

Australian Evangelical Lutheran Church
BETHLEHEM TOOWOOMBA, OUR SAVIOUR LOWOOD, ST JOHN'S AUBIGNY,
ST PAUL'S GREENWOOD, TRINITY MARBURG, TRINITY OAKEY

13th October Harvest Thanksgiving

HYMNS: 563 814 566 85 285 437

INTROIT: Psalm 65

You receive praise in silence in Zion, O God, and vows to You will be fulfilled.
O You who hear prayer, to You all human beings will come.

Iniquitous things have been prevailing over me. You Yourself will provide
atonement for our rebellious actions.

Blessed is the person whom You choose and whom You bring near, that he
may dwell in Your courts! We shall be satisfied with the good things of Your
house, the holiness of Your Temple.

You answer us in righteousness with awesome deeds, O our saving God,
the Confidence of all the ends of the earth and of the most distant sea.

He is the One who sets the mountains in place by His strength, the One
who puts on strength like a waistcloth.

He is the One who calms the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves
and the turmoil of the peoples.

Those who live at the ends of the earth have been in awe of Your
miraculous signs. You make the places where morning dawns and the
places where evening fades shout for joy.

You have taken care of the land and have caused it to overflow. You have
enriched it abundantly. The stream of God is filled with water. You are
providing their grain. For that is how You have prepared it.

You have given its furrows their fill of drink and levelled off the edges of its
furrows. You soften it with gentle rain and bless its growth.

You have crowned the year of Your goodness, and Your wheel-tracks drip
with fat.

The pastures in the desert overflow. The hills are robed with joy.

The meadows are clothed with flocks, and the valleys are covered with
grain. They are shouting for joy. Indeed, they are singing.

COLLECT: Almighty God, You crown the fields with Your blessing and
permit us to gather in the fruits of the earth. As stewards of Your creation,
may we receive Your gifts in humble thankfulness and share Your bounty
with those in need; 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: Deuteronomy 26:1-11 Firstfruits and Tithes

2 Corinthians 9:6-15 Sowing Generously

Luke 12:13-21 The Parable of the Rich Fool

Deuteronomy 26:1-11

¹ “When you enter the land that the LORD, your God, is giving you as an inheritance and you take possession of it and live in it, ² you shall take some of the first from all the produce of the ground, which you will harvest from your land, which the LORD, your God, is giving you! You shall put it in a basket and go to the place where the LORD, your God, will choose to make His name dwell! ³ You shall go to the priest who is in office at that time and tell him, ‘I declare today to the LORD, your God, that I have come into the land that the LORD swore to our forefathers to give us!’ ⁴ Then the priest shall take the basket from your hand and set it down in front of the altar of the LORD, your God! ⁵ You shall make this response before the LORD, your God: ‘My forefather was a wandering Aramean. He went down to Egypt with few people and lived as a foreigner there. There he became a great, powerful and numerous nation. ⁶ However, the Egyptians treated us harshly, oppressed us and imposed severe forced labour on us. ⁷ Then we cried to the LORD, the God of our forefathers, and the LORD heard our cry. He saw our misery, distress and oppression. ⁸ The LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with great terror and with miraculous signs and wonders. ⁹ He has brought us to this place and has given us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. ¹⁰ So now, look! I have brought the first produce of the land, which You, O LORD, have given me.’ Then you shall set it down before the LORD, your God, and worship before the LORD, your God! ¹¹ Then you shall be glad about all the good things that the LORD, your God, has given to you and your family, together with the Levite and the foreigner who is living among you!

2 Corinthians 9:6-15

⁶ In addition, I say this: **The person who sows** sparingly will also **reap** sparingly, and **the person who sows** bountifully will also **reap** bountifully. ⁷ Each person should give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion! **For God loves a cheerful giver.**

⁸ God can make all grace abound toward you, that you may always have all that you need in every way and may abound in every good work, ⁹ as Scripture has said: **“He has distributed. He has given to the poor. His righteousness remains for ever.”** ¹⁰ He who provides **seed for the sower and bread for food** will supply and multiply your seed and will increase what your **righteousness produces.** ¹¹ You are being made rich in every way that you may be totally generous. This is producing thanksgiving to God through us. ¹² This work, which you are doing in serving others, not only supplies the needs of the believers but is also overflowing through many expressions of thanks to God. ¹³ By this service, by which you prove yourselves, you are glorifying God for your subordinate confession of the Good News of Christ and for your generous contribution to them and to all people, ¹⁴ while they also long for you deeply and pray for you, because of the extreme kindness that God has shown you. ¹⁵ Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!

