

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

28 May – Pentecost

HYMNS: 123 121 306 134

INTROIT: Psalm 25:1-15

I am lifting up my soul to You, O LORD.

O my God, I trust in You. Let me not be put to shame! Let my enemies not gloat over me!

Certainly, no one who waits in hope for You will be put to shame. Those who act treacherously without any reason will be put to shame.

Make Your Ways known to me, O LORD! Teach me Your paths!

Lead me in Your truth and teach me! For You are the God who saves me. I wait in hope for You all day long.

Remember, O LORD, Your compassionate and merciful deeds! For they have existed from eternity.

Do not remember the sins of my youth or my rebellious acts! According to Your mercy remember me, because of Your goodness, O LORD!

The LORD is good and upright. Therefore, He teaches sinners in the Way.

He leads humble people in what is right and teaches humble people His Way.

All the paths of the LORD are mercy and truth for those who keep His Covenant and His Testimonies.

For the sake of Your name, O LORD, pardon my guilt! For it is great.

Who, then, is the man who fears the LORD? He will teach him in the way that he should choose.

He himself will dwell in prosperity, and his descendants will inherit the land.

The intimate advice of the LORD is for those who fear Him, so that He causes them to know His Covenant.

My eyes are constantly on the LORD. For He will pull my feet out of the snare.

COLLECT: O God, on this day You once taught the hearts of Your faithful people by sending them the light of Your Holy Spirit. Grant us in our day by the same Spirit to have a right understanding in all things and evermore to rejoice in His holy consolation; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, 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 ddaelc@gmail.com.

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

READINGS:

Numbers 11:24-30 The Spirit causes Eldad and Medad to prophesy.

Acts 2:1-21 Filled with the Holy Spirit.

John 7:37-39 Streams of living water.

Numbers 11:24-30

²⁴ Moses went out and told the people what the LORD had said. He also gathered seventy men from the elders of the people and made them stand around the tent. ²⁵ Then the LORD came down in a cloud and spoke to him and took some of the Spirit who was on Moses and put Him on the seventy elders. When the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied but did not continue to do it. ²⁶ Two men, the one named Eldad and the other named Medad, had remained in the camp. The Spirit also rested on them. They had been among those who had been listed but had not gone out to the tent. However, they prophesied in the camp.

²⁷ Then a young man ran and told Moses, “Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp!”

²⁸ Joshua, the son of Nun, who had been Moses’ assistant since he had been a young man, spoke up and said, “My master, Moses, stop them!”

²⁹ Moses asked him: “Are you jealous for my sake? I wish that all the people of the LORD were prophets and that the LORD would put His Spirit on them!”

³⁰ Then Moses and the elders of Israel went back to the camp.

Acts 2:1-21

¹ When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place.

² Suddenly a sound like a violent blast of wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ They saw tongues that separated, like flames, and one rested on each of them. ⁴ They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages as the Spirit gave them the ability to speak.

⁵ Jews who feared God from every nation under heaven were staying in Jerusalem. ⁶ When that sound occurred, a crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard the disciples speaking in his own native language. ⁷ They were astonished and amazed and asked: “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans?” ⁸ Then how is it that everyone of us hears in his own native language, ⁹ Parthians, Medes and Elamites, people living in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and the province of Asia, ¹⁰ people living in Phrygia and Pamphilia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene, visitors from Rome, Jews as well as proselytes, ¹¹ and people from Crete and Arabia? We hear them declaring in our own languages the wonderful works of God.”

¹² They were all amazed and puzzled. They asked one another, “What does this mean?” ¹³ Others sneered: “They are full of new wine.”

¹⁴ Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed them: “Men who are Jews and all of you who are living in Jerusalem, understand this and listen closely to what I say! ¹⁵ These men are not drunk, as you suppose. For it is only nine in the morning. ¹⁶ Rather, this is what has been spoken through the prophet Joel: ¹⁷ ‘In the last days, God says, “I shall pour out My Spirit on all people. Your sons and your daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions and your old men will dream dreams. ¹⁸ Indeed, even on My male slaves and female slaves I shall pour out My Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. ¹⁹ I shall show wonders in the heaven above and miraculous signs on the earth below: blood, fire and a cloud of smoke. ²⁰ The sun will turn dark, and the moon turn to blood before the coming of the great and splendid day of the Lord, ²¹ and everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”’

John 7:37-39

³⁷ On the last and greatest day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried aloud, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink! ³⁸ As the Scripture has said, ‘Streams of **living water will flow from** inside the person who believes in Me.’” ³⁹ By this He meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were going to receive. For the Spirit had not yet come, because Jesus had not yet been glorified.

