

THE INVOCATION

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

HYMN 444

1
Gracious King of glory,
Ruler of all living,
O accept our glad thanksgiving.
Streams of grace and mercy
Thou art ever sending,
Though we daily are offending.
Grant us still
Power and will,
That our heart may bless Thee,
And our mouth confess Thee.

2
Heaven, proclaim thy Maker,
Tell His wondrous story
Far transcending earthly glory.
Sun, in radiant splendour
Cast thy beams each morning,
All the earth with light adorning.
Praise His might,
Stars of light;
All His works adore Him,
Brightly ranged before Him.

3
Thou, my soul, sing gladly,
Mingling in the praises
Every living creature raises;
Sing perpetual anthems,
Praise and adoration,
To the God of thy salvation.
Bless and own
Him alone,
Of all good the giver,
To be praised for ever.

4
Sing loud hallelujahs,
All His saints together,
All in Christ who call Him Father.
Praise Him, O believer,
Sing with spirit fervent
As the Saviour's loving servant.
Well mayst thou
Praise Him now,
Till in heaven before Him
Sinless thou adore Him.

THE CONFESSION

Dear friends in Christ: Let us draw near to God our Father with a true heart to confess our sins, and ask Him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to forgive us.

Our help is in the name of the Lord.

He made heaven and earth.

I said, I will confess my sins to the Lord.

Then He forgave the guilt of my sin.

Almighty God, our Maker and Redeemer, we confess to You that by nature we are sinful and unclean, and that we have sinned against You by thought, word and deed. Therefore we flee for refuge to your infinite mercy and plead for Your grace for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Most merciful God, You have given Your only Son to die for us: Have mercy on us, and for His sake grant us forgiveness of all our sins. By Your Holy Spirit increase our knowledge of You and Your will, and make us obedient to Your Word, so that by Your grace we may come to eternal life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, has had mercy on us, and has given His only Son to die for us, and for His sake forgives us all our sins. To those who believe in His name He has given the right to become the children of God, and has given them His Holy Spirit. He who believes and is baptised will be saved. Grant this, Lord, to us all. Amen.

THE INTROIT Psalm 103:1-13

**Bless the LORD, O my soul and, all my inmost being, bless His holy name!
Bless the LORD, O my soul, and do not forget all His benefits!**

He forgives all your iniquities. He heals all your diseases.

He redeems your life from the pit. He crowns you with mercy and compassion.

He satisfies what adorns you with good things, so that you renew your youth like the eagle.

The LORD carries out acts of righteousness and of justice for all who are oppressed.

He has made known His Ways to Moses, His deeds to the people of Israel. The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to become angry and abounding in mercy.

He will not always accuse and will not keep on being angry for ever. He has not treated us as our sins deserve and has not paid us back according to our iniquities.

For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His mercy toward those who fear Him.

As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.

As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has had compassion on those who fear Him.

THE GLORY TO THE FATHER

Glory to the Father and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning is now and will be for evermore. Amen.

THE LORD HAVE MERCY

Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy.

THE GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST

Glory to God in the highest.

And on earth peace, among men with whom He is pleased. We praise You, we bless You, we worship You, we glorify You, we give thanks to You for Your great glory, O Lord God, heavenly king, God, the Father Almighty. O Lord, the only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father: You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us. You take away the sin of the world; receive our prayer. You are seated at the right hand of God the Father; have mercy on us. For You alone are holy, You alone are Lord, You alone, O Christ, with the Holy Spirit, are most high in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

THE COLLECT

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

O God, the strength of all who put their trust in You, mercifully grant that by Your power we may be defended against all adversity; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

THE FIRST READING

The First Reading is written in chapter ____ of ____, beginning at verse ____.

Genesis 45:3-15

³ Then Joseph told his brothers, “I am Joseph! Is my father still alive?”

However, his brothers could not answer him because they were terrified at his presence.

⁴ Joseph told his brothers, “Please come closer to me!”