Luke 12:13-21

¹³ Someone in the crowd asked Him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me!”

¹⁴ Jesus asked him, “Man, who appointed Me to be a judge or an arbitrator over you?”

¹⁵ Then He told them, “Beware and be on your guard against all greed! For a person’s life does not consist in how plentiful his possessions are.”

¹⁶ Then Jesus told them a parable: “The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. ¹⁷ He thought to himself, ‘What am I to do? For I have no place to store my produce.’

¹⁸ “Then he said, ‘This is what I shall do: I shall pull down my barns and build bigger ones and shall store my grain and all my other goods in them. ¹⁹ Then I shall say to myself, “Soul, you have many good things stored up for many years. Take life easy, eat, drink and enjoy yourself!”’

²⁰ “However, God said to him, ‘You fool, this very night your life will be demanded of you. Then who will get the things that you have prepared?’”

²¹ Jesus said, “So is he who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.”

JESUS BRIDGES THE GAP

Sermon for Harvest Thanksgiving 2024

Luke 17:11-19

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, Luke 17:11-19: **On the way to Jerusalem He was passing along between Samaria and Galilee.** ¹² **And as He entered a village, He was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance** ¹³ **and lifted up their voices, saying, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.”** ¹⁴ **When He saw them He said to them, “Go and show yourselves to the priests.”** And as they went they were cleansed. ¹⁵ **Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice;** ¹⁶ **and he fell on his face at Jesus’ feet, giving Him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan.** ¹⁷ **Then Jesus answered, “Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine?”** ¹⁸ **Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?”** ¹⁹ **And He said to him, “Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well.”**

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

Dear friends in Christ,

Harvest thanksgiving is a time for us to gather together and express gratitude. We thank God because He has freely given us *“clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and home, wife and children, land, animals, and all we have. He richly and daily provides (us) with all that (we) need to support (our) body and life. He defends (us) against all danger and guards and protects (us) from all evil.”* Why is this so? *“All this He does only out of fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in (us). For all this it is (our) duty to thank and praise, serve and obey Him.”*

We are surrounded by abundant blessings – so much to be thankful for. As people in Christ, we all have something to be thankful for, which is given to us as a pure gift and brings ultimate gratitude.

Now, while it would be easy to exhort you to be more thankful or to urge you to express more gratitude as a Christian, I am afraid that merely telling you to be grateful without showing you what you have to be grateful for is futile at best. To state this differently, consider our sermon text from Luke.

Luke writes, **“On the way to Jerusalem (Jesus) was passing along between Samaria and Galilee.** ¹² **And as He entered a village, He was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance.”**

Here, we are faced with a contagious and hereditary disease that existed during the first century, a disease for which, at that time, there was no curable treatment.

We see a disease that is easily transmitted and can be conveyed to a family's third and fourth generations. It was a disease that produced sores on the skin and impacted a person's joints.

Not only did leprosy dramatically impact individuals, but it also had *sociological implications*. By law, lepers were not able to come near people who were healthy. The law separated them into camps outside the cities. In fact, lepers would be beaten if they came into cities like Jerusalem. Indeed, lepers were cut off from society. They could not associate with people and had to yell "UNCLEAN" to warn others that they were passing by. Many perceived that these lepers were sick due to some mistake that they had made; they were viewed as cursed by God.

But what does leprosy have to do with harvest thanksgiving, and what does it have to do with the idea of gratitude and thankfulness? Are we to be thankful that we don't have leprosy? Well, yes, but *there is more to consider in our text*.

