

Australian Evangelical Lutheran Church
BETHLEHEM TOOWOOMBA, OUR SAVIOUR LOWOOD, ST JOHN'S AUBIGNY,
ST PAUL'S GREENWOOD, TRINITY MARBURG, TRINITY OAKY
Easter Sunday 2024

HYMNS: 88 761 100 103

INTROIT: Psalm 16

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Welcome to all worshipping with us!

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:

Isaiah 25:6-9 The LORD'S banquet of life.

1 Corinthians 15:1-11 The resurrection of Jesus and His appearances.

Mark 16:1-8 Christ has risen!

Isaiah 25:6-9

⁶ On this mountain the LORD of hosts will prepare for all peoples a banquet of rich food, a banquet with aged wines, rich foods full of marrow and refined, aged wines. ⁷ On this mountain He will destroy the surface of the shroud that is covering all peoples and the blanket that has been woven over all nations. ⁸ He **will swallow up death** for ever. The **Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces** and remove the disgrace of His people from the whole earth. For the LORD has spoken. ⁹ On that day people will say: "Look! This is our God. We have been waiting for Him to save us. This is the LORD, for whom we have been waiting. Let us rejoice and be glad that He has saved us!"

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

¹ My fellow-Christians, I am telling you the Good News that I told you, which you also received and on which you also stand. ² You are also saved by it if you cling to the Word that I have preached to you, unless you have become believers in vain. ³ For I delivered to you, first of all, what I also received: that Christ died for our sins as the Scriptures said He would, ⁴ and that He was buried and that He was raised again on the third day as the Scriptures said He would, ⁵ and that He appeared to Cephas and then to the Twelve. ⁶ After that, He appeared to more than five hundred Christians at the same time, most of whom are still living, but some have fallen asleep. ⁷ Then He appeared to James and then to all the apostles, ⁸ and, last of all, He appeared to me also, as to someone abnormally born. ⁹ For I am the least of the apostles and do not deserve to be called an apostle, because I had been persecuting the church of God. ¹⁰ However, by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me has not been without effect; but I have worked harder than all the others have — yet not I, but the grace of God, which has been with me. ¹¹ Now, whether I have done it or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you have believed.

Mark 16:1-8

¹ When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary, the mother of James, and Salome bought spices to go and anoint Jesus. ² On Sunday they were coming to the tomb very early when the sun had just come up. ³ They asked one another, “Who is going to roll away the stone for us from the door of the tomb?” ⁴ However, when they looked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back, even though it was very large. ⁵ As they went into the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting at the right side and were amazed. ⁶ He told them, “Do not be amazed any longer! You are looking for Jesus from Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen. He is not here. See the place where He was laid! ⁷ Go, however, and tell His disciples and Peter, ‘He is going ahead of you to Galilee. There you will see Him, just as He told you!’” ⁸ They went out and hurried away from the tomb, because they were trembling and bewildered, and said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.

JUST AS HE TOLD YOU

Sermon for Easter Sunday, the Resurrection of our Lord 2024

Mark 16:1-8

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 16:1-8: **When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary, the mother of James, and Salome bought spices to go and anoint Jesus. ² On Sunday they were coming to the tomb very early when the sun had just come up. ³ They asked one another, “Who is going to roll away the stone for us from the door of the tomb?”**

⁴ However, when they looked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back, even though it was very large. ⁵ As they went into the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting at the right side and were amazed.

⁶ He told them, “Do not be amazed any longer! You are looking for Jesus from Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen. He is not here. See the place where He was laid! ⁷ Go, however, and tell His disciples and Peter, ‘He is going ahead of you to Galilee. There you will see Him, just as He told you!’”

⁸ They went out and hurried away from the tomb because they were trembling and bewildered, and said nothing to anyone because they were afraid.

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

Dear friends in Christ,

“Do not be amazed any longer! You are looking for Jesus from Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen.”

Surely, this announcement of Christ’s resurrection from that young man dressed in a white robe in the tomb provokes a hearty response of faith and joy. Why? Because this is the heart of our great hope as Christians: that Christ our Lord has conquered sin and death for us and ***secured for us the sure and certain hope of our own resurrection and everlasting life***. As Jude writes, *“To Him who can keep you from falling and to make you stand without fault and with great joy in His glorious presence, ²⁵ to the only God, our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, power and authority, before all ages and now and for ever and ever!”* (Jude 24-25). Christ’s death and resurrection guarantee that we may now stand before Almighty God. Jesus has saved us!