Therefore, they went closer. He said: “I am your brother Joseph, whom you **sold into Egypt.** ⁵ Now, however, do not be sad or angry with yourselves for selling me here! For

it was to save lives that God has sent me ahead of you. ⁶ For two years now there has been a famine in the land, and there are five more years when there will be no ploughing or harvesting. ⁷ God has sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on the earth

and to save your lives by a great deliverance. ⁸ So now, it has not been you who have sent me here, but God. He has also made me a father to Pharaoh, master over his entire household and ruler over all the land of Egypt. ⁹ Go up to my father quickly and tell him,

‘This is what your son Joseph has said: “God has made me master of all Egypt. Come down to me immediately! ¹⁰ You shall live in the region of Goshen, and you yourself,

your children and your grandchildren will be near me with your flocks, your herds and everything else that you have! ¹¹ I shall provide for you there. For there will be five more years of famine. Otherwise you, your family and all who belong to you will lose your property.”’ ¹² Look! Your own eyes and the eyes of my brother Benjamin can see that it

is my mouth that is speaking to you. ¹³ Tell my father about all the honour given to me in Egypt and about everything that you have seen and bring my father down here quickly!”

¹⁴ Then he fell on his brother Benjamin’s neck and wept, and Benjamin wept on his neck. ¹⁵ Joseph kissed all his brothers and wept over them. After that, his brothers talked with him.

This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

THE SECOND READING

The Second Reading is written in chapter ____ of ____, beginning at verse _____.

1 Corinthians 15:21-26, 30-42

21 For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead has also come through a man. 22 For, as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.

23 However, each one in his own turn: Christ is the first-fruits. After that, when He comes, those who belong to Christ. 24 Then the end will come, when He hands over the kingdom to God, the Father, after He has put an end to all dominion, authority and power. 25 For He must reign until God has put all His enemies under His feet. 26 The last enemy that will be destroyed is death...

30 Why are we also risking danger every hour? 31 Fellow-Christians, I die every day. It is as sure as the boast that I make about you in Christ Jesus our Lord. 32 If, like an ordinary man, I fought wild animals at Ephesus, what have I gained? If the dead are not raised, "Let us eat and drink! For tomorrow we die." 33 Do not let anyone deceive you! "Bad company corrupts good habits." 34 Become sober, as you ought to be, and do not sin any longer! For there are some who are ignorant of God. I say this to your shame.

35 However, someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come?" 36 How foolish! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. 37 When you sow, you do not sow the body that will be but a bare seed, perhaps of wheat or one of the other seeds. 38 However, God gives it a body as He has determined and to each of the seeds its own body. 39 Not all flesh is the same. Human beings have one kind of flesh, animals have another kind of flesh, birds have another kind of flesh, and fish have still another. 40 There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies; but the splendour of the heavenly bodies is different from that of the earthly bodies. 41 The splendour of the sun is different from the splendour of the moon, and the splendour of the stars is different again. Even one star differs in splendour from another star. 42 It will be like that with the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in decay: it is raised without decay.

This is the Word of the Lord. **Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!**

THE GOSPEL

The Holy Gospel is written in the ____ chapter of the Gospel according to ____, beginning at verse ____.

Glory be to You, O Lord.

Luke 6:27-38

Luke 6:27-38

27 “However, I tell you who are listening: Love your enemies! Do good to those who hate you! 28 Bless those who curse you! Pray for those who mistreat you! 29 If someone strikes you on the cheek, offer him the other also! If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic as well! 30 Give to everyone who asks you and, if someone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back! 31 Treat other people the same as you want them to treat you! 32 If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. 33 For, if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do the same. 34 If you lend to those from whom you expect to get it back, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners to get equal payment back. 35 Rather, love your enemies! Do good and lend, without expecting to get anything back! Then your reward will be great, and you will be the children of the Most High, because He is kind to ungrateful and wicked people. 36 Be merciful, as your Father also is merciful!

37 “Stop judging, and you will certainly not be judged. Stop condemning, and you will certainly not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.

38 Give, and it will be given to you. People will put a good measure, pressed together, shaken down and running over, into your lap. For the measure with which you measure others will be used for you in return.”

This is the Gospel of the Lord. **Praise be to You, O Christ.**

THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty, from thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

1
My soul, now bless thy Maker!
Let all within me bless His name,
Who makes thee now partaker
Of mercies more than thou dar'st claim.
Forget Him not whose meekness
Forgives thee all thy sin;
Who heals disease and weakness,
Renews thy life within;
Whose grace and care are endless,
And saved thee through the past;
Who leaves no sufferer friendless,
But rights the wronged at last.

