

Australian Evangelical Lutheran Church
BETHLEHEM TOOWOOMBA, OUR SAVIOUR LOWOOD, ST JOHN'S AUBIGNY,
ST PAUL'S GREENWOOD, TRINITY MARBURG, TRINITY OAKEY
16 April – The Second Sunday of Easter

HYMNS: 101 97 100 103

INTROIT: Psalm 148

Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD from the heavens! Praise Him in the heights above!

Praise Him, all you His angels! Praise Him, all His hosts!

Praise Him, sun and moon! Praise Him, all you stars of light!

Praise Him, you heaven of heavens, and you waters above the heavens!

Let them praise the name of the LORD! For He commanded, and they were created.

He set them in position for ever and ever. He gave a decree that will not pass away.

Praise the LORD from the earth, you great sea creatures and all ocean depths, fire and hail, snow and fog, wind and storm, which carry out His Word, you mountains and all hills, you fruit trees and all cedars, you wild animals and all cattle, you reptiles and winged birds, you kings of the earth and all peoples, you princes and all judges on the earth, you young men and also you maidens, you old men together with young people!

Let them praise the name of the LORD! For His name alone is exalted. His majesty is above earth and heaven.

He has raised up a horn for His people, praise from all His devout people, from the people of Israel, the people who are close to Him! Praise the LORD!

COLLECT: Almighty God, grant that we, who have celebrated the Lord's resurrection, may by Your grace confess in our life and conversation that Jesus is Lord and God; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

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.

READINGS:

Acts 5:29-42 Gamaliel's advice and the dismissal of the apostles.

1 Peter 1:3-9 Praise God, who has raised Jesus Christ from the dead.

John 20:19-31 As the Father has sent Me, so I am sending you.

Acts 5:29-42

²⁹ Peter and the other apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men.

³⁰ The God of our fathers has raised Jesus, whom you had murdered **by hanging Him on a tree**. ³¹ God has exalted Him to His right hand as Prince and Saviour, to give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel. ³² We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him."

³³ When they heard this, they were infuriated and wanted to put them to death.

³⁴ However, a certain man in the council, a Pharisee by the name of Gamaliel, a teacher of the Law, who was respected by all the people, stood up and ordered them to put the men outside for a little while. ³⁵ He told them, "Men of Israel, be careful what you intend to do with these men! ³⁶ For Theudas appeared some time ago, claiming to be somebody, and a number of men, about four hundred, joined him. He was put to death, and all who followed him were dispersed and came to nothing.

³⁷ After him, Judas the Galilean appeared in the days of the census and drew a host after him in a revolt. He also perished, and all who followed him were scattered.

³⁸ In the present case I tell you, keep away from these men and dismiss them! For, if this purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail, ³⁹ but, if it is from God, you will not be able to overthrow them. Perhaps you will even be found to be fighting against God."

⁴⁰ He persuaded them. Then they called the apostles in, flogged them, ordered them not to speak using the name of Jesus and let them go. ⁴¹ The apostles went away from the council, rejoicing that they had been thought worthy of being dishonoured for the sake of the Name. ⁴² Every day, in the Temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and telling the Good News that Jesus is the Christ.

1 Peter 1:3-9

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! He has given us new birth by His great mercy, through raising Jesus Christ from the dead. Therefore, we have a living hope, ⁴ which waits for an inheritance that cannot be destroyed or defiled and never fades away and which God has reserved for you in heaven. ⁵ You are protected by God's power through faith, until you come to the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶ In this you greatly rejoice, even though now, for a little while, if it is necessary, you have been suffering grief in various trials. ⁷ These sufferings have come that your faith may be proved genuine. It is more precious

than gold, which perishes, although it is tested by fire. Then the tested genuineness of your faith will result in praise, glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed. ⁸ Although you have not seen Him, you love Him. You do not see Him now but believe in Him and rejoice with unspeakable and glorious joy, ⁹ because you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

John 20:19-31

¹⁹ That Sunday evening the doors had been locked where the disciples were, because they were afraid of the Jews. Then Jesus came, stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you!”

²⁰ After He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. The disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.

²¹ Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent Me, I also am sending you.”

²² After He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit! ²³ If you forgive any people’s sins, they have been forgiven; if you retain any people’s sins, they have been retained.”

²⁴ However, Thomas, one of the twelve, who was called “The Twin,” was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵ The other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord.” He told them, “Unless I see the marks of the nails in His hands and put my finger into the marks of the nails and put my hand into His side, I shall certainly not believe.”

