

Australian Evangelical Lutheran Church
BETHLEHEM TOOWOOMBA, OUR SAVIOUR LOWOOD, ST JOHN'S AUBIGNY,
ST PAUL'S GREENWOOD, TRINITY MARBURG, TRINITY OAKEY
21st July Nineth Sunday after Pentecost

HYMNS: 505 191 289 465 287 604

INTROIT: Psalm 23

The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not lack anything.

He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads to water where I may rest.

He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life; and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

COLLECT:

Heavenly Father, although we do not deserve Your goodness, still You provide for all our needs of body and soul. Grant us Your Holy Spirit that we may acknowledge Your gifts, give thanks for all Your benefits, and serve You in willing obedience; 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:

Jeremiah 23:1-6 The LORD will gather His people.

Ephesians 2:11-22 We are all one in Christ.

Mark 6:30-44 Jesus has compassion on the crowd.

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.

Jeremiah 23:1-6

¹ “How horrible it will be for the shepherds who are destroying and scattering the sheep of My pasture!” declares the LORD.

² Therefore, this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, has said about the shepherds who are looking after my people: “You have scattered My flock, driven them away and have not taken care of them. Look! I am punishing you for the evil that you have done,” declares the LORD. ³ “However, I Myself shall gather the remnant of My flock from all the countries where I have driven them and bring them back to their pasture, and they will be fruitful and increase in number.

⁴ I shall appoint shepherds over them who will look after them. Then they will no longer be afraid or terrified, and none of them will be missing,” declares the LORD.

⁵ “Look! The days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I shall raise up for David a righteous Branch, who will reign wisely as King. He will establish justice and righteousness on the earth. ⁶ In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will live in safety. This will be His name, which people will call Him, ‘The LORD Our Righteousness.’”

Ephesians 2:11-22

¹¹ Remember, then, that once you were Gentiles in a bodily way, called “Uncircumcised” by those who were called “the Circumcised,” in a bodily, hand-made way. ¹² Remember that at that time you were without Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and strangers to God’s Covenants of promise! You had no hope and were without God in the world.

¹³ However, now, in Christ Jesus, the blood of Christ has brought you, who once were **far away, near**. ¹⁴ For He Himself is our **Peace**. In His human nature He has made them both, Jew and Gentile, one, by breaking down the wall of hostility that kept them apart. ¹⁵ He has abolished the Law with its Commandments and Regulations, to create the two into one new person in Himself, so making peace, ¹⁶ and that He may reconcile them both to God in one body through His cross, on which He has killed the hostility. ¹⁷ He came, **telling the Good News of peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near**. ¹⁸ For through Him we both have access, by one Spirit, to the Father.

¹⁹ Therefore, you are no longer foreigners and strangers but fellow citizens with God’s holy people and members of God’s household. ²⁰ You have been built on the **foundation** of the apostles and prophets, and Christ Jesus Himself is the **Cornerstone**. ²¹ In Him the whole building is fitted together and grows to be a holy temple in the Lord. ²² In Him the Spirit also is building you up, with the others, into God’s dwelling-place.

Mark 6:30-44

³⁰ The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to Him everything that they had done and taught. ³¹ He told them, “Come away to a deserted place where you can be alone and rest a little!”

For so many people were coming and going that there was not even time to eat.

³² They went away in the boat to a deserted place to be alone. ³³ However, many people who saw them leaving recognised them, ran there on foot from all the cities and arrived ahead of them. ³⁴ When Jesus came out of the boat, He saw a large crowd and felt sorry for them, because they were **like sheep without a shepherd**. Then He began to teach them many things.

³⁵ When it was already late in the day, His disciples came to Him and began to say, “This is a deserted place, and it is already late. ³⁶ Send them away, that they may go to the surrounding farms and villages and buy themselves something to eat!”

³⁷ Jesus answered them, “You give them something to eat!”

They asked Him, “Are we to go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give it to them to eat?”

³⁸ He asked them, “How many loaves do you have? Go and see!”

When they had found out, they said, “Five and two fish.”

³⁹ He ordered them that they should all sit down in groups on the green grass.

