

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

8 March 2026

Third 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

Sin mars living, distorts perceptions, ignites quarrels, and endorses lies! This is the journey that believers navigate—suffering, enduring, and hoping. It is the singular hope in Christ that catapults us through our own difficult wilderness journey. We know that Jesus in justice and truth brings down the gavel on sin and the sinner. But in His definitive care, He refreshes with Word, water, bread, and wine. In these sacred forgiving gifts, Christ is among us and for us.

Hymns (LSB): 419 918 429 746 632 535

Introit: Psalm 95:1-9

¹Oh come, let us sing to the Lord;

let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!

²Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving;

let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!

³For the Lord is a great God,

and a great King above all gods.

⁴In his hand are the depths of the earth;

the heights of the mountains are his also.

⁵The sea is his, for he made it,

and his hands formed the dry land.

⁶Oh come, let us worship and bow down;

let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!

⁷For he is our God,

and we are the people of his pasture,

and the sheep of his hand.

Today, if you hear his voice,

⁸do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah,

as on the day at Massah in the wilderness,

⁹when your fathers put me to the test

and put me to the proof, though they had seen my work.

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:

O God, whose glory it is always to have mercy, be gracious to all who have gone astray from Your ways and bring them again with penitent hearts and steadfast faith to embrace and hold fast the unchangeable truth of Your Word; 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

Exodus 17:1–7

¹All the congregation of the people of Israel moved on from the wilderness of Sin by stages, according to the commandment of the Lord, and camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. ²Therefore the people quarrelled with Moses and said, “Give us water to drink.” And Moses said to them, “Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the Lord?” ³But the people thirsted there for water, and the people grumbled against Moses and said, “Why did you bring us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?” ⁴So Moses cried to the Lord, “What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me.” ⁵And the Lord said to Moses, “Pass on before the people, taking with you some of the elders of Israel, and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. ⁶Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb, and you shall strike the rock, and water shall come out of it, and the people will drink.” And Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. ⁷And he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah, because of the quarrelling of the people of Israel, and because they tested the Lord by saying, “Is the Lord among us or not?”

The Second Reading

Romans 5:1–8

¹Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. ²Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. ³More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, ⁴and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, ⁵and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

⁶For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—⁸but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

The Gospel Reading: John 4:5–30, 39–42

⁵[Jesus] came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. ⁶Jacob’s well was there; so Jesus, wearied as he was from his journey, was sitting beside the well. It was about the sixth hour.

⁷There came a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink.” ⁸(For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.) ⁹The Samaritan woman said to him, “How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?” (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) ¹⁰Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.” ¹¹The woman said to him, “Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? ¹²Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock.”

¹³Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty forever. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” ¹⁵The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water.”

¹⁶Jesus said to her, “Go, call your husband, and come here.” ¹⁷The woman answered him, “I have no husband.” Jesus said to her, “You are right in saying, ‘I have no husband’; ¹⁸for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true.”

¹⁹The woman said to him, “Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. ²⁰Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship.” ²¹Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. ²²You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²³But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him.

²⁴God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.” ²⁵The woman said to him, “I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things.” ²⁶Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am he.”

²⁷Just then his disciples came back. They marvelled that he was talking with a woman, but no one said, “What do you seek?” or, “Why are you talking with her?” ²⁸So the woman left her water jar and went away into town and said to the people, ²⁹“Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?” ³⁰They went out of the town and were coming to him. . . .

³⁹Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, “He told me all that I ever did.” ⁴⁰So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days. ⁴¹And many more believed because of his word. ⁴²They said to the woman, “It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world.”

Sermon

SALVATION AND LIFE THROUGH JESUS CHRIST

Sermon for the 3rd Sunday in Lent, 2026

Romans 5:1-8

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 taken from Romans 5:1-8, our Second Reading read before:

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

Dear friends in Christ,

In the 4th chapter of Romans, Paul described and illustrated the faith and righteousness of God. Now, in chapter 5, he describes the life that *results from faith in Christ*.

Paul takes up the thread of his discussion by naming some of the blessed results that follow from being justified. He does this by picturing the work of God on our behalf, by showing the relationship of believers to God that arises from the atonement of sin and the consequent justification. **“We have been justified by faith,”** Paul writes.

The Apology of the Augsburg Confession, in Article 4, speaking about justification, says how it “*is the chief topic of Christian doctrine - an article which is of special service for the clear, correct understanding of the entire Holy Scriptures and alone shows the way to the unspeakable treasure and right knowledge of Christ and alone opens the door to the entire Bible.*”

The state of being justified has become ours; we have entered it through our faith in Christ. We have peace with God through Jesus Christ. As a result of His death and vicarious work, the enmity that existed between the Father and us *has been taken away*. Peace with God the Father has been acquired and is now the property of men through justification.

