

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

22 March 2026

Fifth Sunday in Lent

www.aelc.org.au

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

In preparation of worship, please prepare by praying one of the prayers found on page 308 in your LSB hymnbook and have an Order of Service Booklet.

Decaying skeletons are revived in hearing the prophecies of God. Graveyards are opened; the dead are raised—and the Lord does it all! Lifeless creatures respond to the breath of the Holy Spirit. Hostile flesh wars against God and dies, but those continually revived by the Spirit live in peace. Dead Lazarus is three days entombed in stench, and yet, when Jesus speaks, he rises, he lives! Lazarus sheds the shroud of death, and the Lord has done it all!

Hymns (LSB): 819 430 (tune 62 LH) 687 608 623 725

Introit: Psalm 130

¹Out of the depths

I cry to you, O Lord!

²O Lord, hear my voice!

Let your ears be attentive
to the voice of my pleas for mercy!

³If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities,

O Lord, who could stand?

⁴But with you there is forgiveness,

that you may be feared.

⁵I wait for the Lord, my soul waits,

and in his word I hope;

⁶my soul waits for the Lord

more than watchmen for the morning,
more than watchmen for the morning.

⁷O Israel, hope in the Lord!

For with the Lord there is steadfast love,
and with him is plentiful redemption.

⁸And he will redeem Israel

from all his iniquities.

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

The Gradual

Hebrews 12:2

[O come, let us fix our eyes on] Jesus,
the founder and perfecter of our faith,
who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame,
and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

Collect:

Almighty God, by Your great goodness mercifully look upon Your people that we may be governed and preserved evermore in body and soul; 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

Ezekiel 37:1–14

¹The hand of the Lord was upon me, and he brought me out in the Spirit of the Lord and set me down in the middle of the valley; it was full of bones. ²And he led me around among them, and behold, there were very many on the surface of the valley, and behold, they were very dry. ³And he said to me, “Son of man, can these bones live?” And I answered, “O Lord God, you know.” ⁴Then he said to me, “Prophesy over these bones, and say to them, O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. ⁵Thus says the Lord God to these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. ⁶And I will lay sinews upon you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live, and you shall know that I am the Lord.”

⁷So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I prophesied, there was a sound, and behold, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. ⁸And I looked, and behold, there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them. But there was no breath in them. ⁹Then he said to me, “Prophesy to the breath; prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, Thus says the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live.” ¹⁰So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood on their feet, an exceedingly great army.

¹¹Then he said to me, “Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. Behold, they say, ‘Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are clean cut off.’ ¹²Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord God: Behold, I will open your graves and raise you from your graves, O my people. And I will bring you into the land of Israel. ¹³And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people. ¹⁴And I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I am the Lord; I have spoken, and I will do it, declares the Lord.”

The Second Reading

Romans 8:1–11

¹There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ²For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. ³For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. ⁵For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. ⁶To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. ⁷For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. ⁸Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

⁹You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. ¹⁰But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. ¹¹If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

The Gospel Reading: John 11:17–27, 38–53

¹⁷When Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. ¹⁸Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off, ¹⁹and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother. ²⁰So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary remained seated in the house. ²¹Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²²But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you." ²³Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." ²⁴Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." ²⁵Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, ²⁶and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?" ²⁷She said to him, "Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world." . . .

³⁸Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. ³⁹Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, by this time there will be an odour, for he has been dead four days." ⁴⁰Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed you

would see the glory of God?”⁴¹ So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me. ⁴²I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me.”⁴³ When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out.”⁴⁴ The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Unbind him, and let him go.”

⁴⁵Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what he did, believed in him, ⁴⁶but some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. ⁴⁷So the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the Council and said, “What are we to do? For this man performs many signs. ⁴⁸If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.”⁴⁹ But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, “You know nothing at all. ⁵⁰Nor do you understand that it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish.”⁵¹ He did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, ⁵²and not for the nation only, but also to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad. ⁵³So from that day on they made plans to put him to death.

Sermon

WE ARE SET FOR LIFE! Sermon for the 5th Sunday in Lent, 2026 Romans 8:1-11

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 the Second Reading from before, Romans 8:1-11.

