

Australian Evangelical Lutheran Church
BETHLEHEM TOOWOOMBA, OUR SAVIOUR LOWOOD, ST JOHN'S AUBIGNY,
ST PAUL'S GREENWOOD, TRINITY MARBURG, TRINITY OAKEY
15th December Third Sunday in Advent

HYMNS: 3 1 402 754 161 17

THE LIGHTING OF THE THIRD ADVENT CANDLE

R: Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees.

C: Say to those who are of a fearful heart, 'Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God.'

ALL: Lord, hear our prayers, and graciously prepare us for Your coming. For you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

INTROIT: Psalm 85

LORD, You have been favourable to Your land. You have brought Jacob back from captivity.

You have forgiven the iniquity of Your people. You have covered all their sin
You have taken back all Your fury. You have turned away from Your fierce anger.

Restore us, O God, You who save us! Withhold Your indignation toward us!
Will You be angry with us for ever? Will You prolong Your anger through all generations?

Will You not revive us again, that Your people may rejoice in You?

Show us Your mercy, O LORD, and grant us Your salvation!

Let me hear what God, the LORD, will speak! For He will promise peace to His people, to His devout people. However, let them not become foolish again!

Surely His salvation is near those who fear Him, that glory may dwell in our land.

Mercy and truth have met together. Righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

Truth will sprout up from the earth, and righteousness will look down from heaven.

The LORD will indeed give what is good, and our land will yield its produce. Righteousness will go before Him, to prepare a way for His footsteps.

COLLECT: Lord Jesus Christ, we implore You to hear our prayers and to lighten the darkness of our hearts by Your gracious visitation: for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

READINGS: Zephaniah 3:14-20 Do not be afraid or lose courage.

Philippians 4:4-7 Keep your minds on all that is right.

Luke 7:18-35 Jesus and John the Baptist.

Zephaniah 3:14-20

¹⁴ Cry out in jubilation, daughter Zion! Shout, Israel! Rejoice and triumph with all your heart, daughter Jerusalem! ¹⁵ The LORD has taken away the judgments against you. He has turned away your enemy. The King of Israel, the LORD, is among you. You will not fear calamity any longer. ¹⁶ On that day Jerusalem will be told, “Do not be afraid, Zion! Do not let your hands hang limp! ¹⁷ The LORD, your God, is among you. He is a Warrior, who saves. He will rejoice happily over you. He will reduce you to silence in His love. He will exult over you with shouts of joy.”

¹⁸ “I shall gather those who are grieving because of the festival. They have been absent from you. The burden on Zion has been disgrace. ¹⁹ Look! At that time, I shall deal with all who are oppressing you. I shall save those who are lame. I shall gather those who have been scattered. I shall change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth. ²⁰ At that time I shall bring you in, yes, at the time when I gather you together. For I shall make you famous and praised among all the peoples of the earth when I restore your fortunes before your eyes.” This is what the LORD has said.

Philippians 4:4-7

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always! I shall say it again: Rejoice! ⁵ Let your gentleness be evident to all people! The Lord is near. ⁶ Do not worry about anything but in everything make your requests known to God by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving! ⁷ The peace of God, which is beyond all understanding, will also guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

Luke 7:18-35

¹⁸ The disciples of John reported to him about all these things. ¹⁹ Then John called two of his disciples and sent them to ask the Lord, “Are You the One who is coming or are we to expect someone else?”

²⁰ The men came to Jesus and said, “John the Baptist has sent us to ask You, ‘Are You the One who is coming or are we to expect someone else?’”

²¹ At that time Jesus had healed many people of their diseases, afflictions and evil spirits and had given sight to many who were blind.

²² Jesus answered, “Go and report to John what you have seen and heard! **Blind people see**, lame people are walking, lepers are made clean, **deaf people hear**, the dead are raised, and **poor people are having the good news** told them. ²³ Blessed is anyone who is not offended because of Me!”

²⁴ After the messengers of John had left, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swayed by the wind?

²⁵ What, then, did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft robes? No, those who wear splendid clothing and live in luxury are found in kings’ palaces. ²⁶ What, then, did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ²⁷ This is the one about whom Scripture has said: **‘Look! I am sending My messenger ahead of You, who will prepare Your way before You.’** ²⁸ I tell you, among those born to women no one is greater than John; but the one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.”