In our text, we encounter lepers who Jesus heals. When Jesus saw them, **"He said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they went they were cleansed. ¹⁵ Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; ¹⁶ and he fell on his face at Jesus' feet, giving Him thanks."** In the return of that one leper who returned to Jesus with a thankful response, we have a simple and plain picture of the Christian life. Permit me to explain.

Tragically, as we heard, lepers were ostracised from society and family as they stood at a distance while rotting away in utter and complete hopelessness. Leprosy made the individuals stand far off. Their defilement distanced them from everyone and everything. Yet, from our text, we find there is One who bridges that gap.

On a separate occasion, after He had finished giving what we call the beatitudes, Jesus came down from the mountainside, and large crowds followed Him. *"A man with leprosy came and knelt before Him and said, "Lord, if you are willing, You can make Me clean. Jesus reached out His hand and touched the man. "I am willing," He said. "Be clean!" Immediately he was cured of his leprosy"* (Matthew 8:2-3). Did you hear that?

Jesus reached out and touched a leper, bridging that gap. He acknowledged lepers who stood afar off. He, who is perfectly clean, perfectly righteous, and perfectly holy, reached out and touched the man with leprosy, saying, *"Be Clean!"* In our text, He cleanses lepers as well.

Consider how Jesus crosses the great leper divide. In the New Testament, Christ touches and interacts with sinners, tax collectors, lepers, prostitutes, and the dead, while oftentimes becoming ceremonially unclean Himself from touching those who were sick or dead.

Otherwise stated, the Lord Jesus Christ gives everything freely to these lepers and does not take nor seek anything for it. Furthermore, the lepers receive Christ's work freely and pay nothing for it.

Dear friends, like the lepers, mankind is set far off from God *because of sin*. We, too, are unworthy and unable to do anything about our predicament of sin. We have inherited it; it is contagious, it spreads to our children, and it wreaks havoc on our relationships and leads to destruction. We cannot cure our sin problem. We cannot cleanse our bodies and souls. We cannot prevent the rotting. Thus, mankind hides in the shadows or attempts to cover sin with spiritual cosmetics.

The Lord Jesus Christ, though, bridges this gap. He reached out and not only touched sin but bore it upon Himself at the cross. Like a person who becomes unclean due to touching a leper, Jesus, for our sake, was made to be sin so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.¹

Ponder for a moment the great event of Mount Calvary. While on the cross, our mighty Lord took the leprosy of sin upon Himself. In his Commentary on Galatians, Martin Luther says it well, "*When he took the sins of the whole world upon himself, Christ was no longer an innocent person. He was a sinner burdened with the sins of a Paul who was a blasphemer; burdened with the sins of a Peter who denied Christ; burdened with the sins of a David who committed adultery and murder, and gave the heathen occasion to laugh at the Lord. In short, Christ was charged with the sins of all men, that he should pay for them with his own blood. The curse struck him. The Law found him among sinners. He was not only in the company of sinners. He had gone so far as to invest himself with the flesh and blood of sinners. So the Law judged and hanged him for a sinner.*"

Yes, Christ Jesus not only reached out and touched leprosy; He ultimately took the sin-leprosy of the entire world upon Himself, while hanging on the cross, thus making Himself ostracised for a time. Due to sin, the Father distanced Himself from Jesus as Christ bore hideous sin and while this sin collapsed in on Him. In due course, this leprosy of sin crushed Jesus. What does this mean for you and for me?

¹ 2 Corinthians 5:21

Whenever you feel remorse for your sin or see sores of sin-leprosy, look to Christ on the cross. Pure grace and mercy are there, for Christ Jesus has not only reached out and touched lepers but went into the domain of sinners, died, and through this death devoured sin so that God the Father will never stand afar from you again. Faith receives the Word of God that cleanses you. The leper's word of 'unclean' is met with the Lord's Word 'clean.'

Now, this is all good news. However, we have yet to talk about gratitude and thankfulness. But wait? Have we not been talking about thankfulness and gratitude? Yes, we have.