²⁶ A week later, His disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors had been locked, Jesus came, stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!”

²⁷ Next He told Thomas, “Put your finger here and look at My hands! Take your hand and put it into My side! Stop your unbelief and believe!”

²⁸ Thomas answered Him, “My Lord and my God!”

²⁹ Jesus asked him, “Have you believed because you have seen Me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed!”

³⁰ Jesus also performed many other miraculous signs in the presence of His disciples, which have not been written in this book. ³¹ However, these things have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that, believing, you may have life in His name.

EASTER JOY FOREVER!

Sermon for the Second Sunday of Easter, 2023

John 20:19-31; Acts 5:29-42; 1 Peter 1:3-9

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 all three lessons for the Second Sunday of Easter, John 20:19-31, Acts 5:29-42, and 1 Peter 1:3-9, all read before:

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

Dear friends in Christ,

Christ is risen! And guess what? He is still risen! Christ didn't stop being risen once Easter Day was over. And so the Easter season continues - and with it, our Easter joy. It's the Second Sunday "*of*" Easter! Our Easter joy continues!

The Easter joy was certainly evident last Sunday when we gathered for worship. Our hymns were joyful as we celebrated our Lord's victory over sin, death, and the grave.

But that was then, and this is now. Can that Easter joy continue? After all, this isn't Easter anymore. Or is it? Did Jesus stop being risen? No! Our cause for joy and gladness continues, reflected in our hymns today with lines like these: "*Jesus lives! Our hearts know well,*" and "*I know that my Redeemer lives.*" Yes, lots of Easter joy still today.

But this is not a joy that has no basis in fact. By no means is the Easter season some forced, smiley-face celebration that ignores all the sorrow and sadness that life in this fallen world can bring. Our Easter joy can look square in the face of adversity and still rejoice. The pain is real, but the joy is greater. Christ makes it so - Christ, our risen Lord, who is still risen.

The Easter joy keeps ringing long after the day Christ rose. All three of our Scripture lessons today convey the great Easter joy that continues well beyond the first Easter day. In the Gospel of John, in the Book of Acts, and in Peter's First Letter, we see joy radiate to us today. Let's see how that works.

In John chapter 20, the reading starts by telling us, "**That Sunday evening the doors had been locked where the disciples were, because they were afraid of the Jews.**" They were afraid that what had just happened to their Master on Friday might now happen to them. They were terrified. But the risen Lord Jesus comes right in and stands among them, reassuring them: "**Peace be with you!**" They hear His voice, see His face, and, more than that, Jesus shows them "**His hands and His side.**" These are the same hands that had been nailed to a cross.

This is the same side that had been pierced to ensure that He was dead, and Jesus had died; there was no question about that. Now this same Jesus comes and stands among them. This is no hallucination or wishful dream. No, this is the Lord Jesus Himself, raised bodily from the dead.

Jesus greets them by saying, **“Peace be with you!”** He greets those disciples who had denied and deserted Him with peace, for He had earned that peace. His nail-scarred hands and pierced side are the holy wounds by which He had bought their peace. Jesus’ death on the cross was not a defeat, detour, or disappointment. No, it was God’s own plan to redeem a world of sinners - people like you and me. Jesus’ death on the cross paid for our sins - for your sins, all of them. It took the death of God’s own Son to cover the sins of all people everywhere. That’s what Jesus has done.

So now, when Jesus rises from the dead on Easter day and speaks peace to His frightened disciples, He really means it and gives it! **“The disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.”** No wonder! It’s beginning to dawn on them, the joy of it all! And then a week later - literally the second Sunday of Easter - Jesus does it again. He comes and stands among them and greets them with peace. He brings up to speed the doubting disciple, Thomas, who was not with them that previous Sunday - more Easter joy to go around.

That was fine and great for a while. Jesus was still appearing among them. Their Lord could take care of them if there were any trouble. It makes sense that they had joy. But what about later? What about after Jesus is gone? What if the threat of danger comes back? Will they go back to hiding behind locked doors? Will their joy disappear?

We find out in the Book of Acts. The apostles were out in public, at the temple, teaching in the name of Jesus. The Jewish Sanhedrin, the same ones who had sent Jesus off to be crucified by Pilate - now they bring in the apostles and have them stand before the council. The danger is imminent and real. But instead of denying Jesus as He had before, Peter speaks up and confesses Christ: **“The God of our fathers has raised Jesus, whom you had murdered by hanging Him on a tree. ³¹ God has exalted Him to His right hand as Prince and Saviour, to give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel. ³² We are witnesses of these things.”** A bold witness indeed!