2
He shows to man His treasure
Of judgment, truth, and righteousness,
His love beyond all measure,
His yearning pity o'er distress;
Nor treats us as we merit,
But lays His anger by;
The humble, contrite spirit
Finds His compassion nigh;
Far as the heavens above us,
As break from close of day,
So far, since He doth love us,
He casts our sins away.

3
For as a tender father
Has pity on his children here,
He in His arms will gather
All who are His in childlike fear.
He knows how frail our powers,
Who but from dust are made,
We flourish as the flowers,
And even so we fade;
The wind but o'er them passes,
And all their bloom is o'er —
We wither like the grasses,
Our place knows us no more.

4
God's grace endures for ever,
And children's children yet shall prove
His mercy fails them never
Who walk His ways in steadfast love.
In heaven is fixed His dwelling,
His rule is over all;
Ye hosts, in strength excelling,
In praise before Him fall.
O bless Him and adore Him,
His might and love extol.
I too would come before Him:
O bless the Lord, my soul.

TAKE THE LOVE THAT GOD HAS FOR YOU AS HOW WE ARE TO LOVE OUR ENEMIES
Sermon for the 7th Sunday after the Epiphany 2025 Luke 6:27-38

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 6:27-38:
Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth, Your Word is truth.
Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

O, the joy we feel when we get even with someone who has wronged us! How smug we feel when we cut someone down to size by winning the argument! Someone hurts us, so we must hurt them—that's only fair. They have deeply offended me while I am alive, so I'll repay them by cutting them out of my will—that'll fix them. Revenge is sweet.

In the Gospel from last Sunday, we heard Jesus' Sermon on the Plain, where He gave His disciples some intensive training. Today, He is still speaking to His disciples, which is important to note because Jesus is not telling us how we must live in order to be saved but rather *how those who have been saved will live*. Jesus knew the disciples were living in a society where the principal God had instituted civil, corporate punishment, namely, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth (Leviticus 24:20), was an acceptable way to deal with personal conflict. But now Jesus outlines a very different method for dealing with those who do you wrong. He says, **“However, I tell you who are listening: Love your enemies! Do good to those who hate you! ²⁸ Bless those who curse you! Pray for those who mistreat you! ²⁹ If someone strikes you on the cheek, offer him the other also! If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic as well! ³⁰ Give to everyone who asks you and, if someone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back! ³¹ Treat other people the same as you want them to treat you!”**

Is Jesus being serious? Can a person live this way in the real world? Isn't this kind of idealism impossible to carry out? Yet it is clear enough what Jesus is saying here: return love for hate, blessings for curses, prayers for mistreatment; and if someone takes your dignity or property, let them have it and more. Nevertheless, we tend to be sceptical, thinking that Jesus can't be serious and that He seems to be advocating lawlessness and chaos. Therefore, it's just as important for us to understand what Jesus is *not* saying. And He is not saying we cannot, or should not speak up in our own defence when we are wrong. We see Jesus doing this Himself when He stood on trial before Annas. When one of the temple officials struck Him, He never retaliated in kind. He didn't strike him back but said, *“If what I said is wrong, bear witness about the wrong; but if what I said is right, why do you strike Me?”* (John 18:23). Second, Jesus is not saying that we cannot defend ourselves or our loved ones from harm. The 5th Commandment demands that we do so. Third, Jesus is not advocating lawlessness like many are today. He is not denying parents, teachers, police officers or judges the right to discipline and exact punishment as God's representatives. Again, Jesus does not require us to support freeloaders through our charity. Paul's words still stand: *“If anyone does not want to work, he should not eat”* (2 Thessalonians 3:10). So, what is Jesus telling us? He's telling us that personal vengeance is off-limits, out-of-bounds, wrong and sinful, and to love our enemies. It still sounds impossible because, for us, it is. This kind of love is impossible for us unless it's been given to us first. *Have we received that kind of love?*

