

Australian Evangelical Lutheran Church
BETHLEHEM TOOWOOMBA, OUR SAVIOUR LOWOOD, ST JOHN'S AUBIGNY,
ST PAUL'S GREENWOOD, TRINITY MARBURG, TRINITY OAKEY
12th January The Baptism of our Lord

HYMNS: 392 301 279 42 322 791

INTROIT: Psalm 29

Give to the LORD, you heavenly beings, give to the LORD glory and strength.

Give to the LORD the glory due to His name! Worship the LORD in holy splendour!

The voice of the LORD is over the waters; the God of glory causes it to thunder; the LORD is over many waters.

The voice of the LORD is powerful; the voice of the LORD is majestic.

The voice of the LORD breaks the cedars; yes the LORD breaks in pieces the cedars of Lebanon.

He also makes them skip about like a calf. He makes Lebanon and Sirion skip about like a young wild ox.

The voice of the LORD stirs flames of fire.

The voice of the LORD makes the wilderness tremble; the LORD makes the Wilderness of Kadesh tremble.

The voice of the LORD causes the fallow deer to be in labour, and brings kids to premature birth; and in His temple everyone is saying, "Glory!"

The LORD sat enthroned over the Deluge, and the LORD has for ever been sitting as King.

The LORD will give strength to His people; the LORD will bless His people with peace.

COLLECT: Father in heaven, at the Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River You proclaimed Him Your beloved Son and anointed Him with the Holy Spirit. Make all who are baptised in His name faithful in their calling as Your children and inheritors with Him of everlasting life; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit one God, now and for ever. Amen.

READINGS: Isaiah 43:1-7 The Lord redeems Israel.

Romans 6:1-11 Dead to sin, Alive to Christ.

Luke 3:15-22 The Holy Spirit came down on Him.

Isaiah 43:1-7

¹ Now, however, this is what the LORD has said, He who created you, O Jacob, He who formed you, O Israel: “Do not be afraid! For I have redeemed you. I have called you by your name. You are Mine. ² When you go through the waters, I shall be with you. When you go through rivers, they will not flood over you. When you walk through fire, you will not be scorched, and the flames will not burn you. ³ For I am the LORD, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour. I have given Egypt as a ransom for you, Sudan and Seba in exchange for you. ⁴ Since you have been precious in My sight, you have been honoured, and I Myself have **loved** you. Therefore, I shall give other human beings in exchange for you and nations in exchange for your life. ⁵ **Do not be afraid! For I am with you.** I shall bring your descendants from the east and gather you from the west. ⁶ I shall tell the north, ‘Give them up!’ and the south, ‘Do not keep them back!’ Bring My sons from far away and My daughters from the ends of the earth! ⁷ Bring everyone who is called by My name, whom I have created for My glory, whom I have formed and made!”

Romans 6:1-11

¹ Therefore, what shall we say? “Shall we go on sinning that God may be more gracious to us?” ² Certainly not! How shall we, who died to sin, live any longer in it? ³ Or do you not know that all of us who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into His death? ⁴ Therefore, we were buried with Him through baptism into death, so that, as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might begin to live a new life. ⁵ If we have been planted together with Him in the likeness of His death, then we shall be planted together with Him also in the likeness of His resurrection. ⁶ We know that our old self was crucified with Him, that our sinful bodies might be rendered powerless, that we might not be slaves to sin any longer. ⁷ For the one who has died has been declared free from sin. ⁸ If we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, ⁹ because we know that, since Christ was raised from the dead, He will not die again. Death no longer has any mastery over Him. ¹⁰ For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all, but the life that He lives He lives to God. ¹¹ So you too, reckon yourselves to be dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus!

Luke 3:15-22

¹⁵ The people were expecting something and were all wondering in their hearts whether John might perhaps be the Christ. ¹⁶ John answered them all: “I am baptising you with water. However, the One who is more powerful than I am is coming. I am not worthy to untie His sandal-strap. He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. ¹⁷ He has His winnowing fork in His hand to clean up His threshing floor and to gather the wheat into His barn but will burn the chaff with fire that cannot be put out.”

¹⁸ So, with many other words John kept exhorting the people and telling them the Good News.

¹⁹ However, when John rebuked Herod the tetrarch because of Herodias, his brother’s wife, and all the other evil things he had done, ²⁰ Herod added this to them all: he locked John up in prison.