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

Dear friends in Christ,

When someone wins big in the lotto, it is often said that they are “set for life.” Such people can enjoy a life of luxury, free from money worries and without concern for the future, at least financially. I suppose it would be great not to have to stress about cash and to do whatever you please.

But money or wealth is not everything, because you can lose it all. It's more important to lay up "*treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal*" (Matt. 6:20), and this is really what Paul had in mind in today's text from Romans. Whether we have been blessed with much or not, we are already rich—not because we've won big, or are healthy or happy, or anything else—we're rich because we are in Christ Jesus. We are rich because no matter what we have to deal with here on earth, we are safe in the care of Jesus, and *that* is true wealth.

A little earlier in his Letter to the Romans, Paul describes how difficult our battles with sin can be, using himself as an example. He says, "*For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out*" (7:18). As a child of God, Paul struggled with his sinful nature. He had sinful desires and knew they were wrong. He tried to avoid sin but inevitably failed. He said, "*I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?*" (v. 23-24). Paul saw the sin that was in him, the natural corruption that led him to act in sinful ways. He recognised all too well that the sins that accompanied the flesh were the sins we wrestle with every day and which make us the wretched sinners that we are.

"*Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?*" Whenever we read these words, we ought to see ourselves. Psalm 1 reads, "*Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; ² but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on His law he meditates day and night*" (1-2).

We delight in the Law of God, and we want to do God's will, but sin keeps getting in the way, spoiling our best efforts. It is terribly frustrating and makes us miserable. That is why we confess our sins, and this confession needs to be honest. If we don't recognise our sins and our failures, if we don't admit those things that put our salvation at risk, then we're being sinfully dishonest. We all have this battle going on inside, and it's one that'll continually plague us this side of heaven, but just because we have this battle going on inside of us doesn't mean all is lost. To the contrary, Paul writes, "**Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.**"

How so? Because a force greater and stronger than sin has appeared on the scene. Through Jesus Christ, “**the law of the Spirit of life**” has set us free from “**the law of sin and death.**” The condemnation we deserve because of our sins has been taken away. We’re wretched sinners who deserve condemnation and God’s anger, and yet, despite all this, we’re not condemned. The “**Spirit of life,**” that is, the Holy Spirit, has set us free from the law of sin that brings death. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, we have been given the free gift of faith in Christ and have eternal life. All our sins have been forgiven and our guilt cleansed because Christ has given us “**the Spirit of life,**” who brings absolution and pardon. This absolution is ours because Christ has done for us what we couldn’t do for ourselves.

Paul goes on to say, “**For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us...**”

Did you catch what Paul says? He says that because we’re sinful and unable to keep the Law, the things we do cannot save us. We’ll never earn our way to heaven, and no one will enter heaven because he or she is a good person. It doesn’t work that way. Instead, the Father has sent His Son to do what the Law couldn’t do – that is, to save us. Jesus Christ took on our likeness and fulfilled the Law by doing what we can’t. He kept every law that we broke. He always kept His Father as number one. He never gossiped or said hurtful things. He never stole, lied, or coveted. He never lusted, hated, or mistreated anyone He loved. He was perfect, and then, because He had done everything His Father had commanded, He was killed. He took our place under God’s Law and was condemned for our sins. He died in our place, and because He fulfilled the Law, we have now fulfilled it. He has given us what we couldn’t obtain on our own. His death has guaranteed that we’re forgiven, and we have a new Spirit within us. So now we really understand what Paul meant when he said, “**There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.**” We are not condemned, but are set for life.

Now that we have been set free, so that our minds are set on the things of God, Paul writes, “**You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you.**”

There is no doubt in Paul’s mind that Christ is dwelling in the hearts of his readers through faith worked by the Holy Spirit. This is a really powerful verse, and what it means is that we are different. Because the Holy Spirit dwells in us, our thinking isn’t focused on sin or the temptations of the flesh; it’s focused on God.