Which makes our Gospel reading today a little strange since it doesn’t end the way we would like it to end. We want those women at the tomb who had just heard those great words, **“He has risen,”** to join us in a hearty “Alleluia!” We want them to go away from the tomb with a spring in their step and hearts full of confidence and assurance, ready to tell everyone they meet the good news they just heard. But they don’t. Instead, Mark records how **“they went out and hurried away from the tomb because they were trembling and bewildered.”** Surely, Mark could have ended his account of the resurrection on a more positive note.

But Mark’s ending is one that his original hearers, and we, can relate to because it really focuses our attention on the basis for our faith and our hope, the sure and certain words of Jesus. That comes through in this little phrase that the angel uses, referring to Jesus, **“just as He told you.”** So, let’s take it from the top.

Mark writes, **“When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary, the mother of James, and Salome bought spices to go and anoint Jesus. ² On Sunday they were coming to the tomb very early when the sun had just come up.”**

These women wanted to get there as soon as possible because Jesus' body had been placed in the tomb just before sundown on Friday, but then they could not do anything on Saturday since it was the Sabbath. They wanted to get there as soon as they could before the body deteriorated any further. But when they got to the tomb, things were not what they expected. **They asked one another, "Who is going to roll away the stone for us from the door of the tomb?"** ⁴ **However, when they looked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back, even though it was very large.** They look inside, but they do not see the body of Jesus. Instead, **"As they went into the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting at the right side and were amazed."**

The young man they saw in the tomb was an angel, and whenever angels appear to humans in the Bible, humans are always afraid. I suppose it's a natural reaction when confronted with the supernatural in the form of an angelic being. So there's that, plus they're confused and perplexed by the *absence* of Jesus' body. What's going on here? These women **"were amazed,"** but the angel immediately tells them, **"Do not be amazed any longer!"**

Up to this point, we can understand the women being alarmed. What happened to the tomb? What happened to Jesus' body? And who is this young man sitting here? It's all very confusing and alarming. But now you would expect the mood to change with what follows, as this young man dressed in a white robe begins to tell them why they should not be alarmed. He says: **"You are looking for Jesus from Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen. He is not here. See the place where He was laid!"** *"You have come to the right tomb. This is where they laid Him, but He has been raised from the dead."*

Well, this is good news indeed! The body has not been stolen. It's not been taken. No, Jesus is alive! Death could not hold Him! What could be better than that?

Then the young man continues: **"Go, however, and tell His disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you to Galilee. There you will see Him, just as He told you!'"** Now, the women have an assignment to carry out. The good news they have just received they are to pass on to others, in particular, to the disciples. Jesus' closest followers were the ones who had been with Him since the beginning, so naturally, they'll want to hear this.

But wait, these are the same men who had deserted Jesus in his hour of need just a couple of days earlier. When Jesus was betrayed and arrested, they all ran away. Peter, who had boasted that he would never do that, even denied Jesus three times. So, it's significant that the angel makes a special point of mentioning

Peter. In other words, *Peter has not been thrown out and cast aside*. No, Jesus wants him to be included in the good news, but really, *Jesus is forgiving all of them* for their failure that night, and He wants them to know it.

“Go, however, and tell His disciples and Peter, ‘He is going ahead of you to Galilee. There you will see Him, just as He told you!’”

“Just as he told you.” Yes, Jesus had told the disciples that this was what would happen. He had said this a few days earlier, on a Thursday night, when He predicted that they would all fall away when He was arrested and killed. But Jesus added, saying to them, *“After I have been raised, I shall go ahead of you to Galilee”* (Mark 14:28). See, disciples, everything is going along **“just as He told you.”**

So, we think back to Jesus’ words. Remember how, earlier in the day on that fateful Thursday, Jesus had sent two of the disciples into Jerusalem, where they would see a man with a water jar, and he would lead them to a house where there would be a room for the Passover? What happened then? *“They went, (and) found it as He had told them.”* (Luke 22:13).

