

# EASTER SUNRISE SERVICE

“He is not here, for He has risen, as He said. Come, see the place where He lay.”

Matthew 28:6



**Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Toowoomba**  
**5 April 2026**

*Organ voluntary*

*The congregation stands*

## **INVOCATION**

**M:** In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**C: Amen.**

**M:** Alleluia, Christ is risen!

**C: He is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

## **EASTER SUNRISE GOSPEL: John 20:1–18**

<sup>1</sup>Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. <sup>2</sup>So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.” <sup>3</sup>So Peter went out with the other disciple, and they were going toward the tomb. <sup>4</sup>Both of them were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. <sup>5</sup>And stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. <sup>6</sup>Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there, <sup>7</sup>and the face cloth, which had been on Jesus’ head, not lying with the linen cloths but folded up in a place by itself. <sup>8</sup>Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; <sup>9</sup>for as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead. <sup>10</sup>Then the disciples went back to their homes.

<sup>11</sup>But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb. <sup>12</sup>And she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet. <sup>13</sup>They said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?” She said to them, “They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.” <sup>14</sup>Having said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus. <sup>15</sup>Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?” Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.” <sup>16</sup>Jesus said to her, “Mary.” She turned and said to him in Aramaic, “Rabboni!” (which means Teacher). <sup>17</sup>Jesus said to her, “Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’” <sup>18</sup>Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord”—and that he had said these things to her.

**M:** Here ends the Gospel

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

**Almighty God, through Your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, You overcame death and opened to us the gate of everlasting life. We humbly pray that we may live before You in righteousness and purity for ever; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.**

*Sit*

## Hymn 457

*Stand*

### Confession of Sins and Absolution

*LSB 184-185*

**P** Beloved in the Lord! Let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins unto God our Father, asking Him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness. *[Hebrews 10:22]*

*Kneel/Sit*

**P** Our help is in the name of the Lord,

**C** **who made heaven and earth.**

*Psalm 124:8*

**P** I said, I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,

**C** **and You forgave the guilt of my sin.**

*Psalm 32:5*

**P** O almighty God, merciful Father,

**C** **I, a poor, miserable sinner, confess unto You all my sins and iniquities with which I have ever offended You and justly deserved Your temporal and eternal punishment. But I am heartily sorry for them and sincerely repent of them, and I pray You of Your boundless mercy and for the sake of the holy, innocent, bitter sufferings and death of Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to be gracious and merciful to me, a poor, sinful being.**

**P** Upon this your confession, I, by virtue of my office, as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God unto all of you, and in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**C** **Amen.**

*Stand*

## Introit & Glory to the Father

### Psalm 118:15–29

- <sup>15</sup>Glad songs of salvation  
are in the tents of the righteous:  
“The right hand of the Lord does valiantly,  
<sup>16</sup>the right hand of the Lord exalts,  
the right hand of the Lord does valiantly!”
- <sup>17</sup>I shall not die, but I shall live,  
and recount the deeds of the Lord.
- <sup>18</sup>The Lord has disciplined me severely,  
but he has not given me over to death.
- <sup>19</sup>Open to me the gates of righteousness,  
that I may enter through them  
and give thanks to the Lord.
- <sup>20</sup>This is the gate of the Lord;  
the righteous shall enter through it.
- <sup>21</sup>I thank you that you have answered me  
and have become my salvation.
- <sup>22</sup>The stone that the builders rejected  
has become the cornerstone.
- <sup>23</sup>This is the Lord’s doing;  
it is marvellous in our eyes.
- <sup>24</sup>This is the day that the Lord has made;  
let us rejoice and be glad in it.
- <sup>25</sup>Save us, we pray, O Lord!  
O Lord, we pray, give us success!
- <sup>26</sup>Blessèd is he who comes in the name of the Lord!  
We bless you from the house of the Lord.
- <sup>27</sup>The Lord is God,  
and he has made his light to shine upon us.  
Bind the festal sacrifice with cords,  
up to the horns of the altar!
- <sup>28</sup>You are my God, and I will give thanks to you;  
you are my God; I will extol you.
- <sup>29</sup>Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;  
for his steadfast love endures forever!

**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

**Matthew 28:7; Hebrews 2:7; Psalm 8:6**

**P** Christ has risen from the dead.

[God the Father] has crowned him with glory and honour.

He has given him dominion over the works of his hands;  
he has put all things under his feet.

## The Lord Have Mercy (Kyrie)

*Mark 10:47*



**C** Lord, have mer - cy up - on us. Christ, have mer - cy up -



on us. Lord, have mer - cy up - on us.

