

Australian Evangelical Lutheran Church
BETHLEHEM TOOWOOMBA, OUR SAVIOUR LOWOOD, ST JOHN'S AUBIGNY,
ST PAUL'S GREENWOOD, TRINITY MARBURG, TRINITY OAKY
24 March Palm Sunday

HYMNS: 9 86 10 87

INTROIT: Psalm 118:19-29

Open to me the gates of righteousness; I shall go through them; I shall give thanks to the LORD.

This is the gate of the LORD, through which righteous people will enter. I shall give thanks to You, for You have answered me, and You have become my Salvation.

The stone that the builders have rejected has become the Chief Cornerstone.

This has been the doing of the LORD; it is marvellous in our eyes.

This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

I beg You, O LORD, save me! I beg You, O LORD, give me success!

Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD! We have blessed you people from the house of the LORD.

God is the LORD, and He has given us light. Tie the festive procession together with branches of trees as far as the horns of the altar.

You are my God, and I shall praise You; You are my God; I shall honour You highly.

Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good, for His mercy endures for ever!

COLLECT: Almighty and everlasting God, You sent Your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, to take upon Himself our flesh and to suffer death upon the cross. Mercifully grant that we may follow the example of His great humility and patience and be made partakers of His resurrection; through the same 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!

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 ddaelc@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:

Zechariah 9:9-12 Rejoice, Jerusalem, your king comes to you.

Philippians 2:5-11 Christ, obedient servant and exalted Lord.

John 12:12-19 Jesus' entry into Jerusalem.

Zechariah 9:9-12

⁹ Rejoice greatly, **daughter of Zion!** Shout in triumph, daughter of Jerusalem! **Look! Your King is coming to you.** He is righteous and victorious. **He is humble and is riding on a donkey, yes, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.**

¹⁰ "I shall cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the horse from Jerusalem. The bow of battle will be eliminated."

He will proclaim peace to the nations. His dominion will extend from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth.

¹¹ "As for you also, because of the **blood** of your **Covenant**, I shall release your prisoners from the waterless cistern."

¹² "Return to your fortress, prisoners who have hope! Even today I declare that I shall restore twice as much to you.

Philippians 2:5-11

⁵ Have the same attitude as Christ Jesus had! ⁶ Although He was in the form of God, yet He did not consider His equality with God as a prize to exploit.

⁷ Instead, He emptied Himself, took on the form of a slave and became like other human beings; and, when He was found in the appearance of a human being,

⁸ He humbled Himself, becoming obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. ⁹ That is why God also has very highly exalted Him and given Him

the name that is above every other name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus **everyone** in heaven and on earth and under the earth **may kneel**, ¹¹ and that **everyone may confess** that Jesus Christ is **Lord**, to the **glory** of **God** the Father.

John 12:12-19

¹² On the next day, the large crowd that had come for the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. ¹³ They took branches of palm-trees, went out to meet Him and began to shout, "**Hosanna!**" "**Blessed is He who is coming in the name of the Lord!**" and "the King of Israel!"

¹⁴ Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, as Scripture has said: ¹⁵ "**Stop being afraid, daughter of Zion! Look! Your King is coming, sitting on the colt of a donkey.**"

¹⁶ His disciples did not understand these things at first, but, when Jesus had been glorified, they remembered that these things had been written about Him and that they had done these things to Him. ¹⁷ Therefore, the crowd that had been with Him when He had called Lazarus out of the tomb and had raised him from the dead continued to bear witness. ¹⁸ This was also a reason why the crowd went to meet Him, that they heard that He had performed this miraculous sign. ¹⁹ Therefore, the Pharisees said to one another, “You see that you are not achieving anything. Look! The world has gone after Him.”

OUR WAR IS OVER
Sermon for Palm Sunday, 2024
Zechariah 9:9-12

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 First Reading from before, Zechariah 9:9-12: **“Rejoice greatly, daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, daughter of Jerusalem! Look! Your King is coming to you. He is righteous and victorious. He is humble and is riding on a donkey, yes, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. ¹⁰ I shall cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the horse from Jerusalem. The bow of battle will be eliminated. He will proclaim peace to the nations. His dominion will extend from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth. ¹¹ As for you also, because of the blood of your Covenant, I shall release your prisoners from the waterless cistern.**

¹² “Return to your fortress, you prisoners who have hope! Even today I declare that I shall re-store twice as much to you.