As children of God, we are different; that is why we face so much hardship in today's world. There are common issues we disagree on with the world—such as abortion and single-sex marriage. That's why when we speak out against these practices, *we are often met with contempt*. There are many other worldly matters we oppose or want to avoid, and we are scorned for it. The core issue is that any attempt to conform to modern culture and its way of life, when it conflicts with the Word of God, means we are embracing the spirit of the flesh. As Paul warns, **“those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit.”**

These two mindsets are mutually exclusive. You cannot hold two different viewpoints simultaneously, and it's especially true that whenever we focus on the things of the flesh or the world, our thoughts tend to stray from God. Christ has paid the price for our salvation; He has given us life, and now, with God's help, we live as those who possess a new Spirit—God's Holy Spirit.

So does this mean we never sin? Of course not. I wish it were true, but it's not, and we know that all too well. As children of our heavenly Father, our minds are set on the things of God, but temptations swirl all around us, and we're going to succumb to them, and we're going to sin. But, and this is the good news, because the Spirit of God dwells in us, we're not just sinners; we're also saints. We're sinners because we sin, but we're saints because we're forgiven, and **“there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”** Can you see a pattern? Because we're forgiven and not condemned for sins and because Christ has done what's necessary, sin has no dominion over us. It can't control us because we have the Spirit of God. And because we have this Spirit, we have the power to resist temptation and to turn to God when we do sin.

That is why we always speak again and again of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

In baptism, we are given the power to tell that devil and the world that we do not belong to them, neither do we set our minds on them. As Luther once said, *“Sin remains in our flesh even until death and works without ceasing. But so long as we do not give our consent to it or desire to remain in it, sin is so overruled by our baptism that it does not condemn us and is not harmful to us. Rather it is daily being more and more destroyed in us until our death.”*¹

¹ *Luther's Works, Word and Sacrament I*. Fortress Press, Philadelphia. Page 35.

And in the Lord's Supper, we receive a great treasure: the forgiveness of sins. Our Lord's words "*given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins*" assure us that this treasure "*is passed along and made our very own.*"² "For where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation.

Baptism and the Lord's Supper are far more powerful than anything we'll encounter in this world, and it's why Paul can say, "**For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.**"

Life and peace are two things we need so very badly, and two things that we'll never get from this world. True life and peace only come from the Spirit of God. We're blessed with the faith to keep our minds set on the things of the Spirit, and as Paul promises us, "**if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness.**" That righteousness is ours because Christ has given us His righteousness. It's not just Christ's righteousness that's in us; there's something else. He is in us, and we are in Him.

Dear friends, because Christ is in us and we are in Him, we are set for life. We are not condemned because of our sins. Instead, we have been given life and peace. This is such wonderful news for all of us wretched sinners. We fail, we sin, we succumb to temptation, and yet, God is there forgiving and renewing a right spirit within us—His Spirit, and that Spirit will be with us always. Paul finishes today by saying, "**If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.**"

Eternal life is already a *present reality*, but until we leave this sin-stained world, we shall always have our sinful nature, doing things contrary to God. One day, we shall leave our sinful nature and our sins behind. We have been given life in this world, and our Lord will give us life in the next. As we await the call to enter the kingdom prepared for us before the foundation of the world,³ let us keep our minds set on Him. Indeed, we are set for life, set for this life, and the next. Amen.

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

² *The Large Catechism, V 29*

³ Matthew 25:34

Prayer for the Fifth Sunday in Lent

Heavenly Father, in baptism You have given the new birth of water and the Spirit. Make Your children strong in Your Spirit, that they may shun the works of the flesh and live in this world expecting the resurrection and the life of the world to come.

Bless the ministry of the AELC, the ULMA, and the ACLC. May their pastors whom You have sent continue to boldly preach Your Word, that Your Spirit's breath would enter us and we may live forever.

Continue to guide our student Matthew, that he, too, will be led to proclaim Your Word. May Your blessing rest upon him as he continues his studies.

O Lord, soften the hearts of Your people in every home. Turn parents and children toward each other in love and patience. Banish the spirit of impudence, stubbornness and rebellion from all. Sanctify us in Your truth.

