

Australian Evangelical Lutheran Church
BETHLEHEM TOOWOOMBA, OUR SAVIOUR LOWOOD, ST JOHN'S AUBIGNY,
ST PAUL'S GREENWOOD, TRINITY MARBURG, TRINITY OAKY
4 February Fifth Sunday after Epiphany

HYMNS: 308 16 796 839 292 241

INTROIT: Psalm 147:1-11

Praise the LORD! For it is good to sing praises to our God. For it is pleasant; and a song of praise is beautiful.

The LORD is the Builder of Jerusalem; He is the One who gathers the outcasts of Israel together.

He is the Healer of the broken-hearted; He is the One who binds up their sores. He counts out the number of stars; He calls them all by name.

Great is our Lord and great is His might; there is no limit to His understanding.

The LORD comes to the aid of humble people; He brings wicked people down to the ground.

Sing a song of thanksgiving to the LORD; sing praise to our God with the lyre. He covers the heavens with clouds; He provides rain for the ground; He makes the grass grow on the mountains.

He gives food to the animals, and to the young ravens that call out.

He does not delight in the strength of the horse; He takes no pleasure in the legs of a man.

The LORD takes pleasure in those who fear Him, in those who wait for His mercy.

COLLECT: O Lord, keep Your family, the Church, continually in the true faith, that, relying on the hope of Your heavenly grace, we may ever be defended by Your mighty power; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

READINGS: Isaiah 40:21-31 God is unequalled in power and knowledge.
1 Corinthians 9:16-23 Free to be all things to all people.
Mark 1:29-39 Jesus heals many people.

Welcome to all worshipping with us!

Pastor Ziebell can be contacted via phone/text at 0407 583922.

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

Pastor is usually in his office Tuesday-Wednesday for anyone who would like to call in. Other days of the week are set aside for visits.

Isaiah 40:21-31

²¹ Do you not know? Do you not hear? Have you not been told from the beginning? Have you not understood the foundations of the earth? ²² He is the One who is enthroned above the circle of the earth and those who live on it are like grasshoppers. He stretches out the heavens like a veil and spreads them out like a tent to live in. ²³ He reduces princes to nothing. He has made the rulers of the earth worthless. ²⁴ Indeed, they have hardly been planted, they have hardly been sown and their stem has hardly taken root in the ground, when He has blown on them, they have dried out and a windstorm carries them away like stubble.

²⁵ “To whom will you compare Me, that I should be equal to him?” asks the Holy One. ²⁶ Lift up your eyes on high and see! Who has created these? He brings out their army by number. He calls them all by name. Because of His great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing. ²⁷ Jacob, why do you say and Israel, why do you complain, “My way has been hidden from the LORD and my just claim is disregarded by my God”? ²⁸ Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not become tired or weary. His understanding is unsearchable. ²⁹ He gives power to weary people and He increases the strength of those who have no vigour. ³⁰ Even young people will become tired and weary and young men will indeed stumble; ³¹ but those who wait on the LORD will receive new strength. They will cause their feathers to grow like eagles. They will run and not become weary. They will walk and not grow tired.

1 Corinthians 9:16-27

¹⁶ If I tell the Good News, I have nothing to boast about, because I am compelled to preach it. How terrible for me if I do not tell the Good News! ¹⁷ For, if I do it because I want to do it, I receive a reward. However, if I do not want to do it, I still have this work entrusted to me.

¹⁸ What then is my reward? Just this: That when I tell the Good News, I shall not let the Good News cost anyone anything, so that I may not take advantage of my authority in the Good News.

¹⁹ For, although I am free from all people, I have made myself a slave to all, in order that I may win more. ²⁰ To the Jews I have become like a Jew, that I may win Jews. To those who are under the Law I have become like one under the Law, although I myself am not under the Law, that I may win those who are under the Law. ²¹ To those who are without the Law I have become like one

who is without Law, although I am not without God's Law, but am under Christ's law —, that I may win those who are without the Law. ²² To weak persons I have become a weak person, that I may win those who are weak. I have become all things to all people, that in every way I may save some. ²³ I am doing everything because of the Good News, that I may become a participant in it. ²⁴ Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one wins the prize? Run in such a way that you may win! ²⁵ Everyone who enters an athletic contest goes into strict training. Now, they do it to win a wreath that withers, but we do it to win one that never withers. ²⁶ Therefore, I am not like one who runs aimlessly. I do not box like one who beats the air. ²⁷ Rather, I treat my body roughly and make it my slave, so that, after I have been a herald to others, I myself may not be disqualified.