The Apostle Paul seems to think so. To the Christians living in Rome, he wrote, “*For while we were still weak, at the right time, Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—but God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us*” (Romans 5:6-8). If you think someone in your life deserves your vengeance rather than your love, imagine how God must have felt about you. He has created us, body and soul, and given us talents and abilities, families and possessions, and we misuse and abuse those gifts and are quick to question, doubt, and blame Him when He doesn’t give us what we want. He has revealed Himself to us in His Word and invites us to receive His gifts of grace regularly—yet we despise His Word by not reading it, placing ourselves in judgment over it, and neglecting to come into His house at His gracious invitation. We know what the Word of God says and yet come up with all kinds of excuses not to listen to it. In ten simple Commandments, God has laid out His will for our lives—but we often ignore them and do the opposite; we treat them like suggestions and live as if we know better. In thought, word, and deed, we’ve treated God as our enemy, despising His love, cursing His name, robbing Him of His possessions and incessantly asking Him for more. So, how has God responded? How did He get even with us? He sent His only Son to save us. He got even by allowing humanity to do its very worst to His Son. Humanity cursed, slapped, whipped and spit on Him. It paraded Him through the streets of Jerusalem, stripped Him naked, nailed Him to a tree, and sat back in smug satisfaction as He died in front of their eyes. And how did Jesus respond? He said, “*Father, forgive them*” (Luke 23:34). If you ever wonder how God would have been perfectly justified in treating us, look to the cross. That’s what *we* deserved, not Jesus. See God’s Son hanging there in our place, suffering for our lovelessness and dying for the times we took vengeance into our own hands. ***That is how God got even with us.***

But none of this is news for us. We already know this, don’t we? We know that Christ has died and risen for us. We know that “*the blood of Jesus... cleanses us from all sin*” (1 John 1:7). So why is it so hard for us to do what Jesus asks when He says, “**Love your enemies! Do good to those who hate you!**” Why are we so quick to suggest that Jesus surely cannot mean what He says?

The biggest reason is that we’re looking in the wrong direction: instead of looking at what God has done for us, we’re looking at (and judging) whether an individual deserves our love or not. It’s really simple. They don’t—but you don’t either, and the fact that God has given us the love we don’t deserve is the only reason we can “**Do good to those who hate you! ²⁸ Bless those who curse you!**”

Pray for those who mistreat you! ²⁹ If someone strikes you on the cheek, offer him the other also! If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic as well!” When that question, “*Why should I love my enemies?*” pops up in your mind, it’s not because they deserve it; it’s because God loves you.

Next, Jesus tackles the temptation to follow the world’s moral and ethical values when He says, “**If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. ³³ For, if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do the same. ³⁴ If you lend to those from whom you expect to get it back, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners to get equal payment back.**” The way of the world is to do good to your friends and evil to your enemies. But Jesus says, “*That’s not how it’s going to be with My disciples. If you want to get even with your enemy, then you are going to have to break all of society’s rules. You’re going to be radical, and you’re going to love your enemies, do good and lend, expecting nothing in return. This marks you as a child of the Most High God who is kind and merciful even to the unthankful and the evil.*”

This doesn’t make rational sense, but here is where Jesus’ ethic of love proves to be truly divine. Put yourself on the other side of the situation for a moment. Imagine for a moment that you are the villain. You’re the one who’s wronged someone else. You’ve dragged someone’s name through the mud, and they respond by complimenting your charming family, your beautiful home, or whatever. You won’t raise a finger to help your neighbour in need, and yet when you get a flat tyre or something, they stop to help. You get the point. All you have shown is ingratitude and spite, yet others will help and not say a bad word about you. How do you feel? Paul described it as having *burning coals dumped on your head* (Romans 12:20). That hot feeling of shame and embarrassment is what we call contrition, sorrow over sins. It would lead you to grieve over your sins, to confess them in repentance, which, not coincidentally, is exactly what God intends His kindness to us to lead to (Romans 2:4). If you really want to get even with an enemy, really cut them to the heart, really break them, then show them kindness when they don’t deserve it. Treat them the way God has treated you. And maybe your kindness will lead that person to repent of their sins and seek God’s forgiveness. Then you will be truly even: you will both be reconciled to each other and to God by the blood of Christ.

Jesus concludes, “**Stop judging, and you will certainly not be judged. Stop condemning, and you will certainly not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. ³⁸ Give, and it will be given to you. People will put a good measure,**

pressed together, shaken down and running over, into your lap. For the measure with which you measure others will be used for you in return.”

Again, imagine you are the villain. We heard about a famine in our First Reading today. Imagine you are living in a famine, and you and your family are dying of hunger. You haven't done a good job of stocking up even after all the early warning signs that food would be scarce. But you know your neighbour has plenty of food, but you also know that your neighbour knows you have been treating him with contempt and speaking unwell of him. Nevertheless, you sheepishly knock on his door, hoping he can spare a slice of bread. He answers by not giving you a slice but the whole loaf. In fact, he gives you so much more than what you asked for that as you carry it back to your home, you're dropping things all over the place.

