

Australian Evangelical Lutheran Church
BETHLEHEM TOOWOOMBA, OUR SAVIOUR LOWOOD, ST JOHN'S AUBIGNY,
ST PAUL'S GREENWOOD, TRINITY MARBURG, TRINITY OAKY
16th February Sixth Sunday after Epiphany

HYMNS: 305 308 386 511

INTROIT: Psalm 1

Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of wicked people, stand in the path of sinners, or sit in the seat of scoffers. Rather, his delight is in the Law of the LORD, and on His Law he meditates day and night.

He will be like a tree planted by streams of water, which produces its fruit in its season, and has leaves that do not wither; and whatever he does will prosper.

The ungodly are not like that, but are like the chaff that the wind blows away.

Therefore, wicked people will not stand up in the judgment, or sinners in the assembly of righteous people.

For the LORD knows the way of righteous people, but the way of wicked people will perish.

COLLECT: O Lord, graciously hear the prayers of Your people, that we, who justly suffer the consequence of our sin, may be mercifully delivered by Your goodness, to the glory of Your name; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, 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 today!

Pastor Peter Ziebell, Phone 0407583922.

Email him at paziebell@gmail.com or to the church office at ddaelc@gmail.com.

Please notify pastor of anyone who is unwell or in need of a visit.

READINGS:

Jeremiah 17:5-8 Blessed is the person who trusts in the LORD.

1 Corinthians 15:1-20 Christ is our Hope!

Luke 6:17-26 Blessed are you.

Jeremiah 17:5-8

⁵ This is what the LORD has said: “Cursed is the man who trusts in a human being, who makes flesh his strength and whose heart turns away from the LORD! ⁶ He will be like a shrub in the desert and will not see when anything good comes. He will live in the parched places in the wilderness, in a salty land where no one lives. ⁷ Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD! The LORD will be his confidence. ⁸ He will be like a tree planted beside water, which spreads out its roots beside a stream. He will not be afraid when the hot season comes, but his leaves will be green. He will not be anxious in a year of drought or stop producing fruit.”

1 Corinthians 15:(1-11) 12-20

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

¹² If it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? ¹³ If there is no resurrection of the dead, Christ has not been raised either. ¹⁴ If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is useless, and your faith is also useless. ¹⁵ We are also found to be false witnesses of God, because we have testified about God that He has raised Christ; but He did not raise Him if it is true that the dead are not raised. ¹⁶ For, if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. ¹⁷ If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile. You are still in your sins. ¹⁸ Then those who have fallen asleep in Christ have also perished. ¹⁹ If in

this life only we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all other people. ²⁰ However, now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep.

Luke 6:17-26

¹⁷ Jesus went down with them and stood on a level place with a large crowd of His disciples and a great many people from all over Judea, Jerusalem and the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon. ¹⁸ They had come to hear Him and be healed of their diseases, and those who were troubled by unclean spirits were made well.

¹⁹ All the people were trying to touch Him, because power was coming from Him and healing them all.

²⁰ Jesus looked at His disciples and said: “Blessed are you who are poor! For yours is the kingdom of God.

²¹ “Blessed are you who are hungry now! For you will be satisfied.

“Blessed are you who are weeping now! For you will laugh.

²² “Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you, insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man! ²³ Rejoice in that day and leap for joy! For, you see, your reward is great in heaven. For that is how their fathers used to treat the prophets.

²⁴ “However, how terrible for you who are rich! For you have already received your comfort.

²⁵ “How terrible for you who are well fed now! For you will be hungry.

“How terrible for you who are laughing now! For you will mourn and weep.

²⁶ “How terrible for you when all people speak well of you! For that is how their fathers used to treat the false prophets.

TRUST IN THE LORD

Sermon for the 6th Sunday after the Epiphany 2025

Luke 6:17-26

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 read before, Luke 6:17-26:

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

Dear friends in Christ,

I suppose that if you had some nagging illness that was impeding you, especially if it was an illness that no one else could help you with, and you heard of someone who could cure you, you would rush to see that person.