Lord of hosts, You are the true source of life, which You give through the power of Your Spirit. Humble those who are given authority over the lives of our people, that they would discharge this duty honourably in accord with Your will.

O great Redeemer, we hope in You, for with You there is steadfast love and redemption. We cry to You on behalf of those suffering affliction. Assure them that their iniquities have been washed away in Christ and their sins forgiven in His blood. Grant them healing and relief from their burdens, according to Your will.

Mighty God, You have shown us Your great mercy through the death of Your Son. Wherever Your Holy Supper is offered, may all who partake of it come with repentant and humble hearts to taste the body and blood of Christ, which was given and shed for our life.

Gracious Father, Your Son is the Resurrection and the Life, in whom all the dead will rise and through whom Your elect will live eternally in Your presence. Give comfort to all who mourn, that they might not grieve as those who have no hope but as those whose hope is the crucified and risen One.

O Lord, God almighty, through Your Son, You have kept the promise of the ages and rescued us from sin. You have raised up the dry bones of a people captive to death and made us alive in Christ forever. Sustain us in this hope, that we may endure the tests, trials and troubles of this life and be ready when our Saviour comes again in His glory; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Article: UNION OR UNITY?

What is the difference between union and unity? Is there any distinction? Union refers to the act of coming together, while unity signifies harmony, agreement, and concord—sameness of heart and mind—reflecting shared goals and purposes.

Think of marriage. Holy Scripture defines marriage as the union of one man [male] and one woman [female] (Genesis 2:22) living in that union until death parts them (Matthew 19:6). As we reflect on our own marriages, is the union always a genuine expression of unity? Consider the disunity that fractures the marital bond, disrupts the family, and often leads to divorce. Union alone does not necessarily mean unity.

Throughout the world, many Christian denominations exist, distinct from non-Christian religions or groups. Among those who identify as Christian, *doctrinal differences* divide various denominations from one another. Additionally, even within Christian denominations that regard the Bible as their sole source of doctrine and thus expect doctrinal unity, discrepancies still exist. In other words, these groups accept disunity within congregations and among clergy who make up the church. Such a state of union without true unity is known as *unionism* in the church.

The AELC Statement of Faith says regarding union without unity: *“If a church body’s written confession is contradicted by its public practice, and if it does not practise doctrinal discipline against persistent error, its confession is to that degree rendered false or meaningless. Faithful Christians should avoid worshipping or practising fellowship in sacred things with such false church bodies.⁴ To do so is “sinful unionism”* (The Unity of the Church, and Church Fellowship).

That should be the stance of any Lutheran Church that wants to be seen as orthodox. It is also the challenge faced by every orthodox church today, in a time when the attitude that getting along is more loving and attractive than standing for the truth is common. This echoes the scripture that exhorts, if necessary, *“Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I shall receive you. I shall be a Father to you, and you will be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty”* (2 Corinthians 6:17-18).

Union belongs to man. Unity belongs to God. Therefore, the Church does not tolerate division. The high standard of Scripture is clear. All members of the Church are to confess the same truth on all matters of faith. This is explicitly stated by St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 1:10, *“I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment.”* This statement is limited to the Scriptures.

⁴ 1 Kings 18:21; Matthew 7:15-16; Romans 16:17; Ephesians 4:3-5; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18; 2 John 10-11.

In marriage, union without unity is a failure waiting to happen. In the Church, union without unity in the Word of God is living a lie.

The Holy Christian Church is not denominational; it is spiritual. The Holy Christian Church, the Body of Christ, consists solely of believers. It is a fruit of Gospel preaching through which the Lord claims for His own everyone who believes. It is the Lord's will that believers gather in worship and ministry. Such a union of believers assembles not on the basis of faith that cannot be seen, but on the basis of the *confession* of faith. Consequently, within the visible church, there may be some hypocrites in the visible fellowship, such as those who put on airs of being Christian but do not believe in the Lord Jesus. Within the external fellowship of Christian churches, the Lord knows those who are His (2 Timothy 2:19). He will do the sorting on Judgment Day.