What else had Jesus told them? Well, three times He had told them that they were going to Jerusalem, where He, the Son of Man, would be handed over and killed. But Jesus added each time the words, *“And after three days He will rise.”* Do you see? **“Just as He told you.”**

Do you get the point? *You can rely on Jesus’ words*. If Jesus says He will rise from the dead, He will rise from the dead. If Jesus says He is going before you to Galilee, and there you will see Him - you can pretty well be sure you will see Him in Galilee. If Jesus says He is forgiving and restoring those who had let Him down, that is what He will do. Jesus’ words are sure and certain.

Now, these words of Jesus are relayed to women by this young man dressed in a white robe. He has risen, just as He said. He is going before you, and you will see Him, **“just as He told you.”**

And this is where the situation of the women matches your situation here today. They had a young man dressed in a white robe telling them that Jesus had risen and that they would see Him. You, likewise, have someone to tell you the same thing. Yes, your pastor, just like the women at the tomb, is God’s authorised messenger who passes along to you the good news week after week. This is a message you can count on. You can rely on it. The words of Jesus are true and sure and certain.

You see, the resurrection validates everything Jesus has said and done up to this point, and that includes what Jesus had said about going to Jerusalem to suffer and die. Why would He do that? Jesus told us: “*The Son of Man has not come to be served but to serve and give His life as a ransom for many*” (Matt. 20:28). The cross is where He did that. Jesus, the Messiah, the very Son of God, died on that cross to pay the ransom that sets us free. Christ our Lord has redeemed us by His holy precious blood, setting us free from the burden of our sin, rolling the stone away from the grave that awaits us. Because, with our sins forgiven, *death no longer has any hold on us.* We shall share in Christ’s resurrection. We have Jesus’ word on it, and that is certain.

So we come away from Easter the same way the women came away from the tomb: with Jesus’ words passed along to us, the Good News, the Gospel, ringing in our ears. We haven’t seen the risen Christ, but we know we shall. He has gone before us, into heaven, and there we shall see Him.

OK, fine. But then why do the women go away scared, trembling and astonished and afraid? Well, think about it. Everything was so new and different from what they had expected. The reality of it all had not yet sunk in. And maybe there would be things to be afraid of now. Realise, the enemies of Jesus were still around. They had just killed Jesus. Now what about His followers? Would there be danger in store for them?

Yes, there well could be. Both back then and still now. Life can be dangerous for the followers of Christ. It’s no wonder we can be a little afraid.

But in this dangerous world, be assured, be comforted, and do not be alarmed. Christ has overcome death and all the evil that anyone can do to us. The victory remains with life. This life is ours. It is the gift of Christ our Saviour. No matter what, Jesus forgives us. No matter what, Jesus is risen, and we shall share in His resurrection. No matter what, He has gone before us, and we shall see Him, “**just as He told you.**” Amen.

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



PRAYER FOR EASTER SUNDAY

Heavenly Father, we thank and praise You for Your mercy in raising from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ. We thank You for the assurance His resurrection gives us of all our spiritual blessings.

Give us today the radiant joy of the first Easter. Fill our hearts with its glorious good news and precious promises. Make us glad that You have raised Christ, who was delivered because of our offences in order that You might reckon us as righteous before You. We praise You that, because of His resurrection from the dead, You will also raise us, and that death has no more power over us.

Grant us a living faith, free of all doubts, faith that accepts the sure evidence of His resurrection. Give us power to confess our risen Lord Jesus with our mouths. Grant that we may be faithful unto death, and receive the crown of life. Equip us through Christ, our life, who now sits as a human being like us, at Your right hand, with power to live the new life, with our minds on Him, our heavenly treasure.

Guide us by Your Word as we make our way through this world, so that we may walk in Your ways, trust in Your promises, and experience Your richest blessings in this life and the one to come.

Look in mercy on our homes. Fill our families with a sense of Your goodness and providence. Teach them to rejoice especially in the gift of endless life in Your risen Son.

Rule the nations of the earth, and lead them to be obedient to You. Direct the lives of all people, that they may fear and love You, and know the risen Lord, who has the words of eternal life.

We pray for Your Church. Grant that everywhere it may have faithful and true shepherds, who proclaim the Gospel with conviction. Give all believers greater confidence because of Jesus' resurrection.