²⁹ When all the people, even the tax-collectors, heard John, they acknowledged that God was right when they were baptised with the baptism of John. ³⁰ However, when the Pharisees and the lawyers were not baptised by John, they rejected God’s purpose for themselves.

³¹ “Therefore, to what shall I compare the people of this generation, and what are they like? ³² They are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling out to one another. They say: ‘We have played the flute for you, but you have not danced. We have sung a funeral song, but you have not wept.’ ³³ For John the Baptist has come, neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, ‘He has a demon.’ ³⁴ The Son of Man has come, eating and drinking, and you say, ‘Look! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax-collectors and sinners!’ ³⁵ Nevertheless, wisdom is proved right by all her children.”

SERMON FOR THE 3rd SUNDAY IN ADVENT, 2024

Are You the One who is Coming?

Luke 7:18-35

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 is the Gospel read before, Luke 7:18-35:

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

Dear friends in Christ,

People came to the Jordan in droves from all over Judea and beyond to hear John the Baptist speak. They had heard about his preaching and how he had lived on his peculiar diet of locusts and wild honey. Maybe many were going to see John simply out of curiosity, but mostly, they were drawn to the wilderness by *the power of his message*. That’s remarkable because John’s preaching style was not what you’d call gentle and inviting. No, he was very loud and abrasive. John had something of an “in-your-face” kind of preaching. He told it as it was. He pulled no punches. He didn’t care who would

be offended by what he said. He blazed away with the full force and fury of God's Law. His intended target was *all* people: from slaves to kings on the social scale, men and women, rich and poor, from the most pious and upright Pharisees to the worst of the public sinners, from the greatest to the least. John's goal was to fill them all with the fear of God and the terror of His righteous judgements against sin, and John was very good at it. When he preached, his listeners knew that they were hearing the powerful truth of God. And hearing it, they felt the heat of hell's flames and trembled with fear.

But today, in our Gospel lesson, we see a very different John. Gone are his fire and conviction. Now, he appears to be weak and wavering. His confidence is shattered. Where once he had pointed to Jesus and said with absolute certainty, "*Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world,*" now he wonders if maybe he'd been wrong. He **"called two of his disciples and sent them to ask the Lord, "Are You the One who is coming, or are we to expect someone else?"** So what happened? Why did this mighty prophet of God now appear to stumble?

John had been put into prison by King Herod Antipas because the king didn't like the fact that John had accused him publicly of adultery since he had run off with the wife of his half-brother, Philip. The charges were true; it's just that Herod didn't like hearing it. He also didn't like what John's very vocal accusations were doing to his already doubtful reputation. So, to silence John, he put him in prison. According to the early church father *Josephus*, John was imprisoned in the very worst hellhole Herod could find: the dark, hot dungeon of the fortress of *Machaerus*. Perched on the desolate eastern shore of the Dead Sea, it was a frightful place. This is where Herod sent the worst criminals and the most troublesome of his enemies. To be sent there was just about the same as a death sentence, but to be fair, Herod didn't want to kill John. He had a grudging respect for him, but until John stopped publicly accusing him of living in sin, he was going to stay at Machaerus. Herod hoped the unpleasant lodgings would encourage John to tone down his rhetoric and keep his moral judgements to himself, but John wasn't budging. No, John was God's unbending prophet sent to declare His Law. For him, there was no such thing as compromise when it came to the commands of God.

Besides, John had counted that Jesus would soon be ushering in the Kingdom of Righteousness, which John himself had been paving the way for. John had been running ahead of Jesus. Preaching about Jesus, John had said, "*I am baptizing you with water. However, the One who is more powerful than I am is coming... He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. He has His winnowing fork in His hand to clean up His threshing floor and to gather the wheat into His barn, but He will burn the chaff with fire that cannot be put out*" (Luke 3:16-17). That is to say, John saw Jesus as coming in wrath and judgment.

In an absolute sense, John was right: one day, Jesus is going to do all those things, and we look forward to it. But in His first coming, He had another mission to perform. It was a mission that John had either overlooked or that he didn't quite understand—and that's no surprise—because *most people didn't understand what Jesus' first mission was to be about*.