⁴⁰ So, they sat down in groups of hundreds and fifties. ⁴¹ After He had taken the five loaves and the two fish, He looked up to heaven and gave thanks. He broke the loaves apart and kept giving them to His disciples, that they might set them before the people. He also divided the two fish among them all. ⁴² They all had enough to eat. ⁴³ They took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces of bread and the fish. ⁴⁴ There were five thousand men who had eaten the bread.

HUNGRY?

Sermon for the 9th Sunday after Pentecost 2024

Mark 6:30-44

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 6:30-44:

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

Dear friends in Christ,

We can easily get tied into knots about our material needs because we are hard-wired to survive. It is one of our basic instincts. When our bellies get hungry, we want to fill them with food. When the air gets cold, we want to cover ourselves with clothing or put on the heater. When we get tired and threatened, we want to sleep in safety - feeling hungry, cold, or tired causes us to seek out a solution that will satisfy these needs.

But what happens when these needs cannot be satisfied or fulfilled immediately? *Uneasiness* sets in. Fear and worry can consume us.

With all this stated, we need to pause momentarily and be honest with each other. Most of us in our part of the world cannot truly comprehend what it is like to go hungry or not have clothing or shelter. Here in Australia, we are very blessed materially by the Lord – even today, when the cost of living is high in everyone’s minds, and the purse strings are pulled tighter, we rarely go hungry for more than a day. There’s lots of food to put on the table, and various governmental and private agencies can help when we need extra support. Even as individuals, we can all help someone in need in many ways.

Consequently, as Australians, it is easy for us *to take for granted* that the most ordinary blessings, those without a hint of the miraculous, are the Lord’s loving hand for us. Even though we are so used to these things being available, they are still the Lord’s gifts to us. The couple of dollars you might spend on your favourite treat, the meat you buy from the butcher, the clothing you wear, and the bed you slept in last night are all gifts from the Lord to you. They are from the Father, who showers us with material gifts. That’s what Luther reminds us when, as part of his explanation to the First Article, he says, “*I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.*” What does this mean? “*I believe that God gives me clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and home, wife and children, land, animals, and all I have. He richly and daily provides me with all that I need to support this body and life.*” The Apostle Paul writes to the Philippians that “*God will supply every need of yours according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus*” (4:19). Paul is not guaranteeing prosperity here, but reminding the Philippians and us that God will provide for every need that arises.

Now, is this the point of today’s Gospel reading, though? Is the miracle in our Gospel reading the fact that Jesus, “**after He had taken the five loaves and the two fish... looked up to heaven and gave thanks. He broke the loaves apart and kept giving them to His disciples, that they might set them before the people. He also divided the two fish among them all.** ⁴² **They all had enough to eat.** ⁴³ **They took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces of bread and the fish.** ⁴⁴ **There were five thousand men who had eaten the bread**”? Is today’s Gospel reading merely about Jesus providing for the physical needs of the people and that we should seek to do the same?

There is no doubt that Jesus miraculously multiplied five loaves of bread and two fish; however, we must realise this miracle was **a sign**. It was a physical, tangible, and real miracle that fed many hungry people and signalled that Jesus was the Son of God. In other words, all the miracles of healing the sick, exorcising demons, and multiplying the food, which were recorded in the New Testament Gospels, were to serve as Jesus' credentials, the proof that He was who He claimed to be - the Saviour of the world. These miracles were signs that granted faith to the people.

However, as the Gospel of John shows us, this crowd lacked faith. While Mark says it was because **“many people who saw them leaving recognised them (Jesus and the disciples)”** that they **“ran there on foot from all the cities and arrived ahead of them,”** John records how *“a large crowd was following Jesus because they saw the signs that He was doing on the sick”* (6:2). These signs should have drawn the people closer to Jesus and His teachings. Instead, the people were fascinated with the miracles themselves. These people had essentially forgotten the Giver and instead marvelled at the gifts. They did not necessarily want Jesus; they just wanted the gifts that He dispensed.

Unfortunately, in our day and age, things have not changed. The church is literally infected with what is called the *prosperity gospel*, which is no gospel at all. This awful theology - most often found in the sermons of popular TV preachers - focuses on the doctrine that financial and material blessings are the will of God for the Christian.

We can make two points of caution regarding this prosperity theology.