## Gloria in Excelsis

**P** Glory be to God on high

*Luke 2:14; John 1:29*  
*LSB SETTING 4, 204*



**C** 1 To God on high be glo - ry And peace to all the earth;  
2 To You, O sole-be - got - ten, The Fa - ther's Son, we pray;  
3 For You a - lone are ho - ly; You on - ly are the Lord.



Good-will from God in heav - en Pro - claimed at Je - sus' birth!  
O Lamb of God, our Sav - ior, You take our sins a - way.  
For - ev - er and for - ev - er, Be wor - shiped and a - dored;



We praise and bless You, Fa - ther; Your ho - ly name, we sing—  
Have mer - cy on us, Je - sus; Re - ceive our heart - felt cry,  
You with the Ho - ly Spir - it A - lone are Lord Most High,



Our thanks for Your great glo - ry, Lord God, our heav'n - ly King.  
Where You in pow'r are seat - ed At God's right hand on high—  
In God the Fa - ther's glo - ry. "A - men!" our glad re - ply.

Text: Stephen P. Starke

## Salutation and Collect of the Day

**P** The Lord be with you.

2 Timothy 4:22



**G** And with your spir - it.

**P** Let us pray:

### The Collect

**Almighty God, through Your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, You overcame death and opened to us the gate of everlasting life. We humbly pray that we may live before You in righteousness and purity forever; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

*Sit*

### First Reading

#### Exodus 14:10—15:1

<sup>10</sup>When Pharaoh drew near, the people of Israel lifted up their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them, and they feared greatly. And the people of Israel cried out to the Lord. <sup>11</sup>They said to Moses, “Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us in bringing us out of Egypt? <sup>12</sup>Is not this what we said to you in Egypt, ‘Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians’? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness.” <sup>13</sup>And Moses said to the people, “Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. <sup>14</sup>The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to be silent.”

<sup>15</sup>The Lord said to Moses, “Why do you cry to me? Tell the people of Israel to go forward. <sup>16</sup>Lift up your staff, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the people of Israel may go through the sea on dry ground. <sup>17</sup>And I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they shall go in after them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host, his chariots, and his horsemen. <sup>18</sup>And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I have gotten glory over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen.”

<sup>19</sup>Then the angel of God who was going before the host of Israel moved and went behind them, and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them, <sup>20</sup>coming between the host of Egypt and the host of Israel. And there was the cloud and the darkness. And it lit up the night without one coming near the other all night.

<sup>21</sup>Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the Lord drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. <sup>22</sup>And the people of Israel went into the midst of the sea on dry ground, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. <sup>23</sup>The Egyptians pursued and went in after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. <sup>24</sup>And in the morning watch the Lord in the pillar of fire and of cloud looked down on the Egyptian forces and threw the Egyptian forces into a panic, <sup>25</sup>clogging their chariot wheels so that they drove heavily. And the Egyptians said, "Let us flee from before Israel, for the Lord fights for them against the Egyptians."

<sup>26</sup>Then the Lord said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea, that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen." <sup>27</sup>So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to its normal course when the morning appeared. And as the Egyptians fled into it, the Lord threw the Egyptians into the midst of the sea. <sup>28</sup>The waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen; of all the host of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea, not one of them remained. <sup>29</sup>But the people of Israel walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.

<sup>30</sup>Thus the Lord saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. <sup>31</sup>Israel saw the great power that the Lord used against the Egyptians, so the people feared the Lord, and they believed in the Lord and in his servant Moses.

<sup>1</sup>Then Moses and the people of Israel sang this song to the Lord, saying,  
"I will sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously;  
the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea."

**P** This is the Word of the Lord.

**C** Thanks be to God.

## Second Reading

### 1 Corinthians 15:1–11

<sup>1</sup>Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, <sup>2</sup>and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.

<sup>3</sup>For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, <sup>4</sup>that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, <sup>5</sup>and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. <sup>6</sup>Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have

fallen asleep. <sup>7</sup>Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. <sup>8</sup>Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. <sup>9</sup>For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. <sup>10</sup>But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. <sup>11</sup>Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.

**P** This is the Word of the Lord.

**C** Thanks be to God.

*Stand*

### 488 He Is Arisen! Glorious Word

He is a - ris - en! Glo - rious Word! Now rec - on - ciled  
 is God, my Lord; The gates of heav'n are o - pen.  
 My Je - sus did tri - um - phant die, And Sa - tan's ar -  
 rows bro - ken lie, De - stroyed hell's fierc - est weap - on.  
 O hear what cheer! Christ vic - to - rious, Ris - ing glo - rious,  
 Life is giv - ing. He was dead but now is liv - ing!

