

Australian Evangelical Lutheran Church
BETHLEHEM TOOWOOMBA, OUR SAVIOUR LOWOOD, ST JOHN'S AUBIGNY,
ST PAUL'S GREENWOOD, TRINITY MARBURG, TRINITY OAKY
18 February First Sunday in Lent

HYMNS: 57 part 1 756 195 313 290 57 part 2

INTROIT: Psalm 25:1-10

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

O my God, I trust in You; do not let me be put to shame; do not let my enemies triumph over me!

Certainly, no one who waits in hope for You will be put to shame. Those who are unfaithful for no 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 of my salvation! I wait in hope for You all the day.

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

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

The LORD is good and upright, therefore He teaches sinners in the way.

He leads humble people in justice, and He teaches humble people His way. All the paths of the LORD are mercy and truth, for those who keep His covenant and His testimonies.

COLLECT: O Lord God, You led Your ancient people through the wilderness and brought them to the promised land. Guide the people of Your Church, that, following our Saviour, we may walk through the wilderness of this world toward the glory of the world to come; 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!

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.

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

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.

READINGS: Genesis 22:1-18

James 1:12-18

Mark 1:9-15 The temptation of Jesus.

Genesis 22:1-18

¹ After these things, God tested Abraham. God said to him, “Abraham!”

He replied, “Here I am.”

² God said: “Take **your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love**, and go to the region of Moriah! **Sacrifice** him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains that I shall point out to you!”

³ Abraham got up early the next morning and saddled his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. He cut the wood for the burnt offering. Then he got up and started out for the place about which God had told him. ⁴ On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. ⁵ Then Abraham told his servants: “Stay here with the donkey and let the lad and me go over there, that we may worship! Then we shall come back to you.”

⁶ Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and laid it on his son Isaac and he himself carried the burning coals and the knife. The two of them went on together. ⁷ Then Isaac said to his father Abraham, “Father!”

Abraham said, “Here I am, my son.”

Then Isaac said, “Look! We have the fire and the wood where is the lamb for a burnt offering?”

⁸ Abraham answered, “God will provide Himself with a lamb for the burnt offering, my son.”

The two of them went on together. ⁹ When they reached the place about which God had told him, **Abraham** built the altar there and arranged the wood on it. Then he tied up **his son Isaac** and laid him **on the altar**, on top of the wood.

¹⁰ **Abraham** reached out his hand and took the knife **to slay his son**.

¹¹ However, the Angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said: “Abraham! Abraham!”

He replied, “Here I am.”

¹² He said: “Do not lay your hand on the boy! Do not do anything to him! For I know now that you fear God. You have not withheld your son, your **only son**, from Me.”

¹³ When Abraham looked up, he saw behind him a ram caught by his horns in the thicket. So, Abraham went, took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. ¹⁴ Abraham named that place “The LORD Will

Provide.” It is still said today, “On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided.”

¹⁵ The Angel of the LORD called to Abraham from heaven a second time.

¹⁶ He said: “**“I have sworn an oath by Myself,”** declares the LORD, ‘that, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son,

¹⁷ **I shall certainly bless you.** I shall certainly also **make your descendants as many as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore.** Your descendants will possess the city-gates of their enemies. ¹⁸ **In your Descendant all the nations of the earth will be blessed,** because you have listened to what I have said.’”

James 1:12-18

¹² **Blessed is the man who patiently endures** when he is tested, because, when he has passed the test, **he will receive the crown of life,** which God has promised to those who love Him! ¹³ No one should say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God”! For God cannot be tempted to do evil and does not tempt anyone. ¹⁴ Each person is tempted when he is dragged away and enticed by his own desire. ¹⁵ Next, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin and, when sin has run its course, it gives birth to death. ¹⁶ Do not be deceived, my dearly loved fellow-Christians! ¹⁷ Every act of giving that is good and every gift that is perfect comes down from above, from the Father of lights, with whom there is no change or shifting shadow. ¹⁸ As He planned, He gave birth to us by the Word of truth, that we might be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures.

Mark 1:9-15

⁹ In those days Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptised in the Jordan by John. ¹⁰ Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, He saw heaven being torn apart and the Spirit coming down on Him like a dove.

