

THE AUSTRALIAN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH (AELC)
BETHLEHEM TOOWOOMBA, OUR SAVIOURS LOWOOD, ST JOHNS AUBIGNY,
ST PAULS GREENWOOD, TRINITY MARBURG, TRINITY OAKEY

25 December 2025

Christmas Day

A warm welcome to all those who are worshipping with us today!

Behold, the Messiah comes to fulfil the Law and the Prophets, and it shall be proclaimed in all of Jerusalem, "This is the prophet Jesus!" From Mount Sinai to Calvary, the Lord reveals His edicts, His decrees, and that Jesus is the very fulfilment of them all. Christ is faithful in the midst of faithlessness, humble in the midst of arrogance. He alone is the rightful Prophet, Priest, and King. Hosanna in the highest!

In preparation of worship, please prepare by

- **Praying one of the prayers found on page 308 in your LSB hymnbook**
- **Bookmarking Psalm 2 (in front of LSB hymnbook) for the Introit.**

Hymns (LSB): 387 382 26(LH) 389

Introit: Psalm 2 found in the front of your LSB hymnbook.

Gradual:

Isaiah 9:6; Psalm 98:1a

*To us a child is born, to us a son is given;
and the government shall be upon his shoulder.
And his name shall be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
Sing to the Lord a new song,
for he has done marvellous things!*

Collect: Almighty God, grant that the birth of Your only-begotten Son in the flesh may set us free from the bondage of sin; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

The First Reading: Isaiah 52:7–10

⁷How beautiful upon the mountains
are the feet of him who brings good news,
who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness,
who publishes salvation,
who says to Zion, "Your God reigns."

⁸The voice of your watchmen—they lift up their voice;
together they sing for joy;
for eye to eye they see
the return of the Lord to Zion.

⁹Break forth together into singing,
you waste places of Jerusalem,
for the Lord has comforted his people;
he has redeemed Jerusalem.

¹⁰The Lord has bared his holy arm
before the eyes of all the nations,
and all the ends of the earth shall see
the salvation of our God.

The Second Reading: Hebrews 1:1–6

¹Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, ²but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. ³He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, ⁴having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

⁵For to which of the angels did God ever say,
“You are my Son, today I have begotten you”?

Or again,

“I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son”?

⁶And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says,
“Let all God’s angels worship him.”

The Gospel Reading from John 1:1–18

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. ⁴In him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. ⁸He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light.

⁹The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. ¹⁰He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. ¹²But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. ¹⁵(John bore witness about him, and cried out, “This was he of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.’”) ¹⁶And from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. ¹⁷For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father’s side, he has made him known.

HE OPENS US AGAIN THE DOOR OF PARADISE

Sermon for Christmas Day 2025

Genesis 3:15

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is Genesis 3:15: **“I shall make you and the woman hostile to each other and shall make your descendants and her Descendant hostile to each other. He will crush your head and you will crush His heel.”**

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

Dear friends in Christ,

We are a blessed people, you and I, and I'm not just talking about the everyday blessings we receive from God. Yes, they are many, and we are thankful for them, but our true blessing is that *we have received directly from God Himself*, and that is what Christmas is truly about. This day is centred on God. It is therefore a sacred day. All the glory belongs to Him because the story is His. It speaks of man’s sinful state and God’s gracious promise fulfilled and perfected in His only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ. It is a story that begins in paradise and is destined to end in a new paradise. On this day, we once again remember the truth of a paradise lost by man and regained by man’s Substitute.

When we wish others a merry Christmas, we are simply sharing a joy that points to Jesus Christ and the wonderful news that He reopens the door of paradise for us today.

When we open the first pages of our Bible, we see God's revealing light shining on the splendour of His new creation. In six days of 24 hours each, God made everything, and we are told, "*God saw all that He had made and, indeed, it was very good*" (Gen. 1:31). The crowning achievement of His creation was man, and now, He stands before the first human couple, who are to rule His creation on His behalf. In a blessed and perfect relationship, they stand before God as a reflection of His own holiness and righteousness. In perfect happiness, they share God's own immortality and bask in the glory of life with Him. Adam and Eve have all that they need. They enjoy life with the triune Lord of heaven and earth. They are in paradise. What more could any human being want?

