBA LR 9.00am GRN LR 9.30am AUB LR 9.00am LOWOOD LR (Pastor away for the weekend)	9.30am AELC HC service at Bethlehem Toowoomba. Shared lunch and fellowship after service followed by a concert beginning at 12.30pm.	8.30am OAK LR 9.00am TMBA LR 9.00am GRN LR 9.30am AUB LR 9.00am LOWOOD HC
Sunday, 13 November		
READINGS: Malachi 4:1-6;	2 Thessalonians 3:1-13;	Luke 21:5-36
HYMNS: 433 485 556 181		
Sunday, 20 November		
READINGS: Malachi 3:13-18;	Colossians 1:13-20;	Luke 23:27-43
HYMNS: 436 166 70 284 285 473		

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Tuesday, 8 November, 7.30pm. Men's Fellowship at Oakey. Opening devotion: Gavin.

NOVEMBER BIBLE STUDIES:

Saturday 12, 1.00pm. Fellowship afternoon at Toowoomba.

Thursday 24, 10.00am. Lowood.

Friday 25, 7.30pm. Oak/Aub/Grn combined at Oakey.

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

Pastor will be away over the weekend of 12-13 November. During this time, if there is an emergency, you will need to contact your elders.