STREAMS OF LIVING WATER
Sermon for Pentecost 2023
John 7:37-39

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 our Gospel from before, John 7:37-39: **On the last and greatest day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried aloud, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink!”³⁸ As the Scripture has said, “Streams of living water will flow from inside the person who believes in Me.”³⁹ By this He meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were going to receive. For the Spirit had not yet come, because Jesus had not yet been glorified.**

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

Dear friends in Christ,

Today is the Feast of Pentecost, a major festival in the Christian Church Year. Today we celebrate the giving of the Holy Spirit, whom our ascended Lord Jesus Christ poured out on His church. We read about this in the second chapter of Acts. That was the beginning of the worldwide spread of the Gospel, and you and I are here today as Christians because of what began on that first Pentecost.

Actually, though, that was *not* the first Pentecost. The Christian Feast of Pentecost has its roots in the Jewish Feast of Pentecost. That’s why all those people were there in Jerusalem in the first place. They had come to observe the Jewish feast.

There were three main festivals in the Jewish year, in the Hebrew calendar, when all pious Jews from all over would travel to Jerusalem and up to the temple to fulfil their religious duty. They were these three: the Feast of Passover, in the early spring; the Feast of Weeks, also called Pentecost, which occurred seven weeks, or fifty days, later in the spring; and then in autumn, the Feast of Tabernacles or Booths. These three were called the *pilgrimage festivals* because they called for Jews to make that pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

Now at this point, one could ask, “*Who cares? All those festivals are ancient history, and none of us are Jewish! What does all that have to do with me?*”

Well, the answer is a lot! We shall see this morning how these Old Testament feasts are fulfilled in Christ. When we see how the Feast of Tabernacles and the Feast of Passover came to fruition now in the Feast of Pentecost, then we shall rejoice in the good gifts that God gives.

Today's text is the Gospel from John 7, consisting of words that Jesus spoke at the Feast of Tabernacles. Why have this text on Pentecost? The reason is that in this text, *Jesus is predicting what will happen at the Feast of Pentecost*. What is known today as the Old Testament Scriptures had predicted this truth.¹ Those who come to Jesus and drink are those who believe in Him, and everyone who believes not only has received life-giving water but **“Streams of living water will flow from inside the person who believes in Me.”**

God's Holy Spirit leads thirsty souls to Jesus. He works the faith that drinks the refreshment Jesus offers. The Spirit enters the heart of a believer, and the believer calls others to learn of Jesus.

When Jesus had finished His work of salvation and entered His glory, God's Holy Spirit was poured out upon the believers in special measure. This happened on Pentecost when the Spirit turned loose the streams of water from the disciples, and the water of life has flowed through believers to countless thirsting souls in every age since.

But our starting point this morning is the Feast of Tabernacles. Tabernacles commemorated the time when the Israelites travelled through the wilderness and lived in tents, or tabernacles, on their way to the Promised Land. During those years of wilderness wandering, the LORD God had graciously provided for His people by giving them food and drink, even in a dry and desolate desert. He had miraculously supplied them with bread from heaven and water from a rock.

Do you recall that incident from the time of Moses? The Israelites were out in the wilderness; they were thirsty and grumbling that there was no water to drink. So, the Lord told Moses to strike a rock with his staff, and water would come out of it, and the people would drink. That happened: Moses struck the rock, water came out, and the people drank.² It even happened a second time when

¹ Isaiah 58:11; Zechariah 14:8

² Exodus 17:1-7

the Lord once again supplied them with water.³ God was graciously providing for His people while they wandered in the wilderness.

The Feast of Tabernacles was a time when the Jews would gather in Jerusalem to commemorate that great provision. Tabernacles was a week-long festival, with various ceremonies and rituals taking place throughout those days. One of the rituals involved water. Each morning, water was drawn from the Pool of Siloam and carried in a golden pitcher to the temple. The water was poured out, the trumpets sounded, and the people sang the words of Isaiah, “*You will joyfully draw water from the wells of salvation*” (12:3).