¹¹ Then a voice came from heaven: “You are **My Son,** whom I love. With You **I am well pleased.**”

¹² At once the Spirit drove Him out into the wilderness, ¹³ and He was in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and the angels served Him.

¹⁴ After John had been arrested, Jesus went to Galilee and preached the Good News of God: ¹⁵ “The time has come, and the kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe in the Good News!”

THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS
Sermon for the 1st Sunday in Lent, 2024
Mark 1:9-15

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 1:9-15:

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

Dear friends in Christ,

Today is the First Sunday in Lent, which means that the Holy Gospel is an account of the temptation of our Lord. Matthew, Mark, and Luke all record this episode that took place immediately after Jesus' baptism.

This year, we hear from Mark, who tells the account briefly. Actually, it is only two verses as follows: **“At once the Spirit drove Him out into the wilderness,¹³ and He was in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and the angels served Him.”** In their accounts of Jesus' temptation, Matthew and Luke relate three specific attacks of Satan, while Mark simply presents the antagonists, Jesus and Satan.

Mark gets straight to it. The words **“At once”** stand out in Mark. When Jesus was baptised, He saw the heavens opening, and the Spirit **“At once”** drove him out into the wilderness. Jesus is plunged right into the conflict and opposition that would mark His ministry and lead to His death. The battle would be arduous and long. It would last 40 days with no breathing spells - totally unlike the 40 days Moses had spent on the mountain with God¹, and totally different from the 40 days Elijah spent on the way to Horeb sustained by the food God had provided².

At once, Jesus goes from His baptism in the Jordan to His temptation in the wilderness, and what I want you to see today is that this is how it is for us, too. We have been joined to Jesus in baptism, and so we also shall be tempted. There is no escaping it. Like our Lord, at once, we go from out of the water into the wilderness.

¹ See Exodus 24:18

² See 1 Kings 19:8

But before we go, it is Jesus who goes there first, out of the water, into the wilderness. He starts at the water, being baptised by John in the Jordan. There, Jesus sees **“heaven being torn apart and the Spirit coming down on Him like a dove,”** coming in peace to empower the Messiah for His mission. There also comes a voice from heaven, the Father’s voice, declaring, **“You are My Son, whom I love. With You I am well pleased.”**

Now we know who it is who is being baptised. This Jesus is the Christ, the only Son of God the Father, the promised Deliverer come in human flesh, loved by the Father, and well-pleasing to Him for taking on the mission to save mankind. This is the one being baptised in the water.

At once, Jesus is sent out into the wilderness. Notice the way Mark puts it. He tells us that the Spirit **“drove”** Him out into the wilderness. It’s the same word that’s used when Jesus drives out demons. That’s what the Spirit does to Jesus: He **“drives”** Him out into the dark and foreboding wilderness. The language used here is stark and jarring, almost violent. Jesus is not going out for a walk in the park. It’s a wilderness out there. A wild, savage, bleak place. In the Bible, the wilderness is a place of danger. A desolate, remote, lonely place, a place of isolation. A place where a man will be exposed to danger. But also a place where God will test His people, in this case, even His beloved Son. So Jesus will go through this ordeal.

“He was with the wild animals.” Mark is the only one to mention this detail. The wilderness may be uninhabited by humans, but it is a place for wild animals to prowl around. This is their turf, and you go there at your own risk. But Jesus goes, obedient to His Father’s will and the Spirit’s driving. He’s got work to do out there.

Jesus must endure and overcome the temptations of the devil. **“He was in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by Satan.”** Somebody had to do the job and get it right. A representative of the human race had to face down Satan and win. Our first parents, Adam and Eve, had blown it in the garden. Jesus prevails in the wilderness. Israel was in the wilderness for forty years, because they blew it when they were tempted into sin and unbelief and compromising their identity as God’s people. Jesus does not blow it. He withstands the tempting and carries on with His mission. All this lies in the mystery of Christ’s unique person. He is God in the flesh, true God and true man in one person, really tempted, yet without sin. There had to be a man, a second Adam, a faithful Israel, who would stand the test and prevail against Satan. Jesus is the one, and He does it in our place, staying faithful where we so often fail.