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

Dear friends in Christ,

On the Sunday before His crucifixion, Jerusalem welcomed Jesus as her King. The nation of Israel recognised Jesus as the One who was promised, the One from King David’s line who would ascend his throne and reign as King forever.

However, no doubt, not everyone present who witnessed Jesus entering the city understood *exactly* the reason for His coming. There were some who did not realise that He was on the way to the cross. They weren’t fully aware of just who this Jesus was. They simply saw in Jesus nothing more than a popular Rabbi

and teacher. They did not realise that on that Sunday, Jesus was fulfilling the prophecy made some 500 years earlier by Zechariah, **“Rejoice greatly, daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, daughter of Jerusalem! Look! Your King is coming to you. He is righteous and victorious. He is humble and is riding on a donkey, yes, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”** They witnessed *“The large crowd... took branches of palm trees, went out to meet Him and began to shout, “Hosanna!” “Blessed is He who is coming in the name of the Lord!” and “the King of Israel!”* (John 12:12-13).

This festive scene meant that the Messiah had arrived – and what joy it was for them who believed! But to the rest, it meant trouble, unrest, a challenge to their authority and wealth, and possibly an invitation to Roman interference. This is why the Jewish leaders soon felt that they had to do *something* and do it quickly. The choices they made turned the week into what we call Holy Week, culminating in the crucifixion of what they considered a troublesome teacher and would-be-Messiah - but for us, salvation and the glorious joy of Easter!

“Rejoice greatly, daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, daughter of Jerusalem! Look! Your King is coming to you. He is righteous and victorious.”

How true those words are about Jesus! The very nature of Jesus is righteousness, and this description also highlights the nature of man’s problems. You see, we have sinned, and God is righteous. God had threatened death to anyone who sinned. In His righteousness, God could not simply ignore that judgment. There is something in us that knows that, too. Man’s sin causes him to be naturally terrified of God and to hate Him whenever He is confronted. Terror and hatred of God and the awareness of our own sins have twisted our humanity, and we have lost the spiritual ability to know God, to love Him, to understand Him or His will, or to trust Him.

Let’s look at it this way: Each of us has experienced or witnessed at least one of those sorts of things that have caused people to wonder *how God could allow such things to happen.* Perhaps it was the sudden innocent death of a healthy person. Maybe it was a critical illness striking down a beloved one or the sudden onset of some disease or affliction. Maybe it could have been a destructive act of nature, such as a fire or a flood destroying property. Even though *“we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, for those whom He has called according to His purpose”* (Romans 8:28), we still struggle to understand *how God could allow such a thing to happen or what good could*

*possibly come from such terrible circumstances. We cannot understand God. We cannot think the way He does. We cannot make sense of everything He does, and so *the natural thing to do is not to trust Him.* And so, we chafe and worry, and since we can't figure it out, we accuse God of being absent, unjust, or inattentive. We find it almost impossible, and often absurd, to thank God for everything when everything seems to be going wrong around us! We fret, worry, and despair - and that is sin!*

No, we should “**rejoice greatly.**” That is what Zechariah says - and it is echoed loudly in the New Testament as well. Paul says to the Church at Phillipi, “*Rejoice in the Lord always. And again, I shall say it. Rejoice!*” (Phil. 4:4). Again, he writes to the Church at Thessalonica, “*Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus*” (1 Thess. 5:16-17). On Palm Sunday, our Lord enters in righteousness and victory, and so, surely, we should be able to shout in triumph, “*Hosanna!*” “*Blessed is He who is coming in the name of the Lord!*”

