

**Australian Evangelical Lutheran Church**  
**BETHLEHEM TOOWOOMBA, OUR SAVIOUR LOWOOD, ST JOHN'S AUBIGNY,**  
**ST PAUL'S GREENWOOD, TRINITY MARBURG, TRINITY OAKEY**  
Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> April      Maundy Thursday Service

**HYMNS:** 71 295 84 325 293 69

**INTROIT:** Psalm 116:12-19

What shall I repay to the LORD for all the good that He has done to me?  
I shall lift up the cup of salvation, and call on the name of the LORD.  
I shall fulfil my vows to the LORD, in the presence, indeed, of all His people.

Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of His faithful people.  
O LORD, I am indeed Your servant; I am Your servant, the son of Your maidservant; You have undone the chains on my feet.

To You I shall offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and I shall call on the name of the LORD.

I shall fulfil my vows to the LORD, in the presence, indeed, of all His people, in the courts of the house of the LORD, in your midst, O Jerusalem. Praise the LORD!

**COLLECT:** O Lord, in this wondrous Sacrament You have left us a remembrance of Your passion. Grant that we may so receive the sacred mystery of Your body and blood that the fruits of Your redemption may continually be manifest in us; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

*Welcome to all worshipping with us today!*

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

**READINGS:** Exodus 12:1-14

<sup>1</sup> The LORD told Moses and Aaron in Egypt, <sup>2</sup> “This month shall be the first month for you, the first month of your year! <sup>3</sup> Tell the whole congregation of Israel, ‘On the tenth day of this month each man shall take a lamb or kid for himself, according to the household of his father, one lamb for each household!

<sup>4</sup> However, if any household is too small for one lamb or one kid, he and the neighbour next to his house shall take one between them, depending on the number of people! You shall determine your count for the lamb by how much

each person eats! <sup>5</sup> The lamb or kid shall be a one-year-old male without defect! You may take it from the sheep or the goats. <sup>6</sup> Take care of it until the fourteenth day of this month! Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall slaughter it at twilight! <sup>7</sup> They shall take some of the blood and put it on the two sides and the tops of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the lambs! <sup>8</sup> That same night they shall eat the meat roasted on a fire! They shall eat it together with bread made without yeast and with bitter herbs! <sup>9</sup> Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water but roasted on a fire, with its head, legs and internal organs! <sup>10</sup> You shall not leave any of it until the next morning but burn up whatever remains of it until morning! <sup>11</sup> This is how you shall eat it: You shall have your cloaks tucked into your belts, your sandals on your feet and your staffs in your hands! You shall eat it quickly! It is the **Passover** of the LORD. <sup>12</sup> On that night I shall pass through Egypt and strike down every first-born in Egypt, both human beings and animals. I shall bring judgment against all the gods of Egypt. I am the LORD. <sup>13</sup> **The blood** will be a sign for you on the houses where you are. When I see **the blood**, I shall **pass over** you. The plague will **not** strike you to **destroy** you when I strike the land of Egypt.’

<sup>14</sup> “You shall commemorate this day! You shall celebrate it as a festival to the LORD throughout your generations! You and your descendants shall celebrate it as a festival by a permanent Statute!

### 1 Corinthians 11:23-32

<sup>23</sup> For I received from the Lord what I have also passed on to you, that the Lord Jesus, on the night when He was being betrayed, took bread. <sup>24</sup> When He had given thanks, He broke it and said, “This is My body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of Me!” <sup>25</sup> In the same way He also took the cup after the meal. He said, “This cup is the new **Covenant** in My **blood**. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of Me!” <sup>26</sup> For, whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are proclaiming the Lord’s death, until He comes.

<sup>27</sup> Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. <sup>28</sup> However, let a person examine himself and so let him eat from the bread and drink from the cup! <sup>29</sup> For he who eats and drinks without recognising the Lord’s body eats and drinks judgment on himself.

<sup>30</sup> For this reason, many among you are sick and ailing, and a number have fallen asleep. <sup>31</sup> However, if we were carefully judging ourselves, we should not be under judgment. <sup>32</sup> When the Lord judges us, we are being disciplined, that we may not be condemned with the world.

### **John 13:1-17, 31b-35**

<sup>1</sup> Before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus knew that His hour had come to leave this world and go to the Father. He had loved His own who were in the world and loved them completely. <sup>2</sup> The evening meal was being served, and the Devil had already put the idea of betraying Jesus into the mind of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. <sup>3</sup> Jesus knew that the Father had put everything into His hands and that He had come from God and was going back to God. <sup>4</sup> Jesus rose from the meal, laid aside His outer garments, took a towel and tied it around His waist.