Because of this misunderstanding, to John, who had been rotting in his dungeon cell for many months now, it seemed that Jesus was doing everything wrong. John was well informed by his disciples, who kept tabs on what Jesus was doing and reported back to him, but what he was hearing didn't make much sense. Where John had scorched notorious public sinners with threats of damnation, Jesus *embraced* them and sat at their tables to break bread. Then the next day, John heard that Jesus would be just as likely to visit the home of one of the self-righteous Pharisees—the kind of people upon whom John had heaped the hottest of his verbal cinders. It was incomprehensible. It almost seemed like Jesus was making every effort to undo the preparatory work that he had done. Meanwhile, the wicked were still going unpunished, the poor and needy were still being oppressed, and all kinds of lawlessness and injustice were being allowed to continue. And the worst of it was that John knew that one of the things that Jesus had come to do was to set the captives free—that's what the Scriptures promised.

John couldn't understand. And we are, at times, subject to the same kind of misunderstanding. In this world, we want justice *now*. We hate seeing the wicked go unpunished and people getting away with corruption and all kinds of evil crimes. We don't understand why the Lord allows bad things to happen to decent people and why He permits poverty, ignorance, prejudice, and every other social ill you can name to continue unchecked and to grow worse each day. We especially don't understand why God allows bad to happen *to us*. When illness or misfortune strikes, or when we suffer in some way for doing what's right, we want to know, "*Lord, why are you allowing this? I'm on your side. Why aren't you taking better care of me? Why aren't you defending me?*"

We find the answer in Jesus' response to John. He said to the men John had sent, "**Go and report to John what you have seen and heard! Blind people see, lame people are walking; lepers are made clean, deaf people hear; the dead are raised, and poor people are having the good news told to them. Blessed is anyone who is not offended because of Me!**" In short, the message is that right now, Jesus is not here to judge but to heal and restore. His mission *now* is one of mercy and forgiveness. Jesus tells John, "*I'm here to fix things starting with what is most broken: namely the human problem with sin.*" John's job was to make people feel that problem. He was to show them how sin had left them spiritually blind and lame—incapable of doing what God demanded. John was to show them how they were, in fact, dead in sin. He was to load them with the weight of sin's chains; he was to make them feel the heat and oppression—precisely so that they would go to Jesus to be set free.

And that's exactly what was happening. Sure, Jesus was healing people from their physical ailments as well, but He did that primarily to illustrate what was going on *inside* of people who were coming to Him; inside where things can't be seen, in their souls, where they were receiving the healing and life-giving words of God's forgiveness.

Where John had miscalculated (if indeed he had) was with the assumption that if terrifying sinners with a bit of hell-fire and brimstone is a good thing, if that gets them to straighten up and fly right, well, then a lot more of the same must be even better. But it's not. No, the Law of God can only show us what's wrong with us. It has no power to fix

what's wrong. Those who are spiritually blind, lame, leprous, and dead cannot restore themselves. But having discovered that's their condition, they can go to the One to whom John was pointing, the One mightier than John—not for a heavier dose of law—but for the healing forgiveness and mercy they so desperately needed. And while this time of God's grace in Jesus continues, *there will be injustice in the world*. There has to be, precisely because during this time, God isn't treating sinners as they deserve. That's good news for us because we don't want Him treating us as we deserve—but with it comes the consequence that, at times, life will be unfair: the wicked will prosper, the righteous will suffer, and all kinds of social evils will continue. They'll continue until the last repentant soul comes to the Lord Jesus Christ and the day of grace ends.

Interestingly enough, nothing illustrates the spiritual truths we've been considering this morning quite so well as the life of John the Baptist. His behaviour and appearance are intended to be something of a living parable. John had turned his back on the world's creature comforts; he lived in the wilderness wearing rough, scratchy clothing and ate locusts and wild honey. Why? It was all meant to illustrate what the Law of God is to do to you. It's to make you miserable, hot, hungry, thirsty, and uncomfortable. So not only did John preach the message of God's Law, he played the part. And the circumstance we find him today is where life under the Law eventually leads: to despair and doubt in a wilderness dungeon outside of the Promised Land. And that's important. Jesus had said of John, **"I tell you, among those born to women no one is greater than John."** He means that no one came closer than John to leading a perfectly righteous and godly life. John was the best of the best, and yet, just look at what all that Law he lived by got him: absolutely nowhere. You see, John himself has been brought to the point his preaching was intended to bring everyone else: to feeling hopelessly weak and helpless, and the fact that he, the greatest of those born of women, finds himself in that situation highlights the truth that there is no one righteous; no, not one. The Law convicts us all – even the greatest man who ever lived.