The council members are enraged! They want to kill these apostles! A cooler voice by the name of Gamaliel prevails, and they are not put to death. Instead, the apostles are flogged and charged to stop what they’re doing, which is to tell

people about Jesus. Yet, instead of cowering away in fear with their tails between their legs - they leave and note this - **“The apostles went away from the council, rejoicing that they had been thought worthy of being dishonoured for the sake of the Name.”** Imagine that! Instead of fear, they are filled with joy! The Easter joy stayed with them, even despite persecution. They even took the persecution as a reason for joy since it meant that they were suffering for the name of Jesus. And they don't stop with witnessing. **“Every day, in the Temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and telling the Good News that Jesus is the Christ.”**

The world's threats and persecution cannot quench our joy. We know we have a Master who has overcome death and the grave, and we bear His name, placed on us in our baptism. We are joined to Jesus Christ, our risen Lord. What can the world do to us? *“If God is for us, who can be against us?”* (Romans 8:31). No one can shut us up or steal our joy! Our rejoicing and witnessing will continue. Easter makes that big of a difference.

OK, but Peter and those apostles actually got to see Jesus. They spent time with Him, heard Him speak, touched His hands, and felt His side. Because of this, perhaps the apostles could have that kind of courage and that kind of joy, but that was them, not us. We are not that fortunate.

Really? Didn't Jesus say, **“Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed!”**? We are not any less blessed than those first disciples. Jesus is here with us today. Psalm 95:2 says, *“Let us come into His presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to Him with songs of praise!”* Isn't that what we are doing today? Coming into His presence? Hasn't the Lord promised us, *“I shall never leave you or forsake you”*? (Heb. 13:5). Jesus is here right now, giving out His gifts and speaking His word of peace. We have not seen, and yet we believe. So Jesus calls us blessed, for that is what we are. And because we are blessed, we rejoice. *“Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good, for His steadfast love endures forever!”* (Psalm 107:1).

Peter says this very thing to Christians who had never seen Jesus in the flesh. In 1 Peter 1, he writes: **“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! He has given us new birth by His great mercy, through raising Jesus Christ from the dead. Therefore, we have a living hope, ⁴ which waits for an inheritance that cannot be destroyed or defiled and never fades away and which God has reserved for you in heaven. ⁵ You are protected by God's power through faith, until you come to the salvation that is ready to be**

revealed in the last time.” This is quite an amazing thing! You and I have been born again through Holy Baptism. We are new creations in Christ. Now we have a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ and look forward to an imperishable inheritance, the eternal life that will be revealed when Christ returns.

Are you looking forward to this? I know I am! Come, Lord Jesus! Come and deliver us from this vale of tears. We eagerly expect the return of Christ, when our Lord will raise our mortal bodies to be like His glorious body.¹ We look forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness will be at home. We await and anticipate joining the great heavenly choir, praising the Lamb who was slain and now lives forever. This is our hope, and it gives us joy! Easter joy!

The sorrows and afflictions of this life cannot put it out. Peter writes: **“In this you greatly rejoice, even though now, for a little while, if it is necessary, you have been suffering grief in various trials.”** All the trials of this life cannot rob us of our joy, whether it be grief at the loss of loved ones, persecution at the hands of the world, or disappointments and let-downs of various sorts. All of these things may grieve us. We wouldn’t be human if they didn’t. But we do not grieve as those who have no hope.² We do have hope. It is the sure hope of life everlasting with our Lord Jesus Christ. And Peter gets the effect of this hope right when he says: **“Although you have not seen Him, you love Him. You do not see Him now but believe in Him and rejoice with unspeakable and glorious joy.”**

Inexpressible joy and full of glory! That’s Easter joy! It’s our joy, freely given as a gift. Whatever our trials, whatever our afflictions, we have greater joy. And this Easter joy will continue, not only through this joyful Eastertide but will last our whole lives long and then on into eternity. Easter joy forever! Amen.

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

¹ Philippians 3:21

² 1 Thessalonians 4:13

PRAYER FOR THE SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER

Lord God, heavenly Father, mighty in power and majesty, the creator and preserver of all things to the very limits of space, we, Your children, come before You with our thanks and praise, and ask You in mercy to hear the prayers we offer.