Well, Satan had a suggestion. Why be satisfied with being merely "*in the image of God*"? So he whispered in Eve's ear, "*Why not be a god yourself? After all, God has not told you everything or given you everything you would like to have. Didn't He tell you not to eat of the tree in the middle of the garden? He did not tell you why, however, did He? God is holding out on you because He knows that if you eat of its fruit, you will have equal status with Him—you will be like God, knowing good and evil.*"

Satan plants the seeds of doubt, pride, and rebellion in the hearts of our first parents by his lies. That hater of God did his evil work well, and Adam and Eve became willing partners in open revolt against the Lord of all. They received what Satan had promised them, and now they would be like God in knowing the existence of good and evil.

But at what cost! Those who sought to be like God and rule over their own life would now be ruled by Satan. A poisoned heart and sinful nature acting through a hostile will would mark the children of these first parents down through the years of time. As God had forewarned, Adam and Eve would forfeit the right to life with Him. They soon discovered how dreadful sin is, how awful it is to rise up against God! Their existence would be coloured by death, by the experience of life without God, and by the hostile, never-ending, and fatal struggle with Satan and the power of sin. The door of paradise *slammed shut* for our first parents.

The Apostle Paul writes, “*just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned*” (Rom. 5:12). As all mankind is connected by birth with Adam as the head and representative of the human race, so all mankind was involved in his sin and fall from God. What other nature could Adam and Eve pass on to their offspring but one like their own — a nature now corrupted by sin? Genesis 5 tells us that “*When God created man, He made him in the likeness of God.... When Adam had lived 130 years, he fathered a son in his own likeness, after his image” (v. 1, 3). Their children would be literal “chips off the old block,” not in the image, the likeness of God, but in the image of Adam, the father of the human race.*

Like Adam, humanity would now be caught in a constant and tragic struggle with Satan and the powers of darkness, a deadly fight where both would pretend to be gods. An “enmity” would exist, raging in the arena of life without God. In Adam’s sin, we all sinned; in Adam’s death, we all died. The door of paradise slammed shut on mankind, making us all by nature children of wrath. What would have to happen for that door to once again be opened so paradise could be restored? Let’s find out.

As Adam and Eve stand before God in their naked shame and guilt, they hear God’s curse upon their tempter. In that curse and judgment upon Satan, Adam and Eve hear wonderful words of comfort and hope: **“I shall make you and the woman hostile to each other and shall make your descendants and her Descendant hostile to each other. He will crush your head and you will crush His heel.”**

This is the glory of Adam and Eve’s Christmas. In a curse upon Satan that took away all hope of forgiveness from God for him, our first parents hear something different and totally unexpected — not a curse but wonderful news offered in a promise. Facing only despair in their sin, they experience alongside God’s justice *His pure grace and mercy*. The prophet Isaiah captures God’s grace and mercy well when he writes, “*Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool*” (Is. 1:18).

How comforting it must have been for our first parents to realise that God is the enemy of that evil one who inflicted such a serious rupture in their relationship to God, and that God Himself would fix things!

In those words of our text, grace and mercy begin to shine forth from the midst of the wrath which sin and disobedience aroused. In the midst of most serious threats, the Father reveals His pure heart. In a love so undeserved, the hands of God outstretched to embrace our first sinful parents to assure them that in the struggle of mankind with Satan, there would come One who would gain the victory for humanity by crushing Satan's head and rendering him powerless, even though the Head-Crusher would Himself be mortally wounded in the conflict.