Fortunately, Jesus goes on to say that **"the one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he."** That is to say that the least person in the kingdom is even more righteous. Why is that? It's because those in the kingdom are those who have faith in Jesus. They have come to Him for forgiveness, and trusting in Him, they are credited with His holy perfection. In God's eyes, they are truly sinless—no matter how soiled and stained with sin their lives have been. And there could be a double meaning here in Jesus' words. When Jesus speaks of the least in the kingdom of God, He may also be referring to Himself. Because by taking our sins upon Himself and dying on the cross, ***Jesus became the least and the servant of all in God's Kingdom***.

In any case, we see that Jesus did not leave John in his prison of doubt and despair. By sending the message He did, He encouraged John to see that everything was indeed proceeding according to God's plan, even if parts of it were beyond his understanding. And I am certain that John took comfort in these words and trusted Jesus despite his outward circumstances. His body may have remained in chains, but trusting in Jesus, his

soul was set free. I'm just as certain that he continued to trust in Jesus until the end when he faced the executioner's blade. Then, not coincidentally, his own wrongful death for proclaiming the truth served as a foreshadowing of his Lord's innocent death for our sin.

All of which should serve as a reminder for us that God's wisdom is wiser than the wisdom of men. And because we have listened to John's message, and so been brought to mourning over our sins and have subsequently listened to the voice of Christ proclaiming our forgiveness, we know that we too can be confident that Jesus knows what He is doing with us at all times. We know that in the face of injustice or mistreatment, or whatever ills befall us, we can place our complete hope and confidence in Him even when we don't understand what He's doing and remain confident even in adversity and the hour of death because it is especially at such times that the Lord is with us to give us His peace. May God grant this to us all. Amen.

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

PRAYER FOR THE THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT

O God, Shepherd of Your people, You have led Your flock in mercy throughout long years of promise. You have sustained them, and given them hope through Your Son Jesus Christ. Give us all steadfast faith in Your mercy, that we may rejoice and give thanks each passing day, and be ready for Jesus' second coming.

In Your presence, we offer You our prayers, petitions, and thanksgiving. Forgive us our sins and wipe out our many transgressions. By Your Holy Spirit renew us with Your gracious gifts.

Open the eyes of those who are spiritually blind. Guide those who are lame and stumbling. Heal those who are diseased in their thoughts, words, and deeds. Lead all people to believe in Him whom You have sent, and to follow the things that are good, true, and lasting, and pleasing to Your Son Jesus Christ.

We pray for Your Church throughout the world. Bless all who preach and teach Your Word, that many more may come to know You as the only true God and Saviour of mankind. Rule over the hearts of all people. Guide the decisions of those in authority, and sit in the councils of the nations, that peace and justice may prevail everywhere.

Bless all who have gathered here today in Your house. Be with those of our congregation who are sick or afflicted in any way in body, mind, or spirit. Grant that in their trials they may learn of Your gracious power, and of Your readiness to help in every time of need.

Pour out Your grace on us all, that we may be enabled each day to show forth the glory of Your name, and to witness to Your saving truth in Jesus Christ our Lord. Give us these things, and whatever else You know we need, in the precious name of Jesus. Amen.

Article: Basic Principles in the Call to the Public Ministry of the Gospel

The following is a list of principles that should be followed when it comes to men being called into the ministry. Unfortunately, it appears today that in some Lutheran Churches, there is confusion or even ignorance in this area. Some men are called to be pastors even when no congregation has called them. Instead, they receive a call from a man-made organisation and are given the title “Pastor.”