Jesus entered Jerusalem “**riding on a donkey, yes, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.**” Most kings would ride in on a mighty stallion. Not Jesus. He entered humble and gentle. Salvation was already His to give. The victory was assured even before the battle began. Salvation is in His nature; it is one of Jesus' attributes. He did not need to win it so much as to demonstrate it and claim it by the exercise of His love and goodness. For this victory, He did not need flashes of thunder and armies and awesome signs to frighten the enemy into submission. No! He needed only to exercise His power in seeming weakness, to gain victory by what looked like defeat, and to create such great peace out of the intense violence and horrible assault of Good Friday. Zechariah promised that by this victory, the machines of war would be silenced when he said, “**I shall cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the horse from Jerusalem. The bow of battle will be eliminated.**”

Many have made the mistake of assuming that this means *earthly peace*, nation to nation. They mistranslate passages like Revelation 20 that speak of a thousand years as though Jesus will come and give a thousand years of peace on earth before the end. But such thinking is wrong. We are not talking about earthly war or peace. No, Zechariah is talking about the war that is the result of sin - it is our war with God. The mindset of the flesh is hostile toward God.¹ The King of the

¹ Romans 8:7

Palm Sunday coronation ride did not ride in to take control of an earthly kingdom. Less than one week later, He would explain to Pilate that His kingdom was not of this world. The peace He had come to establish was not that of nation to nation, but a bigger peace – peace between God and man by ending the war called SIN.

Mankind has been at war with God. In our sin, He is our natural enemy. Our guilt and shame make us hate Him, and He, for His part, is utterly offended at us and by our sin. Yet He is “**righteous and victorious**.” That is why we look over our shoulder and silently blame God when things seem to go wrong, one thing after the other, and we often feel that we have done a specific sin for which God is now dealing harshly with us.

Well, we would deserve it if He did! Our sins *are* an awful offence to righteousness, which is the very nature of God. We deserve anything and everything that God can throw at us! We deserve pain and misfortune in this life and eternal condemnation in the next. Our guilty consciences know that! The peace that this humble King comes to establish is peace between man and God. He does that by taking the full wrath of God against us and our sins on Himself. He did not ride into Jerusalem, unaware that the cross lay ahead of Him. He rode into Jerusalem to ascend His unique throne - to be nailed to that cross - and to suffer bitter agony and die the death that we have earned and so richly deserve.

The King of the Palm Sunday coronation ride endured the fear, the sorrow, the pain, and that horrid death in our place. Paul writes how “*He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him*” (2 Cor. 5:21). He took our sin so that we may share in the righteousness which He is, by nature, and that He may give us the salvation which is His fundamental quality to give. He ended the war - He silenced the sounds of battle and laid the implements of war to rest. God is no longer angry with us, and we are to be terrified of Him no longer! God has reconciled us to Himself by the blood of His Son Jesus Christ - shed for us on the cross. That is what Zechariah says: “**As for you also, because of the blood of your Covenant, I shall release your prisoners from the waterless cistern.**” Because of His covenant with us, sealed with His blood, we have eternal redemption.

Through us, the King of the humble ride is now proclaiming peace to the nations. It is the peace of sins forgiven. It is the peace of knowing the love of God for us, and His good will toward us - and what is His good will toward us? Our war is over. God is no longer the enemy to be feared - He is our loving

heavenly Father. Our real enemies, sin and Satan, have been utterly defeated and rendered powerless to do us any harm. “**The bow of battle** (has been) **eliminated.**”

And this is the gift of the King who rides “**on a donkey, yes, on a colt, the foal of a donkey,**” not a mighty horse of war. It is the gift that He pours out for all - and it is received by everyone who believes in Him - that is, everyone who knows what He has done and trusts the promises of God in connection with Jesus. Your sins have been forgiven. Jesus “**is righteous and victorious**” with salvation - it is His to give, and He would give it to you, and to all who take Him at His Word and learn to trust Him in life, and death, in good times, and in times that are difficult, painful, and troubling. *Fear not, for behold I am with you always!*

Jesus kept the promise of God, prophesied through Zechariah. Of course, He did it in ways no one expected - from riding on a donkey to dying on the cross. Thus, He has fulfilled the prophecy. He bids our hearts peace, peace with God, and peace in His love and protection because “**He is righteous and victorious.**” Amen.