First, we can get so fixated on getting the gifts - getting health, wealth, and prosperity - that we fail to recognise the Lord as the giver of the gifts. *“Give me bread, give me fish, give me health, give me wealth, and give me prosperity... oh, and I will take Jesus too if I need to.”*

Second, we can get so fixated on health, wealth, and prosperity that we fail to recognise the Lord's gifts of forgiveness, life, and salvation. *“Just give me money, answer my prayers for good health, and make me happy, but I don't need all that talk about the forgiveness of sins and life after death. That stuff is just too scary and too irrelevant to my everyday life. Show me the money. That's what I want and what I was promised.”*

The prosperity gospel teaching fails to realise that sometimes, instead of solving our problems and giving us our wildest dreams, the Lord may allow our problems to remain. He may have you suffer hardship for a time, even if He supplies you with the strength to endure. *“But why me, Lord?”* we may ask. *“Why do I have to suffer more than others?”* It is true that in many cases, we do not know why God allows some to suffer more than others. Those reasons remain hidden in God, whose purposes are often beyond our understanding, just as those who saw Jesus suffer were not at the

time aware of God's great and loving purpose behind the cross. Speaking through Isaiah, the LORD says, "*For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, ... For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts*" (55:8-9). We have to understand that while our thoughts and ways are limited by time, space, and other factors, God's aren't. The deepest thinkers of the ages cannot achieve God's high and lofty ways or understand God. Rather, "*we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose*" (Romans 8:28).

We leave the 'why' of suffering in the Lord's hands. The Lord may supply what you need for your problem, or the Lord may even choose in His wisdom to remove you. In other words, He may take you to Himself in heaven, where all troubles cease.

The point is that the Lord may not always help you how you want. He may supply miraculous help, as He did with the "**five thousand men who had eaten the bread**" (remember – Mark counted the men but not the women and children), or He may give you a miracle even if you do not recognise it at the time. Again, you may experience something that seems like a miracle, even though it may have only been God using natural resources to solve your problem. That is how the Lord works at times. He organises and orchestrates events correctly and at the right time to help you.

Dear friends, God gives us our daily bread: food, drink, clothing, shoes, home, money, goods, good weather, friends, and so forth. But more importantly, the Lord gives us forgiveness, life, and salvation, for we are given the True Bread of Heaven. Indeed, God provides not only our physical needs but also our spiritual and eternal needs by giving us His only Son, Jesus.

The crowd that followed Jesus did not see Jesus correctly, even though they saw Him. Their reaction to Jesus is debatable. In other words, they saw "something" in Jesus; however, something is not everything. Their faith was misplaced.

You see, believing merely that the Lord cares for your daily needs is good, but it is not saving faith. Any unbeliever can believe that. That is why the Holy Spirit's primary work is to show you and me that we are sinners and then turn our eyes upon Christ, the Saviour. Soon after Jesus had taught His disciples how to pray by giving what we call the Lord's Prayer, He then encouraged them not to be anxious about life by telling them to "*seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you*" (Matthew 6:33). When we let the Gospel predominate in our lives, the secondary matters such as food and drink and shelter and so on, will be taken care of almost automatically.

This means that you are safe and secure, no matter what happens around you, because you have Jesus. Because you have Jesus through your Baptism, the Word, and the Holy Supper, let the world threaten you. Let demons surround you. Let your houses be taken, your pillows snatched, and your food spoiled. Let family, friends,

and even your life be taken away. If all these things happen, you are still forever founded upon Christ and His life. You cannot be destroyed, whatever may come. The name of Jesus has been placed on you by the One whose death has made you alive by the bread of heaven. Even if the Lord's material gifts to you are snatched away by pirates, looters, thieves, and tyrants, your Lord surely never stops giving, for when these old tents, our bodies, finally wear out, He promises us in His Word to clothe us with a perfect body on the day of His return, and we shall "*always be with the Lord*" (1 Thessalonians 4:17).

Dear friends, the Lord has come to you with the forgiveness of sins in the Word and Sacraments. This is bigger than all your sins, and His forgiveness is indestructible; it is stronger than any death you'll ever face. His Word of forgiveness is sure and constant whether you have much or little, rich or poor, healthy or sick, dead or alive. His promise of forgiveness places you with Him forever.

Come, then, and feast with Jesus – feast on His words and promises that will keep alive in you the life He freely gave you at your baptism. Here's food that will keep you breathing the sweet air of the resurrection and make the moment when your body stops breathing no big deal; no big deal at all - not to anyone who trusts His Words and promises, not to anyone who is in Christ Jesus.