Text: Birgitte Katerine Boye, 1742-1824; tr. George A. T. Rygh, 1860-1942, alt.  
 Tune: Philipp Nicolai, 1556-1608  
 Text and tune: Public domain

## Nicene Creed

**☩** I believe in one God,  
the Father Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth  
and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ,  
the only-begotten Son of God,  
begotten of His Father before all worlds,  
God of God, Light of Light,  
very God of very God,  
begotten, not made,  
being of one substance with the Father,  
by whom all things were made;  
who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven  
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary  
and was made man;  
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.  
He suffered and was buried.  
And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures  
and ascended into heaven  
and sits at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again with glory to judge the living and the dead,  
whose kingdom will have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the Lord and giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
who together with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified,  
who spoke by the prophets.

And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church,  
I acknowledge one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins,  
and I look for the resurrection of the dead  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

*Christian*: the ancient text reads "catholic," meaning the whole Church as it confesses the wholeness of Christian doctrine.

Hymn 467

Sermon (*the congregation stands to hear the text and then sits*)

**HE HAS RISEN**  
**Sermon for Easter Sunday, 2026**  
**John 20:1-18**

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 John 20:1-18, our Gospel reading read before:

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

Dear friends in Christ,

On the morning of Christ's resurrection, His disciples were confronted with a strange set of facts, things they were not at all expecting to find.

A group of women, also disciples of Jesus, had gone out to the tomb where He had been laid. They knew its location because they had watched as Jesus' lifeless body was laid to rest in the Garden, in Joseph's new tomb, not far from the place of the crucifixion. When they went to the tomb, they expected to find it with a large stone blocking the entrance. However, what they found was an open tomb. *What did this mean?*

They did not immediately have the answer, but then, when they did, the answer that first occurred to one of them *was wrong*. Only when they remembered the Scriptures were they able to draw the right conclusion from the strange and unexpected set of facts that confronted them that morning.

Each Easter, as we hear the familiar story, we follow those first disciples through that process of discovery, past the false and misleading conclusions, to the amazing and joyous truth that the empty tomb means that Christ has risen. We do this again today, so that we may see the glorious truth of the resurrection of our Saviour Jesus Christ anew and see clearly what it means for us.

So, first, we consider what the empty tomb *does not mean*, for, as we have said, some false conclusions were drawn from early reports of it.

John mentions Mary Magdalene. Mary was from the village of Magdala and had previously been accompanying and supporting Jesus as He travelled through the towns and villages proclaiming the Good News. We are told that Mary had been freed from seven demons that had afflicted her.<sup>1</sup> Although John mentions only Mary Magdalene, we know from the other gospels that others were with her.

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<sup>1</sup> Luke 8:1-2

Anyway, John describes how **“on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb.<sup>2</sup> So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him.”**”

Mary running to Peter and John (the disciple whom Jesus loved) was a sign of distress, and the conclusion she drew about the now-open tomb was *partly true* and *partly false*.

Mary correctly assumed that the *body of Jesus was gone*. She incorrectly assumed that *someone must have removed the body and taken it somewhere else*. Full of anxiety and sadness, Mary did not know that Jesus had risen from the dead. Her happiness still depended on His visible presence. If she couldn't see Jesus, then she imagined that she was *deprived of Him*.

Yet we should not be *overly harsh* on Mary and her initial mistaken conclusions about the empty tomb. She is a good example to us in her love and devotion to Jesus, which prompted her to go to His tomb. She **“came to the tomb early, while it was still dark,”** and arrived despite knowing it could bring her more sorrow. Although that journey to the tomb initially filled her with anxiety and fear, it ultimately led her to the risen Christ and to joy in Him.

Mary didn't recognise Jesus out there in the Garden when He physically appeared before her, and maybe we wonder why. John doesn't tell us, other than that she thought He was the gardener who kept up the gravesite. After her encounter with the two angels sitting in the tomb, **“she turned around and saw Jesus standing, but she did know that it was Jesus.”** We also know that after the resurrection others of Jesus' followers didn't recognise Jesus immediately either.<sup>2</sup> Continuing, “<sup>15</sup> **Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?” Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.”** <sup>16</sup> **Jesus said to her, “Mary.” She turned and said to him in Aramaic, “Rabboni!” (which means Teacher).** <sup>17</sup> **Jesus said to her, “Do not cling to me...”** Mary's emotions bounced in a moment from rock bottom to heavenly heights as she realised who was talking to her. She not only found Jesus' body as she wished, but she also had Jesus *alive* with her.