Grant us a rich measure of Your Spirit, provide us with power, willingness, to do Your will, and the courage and ability to make your Gospel known to others. To Christ be the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Article: Jesus Has the Final Say

A long time ago Job said, *“Therefore, I wish that my words were written! I wish that they were inscribed on a scroll! ²⁴ I wish that they were engraved for ever on rock with a stylus of iron and lead! ²⁵ I myself know that my Redeemer lives and that at the last He will stand on the dust. ²⁶ After this, my skin will surround this body, and from my flesh I shall see God”* (Job 19:23-26).

These words of the prophet Job, where he expresses his confident hope in Christ’s resurrection, serve us well this fine Easter day. Today is the day that our Lord triumphed over death and the grave for us. Though He died, yet He lives. Because He lives, we shall live also. The empty tomb we celebrate today shows us that Christ, not death nor the devil, gets the final say.

The Book of Job is not always high on the list of books of the Bible that we love to read. That’s partly because of its length and partly because a large portion of it is poetic. These mark it harder for us moderns to dive into it than, say, Luke or Acts. Most of us, however, are familiar with Job, especially the opening chapters. In just the first chapter, Job, who was a righteous and faithful man, lost his seven sons and three daughters. Job was also a wealthy man who lost all his sheep, camels, oxen and donkeys, and beloved servants. In just a short course of time, Job lost everything that he had and loved. They all died. The temptation for Job throughout the book is to doubt God’s goodness and allow death and the devil to have the final say. Job’s friends and even his wife pester him to believe this.

It’s a temptation we share, as well, to think that death is the final authority. We think that we’re all going to die, and there’s nothing we can do but wait and accept our fate.

The women had accepted it when they went to the tomb. After all, it had been three days since they saw, with their own eyes, Jesus die on the cross. The reason they went to the tomb was to perform one last act of love for their Master. They were going to anoint His body with oil and spices to cover the stench of death’s decay. Jesus’ promised resurrection wasn’t on their minds – only the large stone blocking the entrance to the tomb and who was going to move it for them. They had accepted Jesus’ death – that death would claim Him just as it does everyone else – and now they only worried about how to get to His dead body.

When they got to the tomb, though, what did they find? They found that the stone had been rolled away. Going into the tomb, they found that it was empty, except for a young man sitting on the right side – an angel. The angel said to them, “*Do not be amazed any longer! You are looking for Jesus from Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen. He is not here*” (Mark 16:6) In other words, their ideas about who had the final say in all things were incorrect. It is true that Jesus did die. The death He died, He died as the once-for-all-time payment for our sins. But death could not hold Him, and it didn’t get the final say. The empty grave shows that it belongs to Jesus. He did battle with death and the devil for us, and burst forth triumphantly from the grave.

Job, for his part, was a prophet. By His grace, the Holy Spirit gave Job to see Christ’s resurrection and the great blessing that comes through it. You see, when Christ rose from the dead, He took away death’s fearsome fangs and claws. Death no longer has the power to enslave because Christ tripped the snare, but He didn’t do it just for Himself. The Scriptures say that those who are joined to Christ by Baptism and by faith are joined to His death and resurrection. The resurrection of Jesus means the resurrection of those who believe in Jesus, such as Job. Job knew that, even after everything else wastes away, Christ gets the final say. And what does He say? To us, He says, “Life.”

This is what we celebrate today. God is on our side; what can death do to us? Jesus did die; this is true. He died on the cross as the payment for our transgressions. But, today, He rose. His resurrection shows that our sins are paid for and that death no longer gets the last word. That belongs to Jesus who, by His death and resurrection, makes our death but the gateway to eternal life in Him. By His resurrection, Jesus removes death’s sting. It is still bad; it is still the punishment of our sin, but we no longer need to fear it. We remember the words of Psalm 118:17-18, “*I shall not die, but I shall live, and recount the deeds of the Lord. The Lord has disciplined me severely, but has not given me over to death*” (118:17-18).