Jesus most certainly gives everything that has to do with the support and needs of the body *and* the soul. It is all pure gift: nothing deserved, all given - for you. Amen.

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

PRAYER FOR THE NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Heavenly Father, we rejoice to remember Your constant love, and we join Your Church everywhere to praise Your glorious name. We thank You that Your Spirit has made us Your adopted children in Jesus Christ, so that we may truly know You as our Father, call on You confidently in prayer, and know that You will hear us.

We pray for all believers in the family of the Church. Preserve Your remnant of grace. Give Your flock shepherds whom Your Spirit teaches and leads, and who earnestly proclaim Your pure Word of life. Grant that they may lovingly feed Your sheep with Your Word, and strive to protect them from all error. Rescue Your Church from the dangerous lies of all false shepherds, so that Your children may be linked together in love, may stand firm in a common purpose and may work together to spread the Gospel.

Show Your glory and power to the nations, O God. Turn those in authority whose eyes are spiritually blind to Your light, and from the power of Satan to Christ, so that they may possess the forgiveness of sins and a place among the children of God. Look with favour on our country, that liberty, justice, and high morals may hold sway, and destroy all ungodliness and evil influences.

Heavenly Father, let Your Spirit fill our homes. Let the Word of Christ in all its richness live in the hearts of children, and enable all parents to be proper examples of Christian faith and life. Protect our families in every storm of life, and keep them from all evil.

Since You have sent Your Son into the world so that no one may die in His sins, keep us pure in a corrupt and sinful world, so that we may finally obtain the crown of life. Teach us to know better what You want for us, let us yield a rich harvest of godly deeds, make us able to stand firm in the faith. Help us to put to death the desires of our sinful nature, and to live in the Spirit, as those who will one day enjoy all that You have promised.

Heavenly Father, the source of all holy desires, wise plans, and right actions, give Your peace to all, especially to those who are facing pain, sickness, mental agony, spiritual distress, or any other burden of body or soul. Assure them of Your love and mercy, that they may place themselves in Your care, and receive from You everything they need for their lasting good.

Loving Father, You have invited us to bring our requests before You with thanks. Therefore accept these prayers in the name of Jesus Christ, our Saviour. Amen.

Article: Jesus – The LORD Our Righteousness

Our First Reading today came from the Book of Jeremiah. Jeremiah is known as the suffering prophet and existed during a time when judgment had come upon Jerusalem for its sin. Jerusalem's spiritual leaders were spiritually bankrupt; they were heretical, and they did not defend the cause of the poor and needy. They sought dishonest gain, oppressed the innocent and extorted from those they were responsible for. The people were in constant rebellion. Slavery and forced labour were practised. There was a lack of contentment with the necessities of life, joined with the continual lust for more and more and more. Thus, the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple was a judgment against them for their sin; it was God disciplining the people of Jerusalem. As a result, Jeremiah painfully watched the city get destroyed and painfully watched as the religious leaders proclaimed false messages of hope.

In the beginning portions of today's reading, we read a harsh rebuke to the religious leaders who ruled during the time of Jeremiah. God addresses these religious leaders as "shepherds," which is equivalent to our understanding of "pastors" today. More specifically, God, through the prophet Jeremiah, calls the religious leaders onto the carpet. He exposes them by saying that they are not shepherding the people of Israel but destroying and scattering them. These are serious words; God certainly did not mince any words. *"(You) are destroying and scattering the sheep of My pasture... You have scattered My flock, driven them away and have not taken care of them"* (Jeremiah 23:2).

More specifically, what were they doing that was so detrimental to the people of Israel? As we examine the Old Testament Scriptures, we see in Ezekiel, who was a contemporary of Jeremiah, that these Old Testament shepherds were not feeding the flock but were

feeding themselves (Ezekiel 34). They were exploiting the people. They were fat shepherds with famished sheep. You get the picture.