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<sup>2</sup> John 21:4; Matthew 28:17; Luke 24:16, 37

We can imagine her wanting to take hold of Jesus and embrace Him in welcome, anticipating a return to the way things were. She would scarcely want to let Him go!

We should also not fail to come to the cross and grave of Christ, to meditate on His death. We should not be afraid to face the cross, which means *facing our own sin and guilt*. Only through the cross and repentance can we come to the resurrection, where we shall find forgiveness and peace.

The empty tomb is not a cause for anxiety or fear, but rather for excitement and amazement. We see this in the conduct of Peter and John when they heard Mary Magdalene's report. They immediately headed for the tomb to see for themselves. They did not walk but ran in a virtual footrace, in which John outran Peter. The news of the empty tomb was the first light of day to break the gloom of the crucifixion and burial of Jesus. It stirred the disciples to excitement and activity. Stooping to look inside the empty tomb, John **“saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. <sup>6</sup> Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there, <sup>7</sup> and the face cloth, which had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen cloths but folded up in a place by itself.”**

We can imagine their amazement, not only because of what was not there, but also because of what was. They were amazed at what they *did not see* and at what they *did see*. They did not see the body of Christ, but they saw the linen burial cloths lying there. What could all this mean?

Even today, when we approach the empty tomb already understanding its significance, *we should still do so with a sense of wonder and awe*, for in Christ's empty tomb, we encounter something extraordinary, something truly miraculous. It is the opposite of what we usually see and experience: that people die and are buried. The tombs and graves of this world are not empty; they are full, for in Adam *all die*.<sup>3</sup> We are all sinners like our father Adam, and so we shall die as he did, but in Christ's empty tomb, we have the promise of resurrection and eternal life.

When we understand the meaning of the empty tomb, we are brought from fear and anxiety, from mere excitement and amazement to joy and peace. The evangelist John is the first to realise that Jesus has risen. He is the reporter here,

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<sup>3</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:22

and he tells us when the light of the resurrection first dawned on him. It was when he went into the tomb and saw that the body of Jesus was not there — only the linen cloths were there, peacefully folded in silent testimony of the body that had lately occupied them. John tells us that it was then that he **“went in, and he saw, and believed.”** Suddenly, it hit him: *“Jesus has risen from the dead.”* This was for John the beginning of joy and peace.

But why did the disciples not believe *immediately* upon seeing the empty tomb? Why did it not occur to them *immediately* that Jesus had risen from the dead? John here gives the reason: **“for as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead.”**

Notice that he does not say that it was because Jesus *had not yet appeared to them.*

The faith of the disciples in the resurrection of Christ was not to be based first of all upon the appearances of Christ but on the Old Testament Scriptures in which the resurrection was prophesied. Christ’s resurrection had been prophesied in the Old Testament. For example, in Psalm 16, Jesus speaks through the prophet David, saying, *“For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see decay”* (16:10).

When Christ appeared to His disciples after His resurrection, He directed them to the Scriptures and explained them to them. Luke records that after His resurrection, He said to them, *“‘These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.’ And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. Then He said to them, ‘Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day’”* (Luke 24:44-46). Their faith was to rest upon the Word of the living God, making it a pattern for us so that *even though we have not seen, we still believe that Christ has risen from the dead.*

Faith in the resurrection of Christ is also for us the start of joy and peace. When we believe that Jesus rose from the dead on the third day after being crucified, we feel joy because we know He has defeated death. He was put to death as the sacrifice for our sins. He was raised to confirm that His sacrifice was accepted by the Father, so we are now justified. Instead of death and the grave, we have a confident hope of eternal life. Believing that Jesus arose from the dead gives us peace, knowing that all our sins are fully forgiven.

We can live without fear of death and judgement. The empty tomb proves that our Saviour Jesus Christ has risen. He is the Resurrection and the Life, and anyone who lives and believes in Him will never die. He is risen, He is risen indeed! Amen.

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

## Hymn & Offering

### Hymn 475

*Stand*

### Offertory

*LSB 192  
Psalm 51:10-12*



Cre-ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re -  
new a right spir - it with - in me. Cast me not a -  
way from Your pres - ence, and take not Your Ho - ly Spir - it  
from me. Re - store un - to me the joy of Your sal - va -  
tion, and up - hold me with Your free spir - it. A - men.