This peace which we have with God the Father is based solely upon the reconciliation founded in the atonement of Christ. Through the mediation of Christ, this wonderful peace has been brought about through Him, by which we have “**access by faith into this grace in which we stand.**”

The way to salvation now lies open. Christ Himself has opened this door, which leads directly to grace. Through Him, we now have a standing as Christians. We are justified from sin, *all* our sins are forgiven, and there is no obstruction, nothing standing between God and us. Because of this, we boast on the basis of “**the hope of the glory of God.**” We can therefore see how this hope is indeed *a very precious possession* which leads to a tranquil peace in our lives, which is what we need when we see the world around us! But our lives here are not forever; we have an unspeakably greater joy in sharing in the glories of heaven and of God Himself *in the life to come*.

The glorious prospect of life eternal makes bearable the inevitable crosses and difficulties that come into our lives. These crosses, however, not only become bearable, but in the midst of them, we can still rejoice. We can do so because we know that under the loving care of a good and gracious God, even suffering leads to blessings and positive results in the Christian life. Hence Paul can make the bold claim that we rejoice not only in the hope of future glory “**but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance,⁴ and endurance produces character, and character produces hope,⁵ and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.**”

The afflictions which we may suffer in our present life, all finally result in our benefit, for in these trials *our faith is exercised and approved*. The more severe our trials here on this earth, the more need there is of patient endurance of suffering, of faithfulness to truth and duty.

This endurance produces approval, the state of the mind which has endured the test, as we read from James chapter 1, “*Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love Him*” (v. 12).

During afflictions upon this earth, faith is on trial, being tested. If our faith is of the right kind, we shall emerge purified and strengthened in the hope of the glory of God, and it is a hope that will not make us ashamed. Because its fulfilment is absolutely certain it must bring salvation. David writes in Psalm 22, “*To You they cried and were rescued; in You they trusted and were not put to shame*” (v. 5). God’s Word and all the promises it contains have not failed and never will. The promise of blessing which comes upon the believer on the account of his justification, makes his whole life happy, as he waits for the glory which will be revealed on the great day.

But what is the *basis* of this hope that Christians have?

Paul writes, “**God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.** ⁶ **For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.** ⁷ **For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—** ⁸ **but God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”**

Paul here explains the reason why our hope will not be put to shame. “**God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.**”

The love of God, of which He proved to us by the death of His Son, Jesus Christ, has been, and continues to be, shed abroad in our hearts, to be communicated to us abundantly, which spreads itself abroad through the whole soul, filling us with consciousness and the extreme happiness of His presence and favour.

This has been done “**through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.**” Paul writes to Titus telling him, “(God) *saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to His own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit,* ⁶ *whom He poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Saviour*” (3:5-6). God’s love and the grace He extends to us are in keeping with His merciful nature. Baptism brings new life and spiritual cleansing. God provides this baptism as a means for us to receive His grace through the Holy Spirit, whose testimony we know: **God does indeed love us**. God’s love is our full property in Christ, our Saviour. Because of this, we are absolutely sure and certain of our blessedness. The love of God, resting upon Christ’s vicarious death, is the sufficient and certain foundation of the hope of our future salvation.

Dear friends, Paul explains to us in what respect the love of God is the surety of the Christian's hope, because "**at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.**" While we were still weak, in a condition of inability to do anything good, Christ at the appointed time died for the ungodly people of this earth. On our part, there was nothing. There was not a single thing that we could call favourable in the eyes of God. We were completely worthless in God's eyes. But then God sent His Son to save us. His death on the cross was our Substitute. He died in our stead. John once wrote, "*In this is love, not that we have loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins*" (1 John 4:10). We are saved not by our love for God but by the love of God for us in sending Christ to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Therefore, because of the death and glorious resurrection of Christ, we have the assurance of the continuing love of God. This is the singular, incomparable love of God which exceeds all that we can conceive.

Because of the fact of God's love for us, worthless sinners, how much more certainly shall we now, being justified by the blood of Christ, be spared from the wrath of God through Him. ***Our justification is the guarantee of our deliverance from the wrath to come.*** We were godless, but we have now become righteous and just. We are exactly as God wants us to be because of His wonderful act of pronouncing us just. We are safe against His condemnation.

The hope of eternal salvation, which is the result of our justification, is a certain and definite hope, and one that we should cling to. A hope that fills our hearts, as believers, with a quiet joy that causes us to be confident in our minds that we are indeed justified through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

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

Prayer of the Church for the Third Sunday in Lent

Lord of hosts, Your ancient people worshipped You in Jerusalem, and in Christ You are now worshipped among all nations. Grant us faithful hearts to worship in spirit and truth, that many would come to know You in Your Word and Sacrament.

O God, You led Your ancient people by the hand of Moses and Aaron. Lead us through the wilderness of this world by the hand of faithful pastors, that we would be refreshed by the living water flowing from the stricken side of Christ.