It would indeed be the lot of everyone born of a woman to struggle with Satan and his sin-powers and be fatally bitten in the encounter. But a certain Descendant of Eve, *unique in His birth*, would enter into the struggle with and for man and win the victory over that evil power which inflicts savage death strokes upon mankind. For Adam and Eve, it meant only one thing: the forgiveness of sins and victory, and Paradise again through that One who would break down the door of sin which stood between human creatures and their Creator Lord. That was God's promise to Adam and Eve. They trusted it and relied upon it, so much so that when Eve gave birth to her firstborn son, she hoped she already had that Satan-Crusher whom God had promised. When Cain was born, she said, "*I have acquired a man, the LORD*" (Gen. 4:1). Confident in God's promise to send His Son, born of a woman, Eve believed her firstborn, Cain, was that promised Saviour.

Although Eve was deceived about that hope, she came to realise that, *in God's good time*, this Seed would be born among her descendants. The gracious promise of God was passed down through the centuries. It was repeated to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and David, and through the prophets. Brighter and brighter that promise glowed as God revealed more and more details of the Servant who would suffer, that Root of Jesse, that Child of Bethlehem, that Sun of Righteousness. This promise gave hope and salvation to all who believed it, and then, the battle lines were drawn up once and for all against the enemy of God and man. A little Baby is born to humble, God-fearing Mary and Joseph in a little village called Bethlehem, and the very heavens burst with the victory cry: "*For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord*" (Luke 2:11).

The fight is on. The Promised Seed is here — a little Baby that, for all purposes, looks like any other newborn. Those who trusted in God’s promise stand wrapped in the wonder of it all, and when their amazement subsides and turns to joy, His name is heard: “*Immanuel, God is with us!*”

See what a battle it is! This is the very Son of God, this Babe, clothed in man’s flesh and blood to become one of humanity and destined to become man’s Substitute to “*save His people from their sins*” (Matt. 1:21). Over His humble manger stands an awesome cross; for Satan’s henchmen are even now seeking “*the young Child to destroy Him*” (Matt. 2:13). Scarcely is He born and the enmity begins. This sinless Seed soon would face the full onslaught of sin, be face to face with Satan and his temptations, be beset by a “*brood of snakes,*” and finally be betrayed and crucified by hearts which Satan had won. Willingly, He would do battle with Satan and bear in His own body the sins of all men on a cross, suffering the full and fatal death bite of sin. Satan and his draftees from among men would cheer with fiendish glee as they drive each nail, thinking that at last they have pinned God down.

But Satan’s triumph is short-lived; for Satan’s victory is a “heel” victory. It is a victory shattered to pieces by the final thrust of his Victim: “*It is finished!*” (John 19:30). It sounds almost like a word of resignation, of relief, perhaps, that Jesus’ suffering was coming to an end. But it had to be more than that. Remember how this was Jesus’ hour, that He went to the cross voluntarily, that He was there to complete God’s plan of salvation. Jesus was not saying that the wicked plot against Him was finished. He was declaring that His task as the one and only Son of the heavenly Father was finished. Satan’s head has been crushed. Heaven and earth re-echo its sound, and the earth convulses in a spasm that brings forth its dead in a mighty show of that death which is swallowed up in victory.

Three days later, the Victor returns from battle, bearing the scars of the bitter conflict. In His person, He carries the spoils of the victory — forgiveness, eternal life, and salvation — which He desires to give to mankind, assuring every soul that He is still Lord. The Apostle Paul wrote how “*Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep*” (1 Cor. 15:20). Again, “*For as by the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man’s obedience the many will be made righteous*” (Rom. 5:19), and “*There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus*” (Rom. 8:1).

The words of the prophet Isaiah have come true, and to mankind comes the proclamation of a victory for mankind: “*Comfort, comfort My people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the LORD’s hand double for all her sins*” (Is. 40:1-2).

Is it any wonder that the angels of God would burst from the heavens to sing the praise of this holy Child who is born in Bethlehem? “*Glory to God in the highest,*” they sing in joyful exultation.