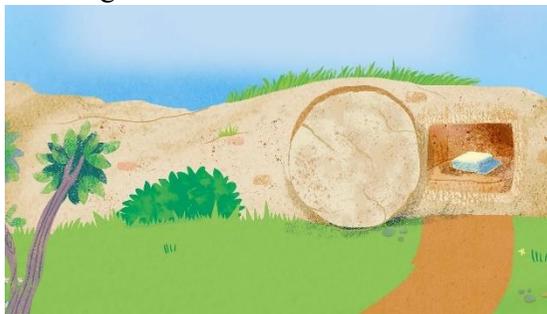
The empty tomb shows that our Lord, not death, gets the final say. After three days, He burst forth from that dreadful prison and left its bars shattered for those who are in Him. When He returns, He will give eternal life to mortal bodies and we shall live with Him forever. Alleluia, Christ is risen! He is risen, indeed. Alleluia!

Children's Message:

What a special day! We have come to the Lord's house to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus! All that suffering and pain that Jesus felt before He died on the cross on Good Friday is over! He has risen, just like He said He would. Jesus is alive – never to die again.

Do you get Easter eggs this time of year? The small ones made of chocolate are usually solid, but what about the bigger ones? When you bite into them, they are hollow inside – there is nothing in them.

Well, that hollow egg is a wonderful reminder for us about Jesus' resurrection. How? Well, when those women whom we heard about in our Gospel today went out to the tomb to anoint Jesus, what did they find? The tomb, like a hollow



Easter egg, was empty! Jesus was no longer dead! The young man dressed in white, who was an angel, was instead in the tomb, and he told those women, “*You are looking for Jesus from Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen. He is not here. See the place where He was laid!*” (Mark 16:6). Jesus wasn't in the tomb. Where was he? Well, He soon appeared to those women. He appeared to His disciples. He appeared to lots of other people.

But is Jesus here, with us? Certainly, He is. How? He is with us in His Word and Sacraments. You can't see Jesus like the women and disciples did on Easter, but He promised to be here when you hear about how He died and rose for us when you were baptised, when we worship Him together in church, and when your parents receive His body and blood in Holy Communion.

But not just in church. Jesus will always be with you. When you're in your bedroom at home, in your chair at school, in the grocery store, driving around town, or playing with friends. You can believe Jesus is with you then too, because the tomb was empty and Jesus has promised always, always to be with you to the very end of the world.

Thank You Jesus for Your death and resurrection. On this happy day, help me remember that You are always with me! Amen.

WEEKLY ANNOUNCEMENTS

7 April 2 Easter	14 April 3 Easter	21 April 4 Easter
8.30am OAK LR 9.00am TMBA HC 9.00am GRN LR 10.45am AUB HC 9.00am LOWOOD LR	8.30am OAK HC 9.00am TMBA LR 9.30am AUB LR 10.15am GRN HC 9.00am MARBURG LR	8.30am OAK LR 9.00am TMBA LR 9.00am GRN LR 9.30am AUB LR 9.00am LOWOOD HC
Sunday, 7 April		
READINGS: Acts 4:32-35;	1 John 1:1-2:2;	John 20:19-31
HYMNS: 95 768 829 (368 289) 508		
Sunday, 14 April		
READINGS: Acts 3:11-21;	1 John 3:1-7;	Luke 24:36-49
HYMNS: 90 323 497 (294 839) 105		
Sunday, 21 April		
READINGS: Acts 4:1-12;	1 John 3:16-24;	John 10:11-18
HYMNS: 391 154 381 (161 289) 390		

Tomorrow, 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).

Wednesday, 10 April, 10.00am. Women's Guild at Bethlehem Toowoomba. Opening Devotion: Leanne. Choose a Bible verse from Numbers 20-23. Item of Interest: Something pink.

Pastor is putting together an order for the *Lutheran Service Book*. At our AGMs, it was discussed if we could begin using hymns out of this hymnbook and gradually moving to it, as the Lutheran Hymnbook we now use is out of print and unavailable for purchase. If any individuals/congregations wish to order a copy, please get these orders to pastor by 21 April. The current price for the hymnbooks is about \$70.00, but it could be cheaper with bulk purchases. Also note that there are 2 editions. A regular, soft-covered edition about the size of our hymnbook, and also a larger hardcover edition with larger print. Pastor has a copy of both and will bring them along to worship services over the coming weeks if you wish to look at them before deciding which one to purchase.