So, Jesus is tempted by Satan. “Satan” is another name for the devil, the evil one, the tempter. And Satan will go after this new Adam, this new Israel, just like he went after the old ones. Satan is the adversary, the enemy, the accuser of the brethren. But this time around, he has met his match and then some. For Christ had come to destroy the works of the devil. Those works include temptations to sin and unbelief and other great shame and vice. Temptations to pride and hypocrisy and refined godlessness. Temptations to tune out God and His Word. The temptations that we so often fall prey to and give in to. But Christ would have none of it. He stays on course, locked in and focused throughout the ordeal.

And then Jesus comes out of the wilderness, proclaiming the message He had come to fulfil: **“The time has come, and the kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe in the Good News!”** Out of the water, into the wilderness, and then out into ministry, Jesus stays true and faithful, staring down the danger and overcoming Satan and his temptations. And then He is bold to preach the same message that had gotten John the Baptist arrested and killed and will do the same to Him.

Make no mistake, this temptation in the wilderness is but a warm-up for the way of the cross. Jesus’ faithfulness was tested in the wilderness. His faithfulness will continue all the way to the agony in Gethsemane and at Golgotha. Jesus has work to do there, to pay the price for our unfaithfulness, the sin that brings death with it. That is what He takes on Himself at the cross, and that is how Jesus finally defeats Satan in the process. He will trample Satan underfoot, even as that serpent strikes at His heel. Sin, Satan, death, hell - all defeated and destroyed by the One who remains faithful, from the water to the wilderness to the wood of the cross. Christ came to destroy the works of the devil and to replace them with His own heavenly works: forgiveness, righteousness, resurrection, life everlasting. Here is our divine Champion! This Jesus is the man we need with us to make it through the wilderness.

Make no mistake about this. We are in the wilderness. Immediately, as soon as we were baptised, we were set in the midst of a wilderness. This world is a wilderness, and Satan is on the prowl here. He goes about like a roaring lion, looking for whom he can devour.³ Satan is like a deadly serpent ready to strike. Out of the water, into the wilderness: That’s how it goes for us, too, who have been baptised into Christ.

³ 1 Peter 5:8

And we would fall prey to Satan if we were going it on our own. “*The old evil foe, Now means deadly woe,*” we shall sing after our sermon, and “*With might of ours can naught be done, Soon were our fall effected.*” You know, it’s appropriate that Luther’s hymn, “A Mighty Fortress,” is used for the First Sunday in Lent, when the Holy Gospel is always Christ being tempted by Satan but winning the victory for us.

Luther once said that when we baptise an infant, this is serious business that will place the child in danger. He writes: “*Remember, therefore, that it is no joke to take sides against the devil and not only to drive him away from this little child, but to burden the child with such a mighty and lifelong enemy.*” You see, Satan hates Christians. He is our lifelong enemy, the adversary, and he is aiming for you. You have a target on your back. It was placed there when the sign of the cross was placed on your forehead and upon your heart at your baptism. Satan will tempt you in whatever way he can, to try to get you away from Jesus. Satan knows he cannot beat Jesus, but if he can just get you away from Jesus, then he will tempt you to let God’s Word go in one ear and out the other. Satan will tempt you to think you have better things to do than to go to church or do daily devotions. Anything to get you away from Jesus. Because when you’re on your own, you are vulnerable.

Dear friends, how is it with you? Are you aware of Satan’s little ways to pull you away from Christ? What form does that take in your life? Be on your guard for such things.

But not only do we have Satan to contend with, *we are living in the wilderness of this world*. This world is a lonely and desolate place, a hostile environment for Christians. We are surrounded by nothing that will reinforce our faith, only by wild beasts that threaten to rip our faith to shreds. Christians are made to feel isolated, alone, and out of place.

Therefore, we need one another. The church is the great caravan, the company of travellers walking together along the way, caring for one another, and supporting one another. And most of all, we need to stick close to Jesus. Satan cannot touch us with Jesus by our side. Christ supplies us with all that we need to remain strong in Him. We are fortified by the Word and the Holy Sacraments. These means of grace are food and nourishment for the journey.

As soon as we were baptised, at once, we went from the water into the wilderness. We have Satan tempting us. We have the world against us. You and I walk in danger all the way. “*But for us fights the Valiant One,*” our divine Champion. “*Ask ye, Who is this? Christ Jesus it is.*” Therefore: “*Though devils*

all the world should fill, All eager to devour us, We tremble not, We fear no ill, They shall not overpower us.” Why? Because we’ve come out of the water and into the wilderness, walking with Jesus all the way. Amen.