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



PRAYER FOR THE SIXTH SUNDAY IN LENT (PALM SUNDAY)

Heavenly Father, we come into Your presence with thanksgiving and joy. You are a great God. You rule over the whole earth from the deepest seas to the highest hills. We bow down and worship You, for You are our Maker. We are the people You care for, and the flock for which You provide.

We thank and praise You especially that You have sent to us the living Word, Jesus Christ, Your Son. We praise You that He willingly accepted the disgrace of dying on the cross for us. Grant that we may keep our eyes fixed on Him, and may not grow weary in doing good, become discouraged, or murmur when we are chastened and corrected. Uplift us with the assurance that, as we share in Jesus' sufferings, so we shall also share in His resurrection to eternal life.

Save us, then, O Lord, not by any good deeds that we have done, but by Your mercy, through the new birth given in our baptism and the new life created by the Holy Spirit. Rescue us from all sin, and purify us to serve and praise You.

Put Your will into our minds, and write it into our hearts. Put Your song into our spirits, that we may proclaim with joy: "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!"

Give us the power to seek out those who are still strangers to Your salvation. Send workers to preach Your Word in truth, and to proclaim the name of Jesus as the only name under heaven through which people can be saved. Prosper the witness of all Your children throughout the world, that all may know You.

Give to our congregations joy and energy as we serve You. Give us all willing minds and pure hearts so that we may do our utmost to build and strengthen Your kingdom.

We pray for all who are burdened by sickness, sorrow, pain, anxiety, and fear of death. Be with them as they pass through troubled waters. Give them the faith that knows that You will deliver them in Your wisdom and love.

Lord, You are able to keep us from falling and to bring us faultless and joyful before Your glorious presence. To You, the only God, our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, might, and authority, in all ages past, and now, and for ever and ever! Amen.

Article: Jesus became One of Us

The Apostle Paul wrote to the Philippians, “*Have the same attitude as Christ Jesus had! Although He was in the form of God, yet He did not consider His equality with God as a prize to exploit. Instead, He emptied Himself, took on the form of a slave and became like other human beings; and, when He was found in the appearance of a human being*” (2:5-7).

Paul wrote to the Philippians during a time of persecution and affliction. The Philippian congregation was a small group and was dear to him. Luke remained among them for a time, as well. Their love for Paul and for their Christian brothers and sisters around the world - as Paul noted the Philippians’ generosity in his letters to the Corinthians - however, did not displace them from their situation.

Philippi was a Roman colony, but there was no Jewish synagogue there. In all likelihood, the members of this congregation were converted to the faith from idolatry. They were poor and few in number and, as a whole, looked down upon by the world. Even in the early years of the Church, Christians were looked down upon for their faith in Christ, sometimes harmed or killed. Put this all together – the Philippians’ poverty, their lack of numbers, and the external pressures of the world – and you can understand why Paul wrote to them. Even for the strongest Christians, the struggles of this life make it very tempting to turn inward on oneself, to focus on our own needs and cares. In contrast, Paul directed the Philippians to the mind of Christ, which was set only on them and on us. Christ only had His mind set on us, resulting in our salvation. By faith, He sets our minds on Him and on each other.

Luther says the following as part of his explanation of the Second Article of the Creed. “*I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord.*” Jesus is “*true God,*” and when Paul says that Jesus “*was in the form of God,*” this tells us that not only was Jesus God, but He did God’s “*stuff.*” He created, led, and defended His people. He provided for them in the wilderness.

Yet, Jesus did not consider His “*equality with God as a prize to exploit*” - something to be grasped. The Spirit’s language here in the Greek echoes the actions of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. When Adam and Eve saw that the forbidden tree was good for eating and making one wise, they

grasped and ate it. They grasped after being and acting like God; so, also, do we when we sin. Every sin we commit involves making ourselves the judges of right and wrong. Every sin is a small attempt to make ourselves God. But Jesus did not grasp after being God – even though He was God. Instead, He went the opposite route. He *“emptied Himself,”* He *“took on the form of a slave and became like other human beings.”* We confess that Jesus became in every way as we are. He became true flesh and blood and was subject to the hardships we endure, except without sin (Heb. 4:15).