The union of Christians where there is agreement in the Word is a beautiful gift of the Spirit and reflects the unity within the Holy Christian Church, the communion of saints. Therefore, the Lord has reasons for instructing that the union of churches or church bodies be based on agreement in all matters of faith and doctrine. Besides the danger of false doctrine to souls (Romans 16:17-18), compromising on matters of faith for the sake of union disrupts the unity that reflects the essence of the Body of Christ. It is the Lord's will that the unity of His Body be reflected on earth within the external fellowship of believers.

While imprisoned in Rome, the Apostle Paul wrote a letter to the believers in Philippi. This congregation was the first in Europe established by the Spirit through Paul's Gospel ministry. The tone of the letter shows that the congregation was very dear to Paul. He encouraged them, as members of the Body of Christ, the Holy Christian Church, to mirror the spirit and mind of the Lord Jesus (Philippians 2:5-8), who is both the Head of the Church and the Saviour. We do not see, "*Fulfil my joy by being likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind*" (2:2), as a rebuke or reprimand, but as an evangelical encouragement. Apparently, word had reached the Apostle about some tension within the congregation that was threatening its unity. Some members were displaying "*selfish ambition or conceit*" (2:3, 4:2). Backsliding Christians also posed a danger (3:17-19). False teachers and supporters of error sow dissension. Even in fellowships where the Word is taught in its truth and purity as the Lord commands and encourages, tensions can sometimes arise over material or temporal issues. Being of one mind and spirit was vital for both the internal life of the congregation and its outward ministry.

Church unity is honest, peaceful, and joyful when there is agreement in doctrine and fellowship within a congregation or church body. What Paul wrote to the Philippians about unity, he also wrote to the Ephesians, urging them to reflect the true unity that exists in the Body of Christ, of which He is the Source, and the Spirit is the power.

In Ephesians 4:1-6, he wrote: *“I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, ² with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, ³ eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ⁴ There is **one** body and **one** Spirit—just as you were called to the **one** hope that belongs to your call— ⁵ **one** Lord, **one** faith, **one** baptism, ⁶ **one** God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.”*

There is not and cannot be division or disunity in the Body of Christ. Paul was not describing what the Ephesians should become, but what they *already were and possessed*. The unity Paul referred to was a description of their status as members of the Church through faith in Christ. He wrote to them (and to us), therefore, to help preserve and maintain this unity, which reflects the identity of Christ-believers within the Holy Christian Church. Both in doctrine and in their relationships, Christ-believers are called to mirror their relationship with Him.

Union or unity? *“Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!”* (Psalm 133:1). While it is pleasant to enjoy unity in marriage and when citizens live together in peace and with a single purpose, the context of the Psalm emphasises *religious unity* among those who are of one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father of all. How blessed is the union of all who have come to the *“until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, ¹⁴ so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. ¹⁵ Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ”* (Ephesians 4:13-15).

Children’s Address:

What makes you sad? I remember going to a funeral, and lots of people were crying. They held tissues to wipe away their tears. Some had been crying so much that their eyes were red. When someone who is close to you dies, it can make you so sad.

Today’s Gospel reading tells of two sisters, Mary and Martha, who were crying because their brother, Lazarus, had died. They had asked Jesus to come and help them, but by the time Jesus got there, Lazarus was already in a tomb. He had been dead for four days. You know what Jesus did? Listen to these words, *“When Jesus saw Mary weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, He was deeply moved in His spirit and greatly troubled. ³⁴ And He said, “Where have you laid him?” They said to Him, “Lord, come and see.” ³⁵ Jesus wept”* (John 11:34-35). Jesus cried. He saw how sad Mary and Martha were, and His heart went out to them. He knows what we’re going through, and He knows how much we hurt.

But then He did something amazing. He called out, “*Lazarus, come out!*” And guess what! Lazarus came back to life again. Incredible! That’s how powerful Jesus is! He is even stronger than death.

Look at the picture of the cross. The cross tells us that even Jesus died. But He also did something else. He came back to life again. In fact, He told one of those sisters, Martha, that He is the Resurrection and the Life. No tomb could hold Him in. Death has no power over Him. He lives forever.