When we look at all that God has given us already, both materially and spiritually, we can't deny that God has been more than generous to us. If you ever doubt that, when you get home today, just stop and look in your fridge, pantry, closet, or garage. Look at your family; His spiritual blessings far outweigh our sinfulness and lovelessness; His material blessings go above and beyond our daily needs.

But the old Adam keeps kicking up concerns, doesn't he? *“If I love and bless and pray for my enemies; if I turn the other cheek and give away my property, who is going to watch out for me and my well-being? How do I know I shall have enough to survive and provide for my family? How can I be sure that evildoers will be punished if I don't see to it myself? How can I let myself be taken advantage of like that?”* You're not alone if those things concern you. Our sinful natures can invent thousands of reasonable, rational thoughts for not loving our enemies and for taking vengeance into our own hands. The answer to those concerns is the same as any other concern we have in life: learn, believe, and trust God's promises.

And what if the love you show an enemy makes them hate you more? So what? *“See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are,”* the Apostle John reminds us (1 John 3:1). But if we give generously to those who can't or won't repay us, won't we risk losing the roof over our heads and the clothing on our backs? Well, *“look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?”* (Matthew 6:26). Hasn't He promised to give you everything you need for life? And what about justice and fairness? If I don't retaliate, people will walk all over me. Trust Paul's inspired words to the Romans, *“Do not take revenge, dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath. For it is written, “Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God,*

for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord” (Romans 12:19). If vengeance is called for, God vows to take care of it, if not now through His representatives, then on Judgment Day, and He holds the power to not only kill the body but cast the soul into hell (Luke 12:5).

Dear friends, let God worry about taking care of you now. God’s love for you is *unconditional*, and that frees you to love your enemies, to turn the other cheek, and to be generous with what He has given you because you know that your true reward is safe in heaven, that has been purchased and won for you by Jesus, your, and your enemies’ Saviour.

The morally and ethically rotten world around us is destroying itself over its thirst for vengeance. Everywhere you turn, it seems someone is trying to get even with someone else for something that was done or said—sometimes over things that happened decades, if not centuries ago—all in the name of justice. That’s the mainstream today; that’s the way of the world. But that is not the way of Jesus’ disciples. We are to be different because through faith in Jesus, as dearly loved children of the highest God whose true reward is safe in heaven, *we are different.* We get even with our enemies the same way God has gotten even with us, namely, with love. Amen.

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

HYMN 356

1
Lord of glory, who hast bought us
With Thy life-blood as the price,
Never grudging for the lost ones
That tremendous sacrifice,
And with that hast freely given
Blessings, countless as the sand,
To the unthankful and the evil
With Thine own unsparing hand:

2
Grant us hearts, dear Lord, to yield Thee
Gladly, freely, of Thine own;
With the sunshine of Thy goodness
Melt our thankless hearts of stone;
Till our cold and selfish natures,
Warmed by Thee, at length believe
That more happy and more blessed
'Tis to give than to receive.

3
Wondrous honour hast Thou given
To our humblest charity
In Thine own mysterious sentence,
“Ye have done it unto Me.”
Can it be, O gracious master,
Thou dost deign for alms to sue,
Saying to Thy poor and needy,
“Give as I have given to you.”?

4
Lord of glory, who hast bought us
With Thy life-blood as the price,
Never grudging for the lost ones
That tremendous sacrifice:
Give us faith, to trust Thee boldly,
Hope to stay our souls on Thee,
But, O best of all Thy graces,
Give us Thine own charity.

THE OFFERTORY

What can I offer to the Lord: for all His goodness to me?

I will lift up the cup of salvation: and call on the name of the Lord.

I will offer you a sacrifice of thanksgiving: and call on the name of the Lord.

I will keep my promises to the Lord: in the presence of all His people;

In the courts of the house of the Lord: in your midst, O Jerusalem.

PRAYER FOR THE SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

Lord God, You are gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and full of constant love; You are good to all, and Your kindness is on all You have made. We come before You with confidence, offering our worship and bringing our prayers.

We thank You above all else for the love You have shown us in Christ Jesus, who was put to death for our sins and raised to life that we might be justified before You. We confess our many sins to You, and acknowledge that we have not deserved Your great mercy. But grant us who have confessed our sins joy in this, that You for Christ's sake, according to Your promise, forgive us our sins, and cleanse us from all our wrong-doings.