And how is it with us this Christmas Day? What is our living response to such a gracious God? Can it be anything less than to give thanks to God the Father who has given us victory over sin and Satan, who has opened us again the door of Paradise through Jesus Christ, our Lord! “*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased!*” (Luke 2:14). May you all have a holy and blessed Christmas! Amen.

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

CHRISTMAS DAY

Father in heaven, with great joy and humble awe, we acknowledge Your dear Son to be the Word made flesh. We rejoice that because He is now our brother, we have become Your sons and daughters through baptism. Keep us, Your children, in true faith in You and in fervent love for one another.

Gracious Lord, be pleased to bless all pastors and work through their proclamation of Your Son to bring the good news of joy and salvation to all who hear them.

Merciful God, as our families gather in this holy season, give us patience, that we may be slow to judge and quick to forgive. Comfort the lonely with Your presence, and help us extend the welcome of our homes and the friendship of Your grace. Make us mindful of those less fortunate, who celebrate this blessed feast in poverty and want, and teach us to be generous. Accept with our offerings the living sacrifice of our bodies to Your service and our voices in praise and thanksgiving.

God of peace, look on the nations of this world. Give them a spirit of peace so that conflicts would cease, and reveal through the birth of Jesus Your great salvation.

Merciful Father, guard and keep all who are sick, lonely, overwhelmed by grief or poor in spirit, that they may be comforted and healed according to Your good and gracious will. Let them look to Jesus Christ and be reminded that He is the light no darkness can overcome.

Lord, humble our hearts in repentance and give us faith to receive with joy and thanksgiving the precious gift of Your Son in the flesh. Grant to Your Church unity of faith and harmony of life and practice.

Heavenly Father, sustain those who suffer persecution for the name of Christ. Keep them firm in their faith as they bear witness to the light of the world, that they would never lose sight of their identity as the children of God.

Hear us, O Lord, for the sake of Your Son, the Word become flesh, the Saviour of the nations, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, ever one God. Amen.

Article:

What Child is this?

Good News from Matthew's Gospel! What Child is this? Well, He is the Virgin Mary's child. The angel tells Joseph: "*She will bear a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins*" (Matt. 1:21).

Remember what the name "Jesus" means? It means "God saves." Saves in what way? From sin and all that the sinner hellaciously deserves because of his/her sin! Sinners and their sin have earned a paycheque. A payday. A salary. Death! "*The wages of sin is death,*" (Rom. 6:23). A forever death! In other words, because of their sin, sinners deserve damnation. That's hell. Forever damned in hell. Everlastingly apart from God. Sin – our sin – puts us in hellish peril. But this Child named Jesus saves you from that! He can do it because He is God! He is God who comes to save you, the sinner, from eternal condemnation in hell because of your sin.

How does Jesus do this? Save you? I'm glad you asked. He takes all your sin in His body and gets damned with it on the cross, in your place. And in exchange, He gives you, who believe in Him, His holiness, His perfection, His righteousness. His sinlessness! In other words, He forgives you. He doesn't hold your sin against you because it was all held against Him!

What Child is this? He's Jesus. "*God saves.*" Yes, only God saves. And that Child Jesus is the God who saves. Pushing it for all that it's worth, Matthew shows that the Old Testament promises through Isaiah the prophet: "*Behold the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel*" (1:23).

Did you catch that? Another name for the Child? He is Immanuel! And what does “Immanuel” mean? It means “God with us.”

Yes, the Child Jesus is Immanuel: GOD WITH US! Jesus is GOD WITH US in order to be GOD FOR US! For us, in what way? The salvation way! The Good Friday saving sinners from their sins way!

I can’t tell you how wonderful this is. You can’t save yourself from the damnation of hell. Only Jesus can. AND DOES! He does the salvation job as Immanuel – God with us – when He suffers and dies on the cross.

As He hangs on the Good Friday cross, Jesus answers for all your sins. The world’s sin. I’ll say it again. ***He doesn’t count your sin against you.*** It all got counted against Him. And for you who believe in Him, you are forgiven. You are saved. No hell. Only heaven. Everlasting life.