1. The ministry is essentially the preaching and teaching of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments (Augsburg Confession V). Jesus Christ has won the blessings of forgiveness and salvation through His active and passive obedience. These blessings are available in the Gospel and the Sacraments. God chooses and sends men to apply these blessings through the Gospel and the Sacraments. The Gospel creates both the church and the ministry, and ministers have no other work and mission than to preach and teach the Gospel and administer the Sacraments. What the office of the ministry is, and what its functions are belong together. We reject the view of any who argue that the ministry is no more than the carrying out of the functions of the ministry resting in the priesthood of all believers and that it is merely by human right.
2. The public ministry of the Gospel is a divine institution. God chooses and appoints men to serve in this office of preaching (John 20:21; Rom 10:15; 2 Cor 5:18-20; 1 Cor 12:28; Acts 20:28). The task of ministers is both to declare God’s Word and protect His church against wolves. No one appoints himself. Though in an emergency, a church may exist for a time without a pastor, the office is necessary, and a commandment of God and the call to the ministry creates the office of the public ministry. It is God’s will that a flock should have its shepherd. The call is absolutely necessary, for the faithful pastor must be certain that God wants to use his labours.
3. There is only one public office of the ministry of the Gospel, though it is known by many titles, such as bishop, elder, pastor, teacher, preacher, and minister. Any distinctions between them, such as the office of president or bishop in the modern sense, and assistant pastor, are not by divine right, but only by human right.
4. The apostles were chosen directly by our Lord. Ministers of the Gospel continue the work of the apostles in the church, but are appointed mediately, or indirectly, through the congregations who call them. God calls through the church (Acts 20:28; Acts 14:23; 1 Tim 4:14; 2 Tim 1:6; Eph 4:12; 1 Cor 3:21; 1 Cor 3:5; Titus 1:5).
5. All Christians have the office of the keys and speak the Gospel privately as occasions demand, teach their children, and baptise in cases of emergency, but not all Christians are in the special public ministry of the

Gospel. The minister teaches out in the open, in the name of his congregation, in and out of season, no matter the consequences. The public office of the ministry is a special office through which God serves the church. It is a sacred office entrusted by the conferral of a legitimate call upon certain suitable persons.

6. In the practice of the Lutheran church of the past, it is the entire company of believers who call to the ministry. Though a call is made by one congregation, it is a call of the whole church. At the time of the Reformation those who called included the civil magistrates, the ministers of the church, and the economic or domestic estates (the people). There was a case in USA in the 19th century where a congregation called a second pastor without the consent or involvement of its pastor, and Walther's opinion was that it was not a legitimate call, because it was the action of only some individuals.
7. The series of steps in a call in the Lutheran Church have been: examination, presentation, confirmation by officials, and the consent, vote, and approval by the people. The sheep must approve the shepherd.
8. Because the call is God's call, there should be no hiring and firing mentality in the church. As God calls through means, God also removes through means, and a pastor should be removed only when it can be shown with certainty that this is the will of God. The Lutheran Theologian John Gerhard once said that, as the whole church is involved in the call, the legitimate cause for a pastor's removal pertains to the whole church. A pastor may be dismissed only when it is shown clearly that he is guilty of false doctrine, or an ungodly life, or that he is no longer able to teach. No one should allow himself to be put in the place of another who has been dismissed without due process. Luther says that such a person would be "a thief and a murderer." He has stolen another's call and destroyed his ministry (Luther's Works XII, 176). A call is also a legal document.
9. No one should publicly teach or preach or administer the sacraments in the church unless he is regularly called (Augsburg Confession XIV; Treatise, 67). When a pastor other than the regular called pastor conducts a service, this also ought to occur only after the invitation of the congregation.
10. Being "regularly called" includes ordination and installation. No one should be ordained without a call. Though ordination is not a sacrament and in theory is not absolutely necessary for entering the office, in Lutheran practice ordination is never omitted for someone called to the public ministry of the Gospel. Ordination is the public attestation by the church of God's gift to the church. The reading of the document of call

is an important part of the service of ordination and any subsequent services of installation.