Lord of all, You bestow Your riches on all who call upon You. Bless parents with all wisdom as they teach their children Your ways, that all in the household may confess with their mouths that Jesus is Lord.

Heavenly Father, preserve our nation, and prosper the cause of justice in this land. Guide and grant Your wisdom to all our elected officials. Grant us peace among the nations, and watch over those who protect us in the armed forces of our land. We pray for a quick resolution to the conflict in the Middle East.

O great Physician of body and soul, by Your Word and Holy Spirit comfort all who are in sorrow or need, sickness or adversity. Hold them all in Your almighty hands and bring them consolation. Heal them according to Your gracious will, and give us all grace to accept and bear our crosses with faith in You, that we would always be prepared to depart this life in faith and come to Your heavenly home.

Merciful God, grant us safe haven at Your altar, that we who bear the weight of this world and its sorrows would always long for Your courts and the blessings You have prepared for those who sing Your praise.

Almighty Lord, to You all hearts are open and all sins are known. Strengthen our hearts by Your grace, that we who daily sin much would make confession boldly and then joyfully receive Your precious word of absolution.

These and whatever other things You would have us ask of You, O God, grant us for the sake of Jesus Christ, Your only Son, our Lord and Saviour, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Article: Hope against Hope

Hope is in short supply today, and with this limited commodity have come despair, fear, and deep loneliness — even among Christians. We generally look around for signs that things are improving, thinking this is what gives us hope. So we search for markers — economic, cultural, medical, and perhaps even polls — to tell us that things are better than they seem or better than we can see right now. One of the things surveys look for is how many people have a positive attitude towards the future. I guess if you are in the ruling government of the day and running for re-election, this matters. But is this what Christian hope is? Is our hope as fragile as the shifting sands of our up-and-down world?

We do not pin our hope on improving realities or signs of a better or even happier life. We do not judge hope by such markers. For Christian hope rests on what cannot be seen, what cannot even be known — except by faith. We do not have crystal balls or special sight. We have only the Word and promise of God. But that is enough, more than enough, to sustain hope when all around us things are falling apart. It is all Christians have ever had.

In the coliseum, facing lions, under the persecution of mighty Caesars, without the protection of law, and with the prospect of martyrdom near, Christians endured in hope. They trusted in what their hands could not hold and their eyes could not see. They believed God's promise of a new heaven and a new earth, of a future without tears or sorrow, of white robes that sin could no longer stain, and of a life without any hint of death. It was enough. They endured.

In the emptying cities and amid the stench of death, Christians met the threat of the plague. They had no cure or vaccine, but they had the presence of God and the hope of a better life to come. They endured the struggles, burying the many dead and living in the shadow of their own death. But hope did not disappoint them. They lived in the present, trusting in God's promise of a future beyond imagination. It was enough. They endured. In the terror of wars supposed to end all wars, fighting against tyranny and fascism and watching their brothers fall, Christians endured in hope of a real peace engineered not by diplomacy in meeting rooms or bigger and better weapons, but by a cross planted where nothing lived except hope. They set out to do battle, expecting death to be near and life to be hard, but hope accompanied them. They came with hidden wounds and missing limbs, yet they built families and homes, businesses and communities, and walked in hope where despair once lived. It was enough. They endured.

Now we face the media's barking voices, which only want to report what they think we want to hear. You hardly, if ever, hear a good news story. There is a housing shortage, mortgage rates are rising, and the threat of terrorism is always near. Now, to top it all off, we are being told that fuel prices will rise sharply, and there could even be a shortage due to the war in the Middle East (better stock up on toilet paper!!). Of course, the knock-on effect is that everything will go up in cost. If the cost of living has been biting hard, it will be even harder. People are becoming more fearful of life.

Some of us Christians have even allowed fear and despair to steal our hearts and control our minds, refusing to hope until progress is evident and life is made more comfortable. That is not our hope. Our hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness. Shall we remember that as we sit in our homes behind locked doors? Shall we put our faith to work, or give our faith a day off and leave hope to the world and those who promise all the answers?

Christian hope is different from the hope the world dares. It is not logical, reasonable, rational, or measured. Our hope lies in the shape of a cross, which has become the tree of life for all who believe, and in a hope you cannot see but which will not disappoint you. The time has come for us to turn off the news, step away from the screens, pick up the Word, and feast upon the Lord's Table. There, God plants, tends, and brings to fruition the precious tree called hope. That is why we need to return to the place called home, where God is present in His Word and feeds us at the Table of our Lord. The longer we stay away from

this norm, the more difficult it will be to escape. Hope was enough for Christians in all the troubles and trials of the world in the past. Is it enough for you and for me now?