Mark 1:29-39

²⁹ Immediately after they left the synagogue, they went into the home of Simon and Andrew, together with James and John. ³⁰ Simon's mother-in-law was lying down with a fever and they told Jesus about her at once. ³¹ He went to her, took her hand and lifted her up. The fever left her, and she began to wait on them.

³² In the evening, when the sun had set, people kept bringing to Him all who were sick and those who were demon-possessed. ³³ The whole city had gathered at the door. ³⁴ Jesus healed many who were sick with various diseases and drove out many demons, but He would not allow the demons to speak, because they knew Him.

³⁵ Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went away to a lonely place and there He prayed. ³⁶ Simon and those who were with him searched for Him. ³⁷ When they found Him, they told Him, "Everyone is looking for You."

³⁸ He told them, "Let us go somewhere else, to the small towns that are near, so that I may preach there also! For I have come forth for this purpose."

³⁹ He went and preached in their synagogues everywhere in Galilee and drove out the demons.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY AND THE LIFE EVERLASTING

Sermon for the 5th Sunday after the Epiphany 2024

Mark 1:29-39

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 Mark 1:29-39: **Immediately after they left the synagogue, they went into the home of Simon and Andrew, together with James and John. ³⁰ Simon's mother-in-law was lying down with a fever and they told Jesus about her at once. ³¹ He went to her, took her hand and lifted her up. The fever left her, and she began to wait on them.**

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³⁹ He went and preached in their synagogues everywhere in Galilee and drove out the demons.

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

Dear friends in Christ,

Jesus healed many people. On a Sabbath afternoon, "**Simon's mother-in-law was lying down with a fever,**" and Jesus healed her. Then, "**in the evening, when the sun had set, people kept bringing to Him all who were sick and those who were demon-possessed. ³³ The whole city had gathered at the door. ³⁴ Jesus healed many who were sick with various diseases and drove out many demons.**" No matter what the disease, Jesus healed the sick and drove out the demons. Nothing was too difficult for Him.

Wouldn't it have been good to be sick back then? I mean, if you were unwell, you could just walk up to Jesus, ask Him to heal you, and bang! You're all better. When Jesus heals someone, they are immediately healed. Lots of people - you who are here today in the Lord's house, or others that you know - have aches

and pains or ongoing health issues that you wish would go away. To be completely healed and back to full health - wouldn't that be nice?

Jesus was pretty good at healing people back then. As we just said, Simons' mother-in-law "**was lying down with a fever.**" The disciples told Jesus about her, and "**He went to her, took her hand and lifted her up. The fever left her.**" She was flat on her back, sick with a fever. But Jesus comes in, takes her by the hand, and lifts her up. Immediately, the fever is gone, just like that, "**and she began to wait on them.**" So, does this mean that Jesus only does these things for His friends? Or does He heal her so that she can fix Him some lunch or something?

No, I don't think that's it because lots of others get healed, too. Jesus seems to be healing all sorts of people with all sorts of problems, and rather indiscriminately. Not just friends. Not just fevers. Not just mothers-in-law who can get up and bring you a nice cup of tea and a sandwich. No, Jesus looked to be in the healing business back then - really into it.

That was then, this is now. So, what are we? Don't our needs count because, God knows, we have enough of them! There's no lack of sick or needy people among us. There are aches and pains from bad bones. There's failing hearing and eyesight. Ongoing health issues. Some can't even make it to worship because of their own lack of health and so on. I am sure there is no shortage of those who would appreciate a healing or two, and I am sure lots of prayers are offered - and appear to go unanswered.

So, perhaps our health problems are caused because of our lack of faith. If only we would believe harder, then we would get a healing. Or maybe it's some unconfessed sin in our lives. We've got to obey better in order to earn our healing. Is this it? **Absolutely not!** Then why? Why does Jesus allow us to continue in our suffering? Did Jesus go out of the healing business? Why the favouritism for those who lived in the first century? Has Jesus lost His touch? Can't Jesus muster up some miracles for His followers today? What happened to the healings?

Here's the deal. All those people who were healed back then in the first century all died. Peter's mother-in-law? Dead. You see, Jesus healed them, yes. But then they all went on to die later on. The healing was only temporary. And so it would be for us.

So, what was the point of Jesus doing these healings? If it was only a temporary stop-gap measure, and if it was only for a few years during His public ministry, and only for a few living in Galilee, then what was the point?