Paul writes, *“He humbled Himself, becoming obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross”* (Phil. 2:8). Jesus lowered Himself to the punishment of the Law in our place; He took the punishment from God we racked up by our many sins. In the Gospels, we hear how Jesus was treated along the way. His own people tried to stone Him for speaking the truth. He was betrayed by one of His own disciples. He was struck and spit upon and mocked. He was flogged and crucified. Properly understood, He did not have to endure all these things; Jesus willingly submitted Himself to the will of the Father as Isaac did to Abraham when he carried the wood for sacrifice. Jesus did it all because, even in suffering, He had one thing on His mind: us. Even in His affliction, Jesus had His mind set on us and secured, by His death, our salvation.



Children's Message:

Who knows what today is called in the church calendar? Right! It's Palm Sunday, a very special day. The Bible says that on a day near the time of Jesus' death, He came into a city called Jerusalem. In those days, a special way to welcome someone was to lay palm branches on the ground. Big crowds of people did that for Jesus as He came into Jerusalem, and that's why we call it Palm Sunday.



The people understood that Jesus was someone special. They may not have understood everything about Jesus, but they knew that He was special. This comes from who He is and what He's done for us. Look at these words: *"The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified... Now My soul is troubled, and what am I to say? 'Father, save Me from this hour!?' No! For this reason, I have come to this hour. Father, glorify Your name!" Then a voice came from heaven: "I both have glorified it and shall glorify it again"* (John 12:23, 27-28).

A few short months ago, we celebrated Christmas. What do we celebrate about Jesus on Christmas? That's right. We celebrate Jesus' birth. In the Lenten Season, we learn the reason why Jesus was born. He came for one reason. The reason was to be lifted up on the cross. That means dying on the cross for our sins.

Jesus is our Saviour. He came as a baby in order to grow up to be a man. As a man, He taught His followers and helped them understand how much God loved them. And now, beginning on Palm Sunday, came the time for Him to show His love in the most amazing way: dying for our sins on the cross.

We believe in Jesus. We love Jesus. We love Him and believe in Him because Jesus first showed us such amazing love. He's given us everything, even His life, to take away our sins and take us to heaven. Let's pray.

Dear Jesus, we thank You for coming on Palm Sunday to save us. We thank you for the many ways You've shown us love. Please help us to remember and hold onto Your love this special day and every day of our lives. Amen.

WEEKLY ANNOUNCEMENTS

MAUNDY THURSDAY	GOOD FRIDAY	EASTER SUNDAY
March 27 (Wed) GRN 7.30pm HC March 28 (Thurs) MARBURG 7.00pm HC	8.30am OAK HC 9.00am TMBA LR 9.00am GRN LR 10.15am AUB HC 9.00am LOWOOD LR	6.00am TMBA PR Easter Sunrise Service (All welcome to attend) 8.30am OAK LR 9.00am GRN LR 9.30am AUB LR 9.00am MARBURG HC
Maundy Thursday		
READINGS: Exodus 12:1-14; 1 Corinthians 11:23-32; John 13:1-17, 31b-35		
HYMNS: 51 295 418 162 293 85		
Good Friday		
READINGS: Isaiah 52:13-53:12; Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9; John 19:17-30		
HYMNS: 63 67 348 (753 292) 81		
Easter Sunday		
READINGS: Isaiah 25:6-9; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11; Mark 16:1-8		
HYMNS: 88 761 100 (97 283) 103 TMBA: 88 105 761 95		

Today, we shall hold our Parish AGM.

April 1, Easter Monday, 10.00am. Children's Easter Picnic at Aubigny. Could each family please provide something for a shared lunch? (savoury, finger food, sweets, etc). Children, please take home with you today a colouring-in page and bring it along on the day! A prize will be awarded for the best picture in each age group.