<sup>5</sup> Then He poured water into a basin and began to wash His disciples' feet and to dry them with the towel that He had wrapped around Him. <sup>6</sup> When He came to Simon Peter. Peter asked Him, "Lord, are You going to wash my feet?"

<sup>7</sup> Jesus answered him, "You do not understand now what I am doing but later you will know."

<sup>8</sup> Peter told Him. "You will assuredly never wash my feet."

Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me."

<sup>9</sup> Simon Peter told Him, "Lord, not only my feet but also my hands and my head!"

<sup>10</sup> Jesus told him, "The person who has had a bath needs only to wash his feet. He is completely clean. You are clean, but not all of you."

<sup>11</sup> For He knew who would betray Him. That was why He said, "Not all of you are clean."

<sup>12</sup> After He had washed their feet and put on His outer garments, He reclined at the table again. He asked them, "Do you know what I have done to you?"

<sup>13</sup> You call Me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and you are right, because I am.

<sup>14</sup> Therefore, if I, the Lord and the Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet! <sup>15</sup> For I have given you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. <sup>16</sup> Truly, truly, I tell you, a slave is not greater than his master is, and one who is sent is not greater than the one who has sent him. <sup>17</sup> If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them! ...

<sup>31</sup> When Judas had gone out, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in Him. <sup>32</sup> If God has been glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself and will glorify Him immediately.

<sup>33</sup> "Little children, I shall be with you a little longer yet. You will look for Me, but, as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: Where I am going, you cannot come.

<sup>34</sup> I am giving you a new Commandment, that you love one another. You also love one another, as I have loved you! <sup>35</sup> By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

**THE SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR IS A MEMORIAL OF THE  
WONDERFUL WORKS OF GOD  
Sermon for Maundy Thursday 2025  
Psalm 111:4-5**

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 tonight is Psalm 111:4-5: **He has caused His miraculous acts to be remembered. The LORD is gracious and compassionate. <sup>5</sup> He has given food to those who fear Him. He will remember His Covenant for ever.**

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

Dear friends in Christ,

*Luther's Small Catechism* asks this of the Lord's Supper: "What is the Sacrament of the Altar?" and answers, "It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ under the bread and wine, instituted by Christ Himself for us Christians to eat and to drink."

On this solemn night, when our Lord would be betrayed, He would institute this sacrament, which for us is a glorious means of grace unto eternal life.

What is remarkable, though, is that although this sacrament was instituted by Jesus and recorded for us by the New Testament writers, it *was already indicated and typified in the Old Testament.* How so?

Earlier tonight, we heard from our First Reading how the LORD instituted the Passover. In so doing, the LORD wanted to prove that He could break Pharaoh's stubbornness and deliver His people. We heard how the LORD would "*pass through Egypt and strike down every first-born in Egypt*" (Exodus 12:12). In the meantime, the children of Israel were to be gathered in their houses to partake of the slaughtered lamb, and to "*take some of the blood and put it on the two sides and the tops of the doorframes of the houses*" (Exodus 12:7). When the LORD would see the blood on their doorframes, He would pass over them and spare them. He then proclaimed to the Israelites, "*You shall commemorate this day! You shall celebrate it as a festival to the LORD throughout your generations! You and your descendants shall celebrate it as a festival by a permanent Statute!*" (Exodus 12:14).

For future generations, the celebration of the Passover would serve as a memorial of the wonderful deliverance of the LORD's people out of Egypt, and in time, the Jews would associate Psalm 111 with the Passover, singing this psalm at their annual celebration while partaking of the lamb of the Passover. Yet, at the same time, the Passover contains a type by which the Holy Spirit points to Christ's greater, more glorious, and more wonderful works of the New Testament, namely, to the wonders of the Sacrament of the Altar, which will remain until the Last Day.

We take note, particularly of the fact that this Psalm says, “**He has caused His miraculous acts to be remembered.**” If this can be said of the Old Testament Sacrament, how much more does this apply to the Sacrament of the Altar? If, in the days of the Old Testament people, they were reminded of the visible and temporal wonders manifested at the institution of the Passover, how much more are we to remember the spiritual and eternal wonders connected with the institution of the Sacrament of the Altar? The children of Israel had only *signs and types* of the Lamb of God, which was to bear the sins of the world; we, however, have and partake of the *very Lamb of God* and in Him of all fullness of grace. Surely, *we have far more reason* to praise with psalms and hymns the memorial of all the wonderful works manifested in the Sacrament of the Altar. Surely, *we are to lift up our hearts to God* and consider that the Sacrament of the Altar is a memorial of the wonderful works of God.