The point was to demonstrate what would be the ultimate outcome of Jesus' coming among us. The healings were a sneak preview, if you will, of the *permanent healing* to come. In other words, what Jesus had come to do, the purpose of His mission will result in complete healing and wholeness forever. There is nothing temporary about it. We are headed for an eternal healing. And on the basis of Christ's coming, where's He's going with all of this, as He walks about Galilee, dispensing blessing left and right, there's a place He's moving toward, there's a direction in which He's going, and when He gets there and does what He had come to do, then that is going to issue forth in complete and total restoration for all those who trust in Him. That's you, and that's me. That's the young person suffering from cancer and the old man in the hospice who's taking it a day at a time.

You see, all these afflictions and ailments we suffer under, the sicknesses and sorrows - they all have one cause, and they all have one cure. ***The cause is sin, and the cure is Christ***. Now, when I say the cause is sin, I do not mean that this particular sickness is caused necessarily by that particular sin. That would be tying cause and effect too narrowly. But in a broader sense, yes, generally, all sickness, all death, is the result of sin. Our sin. The fallen sinful condition that we all share. You and I have sinned against God, in many ways breaking His commandments, and we reap the brokenness and the consequences and the curse that our race of sinners has come under.

So Christ came to deal with this root cause that produces all the bad results. The only way for that root of sin to be dealt with is - well, it's *precisely what Jesus did*. The Son of God came as our brother, keeping God's Law in our stead. Jesus Christ is the only one who has earned God's favour through His works. There was no cause for death in Him, but to deal with our death, Jesus had to take it upon Himself. ***“Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went away to a lonely place and there He prayed.”*** In His prayers, Jesus spoke with His heavenly Father about the work that lay before Him and thus found strength for continuing His task. Paying the price for our sins on the cross, God's own Son would win forgiveness for everyone - yes, even you. Nothing you have ever done wrong is too big or too small for Christ not to have included in His death on the cross. All of it has been covered. You are completely forgiven, for Christ's sake. *“The blood of Jesus, His Son, cleanses us from all sin”* (1 John 1:7).

So when you are sick, when you are suffering, it's not as though God is punishing you. That punishment Christ has already taken in your place. No, God is doing another work in your life, namely, drawing you close to Himself.

inviting you to take refuge in His infinite, yet intimate, mercy. Your heavenly Father is holding you in His loving arms, enfolding you in His loving embrace. This is a time to be reassured of His goodness, knowing that Christ Jesus had died and risen for you and that your eternal future is *secure*.

Yes, Jesus is still in the healing business. It's not like He has lost His touch. The healings He performed long ago were enough to show that this is what is in store for all of us, and with no expiration date on it.

Dear friends, our Lord Jesus has touched you, forgiven your sins, and claimed your body as included in His healing. It happened when you were baptised - when you were joined to Jesus' resurrection, and God washed that saving water over your body. It happens every time you receive Christ's body and blood into your mouth - again, God is saying, "*I have redeemed your body, as well as your soul.*"

God is committed to the healing of your body - indeed, of His whole physical creation - all of which will be restored, new and glorious when our Saviour Christ comes again. These old bones of ours will be made new, no longer subject to disease or decay or death. I don't know yet exactly what all that will look like, but I do know that it will be great, and it will be forever, *and it will surely happen*.

Right now, if you are faced with an illness of any kind or suffering in some way, it's tough and very real, and it doesn't go away when you wake up in the morning. And so, of course, we rightly cry out, "*Lord, help me!*" And we pray that the Lord will, in His mercy, grant healing to the sick, even here in this life. Sometimes, the Lord does this healing work through doctors, to whom He has given such wisdom.

But should that not be the case, should the physical healing not come, we know that the Lord has something even better in store for us. There will come a morning when we shall wake up from the nightmare, and the pain will be no more. Just as our Lord Jesus Christ arose on Easter morning, so too all who trust in him will arise. This is our sure hope. This is what we are looking forward to. This is what all those healings in Jesus' ministry were pointing ahead to - the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting.

Jesus is still in the healing business. He's doing it here today, among us, every time His gospel comes to us in Word and Sacrament. Total forgiveness, total healing, for sick and dying sinners. Complete wholeness, in body, soul, and spirit, begun now and completed at Christ's second coming.

"Jesus healed many." He has healed, and He will heal all of us, too! There is healing - a real, final, forever healing - for all who belong to Christ. Amen.