Thankfulness and gratitude are rooted and dependent on something outside of themselves; they are dependent on what has been given or bestowed upon us. And what has been given and bestowed upon us? Indeed, you have been given Christ; the Saviour who is for you. Yes, Jesus healed the leper; He reached out and touched lepers; He reached out and touched sinners. Today, we hear that Jesus does the same us! Yes, we are not at a distance. Yes, the Word declares us clean. Yes, Jesus has bridged the gap for us. All of this is done for us. We have a better reason to give thanks than any other group of people. We have Christ. We have eternal life. We have peace with God. We have all this not because of any special merit or worthiness on our part but because of the Father's grace for the sake of His Son, Jesus Christ. We have this because Jesus finished the journey to Jerusalem and to the cross.

So continue to enjoy all the riches of God. Enjoy both the earthly riches and the heavenly treasure. They are all gifts from our dear Father in Heaven, who loves us and has sent His Son to save us. We have good reason to give thanks not just tomorrow but every day. In fact, we look forward to giving thanks for eternity. Amen.

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

PRAYER FOR HARVEST THANKSGIVING

God our Father, You have created the universe in great wisdom, and sustain it by Your powerful word. You are good to everyone, and have compassion on all that You have made. We enter Your house of prayer with thanksgiving, and come before You with songs of joy. We thank You for the many blessings and joys You lavish on our lives. We thank You for soil and seed, sunlight and rain, health and strength, machinery and technology, and every other

blessing by which You give us our daily bread. You have given us a plentiful land, rich in resources for agriculture, mining, and industry. You have blessed us with education and skills to use these resources for the good of our country and its people. Although You do not always spare us from trouble and dark days, we still must confess that our cup of blessing is overflowing, and so we praise Your name. Make us continually aware of Your goodness, O Lord. Increase our trust that in all things You are working for our good.

But, Lord, You not only care for our bodies; Your richest love is reserved for the salvation of our souls. Because You have revealed Yourself to us in Your Word, we know You in Your limitless grace, and live in the light of Your truth and love. We thank You especially for Your greatest of gifts: Jesus Christ our Saviour, and for all the blessings of the Gospel and the Church. Help us to appreciate fully these choicest gifts, and to produce in our lives a rich harvest of faith, goodness, and love.

Free us from every temptation to trust in uncertain things like material wealth. Free us from covetousness, envy, and jealousy. Increase our joy in what You provide, and make us content. Make us more sensitive to what others need. Give us compassion to help those who have too little, and the opportunities to share Your blessings. Let our service to others pave the way for witness to the Gospel of salvation through Jesus Christ Your Son. Teach us to use wisely the things You place at our disposal.

Bless and strengthen the poor and the hungry, those who cannot work, the lonely, the depressed, and especially those who are suffering because of their Christian faith. Give them all the generous help of friends, but, above all, strong trust in Your presence and care.

Guide the nations on earth, and particularly those countries whose people are desperately poor. Grant that all who look up to You for material blessings may find Your kingdom, and Your righteousness. Bless our country Australia with a united spirit and godly goals. Teach its leaders and its people to know, believe, and do Your will. Remove from us things that are unwise and harmful.

Continue to supply the spiritual needs of our families, so that truth, love, and high morals may bless our homes.

We offer You our prayers and our songs of praise, heavenly Father, in the name of Your dear Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, to whom be glory and honour for ever. Amen.

Article: Where to now, LCA?

As you know, the LCA, at its recent synod, removed the obstacle to ordaining women into the ministry. Of course, that obstacle was the Word of God. The Word of God was cast aside and trampled underfoot. Unless they repent, those who rejoiced in the decision will now have to look forward to the Lord's judgment (1 Cor. 14:38).

However, WO has not yet been implemented and won't be for a few months. How to implement it (changing the Theses of Agreement and any other doctrinal statements that maintain a men-only ministry, etc.) will be discussed early next year in a scheduled ZOOM 'non-convention' meeting. Theoretically, WO could still be rejected at that upcoming ZOOM meeting, but even if it was (and it won't be – 71% of the delegates voted for the implementation of WO), the damage has already been done. The LCA is a church divided, and if things aren't a mess already, they will get messier. In its *Way Forward Framework* leading up to synod, the LCA pushed the fanciful notion of one church and two teachings. One church – two teachings – will not and cannot work. You are either for God and His Word or against it.