Furthermore, the Sacrament of the Altar is a far greater wonder of divine power. In this Sacrament, we also receive something to be taken with the mouth. Our text reads: “**He has given food to those who fear Him.**”

But this is not ordinary food, no symbolical, earthly lamb. No, we receive the highest and most wonderful food in the Sacrament of the Altar: *the Passover Lamb itself, our Lord Jesus Christ*. Earthly elements, bread and wine, are certainly present, but in, with, and under this bread and wine, *we are to eat and drink the true body of Christ and His true blood, that body of the incarnate Son of God which He gave for us into death on the cross*. While we see and taste only bread and wine, by virtue of the *sacramental union*, the consecrated bread *is* the communion of the body of Christ, and the consecrated cup *is* the communion of the blood of Christ.<sup>1</sup> Thus, in a mysterious way, *the whole Christ* with His body and blood, becomes food and drink to our soul. In this manner, He wants to live in us, and we are to live in Him. We are to be united with Him here in time till we enter His blessed presence and remain with Him eternally.

This wonderful food is meant for all “**who fear Him,**” that is, for all who have faith in Christ and His words, “*Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins*” (Matthew 26:26-28). Since the Sacrament of the Altar is the *Lord’s Supper*, its recipients must only be those who are worthy and well-prepared.

But who can understand this divine miracle? Truly, this work of divine power is beyond our *comprehension*. It is undoubtedly a great miracle that Christ became man, but it is a still greater wonder that He continuously gives us Himself as food and drink. He who understands and truly believes what is given to him in the Sacrament should surely marvel at such a work of divine power, bow down in humility before the majesty of the Son of God, and in holy awe receive this wonderful food.

The problem, of course, is that our natural heart is so corrupt that we do not sufficiently regard the wonders of God, which we behold so frequently. Every day, we see many

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Corinthians 10:16

miracles of divine power in nature, but who still marvels at them? We regard it all as something natural because we see it so often and are inclined to believe the Sacrament of the Altar similarly. Many do not recognise and consider the wonder of grace in the Sacrament of the Altar and are barely stirred by the fact that the great and glorious God enters their hearts with His body and blood in this holy meal. Instead, they become cold and indifferent towards this holy mystery and make no distinction between this food and any other, thus eating and drinking judgment on themselves. God grant that we are not so indifferent, but rather that as often as we partake of the Sacrament of the Altar, we may behold in it a memorial of the wonderful works of God!

Finally, in this Sacrament, not only the power but also the *love* of God is unfathomable.

By instituting the Passover, God showed His love to His people. Israel was thereby to remember its deliverance out of Egypt. A little later, the writer of Psalm 111 would say, “*He sent redemption to His people*” (111:9).

The celebration of the Passover was a constant reminder that the LORD, with a mighty hand, had delivered His people from slavery, temporal death, and the tyrannical power of Pharaoh. At each recurring Passover, they were to remember the wonderful love of God and never to forget what great things He had done for them. They were to realise that with the coming of the promised Messiah, He would do still greater things unto them.

Now, in the time of the New Testament, the great memorial of divine love *has been established*. God has kept His promise; the Messiah *has come*; His work *is completed*; everything has been done that was necessary to save sinners. We can exultingly say: **“He has caused His miraculous acts to be remembered.”** The wonderful work of redemption speaks of Christ’s love, and the Sacrament of the Altar is a constant remembrance of the fact that Jesus has saved us with His body, which has been broken for us and with His blood, which has been shed for us. The Passover was a proof of divine love. The Sacrament of the Altar is a still greater proof of the far more fervent love of Christ, whereby He has delivered us from all enemies of our soul. We were condemned in sin, lost in death, and held by the devil. From these, we are made free by the blood and death of our Lord. He has brought us from sin to righteousness, from death to life, from the devil to God. These are far greater wonders than those experienced by Israel in Pharaoh’s days. We regard it, indeed, as a wonder of divine love that God spared not His own Son but delivered Him up for us all<sup>2</sup> as the Lamb of God that He may take away our sins and deliver us from the power of eternal death. As often as we partake of the Sacrament, we have a memorial of our complete redemption in Jesus Christ.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Romans 8:32

<sup>3</sup> 1 Corinthians 11:26

Though the Sacrament of the Altar is not a mere feast of remembrance, as the Reformed Church teaches, it is, nevertheless, instituted as a memorial. It speaks of Christ's love manifested to us in the work of redemption. We remember His bitter suffering, death, and the shedding of His blood. It is to us a pledge and seal that we are, by Christ's death, *delivered from sin, death, and the power of the devil*. Whenever we partake of the Sacrament of the Altar, we should remember that Christ has died for us because of His great love and that He comes to us in the Sacrament by this love.