### Prayer of the Church

[1 Timothy 2:1-4]

#### PRAYER FOR EASTER

Lord God, on this glorious day, fill Your people with a holy fear at the resurrection of Your Son, that we would tremble no longer before the grave but rejoice and live in the truth of Your power to save.

Heavenly Father, as You once chose apostles to proclaim the resurrection, so open the mouths of Your pastors and people to declare His praises to all who will hear.

O Lord, lead Your people in Your steadfast love, and guide them in strength to Your holy abode. Sanctify our homes. Be the companion of those who live alone. Make our households places where Your wisdom and grace are found.

Your right hand, O Lord, is glorious in power. Grant that all in authority would govern according to Your will, maintaining order and curbing evil, that we may live in peace.

Merciful God, have mercy on the sick and those in any need. Let the dawning light of the new creation in Christ sustain them in faith. In accord with Your will, grant them renewed health — a foretaste of their eternal healing in Him.

Almighty God, give us joy in Your Son's great victory feast as He shares it with us whenever we celebrate His Holy Supper. In the eating of His true body and the drinking of His precious blood in faith, overcome our sin by His forgiveness and swallow up our death in His life, that we may be glad and rejoice in His salvation.

We praise Your holy name, O Lord, for all Your servants who have departed this life in faith. We pray that You will not abandon us to Sheol but that, when we awake in the resurrection of all flesh, Your presence will give us joy.

O Lord, heavenly Father, You have not let Your Holy One see corruption, but have raised Him in triumph from the dead, never to die again. Therefore, our hearts are glad, and we rejoice, for our flesh also dwells securely. Since You have set Him at Your right hand, lead us to set His resurrection before us at all times, that His path of life and the fullness of joy in His presence may be known to us, until we come also to the eternal pleasures at His right hand, forevermore; for You, O Father, with the Son and the Holy Spirit are one God, now and forever. Amen.

## **Hymn 560**

*Stand*

## Preface

LSB 194  
2 Timothy 4:22



**P** The Lord be with you.



**C** And with Your spir - it.

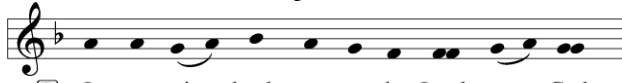


**P** Lift up your hearts.

[Colossians 3:1]



**C** We lift them up un - to the Lord.



**P** Let us give thanks un - to the Lord, our God.

[Psalm 136]



**C** It is meet and right so to do.

## Proper Preface

**P** It is truly meet, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, ..... Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:

## Sanctus

LSB 195  
Isaiah 6:3; Matthew 21:9



**C** Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord God of Sab - a - oth;



heav'n and earth are full of Your glo - ry. Ho - san - na,

ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is He,  
 bless - ed is He, bless - ed is He that com - eth in the name of the Lord.  
 Ho - san - na, ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.

**Lord's Prayer** (*prayed together*)

*LSB 196  
 Matthew 6:9-13*

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

**The Words of Our Lord**

*LSB 197  
 Matthew 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-25*

**P** Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

## Pax Domini

LSB 197  
John 20:19

Two staves of musical notation in G major, 4/4 time. The first staff contains the melody for the first line of text, and the second staff contains the melody for the second line. The lyrics are: [P] The peace of the Lord be with you al - ways. [G] A - men.

## The Lamb of God (Agnus Dei)

LSB 198  
John 1:29

Five staves of musical notation in G major, 4/4 time. The lyrics are: O Christ, the Lamb of God, that tak - est a-way the sin of the world, have mer - cy up - on us. O Christ, the Lamb of God, that tak - est a-way the sin of the world, have mer - cy up - on us. O Christ, the Lamb of God, that tak - est a-way the sin of the world, grant us Your peace. A - men.

## The Distribution

### *Distribution Hymn 710*

The Lord's Supper has always been seen as a sign of unity between those who commune together at the Lord's Table (1 Cor. 10:17). When Christians partake of the Lord's Supper in a church body that has a confession of faith, they thereby declare that they believe that **they are one in faith with those who commune with them**. We ask visitors who are communicant members in a church not in fellowship with this congregation, or are unfamiliar with the AELC Statement of Faith **to refrain from communing today**. However, you are welcome to come forward for a blessing. Please show this by crossing your arms across your chest when you come to the communion rail.