This is where we meet Jesus in the Holy Gospel for today. He’s in Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles. The water ceremony was vivid and fresh in people’s minds. That’s where we pick up the text: “**On the last and greatest day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried aloud, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink! ³⁸ As the Scripture has said, ‘Streams of living water will flow from inside the person who believes in Me.’”**

What is Jesus saying here? He’s saying: “*If you think the way the LORD God provided water for our forefathers in the wilderness was great, guess what? There’s something even greater in store. That water satisfied their thirst for a time, but I have water that will satisfy your thirst for eternity. Are you thirsty? Come to Me and drink.*”

How about you? Do you feel thirsty? How many realise that life is like wandering in the wilderness? Apart from God, this world is a dry and desolate desert with sin and death all around. Do you see the sin and death within you? Then you are thirsty. Then you are ready to drink. Then you are ready to receive what the Lord wants to give you: Living water - the water of life, eternal life. Come to Jesus and drink! And when you come to Jesus and drink and believe in Him, that living water springs up in you and flows out from you and through you to others. That’s the work of the Spirit, that’s what Pentecost will be about, and that’s why this Feast of Tabernacles text was chosen as the Gospel for the Feast of Pentecost. As John adds, “**By this He meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were going to receive. For the Spirit had not yet come, because Jesus had not yet been glorified.**”

So we’re heading toward Pentecost, but we’re not there yet. We’ve got one more feast to stop at before we get there - that’s Passover - and it’s hinted at in

³ Numbers 20:10-11

the words, “**because Jesus had not yet been glorified.**” Jesus will be “glorified,” in a very unexpected way, at Passover.

What was Passover in the Old Testament? Like Tabernacles, Passover likewise was associated with the Lord’s deliverance of His people at the time of Moses. Israel was in Egypt in slavery, and the Lord acted to bring them out of that bondage. The Lord brought a series of plagues upon Egypt to convince Pharaoh to let His people go. The last plague was the death of the firstborn. That plague would have struck the homes of the Israelites, too, except that the Lord had instructed Moses to have the people sacrifice a lamb without spot or blemish and spread its blood on their doorposts. The lamb's blood would be a sign, death would pass over their homes, and the people would be spared. That night would be their exodus from Egypt, from the land of their slavery.

The Feast of Passover was how the Jews remembered that great deliverance. And it was at a Passover, many years later, that the feast would find its fulfilment. Jesus was with His disciples, and at the end of the Passover meal, He instituted something new and greater: “*Take eat, take drink. This is My body, this is My blood, given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.*” Then He went out, was betrayed and arrested, and delivered to death, even on a cross. The only Son of God becomes the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. His blood marks our doorposts, and we are spared. Death passes over. And strangely enough, *this is how Jesus is glorified.* It brings glory to Jesus to die for the sins of the world, to die in shame even though He is sinless. God is glorified chiefly in showing mercy, and this is His greatest act of mercy: giving His Son into death for our salvation. No greater glory is there than in the revelation of divine mercy in the cross of Jesus Christ.

And when Jesus died on that cross for our salvation, and He gave up His spirit, and the soldier pierced His side with a spear, a sudden flow of blood and water came out of His side. Truly of Christ Jesus, it can be said, “**Streams of living water will flow from inside the person who believes in Me,**” for His pierced side, given into death, is the source of our eternal life. The Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, who proceeds from the Son, flows out from Christ the crucified and gives you life.

At Tabernacles, Jesus was not yet glorified. At Passover, Jesus is glorified, by His death and resurrection, to be followed by His ascension into heaven forty days later. Ten days after that, fifty days later, we finally come to Pentecost, when Jesus pours out the Spirit on his church.

But again, we want to back up and find out the Old Testament background for this feast. Pentecost was also called the Feast of Weeks, coming, as it did, seven weeks after Passover. It fell in mid-to-late spring, the time for the early harvest. Therefore, the Feast of Weeks, or Pentecost, celebrated the blessings the Lord had bestowed on Israel when they settled in the Promised Land. It was a land flowing with milk and honey, with abundant crops, and Pentecost or Weeks rejoiced in that great abundance from God. People came to the temple and gave thank-offerings of grain from out of the early harvest. This was called the firstfruits offering since the firstfruits signalled that there was much more to come.