We thank You that You have glorified Your Son Jesus by raising Him from the dead. Give us the blessings of that limitless grace that He has won for us on the cross.

We praise You that You have transformed the sadness of all Jesus' disciples into the joy of the resurrection. Help us to grasp Christ's promise of eternal life, believe it with joy, and rely on it with confidence. Fill us with the assurance that one day our eyes also will see Him, when finally He receives us and all believers into the kingdom prepared since You made the world.

Make the empty tomb the source of inspiration and power to Your Church. Fill all believers with a genuine desire to glorify Your name and do Your will, that people everywhere may be turned from their sin to faith in their risen Lord. As we witness to the risen Lord, give us a sense of solidarity with the apostles of Jesus, the courage that they had, the determination to witness to Jesus' resurrection, and the message of repentance and forgiveness that goes with it, give us opportunities to speak it forth, and give our words Your blessing.

Bless our country with Your continuing favour. Give us a government that maintains liberty, upholds justice, curbs lawlessness, and uses its authority with courage and high principle. Move all Christian citizens to accept their lawful obligations and duties cheerfully, giving respect to those in authority, and honour to all people.

Grant that we may live as people who are only pilgrims on earth. Give us the power and grace we need to resist evil, and fight the good fight of faith, until we finally receive the crown of life.

Give comfort to those among us who are sick, sorrowful, and distressed. Free us from all fear of death and the unknown. Fill us with patience in every test and trouble. Send Your Spirit to make us joyful and thankful Christians. We ask these things in the glorious hope of eternal life with You, in the name, and for the sake, of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Article: Jesus is Lord!

People say, “You have to accept Jesus as Saviour *and Lord!*” Aside from the proud, free-will implication of the word “accept,” what bothers me is the emphasis they put on the term “Lord.” They mean it in the sense of “boss” or “ruler.” The idea is that for salvation it is not enough to trust Christ. One must also obey Him. I’m reminded of that one line in hymn no. 877, “*Trust and obey, for there’s no other way, to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.*” It makes my skin crawl! It’s as if we must do something to save ourselves by our own works. That is directly contrary to the Gospel (Ephesians 2:8-10; Romans 3:19-4:8).

When the New Testament calls Jesus “Lord,” it means that He is true God. It means what the Old Testament means by “LORD,” all in capitals. Compare Deuteronomy 6:4 and 1 Corinthians 8:6; Joel 2:32 and Romans 10:13. It is the name “Jehovah” (“He Who Is”), and it can be applied only to the true God.

The Septuagint was the Greek translation of the Old Testament done by Jews before the birth of Christ. It translated “Jehovah” as “Kyrios,” “Lord.” When the Greek New Testament says, “Jesus is Lord” (1 Corinthians 12:3), that means that Jesus is Jehovah, the only true God. Greek speakers familiar with the Old Testament could hardly fail to understand.

Greek speakers who did not know the Old Testament also knew that Jesus was being called “God.” For them, “Kyrios,” “Lord,” was as strong a divine title as “Theos,” “God.” As they learned the Old Testament, this meaning was deepened in terms of the one true God.

But the Bible means still more by the term “Lord.” It emphasises the true God as the Saviour and Redeemer. When He proclaimed the Ten Commandments from Mount Sinai, God did not start out, “I am the LORD your God, so obey or else!” He said, “*I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.*” (Exodus 20:2).

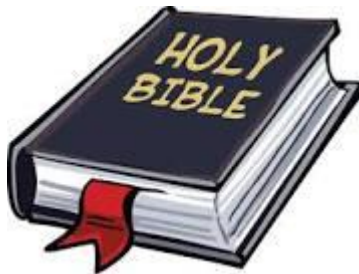
The Israelites were to obey out of gratitude for delivery from slavery in Egypt - and for the promised delivery from sin and hell. We obey out of gratitude for the accomplished delivery from sin and hell. Both Testaments teach us to obey as loved and loving sons - not as threatened and fearful slaves.

A big book could be written about the Biblical use of “Lord.” But even rapid Bible reading and quick word study show that, for Christians, the title “Lord” should be sweet and comforting. See how it is used in Psalm 9:1; 11:1; 18:1-2; 23:1; 27:1; 34:1; 103:1-22; and many more.