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

PRAYER FOR THE FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

Father in heaven, we who are Your children by grace pray that Your kingdom may come. We thank and praise You that You have revealed Jesus as Lord and Christ, and as King for evermore. We pray that His rule may be established from sea to sea and from the rising to the setting of the sun, that every nation, people, and tribe may confess that He is Lord, to Your glory. We thank You that, though He is King of kings, He humbled Himself and became our servant, so that He might be our Saviour, able to save all who come to You through Him.

Gracious Father, You do not enjoy seeing sinners die, but would rather see them turn from their sinning and live. Therefore spread the Gospel, and extend Your kingdom among all nations on earth. Cause the mighty to bow before Jesus their Lord, and teach all people to know that there is healing and saving power only in Him.

Although we rejoice that Your kingdom is already with us, make it come with fresh power and new blessing into our lives. Make the peace of Christ to rule in our hearts, and move us to thankfulness and praise. Give us increased trust in Your Word and obedience to Your commandments. Give us grace to be humble, merciful, kind, and forgiving. Make Christ's message in all its richness live in our hearts and direct all we do and say. Grant that we, redeemed in body and spirit, may be dead to sin and alive to righteousness. Lead us to rejoice in Your grace, and to give thanks for Your mercy day by day.

We pray for Your Church on earth. Keep it from weakness and error, from unfaithful shepherds and false teachers. Protect us from heresy and division. Defend us from the lies of Satan and from the schemes of godless men. Make Your Church secure against the powers of hell. Teach Your people to be patient in hope, firm in trust, and faithful in prayer, until that day comes when You send Your angels to gather Your own into Your everlasting kingdom.

Comfort those who are cast down. Give patience to the sick, peace to the anxious, strength to the weak, help to the needy, and forgiveness to the repentant.

Pour out Your mercy on us all, and teach us to set our hearts on things above, where Christ our Lord lives and reigns. In His holy and precious name we pray. Amen.

Article: We Look to Christ Alone for Salvation

The Bible tells us to look at ourselves. That is the Law! When we look at ourselves in the mirror of God's Law, we see only sin. The Law teaches the certainty of damnation. Then, the Bible tells us to look at Christ. That is the Gospel! Without Christ, damnation is certain. With Christ, salvation is certain.

The Gospel directs us to look outside ourselves, to look at Christ. Jesus compared Himself to the brass serpent that Moses put on the pole (John 3:14-16; Numbers 21:4-9). The Israelites had been bitten by snakes. Those who looked within themselves to fight off the venom died. Those who looked outside themselves, at the serpent on the pole, lived.

We do not have within ourselves any spiritual resources that can save us. Those who trust themselves are lost. Those who trust Christ are saved. Christian faith is not faith in faith. Christian faith is not faith in the Christian. Christian faith is faith in Christ.

Only Lutheranism teaches the Gospel purely (those who do not proclaim it purely are not Lutheran, even if they claim to be). We rejoice that there are Christians who are not Lutherans. Through the Gospel, the Holy Spirit has brought them to believe the Gospel and trust Christ. But they are in danger in their fellowships, for they are told to look to themselves for salvation. We should be told to look to Christ alone for salvation.

Christian faith and hope are based only on Christ and the salvation He has procured for us outside ourselves. Salvation is brought to us from outside ourselves by God's Spirit through the Gospel in all its forms (including Absolution, Baptism, Communion). Dr. C. F. W. Walther said: *"The characteristic feature of our dear Evangelical Lutheran Church is her objectivity, which means that her entire teaching is designed to keep man from seeking salvation within himself, in the powers of his nature and will, in anything he does or is, and to bring him to seek salvation outside of himself. The teaching of all other churches is of a subjective character; it trains man to base his salvation upon himself."*

May God keep us faithful to the true Biblical Gospel to life everlasting. May He cause His Word to be proclaimed freely to the ends of the earth, to the end of the world!

Children's Message:



Have you ever been lost? Maybe you were in a shop or a park, and suddenly you couldn't see your parents anymore. It can be very scary to be lost. You don't know where to go. You can't find your way. But if you get lost, your parents and other people will come looking for you. It is such a good feeling to be found!

When Jesus came to earth, He had a lot of work to do. He taught the people about the kingdom of God. He told them that God loved them. People who were sick came to Jesus, and He made them well. Crowds of people followed Jesus to listen to Him and to be healed. So many people came that Jesus was busy all day teaching, helping, and healing them. So, very early in the morning, even before sunrise, Jesus would go outside to find a quiet place to pray to His heavenly Father.