²¹ When all the people were being baptised, Jesus was also baptised. While He was praying, heaven was opened, ²² and the Holy Spirit came down on Him in bodily form like a dove. Then a voice came from heaven, which said, “You are **My Son**, whom I love. **I am well pleased with You.**”

CHRIST IS BAPTISED AND WILL DO SOME BAPTISING OF HIS OWN **Sermon for the Baptism of our Lord 2025** **Luke 3:15-22**

The grace of our 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 read before, Luke 3:15-22: ¹⁵ **The people were expecting something and were all wondering in their hearts whether John might perhaps be the Christ.** ¹⁶ **John answered them all: “I am baptising you with water. However, the One who is more powerful than I am is coming. I am not worthy to untie His sandal-strap. He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.** ¹⁷ **He has His winnowing fork in His hand to clean up His threshing floor and to gather the wheat into His barn but will burn the chaff with fire that cannot be put out.”**

¹⁸ **So, with many other words John kept exhorting the people and telling them the Good News.**

¹⁹ However, when John rebuked Herod the tetrarch because of Herodias, his brother's wife, and all the other evil things he had done, ²⁰ Herod added this to them all: he locked John up in prison.

²¹ When all the people were being baptised, Jesus was also baptised. While He was praying, heaven was opened, ²² and the Holy Spirit came down on Him in bodily form like a dove. Then a voice came from heaven, which said, "You are My Son, whom I love. I am well pleased with You."

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

Dear friends in Christ,

Today, we remember the Baptism of our Lord, which is always celebrated on the First Sunday after the Epiphany.

The baptism of our Lord happened when Jesus was about to start His public ministry. Luke writes, "**When all the people were being baptised, Jesus was also baptised. While He was praying, heaven was opened, ²² and the Holy Spirit came down on Him in bodily form like a dove. Then a voice came from heaven, which said, "You are My Son, whom I love. I am well pleased with You."**

Notice, however, that the account of Jesus' baptism is prefaced with some words from John the Baptist about the Christ and what He will do, particularly these words: "**He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.**"

Today, let us examine these passages and see two things: *that Christ is baptised and that He will do some baptising of His own.*

We start with Christ Himself being baptised.

In his Gospel, Matthew recalls how "*Jerusalem, all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan kept going out to (John). They were baptised by him in the Jordan River, as they confessed their sins*" (3:5-6). Luke simply says today that "**all the people**" were being baptised. As John baptised the people as they confessed their sins, it seems strange because "**when all the people were being baptised, Jesus was also baptised.**" Why? Jesus had nothing to repent of. He had no sins that needed to be forgiven. Nevertheless, He, too, was baptised. *What's going on here?*

This is Jesus identifying with us, poor sinners. He, the sinless Son of God, comes in the flesh to bear our sins and suffer the judgment we deserve. *He will do this on the cross.* But even here, at His baptism, *Jesus begins the journey that will take Him to the cross.* He is baptised with us for us. Remember the words of the Apostle Paul from our Second Reading? "*Do you not know that all of us who*

were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into His death? ⁴ Therefore, we were buried with Him through baptism into death, so that, as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might begin to live a new life.

⁵ If we have been planted together with Him in the likeness of His death, then we shall be planted together with Him also in the likeness of His resurrection” (6:3-5). Christ has paid the penalty of our sin, and His work is applied to us in baptism.

When Jesus was being baptised and while He was praying, three things happened: **“Heaven was opened... the Holy Spirit came down on Him in bodily form like a dove”** and **“then a voice came from heaven, which said, “You are My Son, whom I love. I am well pleased with You.”**

Each part is significant, so let’s look at them one at a time.

“Heaven was opened.” This means that in Christ’s baptism, there is an intersection between heaven and earth. There is open access, no barrier. God is going to do something now. What will it be?

Heaven is opened, and the Holy Spirit descends on Jesus **“in bodily form like a dove.”**

Why just this? This remarkable manifestation of the Holy Spirit has much to say about who Jesus is and what He has come to do. The coming of this dove speaks much about the person and the work of Christ.

But why does Jesus need the Holy Spirit coming upon Him? Is not Jesus the very Son of God, the Second Person of the Trinity, already in perfect communion with the Holy Spirit from eternity? Yes indeed. But remember, this is the Son of God, *now come in the flesh*. **Jesus is both true God and true man**. So we can say that, according to His human nature, Jesus is anointed with the Holy Spirit at His baptism, which is pretty much what the Apostle Peter says in the Book of Acts, how *“God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and power”* (Acts 10:38).