This past week, some members of the LCA have resigned, and some pastors are preparing to resign as well. Last Sunday, at churches around the Adelaide area where the synod was held, some refused to commune out of protest, while others recognised that they could no longer be part of a heterodox church, and their communing would have given the indication that they agreed with the decision. These members and pastors must be commended.

However, some still communed because they were confused and unsure. We pray that they will come to a proper understanding. Some of these continue to reach out to the AELC for guidance.

But there are also those—and I think this will be a majority of pastors and congregations—who will continue as they are. They may not be for WO, but since they are against it on a congregational level, they see no need to leave. They do not have a proper understanding of fellowship and must be reminded of the Apostle Paul's words when he writes, "*Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread*" (1 Cor. 10:17). Union with Christ results in union with one another. The symbol of sharing "one bread" corresponds to the reality of the "one body."

Children's Message:

Can you tell me what the sign on this page is? Right. It's a caution sign. And what's this caution sign for? A caution sign alerts us to pay attention and be careful of something that might be dangerous to us. For instance, we might see a caution sign in a store, alerting us that the floor is wet so we don't slip and fall. We might see a caution sign alerting us that kangaroos are in the scrub, so we keep an eye out that we don't hit any that may come bounding across the road.



The author of the book of Hebrews is holding up a caution sign for his congregation. They've been struggling through some really tough times. Some of them had been beaten, some had their homes taken from them, and some had been put in jail - not because they did anything wrong, but simply because they had told everyone they believed in Jesus.

Their pastor, the author, is afraid these new Christians might lose hope and get discouraged. They might even be tempted to stop believing in Jesus. So he holds up a caution sign and warns them, "Be careful, fellow-Christians, that none of you has in him a wicked, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God!" (3:12). A "wicked, unbelieving heart," not believing in Jesus - anyone who has that will be lost to hell!

The ancient Israelites in the wilderness eventually fell away from the faith because they refused to listen to the voice of God and trust in His ways. Could the same thing happen to these Hebrew Christians? Unfortunately, yes, it certainly could. So when God cautions them, what should they do? They should listen to God's voice, His Word, because, in His Word, God tells them that He'll always be with them no matter how tough the times may be. That's because Jesus made them God's children again by dying on the cross. And they should encourage one another with the same Word.

When we continue to come to church, we hear that same Word of God that keeps us believing in Jesus. It keeps telling us, too, that Jesus took away our sin so that God will always be with us - and that we're connected to Him by Baptism. Besides, when we're here to hear, we also encourage everyone else here to keep believing in Jesus - all the way to heaven.

Thank You Father for giving me Your voice Your Word. Help me to always listen to You. Amen.

WEEKLY ANNOUNCEMENTS

20 October 22 Pentecost	27 October Reformation Day	3 November All Saints' Day
8.30am OAK HC Harvest 9.00am TMBA LR 9.30am AUB LR 10.15am GRN HC Harvest 9.00am LOWOOD LR	10.00am HC GRN AELC Service and St Paul's Lutheran Church Greenwood 125 th anniversary.	8.30am OAK LR 9.00am TMBA LR 9.00am GRN LR 9.30am AUB LR 9.00am LOWOOD HC
Sunday, 20 October		
READINGS: Ecclesiastes 5:10-20; (Oak & Grn) Deuteronomy 26:1-11;	Hebrews 4:1-16; 2 Corinthians 9:6-15;	Mark 10:23-31 Luke 12:13-21
HYMNS: 502 372 377 426 OAK/GRN: 563 814 566 (53 293) 437		
Sunday, 27 October		
READINGS: Revelation 14:6-7;	Romans 3:19-28;	Luke 19:1-10
HYMNS: 183 195 201 69 287 (292 if needed) 257		
Sunday, 3 November		
READINGS: Revelation 7:2-17;	1 John 3:1-3;	Matthew 5:1-12
HYMNS: 494 213 210 (169 284) 473		

OCTOBER Bible Study dates:

Wednesday, 16 October, 7.30pm Greenwood.

Thursday, 17 October, 10.00am Lowood.

Friday, 25 October, 7.30pm Oak/Aub at Aubigny.