So it was with Jesus. Many people were drawn to Him because of the healing miracles He performed. In today's Gospel, we see "**a great many people from all over Judea, Jerusalem and the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon**" flocking out to be "**healed of their diseases.**" Others "**who were troubled by unclean spirits were made well.**" It's a safe bet that many others who were perfectly healthy came also just to see these wondrous displays of power. Humans are always attracted to the spectacular, and it's good that so many were present to see Jesus perform these miracles because it confirmed that this man Jesus was far more than just any man—He was indeed the promised Saviour, God in flesh, come in mercy and power to rescue His people.

But it's precisely because we are drawn to the spectacular that we, like so many of those who flocked to Jesus back then, tend to forget that the healing miracles of Jesus were only a sideline to His main ministry, which was *teaching*. Jesus was primarily a religious teacher. He revealed, taught, and explained the Word of God. As our Prophet, Jesus proclaimed the Word of God. That's what the Apostle Peter reminds us when he writes, "*how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil*" (Acts 10:38). It's vital that we put the emphasis there, because all of the people whom Jesus healed became sick again, or they were injured in accidents, or they went blind, deaf, and even lame. Eventually, they all died—even the ones to whom, at one point, He had raised from the dead. But the people He taught, those who held fast to His words and believed in Him, they live even though they died, and their bodies now long since returned to dust will rise again on the Last Day and live forever in the perfect Paradise of the New Creation because of the things He taught them.

So which is more important? The fact that Jesus healed a lot of people in time or that He taught us the Words of eternal life? The answer is obvious. With that in mind, we turn our full attention to the *content* of what Jesus taught—for in that is our life and salvation.

Before us today are the opening verses of what is known as the Sermon on the Plain in Luke's Gospel. In these verses, we hear clear echoes of the

Beatitudes from the much better-known Sermon on the Mount as it is recorded in Matthew's Gospel, but besides being shorter, there are two other significant differences. The first is that Matthew narrows the statements to spiritual concerns, whereas Luke is much broader. So where Matthew specifies, "*Blessed are the poor in spirit,*" in Luke, it's just "**Blessed are you who are poor!**" And where Matthew has "*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,*" in Luke, it's simply "**Blessed are you who are hungry now!**" Luke does not exclude spiritual matters but reminds us that Jesus is also concerned about physical things, our complete well-being.

And there is a connection. Those who are poor financially have to look to charity to meet their needs. They know they depend on the kindness and generosity of others. So it's easier for them to see spiritually this way, too, that the kingdom of God is theirs only as a free gift of God's grace. Likewise with hunger: if you have to line up at the soup kitchen to get something to satisfy the empty feeling in your stomach, it's easier for you to understand the same thing applies to your standing before the Lord, that when it comes to righteousness, I've got nothing. It can only be given to me by the Lord. I look to Him to fill me up.

It's all about trust. To whom do we look for all our needs? Shall we look to ourselves, to our powers and abilities, or shall we look to the Lord? Do we trust Him completely? This is basic First Commandment stuff. As it is written in the catechism, "*What is the First Commandment? You shall have no other gods. What does this mean? We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things.*" So, if we fear something more than we do the Lord, then that thing is our god. If we love something more than we do the Lord, that thing is our god. And the one thing that gets us the worst is if we trust something more than we do the Lord, then that thing is our god. And what are we most likely to trust in apart from the Lord? *Ourselves*. We make ourselves our own god, which is a pretty poor choice considering that there's an infinitely better alternative. Human beings make bad gods. Only the Lord will do; He doesn't care for competition.

That's why, besides the blessings Jesus pronounces in the Sermon on the Plain, He also declares the woes on the rich, the full, and the laughing. This is the other big departure from the Beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount. When Jesus says, "**How terrible for you,**" He means that you are under the curse of God, and well, you should be because of your *self-idolatry*.