In His baptism Jesus is anointed with the Holy Spirit to empower Him for His ministry—for His office as the Christ. The word “Christ” means “the Anointed One,” the Messiah. The Holy Spirit here marks Jesus as Christ, empowering Him for His office and showing that God’s choice, blessing, favour, and power rest upon this man Jesus. He is taking up His office as the Christ now, as He’s about to begin His public ministry. That’s what the Spirit’s descent at His baptism is doing and saying.

And there’s even more going on here. Think back to the creation of the heavens and the earth. In Genesis 1, we read how *“the Spirit of God was hovering over*

the surface of the water.” So also, here at the baptism in the Jordan, the Spirit of God is coming down over the waters. Jesus, the one being baptised, is going to bring in a new creation, restoring all that has been damaged and lost by our fall into sin.

Or think of the significance of the Spirit coming down over the water “**in bodily form like a dove.**” Think of Noah at the end of the flood, and there’s a dove that comes, letting him know that now there’s a brand-new start for the earth after the destruction that sin brought. So again, at Christ’s baptism: dove, Spirit, water—a new creation. Jesus, the Christ, baptised in the water of the Jordan, anointed with the Holy Spirit, descending upon Him “**in bodily form like a dove**” —this Jesus is here to do the ultimate new-creation job.

The heavens are opened, the Spirit descends, and now, a third thing, a voice comes from heaven, saying, “**You are My Son, whom I love. I am well pleased with You.**”

Of course, this is the voice of God the Father, attesting to His love for His Son and His choice of His Son to carry out the mission on which He sent Him. Again, Christ has always been God’s Son from eternity, but now, as He sets out on this journey that will take Him to the cross, the Father assures Jesus of His love. God was well pleased to send His Son into the world to take on this mission that would win salvation for the world. Recall that even at Jesus’ birth, the angel choir sang of God’s goodwill, His good pleasure, in sending Christ to bring peace on earth.

“**You are My Son, whom I love,**” the Father tells Jesus. How mysterious and profound, then, when later the Father will forsake His beloved Son as He is hanging on the cross. It is like, although in an infinitely greater way, when God told Abraham: “*Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah! Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains that I shall point out to you!*” (Genesis 22:2). And just as Abraham was about to sacrifice his beloved son, God called him back at the last moment and provided a substitute. This was a picture of how God would not spare His own Son, His only Son Jesus, whom He loves. “*For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that everyone who believes in Him might not perish but have eternal life*” (John 3:16).

Dear friends, how much God must love us that the One He forsakes on the cross is this same Jesus, to whom He says here at His baptism: “**You are My Son, whom I love. I am well pleased with You.**”

Yes, this is God's own Son who sets out on this journey now, beginning from His baptism. He is the One who is baptised, but He is also the baptised. Remember what John said: **“He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.”** Christ, our Lord, baptises us. What a difference this makes for us!

“He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.” What is meant by **“with fire”**?

There are two possibilities here, both of which would accord with the teaching of Scripture elsewhere. One is that **“with fire”** refers to end-time judgment. Remember, John was speaking to the whole crowd that was coming out, which included both the repentant and the hypocrites. He said that Jesus **“has His winnowing fork in His hand to clean up His threshing floor and to gather the wheat into His barn but will burn the chaff with fire that cannot be put out.”** So, “fire,” in this context, could refer to the coming judgment.

The other possibility is that **“with fire”** refers to what Christ Jesus will do on the Day of Pentecost, when our ascended Lord pours out the Holy Spirit on His church, and tongues of fire rest on each one, and the Spirit empowers their witness, as they speak of the wonderful works of God. That would fit, too.

In either case, it is Christ Jesus who baptises us, and for us who are baptised by Jesus and believe in Him and receive the Holy Spirit from Him, that is a good thing.

Christ Jesus is baptised, and He baptises us. In our baptism, we are joined to Him. All the benefits Christ Jesus has won for us—by His ministry, suffering and dying for us on the cross, by His victorious resurrection—all those wonderful gifts are given to us and applied to us in *holy baptism*. We receive Christ's righteousness and the forgiveness of sins. We are buried with Christ and raised to newness of life. We are given the Holy Spirit, who creates faith in our hearts and empowers us for a life of Christian service and witness. The heavenly Father's voice comes from heaven and says to each one of us: *“You are My beloved child. Because of My Son Jesus Christ, I am well pleased with you.”*

Dear friends, in the waters of holy baptism, the heavens are opened, and the Spirit descends upon you and makes you a new creation. It is just as Paul writes to the Corinthians, *“If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old things have passed away. Look! They have become new!”* (2 Cor. 5:17). You are a new creation, meaning you are a new person in Christ. You walk in newness of life, and this is life everlasting. You are united with Christ in His resurrection. God has claimed your body and your soul, and you will be raised, bodily, to eternal life when Christ comes again and wonderfully restores all of creation.