The same goes for the New Testament. In the opening greetings in his letters, Paul again and again connects “Lord” with grace and peace (Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:3; 2 Corinthians 1:2; Galatians 1:3; Ephesians 1:2; Philippians 1:2; Colossians 1:2; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:2; 1 Timothy 1:2; 2 Timothy 1:2; Titus 1:4; Philemon 3). That list includes every one of Paul’s epistles. He cannot even get through saying, “Hello,” before he connects the title “Lord” with the grace of God that the Lord Jesus earned for us by His suffering and death for our sin in our place.

In his Large Catechism, Dr. Martin Luther sums up the second article of the Apostles’ Creed by showing that “Lord” means “Redeemer.” He writes: *“But what is it to become Lord? It is this, that He has redeemed me from sin, from the devil, from death, and all evil”* (Concordia Triglotta, p. 685). He says again: *“Let this, then, be the sum of this article that the little word Lord signifies simply as much as Redeemer, i.e., He who has brought us from Satan to God, from death to life, from sin to righteousness, and who preserves us in the same”* (p. 685).

What should we mean when we say that Jesus is Lord? It should be our confession of faith that Jesus is our God, our Saviour and Redeemer!



Jesus is Lord

Children's Message:

What do we use a torch for? Of course, to see in the dark! If we don't use some kind of light in the dark, we could fall over something and hurt ourselves! It is always good practice to keep a torch handy, and to check that it works. We have to make sure that the bulb is good, and that the batteries aren't flat. It's handy to make sure it's in perfect shape. But what would happen if we switched on a torch and forgot to turn it off? It will shine for a while, but eventually the batteries would go flat and the light would go out. The torch will no longer work.



How about this idea? I turn it off, but once a week I come and turn it on for a couple of minutes just to make sure it's still working. Will the battery still be like new five years from now when I really need to use the flashlight? No, the batteries will be losing energy even with me just checking them.

Well, how about this? I just leave the flashlight off. Will it still be just as bright ten years from now if I don't use it until then? Nope, it might not even work, because even with the flashlight off, the batteries slowly lose their energy.

But now let's think about something God does for us by His power: Jesus dying on the cross and defeating sin, death, and the devil. Wow! And Jesus rose from the dead three days later. He lives! So when you were baptised, Jesus gave you the forgiveness of your sins and the gift of eternal life now. And there's more to come! God wants you to live that life with Him in perfect bodies in heaven someday. What a gift!

It's been many years since Jesus won that gift of eternal life for you. And it may be a long time from now until you'll be brought to live with Him in heaven. Do you think eternal life with Jesus will still be just as wonderful and peaceful and joyous when you finally go to heaven? You bet! God is the Giver and Keeper of life! Our Second Reading today says that the life God wants to live with you is "reserved for you in heaven" - always ready and waiting (1 Peter 1:4). It's just as wonderful as when Jesus won it for us, and it will not die out like a flashlight.

So we get concerned here on earth about things running down or getting broken or fading. Not so with God's gift of eternal life. And since we know that it's waiting for us and that God's already done everything for us to be in heaven with Him, we can live here and help others. *Thank You Father for giving me the gift of eternal life with You forever through Your Son Jesus Christ! Amen.*

WEEKLY ANNOUNCEMENTS

23 April 3 Easter	30 April 4 Easter	7 May 5 Easter
8.30am OAK LR 9.00am TMBA LR 9.00am GRN LR 9.30am AUB LR 9.00am MARBURG HC & Bible Study	10.00am OAK HC AELC Service	8.30am OAK LR 9.00am TMBA HC 9.00am GRN LR 10.45am AUB HC 9.00am LOWOOD LR
Sunday, 23 April		
READINGS: Acts 2:14a, 36-41; 1 Peter 1:17-25; Luke 24:13-35		
HYMNS: 768 14 541 (839 333) 459		
Sunday, 30 April		
READINGS: Acts 2:42-47; 1 Peter 2:19-25; John 10:1-10		
HYMNS: 105 391 604 387 287 602		

Sunday, 30 April. 10.00am AELC Service at Trinity Oakey. Please bring something for a shared lunch and remember to mark your offering back to your own congregation. Loose offering will remain with Trinity. The parish AGM will also be held at Oakey on this day.

Choir practice for parish service. Sunday 16th and 23rd April. Oakey 7.30pm. The music will be available today at the back of the church.

BIBLE STUDIES:

Thursday, 20 April, 10.00am at Lowood.

Sunday, 23 April, after service at Marburg.

Down's Bible Studies will resume in May.