What Child is this? He is Jesus/Immanuel! God with us in order to save you His people from their sins. Jesus/Immanuel is the free gift of eternal life. What joy for this Christmas and for your life!

Children’s Address:

A blessed Christmas to you all! Today, God became flesh and blood when He was born in Bethlehem.

Do you sometimes feel down in the dumps? Sometimes life can make you feel as though everyone and everything is against you. Maybe you have had an argument, been disobedient, or have been hurt in some way.

John tells us today that “*The Word became flesh and dwelt among us*” (John 1:14). The event of the Word (Jesus) becoming a man is an encouragement when we suffer. That event is encouraging when we feel defeated, because it means we are not alone in facing our problems. That event helps us overcome despair (suffering without hope), because Christmas is a hopeful event. God gave us His Son. God said that He would come, and God kept that promise!

The Son of God is the One who makes the Father known. From God’s fullness, we receive grace upon grace, setting us free to be the people we were intended to be when we were born. He said He would come and do all this, and He did. One of our problems is that we have heard the story so often, we don’t really



hear it. So let's take the time this year to hear the Christmas story once again, and celebrate today by rejoicing that Jesus has been born!

Thank You, Jesus, for being born in Bethlehem. On this day of Your birthday, help me to remember that You are my Saviour, who helps me in all my troubles. Happy Birthday Jesus! Amen.

SERVICE TIMES

28 December 1 Christmas	NEW YEAR'S DAY 1 January 2026	4 January 2 Christmas
8.30am OAK HC 9.00am TMBA LR 9.30am AUB LR 10.15am GRN HC 9.00am MARBURG LR	10.00am AUB HC	10.00am TMBA HC Parish Service

Sunday, 28 December

READINGS: Isaiah 63:7-14; Galatians 4:4-7; Matthew 2:13-23

HYMNS: 360 374 725 (608 619) 383

Thursday, 1 January 2026

READINGS: Numbers 6:22-27; Galatians 3:23-29; Luke 2:21

HYMNS: 901 900 898 362 524 733

Sunday, 4 January

READINGS: 1 Kings 3:4-15; Ephesians 1:3-14; Luke 2:40-52

HYMNS: 696 410 662 427 636 399

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Forward Announcement: Sunday, 4 January. Parish Service at Bethlehem Toowoomba, beginning at 10.00am. A Parish Executive meeting will be held after the service.

Verse of the Day

Alleluia. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. Alleluia.

John 1:14

AELC Member Congregations Details

Contact: ddaelc@gmail.com

<i>Congregation</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Giving</i>
Bethlehem Toowoomba	41 Buckland Street, Harristown	BSB 638-070 Account 15877094
Our Saviour Lowood	63 Prospect Street, Lowood	BSB 633-108 Account 159171487
St Johns Aubigny	2 Aubigny Crosshill Road, Aubigny	BSB 014-675 Account 388228975
St Pauls Greenwood	617 Acland-Silverleigh Road, Greenwood	BSB 638-070 Account 6918247
Trinity Marburg	19 Edmund Street, Marburg	BSB 633-000 Account 146106893
Trinity Oakey	125 Hamlyn Road, Oakey	BSB 638-070 Account 7405138

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The Church Office of the AELC: Email: ddaelc@gmail.com

About the AELC

The Australian Evangelical Lutheran Church (AELC) believes that the Holy Scriptures are the inspired, inerrant, infallible, and authoritative Word of God, and accordingly, believe that the Holy Scriptures are the sole source of what we believe, teach, and confess. We also subscribe to *The Lutheran Confessions of 1580*, *The Word Shall Stand* and *The AELC Statement of Faith* as correct expositions of Scripture, which address issues that have arisen throughout history by the Word of God. We teach nothing new and stand on Scripture alone as God's Word to us. We teach the message of Christ crucified for sinners. We teach that salvation is by God's grace alone, through faith alone in Christ alone.



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