

Australian Evangelical Lutheran Church
BETHLEHEM TOOWOOMBA, OUR SAVIOUR LOWOOD, ST JOHN'S AUBIGNY,
ST PAUL'S GREENWOOD, TRINITY MARBURG, TRINITY OAKEY
9 April 2023 Easter Sunday - the Resurrection of our Lord

HYMNS: 95 89 92 323 99 88

INTROIT: Psalm 16

Protect me, O God! For I have taken refuge in You.

I have been saying to the LORD: "You are my Lord. Without You I have nothing good."

As for the holy people who are in the land, they are the excellent people, and all my delight is in them.

Those who run after another god will have many sorrows. I shall not pour out their libations of blood or take up their names on my lips.

O LORD, You are my allotted portion and my cup. You are firmly holding what has been allotted to me.

The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places. Surely, I have a delightful inheritance.

I shall bless the LORD, who has given me advice. Even during the nights my inmost parts teach me.

I have set the LORD before Me constantly. Because He is at My right hand, I shall not stagger.

Therefore, My heart is glad, and My glory rejoices. My body also will dwell securely. 10 For You will not abandon My soul to Sheol or allow Your Faithful One to see decay.

You make known to Me the path of life. In Your presence there is fullness of joy. At Your right hand there are pleasures for ever.

COLLECT: Almighty God the Father, through Your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, You have overcome death and opened the gate of everlasting life to us. Grant that we, who celebrate with joy the day of our Lord's resurrection, may be raised from the death of sin by Your life-giving Spirit; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, 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 draelc@gmail.com.

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

READINGS: Acts 10:34-43 Summary of Jesus' life and ministry.
Colossians 3:1-4 Raised with Christ.
Matthew 28:1-10 The first Easter morning.

Acts 10:34-43

³⁴ Then Peter began to speak: "Now I realise that it is true that **God does not show favouritism**, ³⁵ but that in every nation the one who fears Him and does what is right is acceptable to Him. ³⁶ You know **the Word that God has sent** to the people of Israel to **tell the Good News of peace** through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. ³⁷ You know what took place throughout Judea. It began in Galilee after the baptism that John preached. ³⁸ It was about Jesus of Nazareth, how **God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit** and power. He went around doing good and healing all who were under the tyranny of the Devil, because God was with Him. ³⁹ We are witnesses of all the things that He did in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They also executed Him **by hanging Him on a tree**. ⁴⁰ This man God raised on the third day and caused Him to be seen. ⁴¹ He was not seen by all the people but by witnesses whom God had selected beforehand, by us, who ate and drank with Him after He had risen from the dead. ⁴² He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that this is the One whom God has appointed to be the judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³ All the prophets testify about Him, that, through His name, everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins."

Colossians 3:1-4

¹ Therefore, if you have been raised with Christ, search for the things that are above, where Christ is **sitting at the right hand of God!** ² Keep your minds on things above, not on things on the earth! ³ For you have died, and your lives have been hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ, who is your Life, appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

Matthew 28:1-10

¹ After the Sabbath, as Sunday was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. ² There was a great earthquake. For an angel of the Lord came down from heaven, went to the tomb, rolled the stone back and sat on it. ³ His appearance was like lightning and his clothes were as white as snow. ⁴ The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men. ⁵ The angel told the women, “Do not be afraid! For I know that you are looking for Jesus, who has been crucified. ⁶ He is not here. For He has risen, as He said. Come! See the place where He was lying! ⁷ Then go quickly and tell His disciples, ‘He has risen from the dead. Indeed, He is going ahead of you to Galilee. There you will see Him.’ Be sure! I have told you.”

⁸ The women hurried away from the tomb with fear and great joy and ran to tell His disciples. ⁹ Just then Jesus met them and said, “Greetings!” They went up to Him, took hold of His feet and worshipped Him.

¹⁰ Then Jesus told them, “Stop being afraid! Go and tell **My brothers** to go to Galilee! There they will see Me.”

The Women Who First Came to the Tomb
Sermon for Easter Sunday, 2023
Matthew 28:1-10

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 the Gospel read before, Matthew 28:1-10 **After the Sabbath, as Sunday was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. ² There was a great earthquake. For an angel of the Lord came down from heaven, went to the tomb, rolled the stone back, and sat on it. ³ His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were as white as snow. ⁴ The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.**

⁵ The angel told the women, “Do not be afraid! For I know that you are looking for Jesus, who has been crucified. ⁶ He is not here. For He has risen, as He said. Come! See the place where He was lying! ⁷ Then go quickly, and tell His disciples, ‘He has risen from the dead. Indeed, He is going ahead of you to Galilee. There you will see Him.’ Be sure! I have told you.”

⁸ The women hurried away from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell His disciples. ⁹ Just then Jesus met them, and said, “Greetings!”