Now, please don't misunderstand. This doesn't mean you can't be rich, have plenty to eat, laugh, and still be a faithful Christian. Jesus is speaking in generalities here, and in general, we tend to make evaluations based on appearances. When you see someone who appears to be blessed with health, wealth, and happiness, the natural assumption is that the favour of God rests on that person. Likewise, when you see someone who is poor, starving, and filled with sorrow, it appears that the Lord is punishing that person. But this thinking is wrong. No, we ought to know that God sometimes brings hardships on us precisely to show us what pathetic gods we are when we place our trust in ourselves.

Part of what's going on here, too, is that Jesus is playing the long game. He's asking us to recognise that this life is merely the corridor to the next, where real living begins. This world is not our home. We are not staying here forever. But what happens here determines where we shall be residing forever. This life is under the curse of sin. It's dirty, often hard, filled with trials and sadness, but it's only temporary. Yet a lot of people live like this life *is all there is*. They want their pleasures *now*. They want to live it up, play with their toys, enjoy the good things, and always be happy. They see their success and happiness as signs of God's favour when what they are really worshipping is *the false god of self*. They gain the world but lose their souls; their end is eternal destruction.

It is not so for those whose trust is in the Lord because they see the present for what it is. So, it doesn't matter whether the Lord gives sunshine or rain, wealth or poverty, health or sickness, happiness or sorrow. Whatever He gives, He gives in His perfect wisdom so that we shall learn all the more to trust in Him and give Him thanks for all things, to satisfy our material needs and, more importantly, our spiritual needs, which He does by grace freely for the sake of Jesus our Saviour, who gave His life for ours.

We set our sights on the future that Christ has earned for us, but that helps us even now in the present. In this fallen world, hardship, sorrow, pain, and loss eventually come to all. And when they do, those who have placed their trust in themselves don't know what to do—their false god has failed them. As Jeremiah said in our First Reading today, "*Cursed is the man who trusts in a human being, who makes flesh his strength and whose heart turns away from the LORD!*"⁶ *He will be like a shrub in the desert and will not see when anything good comes. He will live in the parched places in the wilderness, in a salty land where no one lives*" (Jer. 17:5-6). Such people have shallow roots.

So, when the hot season comes, they dry up and die. But the person who trusts in the Lord is like that tree with deep roots planted by a stream. When the hot season comes, and the stream dries up, there's still plenty of groundwater down deep. The tree stays green and bears fruit. That person understands that the hot season—what appears to be a curse—is, in fact, a blessing because by it, the Lord destroys sinful trust in self and directs all faith and hope to Him where it belongs.

Through such disguised blessings, may the Lord increase our faith so that each one of us may truly say with the writer of Hebrews, "*I shall put my trust in Him*" (2:13). Amen.

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

PRAYER FOR THE SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

O God our Father, You are our rock and our fortress, our joy and our salvation, our light and our life, our sun and our shield. You are always ready to hear those who come before You. Therefore hear us as we come before You with our prayers and praise.

We thank You that You have called us by Your Spirit to believe in Your Son Jesus Christ, made us citizens of His eternal kingdom, given us righteousness as our dress, and equipped us with power, love, and self-control. Continue to give us these blessings, and fill us with the fruits of faith. Make us living letters that speak of Jesus Christ, that people around us may read of Your mercy and saving power in human lives.

We praise You for Your grace in calling us to work in Your vineyard. Bless our work, witness, and giving in Your name. Use us to bring many people to Your glory. Make us glad to obey Your great commission, ready to accept every service, eager to perform every duty well, and strong to do every task faithfully. Make us patient and willing even when service in Your kingdom is long and difficult. Give us the joy of seeing others come to worship You, and give us the grace to welcome them warmly as brothers and sisters in Christ.

Keep us all safe in Your loving care, and lead us to the heavenly land of promise. Grant that we may run our daily race by the presence and power of Your Spirit. Give us self-control over everything that could endanger our faith and disqualify us for the prize. Grant that we may seize every opportunity to live the new life. Prevent us from boasting in our own wisdom, wealth, or power. Enable us to glory only in knowing You as our Father. May our only treasure be to possess Your wisdom and power in the life, death, and resurrection of Your Son.