Forgive us especially our sins of despising and neglecting Your Word; in Your grace do not take it from us. By Your Holy Spirit help us to treasure it, and to use it with sincere and open hearts. Grant that it may take root in us as good seed in good ground, grow up, and bring forth much fruit to the glory of Your name.

Save and defend Your Church from all evil. Bless all preaching and teaching of Your Word of life. Help all Your children to be obedient to Your truth, conscientious in their daily work, patient in sufferings, and upheld by the blessed hope of everlasting life. In particular, we ask Your blessing on missionaries in other lands. Give them joy in Your service. Guard and keep them by Your power from all dangers of body and soul. And bless their work with an abundant harvest.

We pray for our government. Give us unselfish and trustworthy leaders, and a society that reflects high moral values.

Bless our homes, and make them dwelling-places of Your Spirit, places where Christ is honoured in the teaching and love of parents, and in the obedience of children.

We ask Your mercy on those who are sick; help them to know and rejoice in the grace and healing power of Christ. Comfort the sorrowing; be with the lonely; support the aged and infirm. Give faith in Your power and mercy to any who are struggling with doubt or depression, temptation or trial; teach them to know that the grace of Christ is always sufficient, and remind them that Your power is strongest when they are weak.

Let the word of Christ in all its richness live in our hearts, and help us all to receive the end of our faith, the salvation of our souls. We ask this in the name and for the sake of Jesus our Saviour. Amen.

LORD’S PRAYER:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

THE BLESSING

The Lord bless us and keep us. The Lord make His face shine on us and be gracious to us. The Lord look upon us with favour, and give us peace. **Amen.**

HYMN 608

1
Jesus, high in glory,
Lend a listening ear;
When we bow before Thee,
Children’s praises hear.

2
Though Thou art so holy,
Heaven’s almighty King,
Thou wilt stoop to listen
When Thy praise we sing.

5
Then, when Thou shalt call us
To our heavenly home,
We will gladly answer:
“Saviour, Lord, we come.”

3
We are only children,
Weak and apt to stray;
Saviour, guide and keep us
In the heavenly way.
4
Save us, Lord, from sinning;
Watch us day by day;
Help us now to love Thee;
Take our sins away:

WEEKLY ANNOUNCEMENTS

2 March The Transfiguration	ASH WEDNESDAY	9 March 1 Lent
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	Wednesday, 5 March. 7.30pm Vespers at Bethlehem Toowoomba Thursday, 6 March. 7.00pm at Trinity Marburg. HC	8.30am OAK LR 9.00am TMBA LR 9.00am GRN LR 9.30am AUB LR 9.00am LOWOOD HC Conf.

CONGREGATIONAL AGM'S:

Marburg: Today, 23 February after divine service.

Greenwood: Today, 23 February, 10.45am.

Oakey: Today, 23 February, 1.00pm.

Lowood: Sunday, 9 March, after divine service.

Friday, 28 March: 7.30pm. Bible Study, Oak/Aub at Trinity Oakey.

Saturday, 8 March. 10.00am, CoC/Sem meeting at Trinity Marburg. Any agenda items, please forward to the secretary, Ian Manz at igm64@hotmail.com.

Saturday, March 8, 7:00pm, Young Adults & Youth (YAY) is on at Aubigny, with the hall open from 6:30pm. Please bring your Bible, and a plate to share, for an evening of fun, games, food, and a devotion. Any questions, please contact Matthew at matthewsippelaelc@gmail.com

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.

MIDWEEK LENTEN SERVICE PROGRAM:

Downs Members:

All services are set down for Wednesdays, 7.30pm.

March 5, Bethlehem Toowoomba

March 12, Trinity Oakey

March 19, Bethlehem Toowoomba

March 26, Trinity Oakey

April 2, Bethlehem Toowoomba

April 9, Trinity Oakey

MIDWEEK LENTEN SERVICE PROGRAM:

Marburg/Lowood Members:

Throughout the season of Lent, weekly Morning Devotions and Lenten Bible Studies will be held. We shall meet on Thursdays at 10.00am, with the first to be held at Lowood. Dates are: March 6, 13, 20, 27, April 3 and 10. This will be followed by a shared cuppa. If you are able to, please come along.