They went up to Him, took hold of His feet, and worshipped Him.

¹⁰ Then Jesus told them, “Stop being afraid! Go, and tell My brothers to go to Galilee! There they will see Me.”

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

Dear friends in Christ,

Jesus Christ, our Saviour, has risen! His passion is over! He has made full payment for our sins. As John writes in his First Letter, “*the blood of Jesus, His Son, cleanses us from all sin*” (1 John 1:7). Only Christ’s blood could atone and has atoned for the sin of the world.

Matthew tells us today of the women coming out to the tomb. Who were these women?

God’s Word gives us just a few names. Matthew mentions “**Mary Magdalene and the other Mary**.” Mark tells us about Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome¹; Luke tells us about Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Joanna.² John tells us the account of Mary Magdalene with Jesus when she thought Him to be the gardener.³ The lists are not identical, but I suspect that Salome was later known as Joanna, and the Mary who is listed as the mother of James is

¹ Mark 16:1

² Luke 24:10

³ John 20:1-18

the mother of our Lord. James was the church's first leader in Jerusalem and half-brother to Jesus.

Anyhow, these women headed out to the grave of Jesus as they still believed that He was dead. They intended to anoint His body and add to the spices that were wrapped about His body as a sign of love and mourning. In his Gospel, Mark tells us that one of their concerns was how they were going to get the stone rolled away so that they could enter the tomb and complete the funeral preparations for Jesus.⁴ Matthew simply says that they “**went to look at the tomb.**” No matter what they had heard Jesus say before His death, they were not expecting Easter. It was just too unbelievable and unimaginable for them. It was also unexpected.

The Bible gives us no information as to whether they knew about the guard that Pilate had posted to watch the grave or not. It didn't matter because “**there was a great earthquake. For an angel of the Lord came down from heaven, went to the tomb, rolled the stone back, and sat on it.**” This had happened before the women arrived. The angel rolled the stone away from the entrance of the tomb to show that the tomb was empty. “**The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.**” The guards then fled from the scene. We know that the high priests bribed the soldiers to say they had fallen asleep and that the disciples must have stolen the body from the grave while they were having a nap.⁵ Still, that story probably didn't carry much power among the people who heard it since they knew that falling asleep on the job while on duty was a death sentence for a Roman soldier. It was just the only story available to them to hide the truth of the resurrection.

When the women arrived, they found the grave open and empty. Well, not quite empty; the angel that had frightened the soldiers so terribly was still there, only he wasn't as frightening to the women. He said, “**Do not be afraid!**” This was the same greeting Gabriel had given to Zechariah⁶

⁴ Mark 16:2-3

⁵ Matthew 28:11-13

⁶ Luke 1:13

and Mary.⁷ When an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream⁸, and the angel appeared to the shepherds⁹, the greeting was the same: “**Do not be afraid!**” That is the gospel in a nutshell. That is the message of Easter. King David has taught us to pray and take it to heart: “*Even though I walk through the valley of deep darkness, I shall fear no evil*” (Psalm 23:4).

At first, the angel’s words sounded too good to be true: “**He is not here. For He has risen, as He said.**” It was a gentle way of saying, “*I told you so! You should not be surprised. You should have known He would not be here anymore.*”

What could they say? Matthew does not record a single word that the women said in response to this good news, and Mark tells us, “*They went out and hurried away from the tomb, because they were trembling and bewildered, and said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid*” (16:8).

If the angel had not told them what to do next, they likely would have stood there for some time in amazement. So the angel told them to “**go quickly, and tell His disciples, ‘He has risen from the dead. Indeed, He is going ahead of you to Galilee. There you will see Him.’**”

Matthew does not mention how the disciples reacted when they heard the women’s report. But Luke tells us, “*These words seemed like nonsense to the Eleven. and they would not believe them*” (24:11). Not only did the disciples fail to believe that Jesus was alive, they did not head straight for Galilee either. Instead, they came to the tomb to see it was empty. And they were still in Jerusalem, gathered behind locked doors when Jesus came and appeared to ten of them on Easter evening.

Before the women went to where the disciples were gathered, “**Jesus met them, and said, ‘Greetings!’ They went up to Him, took hold of His feet, and worshipped Him.**”

⁷ Luke 1:30

⁸ Matthew 1:20

⁹ Luke 2:10

Jesus repeated the message they had just heard from the angel. So as they ran off to find the disciples, they had more than the word of an angel; they could say that they had seen Jesus!

Our reaction is different. We have not seen Jesus die except through the eyes of the Apostles. We have not seen Jesus rise from the dead either. We believe that He has risen, don't get me wrong, but there is an emotional difference between hearing about someone rising from the dead and watching one of your closest and most important friends die and then seeing them alive and well again! We all know something of the sorrow of Good Friday, but we cannot truly appreciate the incredible joy of seeing Jesus alive again. The best we can do with that is imagine how we would feel if we saw our mother, father, or someone near and dear to us who has passed away alive again.