The baptism of our Lord is one of the most significant events in the Bible. It tells us so much about our Saviour, Jesus Christ, His person and His work. It speaks such wonderful things for us, we who have been baptised into Christ. In the baptism of Jesus, we see Him as being baptised and the One who baptises us. Amen.

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

PRAYER FOR THE FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

(The Baptism of our Lord)

Lord God, heavenly Father, we praise You that You have revealed Your will and wisdom in the life of Your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. We praise You that You have given us the gift of Your Holy Spirit in our baptism, and that in baptism You have acknowledged us as Your dear children. We praise You that in the baptism of Your Son in the Jordan You marked Him out as the Messiah, our true representative, to fulfil all righteousness, and, as our substitute, to give Himself in sacrifice for our sin and death. We praise You that, as Jesus saw the heavens opened when He was baptised, You have assured us of eternal life, where we shall see Your heaven opened to us.

Through Your Holy Spirit renew the mind of Christ in us, and let it grow in us. As Jesus began His public ministry for us at His baptism, we thank You for the privilege of regarding our baptism as our commissioning to serve You. Make us ready to give ourselves sacrificially for others, as Jesus has done, in ways that glorify You.

In mercy care for the spiritual welfare of all our baptised children. Give us grace as parents to show Your will and way to those who have yet to learn all that Christ has commanded us, by faithful worship, love for Your Word, and the desire to walk in the ways of Christ at all times. Free us all from being like this world. Transform us inwardly, that all our thoughts, words, and deeds may reflect Your perfect will.

Bless those who are one in confession with us in the fellowship of Your Church. Pour out Your blessing and strength on our pastor, that he may preach and teach Your Word with warmth and energy, and let the light of Your Gospel shine to people in darkness. Guide and teach our seminary student Matthew that he may be placed into Your service of proclaiming the Gospel also. Bless the witness of us all to the power of Jesus Christ to save sinners. Fill us with increasing zeal for

the salvation of people who do not yet know Him as their Saviour, and for the extension of His kingdom. Send Your Holy Spirit to all Your people, to overcome weakness in Your Church, to remove all indifference, to cast out all fear of human beings, to reject the love of the world, and to banish all lukewarmness.

Grant that we may find strength in Your almighty power and daily care. Show Your mercy and goodness to the sick, the lonely, the bereaved, and the suffering. Teach them to cast their cares on You. Show them that You are not dealing with them in wrath, but in love, for Jesus' sake.

Help, heal, uphold, and strengthen us all, and in all things enable us to rejoice in Your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ, whom we adore, with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Article: Why Pray?

Why pray? One good excuse is that the world has plenty of trouble and sorrow. When Jesus is confronted by unspeakable wickedness in the case of demon possession in the synagogue, He knows there is an onslaught to come. He knows that our oppressor has latched onto Him, because He has come to snatch us from the fiend. He has come to box the devil on the nose and cast him out: “*What do we have in common with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are, the Holy One of God!*” Jesus spoke sharply to him: “*Be quiet and come out of him!*” (Mark 1:24-25)!

Why pray? Because the devil is prowling about seeking to devour you! The devil knows what is afoot. He can name the Lord. The devil knows what the game is, even if he is trying to hide it from us.

So it is in these days in which God's laws are flaunted in the name of love; a love bent from the purposes for which it was given by God. There can be no right love, outside of the commands of the God who is Himself love. And yet our enemy is trying to blind us to this with worldly demands for fairness. Our own natural blindness finds us calling God's Law unloving and calling moral discipline names I dare not repeat. Satan would prefer us to be instructed by teenagers and morally formed by those who have not yet matured in their judgment. Comedian Jerry Seinfeld was quoted as saying about his own adolescent daughter, “They just want to use these words. ‘That’s racist.’ ‘That’s sexist.’ ‘That’s prejudiced.’ They don’t even know what they’re talking about.” Such “wise, adult” children should turn again and become God's children, subject to a loving Father's discipline.

The older I get, the more childlike I want to become—if that childlikeness is God’s childlikeness. “Yes, dear Father, I am Your child and would do as you have commanded. I know that I will falter, but I will never glory in my fault, but confess it, sorrow over it, and seek Your mercy. Dear Father, forgive me. Turn me away from my sin. Restore me that I may not die.” The sin in the world leads me to pray about my own sin. If you don’t need to pray, place your hand on your heart and check to see if it is still beating. If it is, you are still in the world and there is plenty of trouble, sorrow, sin, and suffering in it.