Be with us, dear Father, in all that we do. Strengthen and direct us in our daily work. Protect us in our leisure. Shelter us in our homes. Guide us as we travel. Teach us in our problems. Shield us in our afflictions. Comfort us in our sorrows. Hear us as we pray, and lift up our spirits to You as we worship.

Accept these sacrifices of humble prayer and joyous praise that we offer before You, for the sake of Jesus Christ. And to You, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God, be all glory and praise, for ever and ever. Amen.

Article: Brand Lutheran

We've gone soft. The Lutheran church, the one that was hammered into shape on the anvil of Wittenberg's altars, has somehow drifted into lukewarm waters. What once burned with conviction, with the furious guts of a German monk banging his fists on the papal gates, has somehow turned into a watered-down brand, a logo stamped onto bland church signs and pamphlets. But that's the thing about brands—they're hollow unless there's something real behind them. And if Luther could see where things stand now, he'd likely be nailing his 95 Theses all over again, and this time, on our doors.

So many who go by the name of "Lutheran" have now traded the raw courage of the Reformation for a more palatable, polished version of Lutheranism. They've gotten comfortable and safe. Instead of being reformers, they have become quiet spectators.

But let's rewind to the days when Luther and the Wittenberg reformers were fighting a battle that wasn't just academic; it was life-or-death stuff, burning the fat of spiritual rot right off the church's bones. That was no polite negotiation—it was a fight for the truth of the gospel.

Today, we're like Siegfried, the dragon-slayer, with his cloak of invisibility and strength that seems unstoppable. But he lets his guard down, trusts too quickly, and is betrayed. That's what I see when I look at many today who go by the name Lutheran. They're Siegfried, once formidable, now fallen because they've let themselves become comfortable, invisible, and even trusted in the wrong things. They have traded their dragon slaying mission for a seat at the table with the very institutions they once challenged.

Take Luther's doctrine of Scripture Alone (*sola scriptura*). This torch was held high, enlightening the path that leads directly to Scripture without the middleman of church hierarchy or government edicts. It was a cry for a raw,

unfiltered faith grounded in God’s Word. Yet now, I see bending to cultural tides, swapping out core teachings to keep people happy and to stay relevant. Luther didn’t stick his neck out so we could turn the faith into a watered-down version that’s “nice” but toothless. He wanted a church grounded in Scripture that stood its ground against corruption and refused to compromise.

And it’s not just *sola scriptura* that has been left to slide. Luther was relentless about Faith Alone (*sola fide*)—no reliance on works or indulgences, just the pure grace of God. Today, many seem too keen on adding their own qualifications, trying to mould faith into something comfortable and respectable. If Luther heard some of the sermons being preached today, he’d be digging his heels into the ground, demanding we go back to that gritty, unshakable core of grace, that pulse that drove him to stand before emperors and councils without flinching.

With that, another classic Germanic tale comes to mind: the Wandering Jew, the man who taunted Jesus on the way to the cross and was cursed to walk the earth until the Second Coming. That’s almost the Lutheran Church today, with many wandering in spiritual limbo.

The Lutheran Church was once seen as a defiant force, willing to face exile and be bold. But now? The Lutheran Church has splintered, with many floating, stuck between who they once were and who they think they need to become to stay “relevant.” The irony is that Luther never once worried about being relevant. He worried about being faithful, and there’s a universe of difference between the two.

Many who still go by the name “Lutheran” have forgotten how to carry the fire, losing sight of the Reformation’s urgency, refusing to tolerate spiritual rot, and insistence on truth over comfort. Luther wasn’t interested in making allies but in rescuing souls, standing on Scripture, and nothing else. It wasn’t some “brand.” It was blood and bone, life and death. The Reformation wasn’t a feel-good movement. It was a rebellion, a risk, and a call to arms.