Our joy in Easter is not on a level with the personal relationship that the disciples had with Jesus. Our happiness is in knowing what that resurrection means! The resurrection of Jesus is connected to the love of God that put Him on the cross to die in our place. His resurrection means that God had accepted the trade. Jesus' death was accepted in our place and for our sins, so we are now forgiven! The resurrection tells us that everything Jesus taught is true and every promise is eternally valid. That stuff about how God loves us? It's true! Those words about life eternal and living in glory with Him? It's true! The promise that we shall rise from the grave and live forever though we die? It's true!

We rejoice because Jesus has risen from the dead, but not because He is a long-time friend we watched die amid our sorrow, and now we have Him back. No, we rejoice because the promises of forgiveness, life and salvation are guaranteed, valid and true, and apply to us! We don't know Jesus intimately like a friend, but we shall! That also is one of those promises - that we shall know as we have been known. On that day in heaven, we shall have the opportunity to get to know Jesus as intimately as the disciples do. Then our joy in the resurrection will be as personal and as much about a loved one rising from the grave as the joy of these women on that first Easter.

Until then, it is just about forgiveness. Until then, it is just about knowing that God loves us and that we do not have to fear Him as some sort of danger, but to love Him as a Father. Until we have the face-to-face joy of seeing Jesus and talking with Him, we have the quiet peace of knowing that He has accepted us even though we are sinful, and has cleansed us and that He will do everything on our behalf to guard us and keep us until we have that day of face-to-face in heaven.

On Good Friday, the earth shuddered as the Lord of Life was killed. On Easter, **“there was a great earthquake.”** Today, if there is any shaking at all, it is from the joyous hymns of praise sung by those who know the love of God, and believe all the blessings and promises we have received because of Jesus Christ.

The women did not know all of this at first, but they learned it, and it only made their joy that much sweeter. And now you know it, too. He is risen! He is risen indeed. Hallelujah! Amen.

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

PRAYER FOR EASTER

The Lord is risen! He is risen, indeed!

Almighty and eternal God and Father, we praise and glorify Your name for You have done great things for us, and we are glad. We thank You for the glorious resurrection of Your Son Jesus Christ from the dead, for His triumphant victory over death and the grave, and for the life and immortality He has brought to light. We rejoice that by Baptism we have been buried with Him into His death, and raised again to a new life and the sure hope of heaven.

Risen Lord Jesus Christ, abide with us, walking with us through our life and death. Help us to know the hope to which You have called us as Your redeemed children. Comfort us with the forgiveness of sins, and uplift us with Easter power and joy in all our doubts and conflicts. Give us Your Spirit so that we may daily conquer sin, death, and the devil, and remain steadfast and firm, always busy in the work of the Lord.

Fill Your Church on earth, O Lord, with the power of eternal life. Stir up Your people to a living hope, fill them with Your resurrection joy, and remove from them all fear of death. Strengthen them for their task of proclaiming to the very ends of the earth the message of Your cross and empty grave. Provide shepherds who will feed and lead Your flock with the grace and truth of the Gospel and Your holy Sacraments.

Bless our land and those who rule over us. Make all governments the guardians of peace and justice, and inspire them with true wisdom and reverence for Your holy name, so that Your Church may flourish and the Gospel of triumphant life in Christ may spread rapidly.

Fill our homes with resurrection life and joy. Make the light of Easter victory shine into every dark place in our lives, and give us abundant life in our risen Lord. May His victory give comfort to the lonely and forsaken, hope to the sick and sorrowing, and strength to those who are facing death. May the song of Easter victory sound again among all who are fearful and uncertain, lifting them out of their doubt and defeat, and leading them back to the glorious confidence and certainty of faith in Him who was dead but is alive for evermore.

May the God of peace who raised from death our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, whose death sealed the eternal covenant, provide us with every good thing we need to do His will, and work in us what pleases Him, through Jesus Christ. To Him be glory for ever and ever! Amen.

Article: Dimensions of Love

Have you ever swum in the ocean? It is very impressive. There is no comparison with a pool. With a pool you have sides close by but think of the ocean. It's vast. Collectively, the oceans on earth cover more than 70 percent of the surface of earth. And the sea is tremendously deep in places. The deepest is the in the Mariana Trench, located in the western Pacific Ocean. At its deepest part, it is just under 11 kilometres deep. Mount Everest by comparison is 8.8kms high. So if Mount Everest were sunk in the Mariana Trench, its peak would be a couple kilometres under water.