Now, for the most part, each and every one of us can pick out the abuses of shepherds/pastors in the news, and as we read the scriptures of the Old Testament, we can point and say, “*Now that is wrong. That is not what a shepherd is to do and be.*” But more subtly, some things caused God to rebuke the shepherds in Jeremiah’s day, things that the average person probably wouldn’t notice unless it is pointed out. As we look at Ezekiel chapter 13, we see that these false shepherds, these false prophets, followed their own hearts and proclaimed messages from false visions. In other words, their message was not of the Holy Spirit and God’s Word. Their messages were conjured up in the caverns of their own hearts and their own imaginations. Because their messages originated within themselves, it is no wonder why they spoke false things and led the people astray. It is no wonder why the sheep were famished, for only the Word of God feeds souls, not messages that originate from the deep caverns of a shepherds subjective feelings and thoughts. These teachers gave way to their own imaginations and their own fancy. Legitimate Old Testament Prophets did not speak their own message but a message that was outside of themselves - a message that God gave them. The legitimate prophets were called, and most of the time, they did not want to proclaim the message from God because it did not mean fortune and fame but pain and persecution. The same goes for us here and now in today’s world. Pastors are to proclaim the scriptural truths of the Word, in season and out of season. When it is popular and when it is not.

Now, here is where it gets even worse and, frankly, very dangerous. In Jeremiah 6:14 and in Ezekiel 13:10, we see that these false shepherds failed to tell the people how sick they really were, claiming that all was well; they put band-aids on the people’s cancerous wounds. In other words, they proclaimed, “Peace, Peace,” when there was no peace. These false shepherds proclaimed that there would be peace in the land and that the people were going to enjoy great prosperity when no such thing would come to pass. They were proclaiming a message exactly 180 degrees the opposite of reality.

We all crave messages of peace. We desire good news in a bad-news world. This was the desire of the people of Israel, to have a message of peace, and this was the message that they were given by the false shepherds. You see, the true shepherds called out sin, but the false prophets flattered the people with smooth words. The false shepherds minimised sin and guilt, which put alarmed consciences to sleep. The false shepherds taught the people that they should always presume God’s favour and assume that God would never bring about suffering in Jerusalem. The false shepherds would proclaim pleasant messages and smooth/happy doctrines. However, these smooth doctrines and their smooth talk did not make a smooth and happy reality.

Amazingly, the Apostle Paul says to the young Timothy in his Second Letter, “*I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry*” (4:1-8).

There is always an inclination for each and every one of us to want our ears to be itched. We want to hear what brings peace. Not only are the bad shepherds to blame for this but,

the sheep of the flock, people like you and me, will try and accumulate pastors and teachers to tell us what we want to hear, what will itch our ears. We want good news in a bad-news world.

As we listen to Jeremiah, it seems as if all is lost. It would also seem from looking at Jeremiah that he is a simple downer. “*Does he have any hope or just messages of doom and gloom?*” No, the message does not end with these faithless shepherds. Jeremiah doesn’t leave us with just bad news, and we are then expected to sort out all the trouble. No, God promises something great and something profound. God promises that He will raise up a Righteous Servant for the people, a Righteous Shepherd.

Now, very specifically, this verse contains a term that is so important for us to understand. It is the term, “*Branch.*” God says that He will raise up a “*righteous Branch.*” This metaphor is not a branch in the sense that we would think of one. The branch that God will raise forth is not dependent upon a fully grown tree for strength and life. Rather, this branch that Jeremiah mentions grows out of a dying stump or from the ground where a tree has recently decayed. It is a fresh, new growth with its own strength and life. True, it comes from the dead and decaying tree or bush, but it is in itself something new and independent. Jesus is the new growth that is promised, who will come forth out of the decay, depravity and chaos of Israel. Jesus is the Good Shepherd who came for the whole world.

Notice how Jeremiah doesn’t proclaim peace when there was none. But he does proclaim God’s message of peace. He proclaims peace that is found outside of the circumstances of life; he proclaims the coming Christ who will bring ultimate and true peace.

This righteous Branch will save His people. Jesus will be called by the name “*The LORD Our Righteousness.*” This reminds us of God’s great exchange (Isa 53:4–6; 2 Cor. 5:21). Jesus, who is perfect Righteousness, lived a perfect life for us and then suffered and died to pay for our sins. He alone is inherently righteous and perfect. He alone lived a perfect life in total obedience to God’s commands. Not only did He act and speak perfectly, but He even thought perfectly. God accepted this as full payment for sin and declared the world righteous for Jesus’ sake. Now, all who by faith receive Him are assured of eternal heaven.