Now, here’s His promise: One day, He will come back. We don’t know when that will be, but when Jesus does come back, everyone will come out of the places where they were buried. He’ll bring everyone back to life again. Those who believe that Jesus forgives us, saves us, and gives us eternal life will go to be with Him forever in heaven. No more people dying. No more tears. No more sadness. Jesus is amazing, isn’t He? *Dear Jesus, I believe you are the Resurrection and the Life. Amen.*

SERVICE TIMES

<p>29 March Palm Sunday</p>	<p>5 April Easter Sunday</p>	<p>12 April 1 Easter</p>
<p>10.00am TMBA HC AELC Service</p> <p>Maundy Thursday Wed 1 April: 7.30pm HC GRN Thurs 2 April: 7.00pm HC MARBURG</p> <p>Good Friday* 8.30am OAK HC 9.00am TMBA LR MS 9.00am GRN LR 10.30am AUB HC 9.00am LOWOOD LR</p>	<p>6.00am TMBA HC Easter Sunrise Service 8.30am OAK LR MS 9.00am GRN LR 10.00am AUB LR MS 9.00am MARBURG HC</p> <p>*please note changes so ALL congregations will have HC over the Easter period</p>	<p>8.30am OAK LR 9.00am TMBA LR 9.00am GRN LR 9.30am AUB LR 9.00am LOWOOD LR MS</p> <p>Pastor is away 6-18 April</p>

Sunday, 29 March		
READINGS: Isaiah 50:4-9a;	Philippians 2:5-11;	John 12:12-19
HYMNS: 441 86 (LH) 347 573 622 921		
Maundy Thursday		
READINGS: Exodus 24:3-11;	Hebrews 9:11-22;	Matthew 26:17-30
HYMNS: 575 617 639 433 625 886		
Good Friday		
READINGS: Isaiah 52:13-53:12; Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9; John 19:17-30		
HYMNS: 448 452 447 (437 531) 554		

ANNOUNCEMENTS

DOWNNS MID-WEEK LENTEN SERVICE:

Wednesday, 25 March, 7.30pm at Bethlehem Toowoomba

HYMNS: 814 918 441

Wednesday, 25 March. 10.00am. Bible Study at Lowood.

Sunday, 29 March. Parish Service and AGM at Toowoomba. Please mark your offering in an envelope marked back to your own congregation, and bring something for a shared lunch.

Wednesday, 1 April, 10.00am. Women's Guild at Bethlehem Toowoomba. Opening Devotion: Fay. Choose a Bible verse from Ruth chapters 1-4. Item of Interest: "B". A birthday card.

Monday, 6 April. 10.00 am. Parish Sunday School Picnic at St Johns Aubigny. All are invited to attend. Could each family please provide a plate to share and also something for dessert? If you would like to bring along any games/puzzles (eg. how many jellybeans in a jar etc) please do!

The Women's Guild is again running an Easter colouring competition for the children. Sunday School-aged children can take home a picture to colour in today. Please bring it to the Easter Monday Picnic at Aubigny!

Sunday, 29 March. Parish AGM at Toowoomba after service.

Verse of the Day

I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live.

John 11:25

WEEKLY READINGS

Sunday, March 22	Ecclesiastes 1-3 Revelation 10	<i>Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation (2017)</i> pp. 93-104, Sixth Commandment Questions 65 - 77
Monday, March 23	Ecclesiastes 4-6 Revelation 11	
Tuesday, March 24	Ecclesiastes 7-9 Revelation 12	
Wednesday, March 25	Ecclesiastes 10-12 Revelation 13	
Thursday, March 26	Numbers 1-2 Revelation 14	
Friday, March 27	Numbers 3-4 Revelation 15	
Saturday, March 28	Numbers 5-6 Revelation 16	

AELC Member Congregations Details

Contact: ddaalc@gmail.com

Congregation	Address	Giving
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

Pastor Peter Ziebell: Ph. 0407583922 Email: paziebell@gmail.com

The Church Office of the AELC: Email: ddaalc@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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