So that's where we are on the Day of Pentecost, in Acts chapter 2. We're in Jerusalem with the multitudes of Jews who had come on pilgrimage from all the nations where the Jews had been scattered. "*Jews who feared God from every nation under heaven were staying in Jerusalem... Parthians, Medes and Elamites, people living in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and the province of Asia,* ¹⁰ *people living in Phrygia and Pamphilia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene, visitors from Rome, Jews as well as proselytes,* ¹¹ *and people from Crete and Arabia.*"

What does this mean? It means that God is now going to have a firstfruits offering from among these nations. The harvest is ready to be brought in. It's about to start. The Spirit is poured out on the disciples. Peter starts preaching. This is how the harvest will be gathered. Peter begins telling them the mighty works of God. He will make known to them what God has done for them in Christ so that "*everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved*" (Acts 2:21).

Dear friends, this is what the Feast of Pentecost is all about. It's about the Gospel going out to all the world, calling people to repentance and faith in Christ - calling us to repentance and faith. From Tabernacles to Pentecost, with Passover along the way, the message is still the same: The streams of living water are flowing out from Christ to us! Therefore, come to Jesus and drink! Amen.

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

PRAYER FOR PENTECOST

Almighty, eternal God, we praise You today for giving the Holy Spirit to the Church to bear witness to Your saving truth in Jesus Christ. Fill Your Church again now with heavenly power, and sanctify Your people as they now come before You in praise and prayer.

We praise You, above all else, for the precious gifts of faith, eternal life, love, joy, and peace through Your Spirit. We thank You for His inspiration of the prophets and apostles who wrote Your Word. We thank You for protecting the Holy Scriptures, so that we still have them today. Grant that we may be eager to hear Your Word also today. May we receive the words we hear as Your words, and so remain in Your truth and life. Help us to appreciate them and to use them as a lamp for our feet and a light for our path day by day. Help the precious truths of Your Word to shine brightly among all people, so that many more may gladly accept Your truth, and trust in the Saviour. We thank and praise You for the willingness and courage that the Spirit has given to Your people ever since the days of the apostles, to spread the Gospel among the nations. Give us similar willingness and courage, that people everywhere may learn to sing Your praises and to rejoice in Your salvation.

Loving Father, by Your Spirit renew in us sincere repentance for our sins and faith in Jesus. Direct and rule our lives, that we may grow daily in knowing and loving You and our Saviour Jesus Christ. Give us the continuing peace and comfort of Christ's saving love. Arouse within us a genuine desire for all that is right, holy, pure, and just. Cleanse us in both body and soul so that, as temples of the Holy Spirit, we may be loyal to our Saviour, obedient to His words, faithful to His church, and untiring in deeds of love and mercy. Help us to live in holiness, and save us from all unrighteousness. Grant us the spirit of mercy, kindness, peace, and goodwill.

May Your truth and Word have pride of place throughout our land. Teach all people to walk in Your ways, and to respect Your holy will.

Give Your Holy Spirit, the Advocate, to all who must pass through dark valleys and deep waters, that they may find in You their strength and comfort for ever. Be the guardian of all in danger, the friend of all who are lonely, the strength of all who are tempted, the comfort of all who sorrow, the hope of all who despair, and the health of all who are sick. In everything, help us to be filled with the Holy Spirit, for Jesus' sake, in whose precious name we pray. Amen.

Article: Thank God, We are Christians

Some time ago, a news item said that, according to a pastor, a well-known convict had “found Jesus” in prison. It occurred to me that Jesus was not the one who had been lost. We should hope that the convict was brought to faith in Christ. We should also hope that he gave God the glory for his conversion instead of taking credit for it himself.

Years ago an evangelistic campaign used the slogan, “I found it.” Buttons and bumper stickers were distributed with those words. Someone asked me whether it should not be, “I found Him.” I suggested that it should be, “He found me.”

It is amazing to hear those who profess faith in Christ speak as if a person converted himself, as if a person could by his own choice and effort, make himself a believer in Christ. The Bible says clearly that fallen man cannot do anything at all toward his conversion, much less convert himself (1 Corinthians 2:14).

The Apostle Paul never once, in all his letters to Christians, thanks them for believing in Christ. But he regularly thanks God for their faith in Christ (Romans 1:8; 1 Corinthians.,1:4-6; Ephesians 1:15-16; Philippians 1:3-6; Colossians 1:3-6; 1 Thessalonians 1:2-5; 2 Thessalonians 1:3-5; 2:13; 2 Timothy 1:3- 5; Philemon 4-6). He gives God alone all the credit, all the glory and gratitude, for their faith.

Christianity is completely different from human religions. Every human religion teaches that we must try to get to God by our own efforts. The Bible teaches that God has come to us in His grace and power. Every human religion is a feeble failure. Christianity is a supreme success.