One day, while Jesus was outside praying, His disciples were looking for him, but they couldn't find Him. Was Jesus lost? The disciples looked everywhere and finally found Him! They told Jesus, "*Everyone is looking for You!*" Jesus said, "*Let us go somewhere else, to the small towns that are near, so that I may preach there also! For I have come forth for this purpose*" (Mark 1:37-38). So Jesus went to many different towns to teach about God and heal the sick.

Of course, Jesus wasn't really lost. He had just found a quiet place to pray. Jesus wasn't lost; He came to find us who were lost! Without Jesus, we were lost in sin. That means we didn't know what to do about our sins. We didn't know how to be forgiven. Without Jesus, we didn't know how to get to heaven. But Jesus said that He came "*to seek and to save the lost*" (Luke 19:10). He died on the cross and rose from the dead for us. When we were baptised, the Holy Spirit created faith in our hearts. We believe that Jesus is our Saviour. We are not lost in sin anymore! Because Jesus died for us, our sins are forgiven. Jesus is the way to heaven. We were lost, and Jesus found us!

When Jesus lived on earth, many people came to Him for help. Many people today don't know about Jesus. They don't know that He can help and save them. They are lost in their sins. They don't know the way to heaven. We can tell people about Jesus and His love. We can tell them that Jesus came to seek and save the lost. Jesus loves them, and He came to find and save them! *Thank You Jesus for seeking me out and finding me! Help me to also seek out others for Your kingdom, telling them the good news You have given me to share. Amen.*

Trip to America

Pastor is still planning a trip to the USA later this year, working between the dates of August 7 and 18. It is still early days yet in the organising, but the following is a rough time frame, to give you some idea. We can begin to work out a schedule as soon as we have numbers.

We hope to leave Australia on Wednesday, the 7th of August, arriving in the USA on the same date. We shall visit the Ark Encounter and the Creation Museum over two days and then travel to Decatur, where we can worship with our brothers and sisters of the ULMA on Sunday, 11 August. The following week is still unplanned, but we can set aside a few days for sightseeing, etc. Pastor will talk with the ULMA people about ideas.

Return flights are hovering around \$1900.00, and plan around \$150.00 a night for accommodation. Tickets into the Ark and Creation Museum are around \$135.00 for dual entry into both attractions and can be purchased here before we go. I suggest you work on a budget of around \$5000.00 as the minimum for the trip. However, this does not include food, souvenirs, transport, etc. There is the possibility that some ULMA members may put us up while in Decatur, or drive us around, saving a little more money.

So, anyone interested in coming along, **please let pastor know by the end of February.**

WEEKLY ANNOUNCEMENTS

11 February The Transfiguration	Ash Wednesday	18 February 1 Lent
8.30am OAK LR 9.00am TMBA LR 9.00am GRN LR 9.30am AUB LR 9.00am MARBURG HC	Wednesday, 14 Feb. Oakey Vespers, 7.30pm. Thursday, 15 Feb. Marburg HC. 7.00pm.	8.30am OAK HC 9.00am TMBA LR 9.30am AUB LR 10.15am GRN HC 9.00am LOWOOD LR
Sunday, 11 February		
READINGS: Exodus 34:29-35; 2 Corinthians 3:12-18; 4:1-6; Mark 9:2-9		
HYMNS: 747 37 358 (84 291) 152		
ASH WEDNESDAY		
READINGS: Joel 2:12-19; 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10; Mark 6:1-6, 16-21		
HYMNS: Marburg: 54 310 59 (294 282) 48 v.1 Oakey: 54 310 59 48 v.3		

Wednesday, 7 February, 10.00am. Women's Guild at Bethlehem Toowoomba. Opening devotion: Narelle. Choose a Bible verse from Numbers, chapters 13-16. Item of Interest: A hair clip or scrunchie.

Saturday, 10 February, 1.00pm. Fellowship afternoon at Bethlehem Toowoomba. All are invited to attend, Please bring something for afternoon tea.

Sunday, 18 February, **1.00pm**. Seminary Committee meeting at Bethlehem Toowoomba.

Thursday, 22 February, 10.00am. Bible Study at Lowood.

Congregation AGM dates:

Trinity Marburg: Sunday, 11 February, after service.

Bethlehem Toowoomba: Sunday, February 18, 2.00pm.

Our Saviour Lowood: Sunday, March 3, after service.