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

PRAYER FOR THE FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

Almighty God, heavenly Father, since every good gift comes from You, we approach You in prayer in the name of Your Son Jesus Christ our Saviour. Though we are ashamed because we are unworthy, we come with faith and confidence in Your fatherly love and mercy.

We thank You that You have given us Jesus Christ as our high priest. He knows our weaknesses, for He bore them. He knows our temptations, for He endured them, and learnt obedience by what He suffered. Grant that we may show our loyalty to You by absolute loyalty to all Your words, even when they seem baffling.

Lamb of God, slain for the sins of the world, cleanse us from our sins, and teach us obedience. Take away from us all desire to follow any will but Yours. Fill us with faith and love, that we may gladly believe and follow Your Word. Give us such trust in our heavenly Father’s protection that we always rejoice as we walk in His ways.

Holy Spirit of God, when we are led into the wilderness of testing, deliver us by Your power, and save us from the evil on every hand. Give us Your strength, and by the example of Jesus show us the victorious power of God’s Word.

Strengthen and bless Your Church. We praise You for the privilege of being co-workers with You to save people. Help us not to waste the grace of God that we ourselves have already received. Open the door of opportunity for us. Fill us with a faith that claims Your grace each day and then moves us to proclaim it to others. Because Your Gospel can make many people rich, give us joy in our witnessing, no matter what sacrifices we suffer.

Uphold our homes by the Gospel. Empower all parents to be true followers of Jesus, the light of the world, so that their example of faith and obedience may help their children also to know and follow Jesus.

Pour out Your Spirit on our country, O Lord, so that in their life and work all citizens may seek to show forth Your praise, power, and glory.

Be with all those who suffer, and let them know Your concern and compassion. Be with those who grieve, and comfort them with Your promises. Be with those whose earthly pilgrimage is coming to an end, and fill them with the sure hope of eternal life in Christ.

O Father, watch over all Your people, and bring us safely through this world to the kingdom that You have prepared for all who love You. We pray all these things in the name of Your Son Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Article: He Must Increase

“He [Jesus Christ] must increase, but I [John the Baptist] must decrease”
(John 3:30).

If ever a preacher was in a position to be tempted by pride, that preacher was John the Baptist. Crowds came from all over to hear him preach and to be baptised by him.

If ever a preacher was in a position to be tempted by jealousy, that preacher was John the Baptist. Jesus, whom John had baptised, began to attract more people so that it was said, “All are going to Him” (John 3:26).

Pastors are tempted by pride. They are tempted to think that the church is about them, about their abilities, talents, personality, intelligence, charm, etc. The pastor is, after all, the man on the scene. He is the one who is visibly doing so much work. Even the humblest pastor, who takes the blame when things go wrong, is therefore also tempted to take the credit when things go right.

Pastors are tempted by jealousy. They are tempted to be jealous of other pastors who are more popular or more successful in human eyes. A pastor may even be jealous of Christ if he sees that some people may be more interested in the Word of Christ than in the brilliance of the pastor or if someone corrects the pastor on the basis of the Bible.

Pride and jealousy are sins. But they are sins for which Christ died, for which He earned forgiveness. Jesus died for all human sin.

Pride and jealousy are not to dominate us. God’s power in the good news of forgiveness, for Jesus’ sake, moves us to fear and love God so that we may be humble and content with our position under Christ’s benevolent authority. Pastors and people stand together under Christ’s authority. More importantly, they stand together under the grace of Jesus Christ, which saves us.

John the Baptist is a good example of the right attitude for pastors. Christ must increase, but we must decrease. The pastor is not to be concerned with his own personal popularity. He is not to have a following of his own. The pastor is to be concerned that he does as John the Baptist did. John the Baptist directed people to Christ, saying, “Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). John told them, “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life” (John 3:36).

The pastor must point people to Christ, whether he enjoys the popularity which John had at one time, or whether he gets the axe as John did later. Every other idea about the ministry is nonsense.