There is no ladder by which we sinners can climb to heaven - and if there were, we would not have the will nor the strength to climb it. But God has come to us, to save us, to rescue us, and to take us to Himself in heaven.

God the Father has sent God the Son to become a true Man, to live as we should have lived, to die as we should have died - all in our place, and to earn for us the forgiveness of all our sins: God the Father and God the Son have sent God the Holy Spirit to work in us through Word and Sacrament - to bring us to the faith and to keep us in the faith. God-given faith receives the forgiveness and salvation that Jesus has earned for us.

In John 1:41, Andrew says that they had “found” Christ. He means that they knew where Christ was located, for He had come to them. Jesus is everywhere (Ephesians 4:10). We “find” the Lord only where He comes to us: in the Word and the Sacraments (Isaiah 55:6-12).

Children's Message:

Hi, kids! Remember what we talked about last week? We talked about what pastors wear. Remember how pastors wear a kind of a robe, this thing we call an alb (or cassock and surplice). And every pastor also wears a stole. Pastors don't choose whatever they want to wear, because wearing special pastor clothes - especially the stole - instead of his own choice reminds us that pastors don't say whatever they choose to say. Pastors are only to say what God's Word in the Bible says.

But there is one thing the pastor wears today that is different from last week - and it reminds us how we're able to speak those words from the Bible. Last week the pastor's stole was white, but today it's red. That's because last week was the Easter season, and we wear white for Easter, but today is a special festival we call Pentecost, and for Pentecost we wear red.



What do you think about when you see red? Red is also the colour of fire. And on Pentecost, little tongues of fire came over all the apostles' heads. That was a signal that God the Holy Spirit had come to them. Pentecost is the day we celebrate the Holy Spirit coming to us.

Here's what the Holy Spirit does. When we read or hear God's Word in the Bible, the Holy Spirit comes in the Word and causes us to believe it. Every word of the Bible is about Jesus - how we need Him as our Saviour and how He has saved us by dying on the cross for us. The Holy Spirit causes us to believe that, and then we have eternal life in heaven.

But the Holy Spirit also enables us to tell people about Jesus. He uses me to tell you about Jesus. Who else does He use? Your Sunday School teacher tells you about Jesus. Even though Sunday School teachers don't wear a special robe, they still tell you about Jesus. The same way with your parents and so many others. You get to tell others about Jesus too. You sing the hymns, you participate in the service. The words you're saying are all about Jesus. You can tell your friends too.

And when you see the pastor wearing his red stole, you have a wonderful reminder: the Spirit is using Pastor to tell me about Jesus.

Thank You, Jesus, for sending the Holy Spirit to me! Help me to tell others all about You. Amen.

WEEKLY ANNOUNCEMENTS

4 June Trinity Sunday	11 June 2 Pentecost	18 June 3 Pentecost
8.30am OAK LR 9.00am TMBA LR 9.30am GRN LR 9.30am AUB LR 9.00am LOWOOD HC	8.30am OAK HC 9.00am TMBA LR 9.30am AUB LR 10.15am GRN HC 9.00am LOWOOD LR	8.30am OAK LR 9.00am TMBA HC 9.30am GRN LR 10.45am AUB HC 9.00am MARBURG LR
Sunday, 4 June		
READINGS: Genesis 1:1-2:4a; Acts 2:14a-22-36; Matthew 28:16-20		
HYMNS: 140 139 136 (789 842) 221		
Sunday, 11 June		
READINGS: Hosea 5:15-6:6; Romans 4:13-25; Matthew 9:9-13		
HYMNS: 329 300 305 (170 292) 440 verse 1		

Sunday, 11 June, 1.30pm. Seminary Committee meeting at Bethlehem Toowoomba.

Tuesday, 13 June, 7.30pm. Men's Fellowship at Oakey. Opening devotion: Jeff.

Wednesday, 14 June (note the date!) 10.00am. Women's Guild at Bethlehem Toowoomba. Opening devotion: Jeanette. Choose a Bible verse from Leviticus 17-20. Item of Interest: a bag or handbag.

BIBLE STUDIES:

Friday, 16 June. 7.30pm GRN.

Sunday, 18 June. 8.00am TMBA.

Thursday, 22 June. 10.00am LOWOOD.

Friday, 23 June. 7.30pm. OAK/AUB at Oakey.

Sunday, 25 June. MARBURG after service.