Hope is not weak or shallow or faint. It is strong and deep and mighty. Abraham surveyed the sand on the shore and the stars in the sky and saw a mighty legacy of faith. Israel saw a mighty army in pursuit, a wall of water on both sides, and a land flowing with milk and honey. A virgin saw God in a promise and the Son of God in her womb and redemption for a whole world. What do you see?

Children's Address:

Imagine what it's like to survive in the desert. What do you think is the most important thing you need? We need water each day to survive; we can die without water. In our First Reading, Moses and the people of Israel are walking through the desert, and they're getting very thirsty. There's no water. But instead of praying to God, asking Him for water, and trusting Him to take care of them,



the people complain. They grumble. They start to think God is going to let them die. But God doesn't. He tells Moses to use his staff to strike a rock. And then God makes water gush out of that rock like a fountain.

A long time later, Jesus came to die for us. And when He died and His body was hanging there on the cross, one of the soldiers, to check if Jesus was really dead, used his spear to stab Jesus in the side. And from the wound in Jesus' side came water and blood. It was amazing, like the rock in the wilderness. The rock was hit with Moses' staff, and water came out. Jesus' side was stabbed with the spear, and water and blood came out.

Where in church do we see or talk about water? Baptism is where water washes our sins away. What about blood? Where in church do we hear about blood? The Lord's Supper is where we are given Jesus' blood to drink to forgive our sins. Remember how water and blood came out of Jesus' side when He was on the cross? It's as if that fountain from Jesus' side pours right into the font and the chalice. This fountain from Jesus forgives our sins and gives us life.

Water from the rock in the desert gave the Israelites life for each day, but they would always get thirsty again and eventually die. In Baptism and the Lord's Supper, Jesus gives us eternal life. We'll live forever!

Dear Jesus, thank You for the water and the blood that forgives our sins and gives us eternal life. Amen.

SERVICE TIMES

15 March 4 Lent	22 March 5 Lent	29 March Palm Sunday
8.30am OAK LR 9.00am TMBA HC Confirmation Service 9.00am GRN LR MS 10.45am AUB HC 9.00am LOWOOD LR	8.30am OAK LR 9.00am TMBA LR 9.00am GRN LR 9.30am AUB LR MS 9.00am MARBURG HC & Bible Study	10.00am TMBA HC AELC Service

Sunday, 15 March		
READINGS: Isaiah 42:14-21; Ephesians 5:8-14; John 9:1-7, 13-17, 34-39		
HYMNS: 436 566 914 (526 619) 537		
TMBA: 436 566 914 689 619 692		
Sunday, 22 March		
READINGS: Ezekiel 37:1-14; Romans 8:1-11; John 11:17-27, 38-53		
HYMNS: 819 430 (tune 62 LH) 687 (608 623) 725		
Sunday, 29 March		
READINGS: Isaiah 50:4-9a; Philippians 2:5-11; John 12:12-19		
HYMNS: 441 86 (LH) 347 573 622 921		

ANNOUNCEMENTS

DOWN'S MID-WEEK LENTEN SERVICE:

Wednesday, 11 March, 7.30pm at St Johns Aubigny.

HYMNS: 431 339 573

This afternoon, Seminary Committee Meeting, 2.00pm at Trinity Oakey.

Saturday, 14 March, 10.00am. CoC/Sem meeting at Bethlehem, Toowoomba. Congregations, please bring any agenda items to the meeting through your rep.

Saturday, March 14th, 6:00pm. Young Adults & Youth (YAY) for **Toowoomba** at Bethlehem Toowoomba. The hall is open from 5:30pm. Please bring your Bible and a plate to share for supper. Any questions, please contact Matthew.

Sunday, 15 March, 1.00pm, for the members of TRINITY MARBURG: A meeting will be held at the church to discuss the reserving of plots in the cemetery. ALL members are asked to attend this meeting.

Saturday, March 21st, 7:00pm. Young Adults & Youth (YAY) for **Aubigny-Oakey-Greenwood** at St Johns Aubigny. The hall is open from 6:30pm. Please bring your Bible and a plate to share for supper. Any questions, please contact Matthew.

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

WEEKLY READINGS

Sunday, March 8	Leviticus 13 Hebrews 10	<i>Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation (2017)</i> pp. 81-84, The Fourth Commandment Questions 54 - 58
Monday, March 9	Leviticus 14 Hebrews 11	
Tuesday, March 10	Leviticus 15-16	
Wednesday, March 11	Leviticus 17-18 Hebrews 12	
Thursday, March 12	Leviticus 19-20 Hebrews 13	
Friday, March 13	Leviticus 21-22 Revelation 1	
Saturday, March 14	Leviticus 23-24 Revelation 2	

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



www.aelc.org.au



youtube.com/@TheAELC



facebook.com/aelc.org.au



instagram.com/aelc.org.au