Great, indeed, is the marvel that Christ shows us His divine power and love in His Holy Supper. But the greatest miracle is this: the Sacrament is also a memorial of divine grace and compassion.

**“He has caused His miraculous acts to be remembered. The LORD is gracious and compassionate.”** Listen again to those words: **“The LORD is gracious and compassionate!”** Of what benefit to us would be the streams of Christ's love if they did not have their source in the hills of His eternal grace and compassion and did not come down upon us in grace and mercy! The weary and heavy-laden<sup>4</sup> are encouraged by the grace and compassion of God to partake in the joy of His Supper, and the words **“Gracious and compassionate”** are wonderful since they tell us Christ does not come to reckon with us and judge us in the Sacrament, but rather *to offer us His grace*. He does not ask anything of us but bestows His heavenly gifts upon us. He comes as a physician to the sick. He brings salvation, the fruit of His suffering and death, the most precious heavenly gifts, forgiveness of sin and eternal redemption. He has compassion on us in our misery, sin, and distress. As often as we come to the Sacrament of the Altar, we are to remember that He forgives us our sins, has patience with our weakness, is long-suffering, and will not cast us away from His presence. He indeed assures us that His Supper is a memorial of His grace and compassion. It is, indeed, a wonderful work that the Holy One comes to us sinners, the Highest to us who are dust and ashes, the ever Blessed One to us miserable creatures. This is grace indeed, which the human mind cannot comprehend.

Dear friends, we belong to the highly favoured guests at the Lord's Table. If at times you hesitate or are afraid to follow the Lord's invitation, if your conscience accuses you and says you are not worthy, or if Satan should try to make your sins appear greater than God's grace, then remember these words, **“The LORD is gracious and compassionate.”** God wants you to trust Him and His Word. And if, at times, the thought comes to you that God may grow tired of forgiving your sins again and again, then remember the closing words of our text: **“He will remember His Covenant for ever.”**

This is the covenant of grace that God made in Christ with us sinners, which He proclaimed in the Gospel and sealed by the Sacrament. It is an everlasting covenant.

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<sup>4</sup> Matthew 11:28

God remains faithful even though we break it. He will always receive us again when we come in repentance and faith and will strengthen us by means of His holy Sacrament.

Let us, then, rejoice that Christ has given us in the Sacrament of the Altar, such a wonderful memorial of His power, love, and grace. Let us praise the Lord for His goodness! And then, whenever we poor, miserable sinners are guests at His Table, we shall receive His holy body and blood in remembrance of His death and of our salvation. Amen.

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

#### PRAYER FOR MAUNDY THURSDAY

Almighty God, heavenly Father, we thank and praise You for Your goodness and loving-kindness in sending to this needy world Jesus Christ, the bread from heaven. We praise You that you have enabled us to know You through Him.

Open our eyes so that we may see ourselves as we really are in the mirror of Your holy Word, and grant us sincere repentance. Nothing is hidden from You. You know our secret sins. Therefore we cast ourselves down before You, trust in Your mercy, and cling only to this, that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from every sin. Forgive us our many transgressions. Grant that by faith we may grasp what Christ has done for us, and rejoice in the perfect peace of His pardon. Do not take Your Holy Spirit from us, but continue to make us glad that You have saved us. Satisfy our souls with the bread of life, and grant that through faith in Him we may never hunger again. Do not cast us from Your presence because of our faithlessness, but through Christ keep us for Your eternal kingdom. Help us to overcome pride and self-will, which disregard Jesus' example of humble service. Give us a ready mind and a pure heart to follow in His steps.

Bless Your Church, O Father. May all Your people be nourished by the true manna, which has come down from heaven, and given them the vision and strength to do Your will. Help Your Church to appreciate and use Your Word, Baptism, and the Sacrament of the Altar, through which Your Spirit brings salvation to all people.

May Your blessing rest on all who feel the burden of a guilty conscience, the pain of sickness, the ache of sorrow, the sadness of separation, and the sting of death. Give to all who seek Your gracious help the assurance of Your love and comforting presence, and, at the end, entrance into Your eternal glory.

As now we proclaim our Lord's passion and death in the communion between bread and Jesus' body and wine and Jesus' blood at His Table, unite us with Him and with each other in faith and fellowship. For there we are one body in Him. Assure us again of Your presence and Your mercy. Increase our joy and hope of heaven. Let Your Word and the Sacrament of the Altar continually strengthen us during our pilgrimage on earth, until we finally share in the marriage supper of the Lamb for ever. We pray these things in the name of Jesus Christ, whose saving death is our peace and hope until He comes. Amen.