Think about this for a moment: it would do little good for God to replace Israel’s bad shepherds with other earthly rulers. The reason is that mankind has repeatedly affirmed and shown that we cannot lift ourselves out of the quicksand of sinful corruption. Israel was not able to fix herself. Rather, God Himself must come to the rescue, which He did in the person of His Son and in the power of His Holy Spirit. God not only promised in the Old Testament that He would send the Good Shepherd, Christ, to be the Shepherd of the Sheep, but He actually did this. It is a historical reality. Just as the coming Righteous Branch casts out fear and gives comfort, we too do not have to fear, for we can rest with confidence and serve with confidence that our Good Shepherd is sufficient and able to deliver us from evil. Just as they looked forward to the coming age, we look back to Christ. If God is to break the power and reign of sin, He must send into this world Christ, His servant who is fully human and a fully divine Shepherd. Jesus is the One who will not destroy the sheep but feed them with bread from heaven. He came not to be served but to serve you and me! He is the Good Shepherd; fear not, for He is with you and me.

Children's Message:

If I brought one loaf of bread to church on Sunday, would that be enough to feed everyone until they were full and even have some left over?

What if I told you that our Lord Jesus could do that with bread? Have you heard about the feeding of the five thousand from our Gospel today? People were following Jesus and listening to everything that He taught them. They listened to Him all day! It started to get late,



and the people became hungry, but they were nowhere near a town where they could buy food. Then Jesus told His disciples to give them something to eat. But they only had five little loaves of bread and two fish. Did I mention that the five thousand people there did not include the women and children? That's a lot of people!

Well, Jesus did a miracle with that bread and fish. He had His disciples pass out the food to the people, and they ate until they were full. And here's the best part: lots of bread and fish were still left over!

We can't perform a miracle like that, but the good news is that Jesus isn't done doing miracles with bread, and this miracle is even better than the feeding of the five thousand! Our Lord takes regular bread and makes it His body for us! Not only that, but He promises us that eating this bread forgives our sins. His Gospel - that He died for us, rose for us, and gives us eternal life - is actually given to us when we take and eat this bread and drink from His cup. This is Holy Communion. What a miracle! It's even more wonderful than the feeding of the five thousand because Jesus does this not just once but every time we celebrate Holy Communion..

God loves to take regular things, like bread and fish, or bread and wine, and make miraculous things happen. He did it in the Old Testament too! Remember when He told Moses just to lift up his ordinary staff, and the Red Sea parted? Or when God made water come out of a rock for His people to drink in the desert? Those were miracles - and He's never done doing miracles to care for His people, even us.

Lord Jesus, You fed all those people with just five loaves and two fish. Thank You for feeding us through Your Word and Your Sacraments for the forgiveness of our sins and everlasting life. Amen.

WEEKLY ANNOUNCEMENTS

28 July 10 Pentecost	4 August 11 Pentecost	11 August 12 Pentecost
8.30am OAK HC 9.00am TMBA LR 9.30am AUB LR 10.15am GRN HC 9.00am LOWOOD LR	8.30am OAK LR 9.00am TMBA LR 9.30am GRN LR 9.30am AUB LR 9.00am MARBURG HC	8.30am OAK LR 9.00am TMBA HC 9.30am GRN LR 10.45am AUB HC 9.00am LOWOOD LR
Sunday, 28 July		
READINGS: Genesis 9:8-17; Ephesians 3:14-21; Mark 6:45-56		
HYMNS: 422 409 578 (763 292) 608		
Sunday, 4 August		
READINGS: Exodus 16:2-15; Ephesians 4:1-16; John 6:22-35		
HYMNS: 187 347 395 (284 291) 510		
Sunday, 11 August		
READINGS: 1 Kings 19:1-8; Ephesians 4:17-5:2; John 6:35-51		
HYMNS: 308 771 530 (289 290) 451		

Saturday, August 3, at 7.00pm, YAY (Young Adults and Youth) is on at Aubigny. The hall will be open for games and socialising from 6:30pm. All young adults and youth are most welcome to attend. Please bring your Bible and something for supper.

JULY BIBLE STUDIES

Wednesday, 24 July, 7.30pm St Paul's Greenwood (at Darryl and Leanne's home)

Friday, 26 July, 7.30pm Oakey/Aubigny at St John's Aubigny.