Children’s Message:

Do you know any superheroes who defeat bad guys? There’s Batman, who beats the Joker. There’s Spider-Man, who stops the Green Goblin. Maybe you



know some other superheroes who defeat the bad guys. We like stories about beating bad guys. After all, they’re scary and mean. We don’t want them to hurt people. So, when superheroes win, we’re happy.

These stories and movies are just make-believe, though. They’re not real. We like to hear about superheroes, but we should remember that they and their bad guys are make-believe.

You know, though, there’s a really bad guy who is real! He’s a bad guy who’s scary and mean and wants to hurt people. He’s the devil, Satan. The devil is real, but we can’t see him. So sometimes people imagine what he may look like. Maybe you have an image of what Satan looks like in your own mind.

One way Satan tries to hurt us is to get us to do bad things, to sin. Things like yelling and saying mean things, or hitting someone. When Satan tries to get us to do these things, to sin, we call it “temptation.” When you give in to temptation and do a bad thing, Satan then also wants you to feel very bad. Like I said, he’s mean!

But today, we learn that Jesus, our Saviour, defeats this really bad guy for you. Satan tried to beat Jesus by tempting Him to sin, too. But Jesus won. He won when He obeyed God perfectly - didn’t sin like Satan wanted him to do - and then died on the cross and rose from the dead. Jesus won’t let this real but really bad guy hurt you. ***Jesus is always protecting you.***



And here's something amazing: God the Father says that when Jesus beat Satan by not sinning, that counts for you! So when Satan tempts you and you sin, God still loves you. And because Jesus never sinned and died on the cross for you, your heavenly Father forgives you. He counts it as if you've never sinned, as if you obeyed Him perfectly, just like Jesus did. He says you've defeated this bad guy, Satan, too.

Thank You Jesus, for defeating Satan for me. Help me to resist any temptation he brings. Amen.

Trip to America

Pastor is still planning a trip to the USA later this year.

The latest plan is to stay about three nights in Cincinnati, making that our base as we visit the Ark Encounter and the Creation Museum. We shall then travel on to Decatur, about 5 hours from Cincinnati, where on Saturday, the 10th of August, a fellowship get-together with members of the ULMA and the ACLC is scheduled. The next day, Sunday the 11th, a combined worship service of the ULMA, ACLC, and AELC will be held. This service will acknowledge the altar and pulpit fellowship we hold with one another. It promises to be a wonderful weekend!

If you wish to come along, **please let pastor know by the end of February.** Depending on numbers, the travel agent may be able to work on cheaper group discounts and bookings. Also, once numbers are confirmed, Pastor can let the ULMA people know, who may be willing to put us up for a few nights in private homes in the Decatur area.

WEEKLY ANNOUNCEMENTS

25 February 2 Lent	3 March 3 Lent	10 March 4 Lent
8.30am OAK LR 9.00am TMBA HC 9.00am GRN LR 10.45am AUB HC 9.00am MARBURG LR <p style="text-align: center;">Wednesday, 28 Feb 3rd mid-week Lenten Service</p> 7.30pm Toowoomba Hymns: 61, 58 part 1, 320, 48 v3	8.30am OAK LR 9.00am TMBA LR 9.00am GRN LR 9.30am AUB LR 9.00am LOWOOD HC <p style="text-align: center;">Wednesday, 6 March 4th mid-week Lenten Service</p> 7.30pm Aubigny Hymns: 53, 55 part 1, 60, 48 v3	8.30am OAK HC 9.00am TMBA LR 9.30am AUB LR 10.15am GRN HC 9.00am MARBURG LR <p style="text-align: center;">Wednesday, 13 March 5th mid-week Lenten Service</p> 7.30pm Oakey Hymns: 57 part 1, 171, 57 part 2, 48 v3
Sunday, 25 February		
READINGS: Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16; Romans 5:1-11; Mark 8:27-38		
HYMNS: 62 385 403 (848 51) 377		
Sunday, 3 March		
READINGS: Exodus 20:1-17; 1 Corinthians 1:18-31; John 2:13-25		
HYMNS: 345 270 457 (53 333) 75		

This afternoon, 1.00pm. Seminary Committee meeting at Bethlehem Toowoomba.

Thursday, 22 February, 10.00am. Bible Study at Lowood. We shall begin our study on Amos.

Congregation AGM dates:

Bethlehem Toowoomba: this afternoon, 2.00pm at the church.

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