Why pray? Because I see so much needless suffering around me, much of it is caused by me. Jesus certainly prays at pivotal moments in His ministry. In Mark 1, He makes the first public appearance of His ministry. On the night of His betrayal, He prays continually: at the Supper, for Himself, His disciples, and us in the Upper Room and in the Garden of Gethsemane. He is ready to be offered the eternal plan to die, a plan devised by Him from the foundation of the world. And yet now He is confronted by the enormity of His suffering (and not just its physical cost): the weight of human depravity which He is owning now to remove it from you. He is facing the implacable and stubborn unbelief of the humans who howl for Him to die and for whom, despite their rage against Him, He has come to die. In the darkness, He cries out to His Father. In the darkness, great drops of bloody sweat ooze from His pores.

Why pray? Because we are in such deep trouble!



The Lord’s Supper has always been seen as a sign of unity between those who commune together at the Lord’s table (1 Cor. 10:17). When Christians partake of the Lord’s Supper in a church body that has a confession of faith, they thereby declare that they believe that they are one in faith with those who commune with them. Since people cannot honestly hold two differing confessions at the same time, they cannot honestly commune with those whose confession is in conflict with their own. If any do this nevertheless, they deny their own confession, and so deny Christ Himself (2 Cor. 6:14-18). **We ask visitors who are communicant members in a church not in fellowship with the AELC, or are not familiar with the *AELC Statement of Faith*, to refrain from communing today. If you have questions, please speak with the pastor after service.**

Children's Message:

Today, our First Reading in church from the book of Isaiah tells us that each one of us belongs to God. Isaiah tells us how we can know for sure that we belong to God. He tells us God's own words. God says, "*Do not be afraid! For I have redeemed you. I have called you by your name. You are Mine.*" Guess what! You all belong to God, too! God paid a really high price to buy you for Himself—that's what "redeemed" means—a very high price that lets Him put His name on you. Yes, God calls each of you by name, too. God claims us as His very own when we are baptised.

When we are baptised, God puts His own name on us—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. That's how God knows we belong to Him because we have His name. And God's name assures us of His love for us. His name tells us He is our loving Father who made us; He is the Son, Jesus, who has paid that very high price of dying on the cross to forgive our sin that separated us from God, then rose again to give us a new life in His family; He is the Holy Spirit, who gives us faith to believe in Jesus.



Because we are God's own special children, Isaiah tells us that God takes care of us and will always be with us, even in times of trouble—like when we're scared or sick or when things don't go our way. We never have to be afraid because we know we belong to God and are very special to Him. What a special gift God gives to you, and what a special treasure you are to God because you have His name on you.

Thank You, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for placing Your name on me when I was baptised. Help me to remember this baptismal promise until my faith in You is turned to sight when I see You in heaven! Amen.

Welcome to all worshipping with us today!
 Pastor Peter Ziebell, Phone 0407583922.
 Email him at paziebell@gmail.com or to the church office at ddaalc@gmail.com.
Please notify pastor of anyone who is unwell or in need of a visit.

WEEKLY ANNOUNCEMENTS

19 January 2 Epiphany	26 January 3 Epiphany	2 February 4 Epiphany
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 MARBURG HC	8.30am OAK LR 9.00am TMBA HC 9.00am GRN LR 10.45am AUB HC 9.00am LOWOOD LR
Sunday, 19 January		
READINGS: Isaiah 62:1-5; 1 Corinthians 12:1-11; John 2:1-11		
HYMNS: 40 45 47 (84 840) 509 OAKEY: 276 45 47 84 840 509		
Sunday, 26 January		
READINGS: Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10; 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a; Luke 4:16-30		
HYMNS: 272 217 785 (84 364) 267		
Sunday, 2 February		
READINGS: Jeremiah 1:4-19; 1 Corinthians 12:31b-13:13; Luke 4:31-44		
HYMNS: 9 239 262 (148 83) 616		

Today, after service, a Parish Executive meeting and a Seminary Committee meeting will be held.

BIBLE STUDIES for JANUARY

Wednesday the 22nd, 7.30pm Greenwood.

Thursday the 23rd, 10.00am Lowood. (PLEASE NOTE DATE!)

Sunday the 26th, after service at Marburg.

Friday the 31st, 7.30pm Oak/Aub at Aubigny.

(Feb 2), 8.00am at Toowoomba.