11. The public minister of the Gospel is both a servant of God and a servant of the congregation. There may be times when a pastor, in God's name, has to resist even the majority of his congregation.
12. Because the call constitutes the ministry, a man who has been a pastor and is without a call (through early retirement or being deposed, for example) is strictly no longer a pastor, even though he may be called one out of respect.
13. The call to the public ministry of the Gospel may be part-time. For a while, Paul supported himself by making tents part-time.
14. The call should always be permanent. One should not merely quit such a high calling. It is irrevocable unless God Himself intervenes. For a couple of centuries after the Reformation, even the idea of retirement did not occur to people. Temporary calls are not objectionable when the tasks are by their nature temporary, but not those that have a built-in dismissal, which allows officials to terminate a call on unbiblical grounds.
15. No pastor should transfer to another ministry without another legitimate call. When a pastor, who has a divine call, receives a call from another congregation, he does not decide which call is divine, but in which divine call it is the Lord's will that he should labour.
16. In *The Doctrine of the Call in the Confessions and Lutheran Orthodoxy*, Robert Preus warns about the frequent dangerous movement from emergency to practice to doctrine, and applies it within the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod. Among such wrong practices he includes public preaching by lay people who have not been properly called; the practice of referring to anyone who serves the church full time, privately or publicly (in bureaucratic and administrative positions), as "ministers"; the deposing of men from the ministry without cause; the placing by officials of some pastors on a restricted list; the firing of pastors without due process, on the grounds that the pastor is "an employee at will", and that the congregation is autonomous; the requirement that a called pastor undergo psychological evaluation, or counselling against his will; the controlling of call-lists by district presidents; interference by district presidents by talking with members and hearing complaints behind the pastor's back; temporary calls; forced retirements; and the calling of women to the public ministry of the Gospel.

Children's Message:

Pretend someone said something really mean to you, and it made you angry. Do you have an angry face? I'm sure you do! Now, pretend that something even worse happened, but instead of looking sad or angry, you made the most wonderful smile. Would that make sense? Of course not! It makes no sense to smile when bad things happen.

Our Bible reading from our Second Reading today, from Philippians, says, "Rejoice in the Lord always!" (4:4). What does it mean to "rejoice"? It means to show joy or gladness. "Rejoice in the Lord always" means God always gives us a reason to be excited, even when bad things happen. Even when we feel mad or sad, we always have a reason to shout, "Praise the Lord!" God doesn't tell us to



rejoice, to show joy, only when we like what's happening. Because of Jesus, we still have reason to rejoice even when things are going badly.

Why? Why do we still have to rejoice when bad or sad things happen—like your dog runs away, your best friend moves away, or you get in trouble? Because God still loves you. Jesus is still your Saviour. You are still saved from sin and the devil because Jesus has taken away your sins through His life, death, and resurrection. No matter how horrible everything is going, God is still helping you. Sometimes, His help can be hard to see, but that's a great time to pray. We pray for God to help us—and He does! We also pray for God to calm us down. We pray for peace. God promises to help us know that He is taking care of us. And He guards our hearts, minds, and souls, now and forever. That's why we rejoice.

Dear Jesus, I am not always happy but I am sometimes sad. When I am sad, help me remember that You are still with me and have prepared a place for me with You in heaven, where I shall rejoice forever more! Amen.

WEEKLY ANNOUNCEMENTS

22 December 4 Advent	25 December Christmas Day	29 December 1 Christmas
9.00am LOWOOD LR 9.30am TMBA HC incorporating the Downs Children's Christmas Service	7.30am MARBURG HC TMBA LR (Time to be determined) 10.00am OAK HC	8.30am OAK LR 9.00am TMBA LR 9.00am GRN HC 10.45am AUB HC 9.00am LOWOOD LR Downs members: Please note the change
Sunday, 22 December		
READINGS: Micah 5:2-5a; Hebrews 10:5-10; Luke 1:39-56		
HYMNS: 14 7 431 633		
Wednesday, 25 December		
READINGS: Isaiah 52:7-10; Hebrews 1:1-6; John 1:1-14		
HYMNS: 25 624 627 34 33 634		
Sunday, 29 December		
READINGS: Exodus 13:1-3a, 11-15; Colossians 3:12-17; Luke 2:22-40		
HYMNS: 46 26 44 (22 364) 29		

Friday, 20 December. 7.30pm. Carols Evening at Trinity Oakey.

Next Sunday, Downs members: Please place your offering in envelopes marked back to your own congregation.

We are still waiting for the new hymn books which are ordered to arrive.