In Ephesians 3:14-19, St. Paul writes that he prayed for the Christians to understand the dimensions of God's love in Christ. God's love is great beyond all our thinking or imagining. Its breadth knows no bounds; its length no limits; its height and depth, no end.

How great is the love of Christ for us? It reaches from the height of heaven to the depth of death. God loved us so much that He sent His Son to suffer for our sin, to die in our place. God Himself paid the debt we owed Him for all our sins of every size and shape, of every description and dimension.

God's love is so great that all the atrocities of human history could not dim, dull, dampen, or diminish it. God the Son willingly came to live our life and die our death. He rose and lives to give us life in spite of death. He sent His loving Spirit to convince us of His love through His Word of love.

Jesus loves sinners! He did it all for us not because we were good, but because we were bad; not because we loved Him, but because we hated Him; not because we had done anything for Him, but because we had done everything against Him; not because we deserved salvation, but because we deserved damnation; not because He needed us, but because we needed Him; not because we wanted Him, but because He wanted us.

There is no greater height of love or depth of caring. It is beyond our ability to grasp. But let us also remember its length and breadth. The length of His love extends over the whole world. He died for all, absolutely all people. He died for the people who commit the worst horrors you have ever heard.

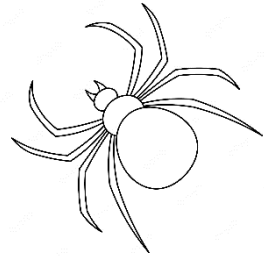
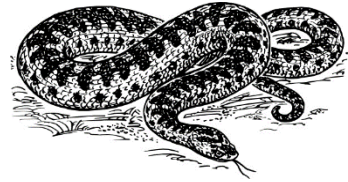
Jesus died for the worst sinner I know. He died for me. Jesus died for the worst sinner you know. He died for you. For each of us has more information about his own sins than about anyone else's. But that need not matter anymore. All is forgiven. Christ died for us.

How can we not love Him - though our love can never compare to His - and how can we not love all those for whom He died?

Children's Message:

I want to start today by asking you a question. Have you ever been afraid? Yes. We've all been afraid. No matter how old we are, we sometimes get afraid.

Now, look at the three pictures to the right. They are three that may make us afraid. Let's see. I do not like snakes. Snakes make me afraid every time I see one. Are you afraid of snakes? All right, next one. A spider. Spiders always scare me. Are you afraid of spiders? All right. Last one. This one is a little more difficult. This person is on the edge of a very high place. And if this were me, I'd be very afraid because I'm afraid of heights. I get very nervous and afraid if I'm in a high place close to the end of a cliff or a building or anything.



In one of our Bible readings today, we hear these words: "Do not be afraid." On Friday, we had a church service remembering when Jesus died on the cross for us. He was buried in a tomb, and all of Jesus' friends were very afraid and sad. But two days later, two of Jesus' friends, both named Mary, were going to visit the place where Jesus was buried, and some very strange things happened. First, there was an earthquake. Then, in the place Jesus was buried, there was a big stone, but an angel came down out of the sky, rolled back the stone from the tomb, and sat on top of it. Both of the women named Mary were afraid, but the angel spoke to them and said, "Do not be afraid" The angel told them the best news in the whole world. Jesus was not dead anymore. Jesus was alive again. And the angel told the women to go tell Jesus' other friends the good news. And as they were going, who should appear, but Jesus! You now what Jesus said to them? He said, "Stop being afraid!"



There are times we're afraid, but Jesus promises to be with us even those times. So when we are afraid, we can remember that Jesus is with us, and we can remember His words: Stop being afraid. That's the wonderful news of Easter, isn't it! Since Jesus is risen, we don't need to be afraid! *Thank You Jesus, because now that You have risen from the dead, I no longer need to be afraid! Amen.*

WEEKLY ANNOUNCEMENTS

16 April 2 Easter	23 April 3 Easter	30 April 4 Easter
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 & Bible Study	10.00am OAK HC AELC Service
Sunday, 16 April		
READINGS: Acts 5:29-42;	1 Peter 1:3-9;	John 20:19-31
HYMNS: 101 97 100 103 TMBA & AUB: 276 97 100 311 75 103		
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		

Tomorrow, 10 April, 10.00am. Parish Sunday School Picnic at Aubigny. Everyone is invited. Could each family please provide something for a shared lunch and/or dessert?

PLEASE NOTE: Due to Betty Hausler's funeral service next Wednesday at Greenwood, Women's Guild has been cancelled for April. We shall hold our next meeting on May 3 at Lowood.

BIBLE STUDIES:

Thursday, 20 April, 10.00am at Lowood.

Sunday, 23 April, after service at Marburg.

Down's Bible Studies will resume in May.

Parish AGM - Sunday, 30 April, after the AELC Service to be held at Oakey.