The Reformation was never about comfort or relevance. It was about truth, even when it hurt, even when it cost. We must still be willing to step into the fire, face the dragons, risk exile, and speak uncomfortable truths. Because if not, then we’re just coasting on a legacy that no longer belongs to us. We must remember who we are and remain faithful to our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Children's Message:

Have any of you ever done martial arts? You know, like karate? Well, I once heard a bit of martial arts wisdom that I'll never forget. It goes like this: "Where your head leads, your body follows." So if you want to have really great punches and kicks, you first have to turn your head in the direction you want to go—and then your body will follow!

That wisdom isn't good only for someone who's learning karate, though. It's good for all of us because it shares a wonderful Christian truth that we should never forget. "Where your head leads, your body follows."

Who is our Head? When you and I were baptised into Christ, we became part of His Church. The Bible calls the Church Jesus' Body, and He is the leader, the Head, of the Church, so we in the Church are His Body, and He is our Head. Isn't that amazing? That means that what happens for Jesus, happens for us. Where our Head leads, we follow, because we are His Body. So where did Jesus go? Yes, He was baptised, He went to the cross, and He went into the tomb. Through baptism, we went to all of those places too. But that's not all.

In Paul's first letter to the Corinthians which we read today, he reminds the people that Christ was also raised from the dead! We can be very sure of this, because He appeared to many people, and we have faith that His Word is truth. So if Jesus rose on Easter, what does that mean for us? Yes! Where your head leads, your body follows. If Jesus, our Head, was raised, then we, His Body, shall be raised too. Because of Jesus, we—every one of us—have a new resurrection life! Christ, our Head, is risen! So we shall most certainly follow after Him.

This is the best news! And now that we live in this new life, we also can follow our Lord by doing what He did—praying to our Father in heaven, serving people in need, obeying the Ten Commandments. We are His Body, and where Jesus our Head goes, we follow! This is the Gospel—that what goes for Jesus, goes for us. Because He lives forever, we live forever. We can thank Jesus for this wonderful gift! *Dear Jesus, You came to be our Head and make us Your Body through Holy Baptism. Thank You for leading us out of death and into a new life so we can be with You forever. In Your name we pray. Amen.*



WEEKLY ANNOUNCEMENTS

23 February 7 Epiphany	2 March The Transfiguration	9 March 1 Lent
8.30am OAK LR 9.00am TMBA LR 9.00am GRN LR (Student Matthew Sippel to lead) 9.00am MARBURG LR 9.00am AUB HC Conf.	8.30am OAK HC 9.00am TMBA LR (Student Matthew Sippel to lead) 9.30am AUB LR 10.15am GRN HC 9.00am LOWOOD LR	8.30am OAK LR 9.00am TMBA LR 9.00am GRN LR 9.30am AUB LR 9.00am LOWOOD HC Conf.
Sunday, 23 February		
READINGS: Genesis 45:3-15; 1 Corinthians 15:21-26, 30-42; Luke 6:27-38		
HYMNS: 444 431 356 608 AUBIGNY: 301 431 356 317 343 300		
Sunday, 2 March		
READINGS: Deuteronomy 34:1-12; Hebrews 3:1-6; Luke 9:28-36		
HYMNS: 347 37 747 (169 294) 164		

CONGREGATIONAL AGM'S:

Marburg: Sunday, 23 February after divine service.

Greenwood: Sunday, 23 February, 10.45am.

Oakey: Sunday, 23 February, 1.00pm.

Lowood: Sunday, 9 March, after divine service.

Robert Ritter has various church music vinyl records that used to belong to his mother available for sale. Any sales will be donated to the Seminary Committee. If you would like to find out what he has, give him a call at 0419 722438.

FEBRUARY BIBLE STUDIES

Wednesday the 19th, 7.30pm. St Pauls Greenwood.

Friday the 28th, 7.30pm. Oak/Aub at Trinity Oakey.

Forward Announcement: Saturday, 8th March, 10am, at Trinity Marburg. CoC/Sem meeting. Any agenda items, please forward to the secretary, Ian Manz at

igm64@hotmail.com