After the Distribution, we stand

## Nunc Dimittis

LSB 211 Luke 2:29-32

1 O Lord, now let Your ser - vant De -  
2 All glo - ry to the Fa - ther, All  
part in heav'n - ly peace, For I have seen the  
glo - ry to the Son, All glo - ry to the  
glo - ry Of Your re - deem - ing grace:  
Spir - it, For - ev - er Three in One;  
A light to lead the Gen - tiles Un -  
For as in the be - gin - ning, Is  
to Your ho - ly hill, The glo - ry of Your  
now, shall ev - er be, God's tri - une name re -  
peo - ple, Your cho - sen Is - ra - el.  
sound - ing Through all e - ter - ni - ty.

## Thanksgiving

LSB 200 Psalm 107:1

**P** O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good,  
**C** and His mercy endures for - ev - er.

## Post-Communion Collect

**P** Let us pray.

We give thanks to You, almighty God, that You have refreshed us through this salutary gift and we implore You that of Your mercy You would strengthen us through the same in faith toward You and in fervent love toward one another; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.



**C** A - men.

## Salutation

*LSB 201*

*Timothy 4:22*

2



**P** The Lord be with you.

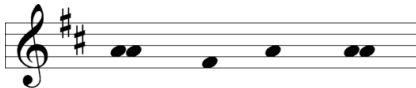


**C** And with Your spir - it.

## Benedicamus

*LSB 202*

*[Psalm 103:1]*



**P** Bless we the Lord.



**C** Thanks be to God.

## Benediction

*LSB 202*

*Numbers 6:24-26*

**P** The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious unto you.

The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.



**C** A-men, a-men, a - men.

*Sit*

**Hymn 484**

## Acknowledgments

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## Article: The Empty Tomb and the Resurrection

Written by Matthew Sippel

The belief in the resurrection – that Jesus Christ rose from the dead – is central to Christianity. If this belief were wrong, the entire Christian religion is false, and as a result then, your faith is in vain (1 Corinthians 15:14). If Christ was not raised from death, then you are still in your sins. How? *By God raising Jesus from the dead, He showed that sin and death were truly defeated, because by Jesus' being raised, God showed that Jesus' sacrifice for your sins was acceptable and that the full price had been paid.* Jesus Christ's resurrection proved to all that Jesus Christ's life and death was enough to cover every single one of your sins. God's wrath against your sin is satisfied. Not only this, but Jesus' resurrection proved that He was the divine Son of God (and not just a false teacher claiming to be the Jewish messiah), for by God raising Jesus, God vindicated Jesus for you, proving that what Jesus claimed was true, that He was the Saviour, the Christ-Messiah, the one who saves you from your sins (Matthew 1:21). If Jesus was not raised, then Jesus was a false teacher. But Jesus is raised, and you now have a confident hope!

Many atheists, agnostics, and other religions reject the resurrection of Jesus Christ. They claim that someone raising from the dead simply does not happen, because people don't rise from the dead. While it is certainly true that no one usually rises from the dead, because people are simply dead, the evidence shows that Jesus truly did rise from the dead. People who *outright reject miracles* – and Jesus rising from the dead is such a miracle – will never believe Jesus rose from the dead, for they reject any evidence for the resurrection before they even examine it. Yet, as a Christian, you have a confident hope, for because of Jesus' resurrection from the dead, you know that you have the forgiveness of sins and that it has been won by the death of Christ, and proved – vindicated – by His resurrection (Hebrews 11:1). In spite of all the arguments used by those who reject the resurrection, you as a Christians should be reminded that every 'argument' against the resurrection fails, and that your confident hope in the resurrection of Christ remains.

**Argument #1: The “Swoon” or “Coma” Theory.** Because of the historicity of Jesus – that he truly lived – and the evidence in favour of Christ's resurrection, some sceptics try to deny the resurrection of Jesus by claiming that Jesus did not actually **die** on the cross but simply fell into a deep sleep or a coma, and then, he only walked

out of the tomb three days later. This is ridiculous, for the Romans knew how to kill people; and, no one survives crucifixion. On a cross, one dies by asphyxiation: you cannot breathe. Your arms nailed to the side make it harder to breathe, and eventually, you become too tired and run out of strength to keep yourself up to breathe. On a cross, you die; no one survives. Not only this, but the Romans ensured every person going through crucifixion was dead, and they found Jesus dead (John 19:33). Therefore, you can be beyond confident that Jesus died on the cross.

**Argument #2: The “Theft” Theory.** Other sceptics claim that Jesus’ body was stolen from the tomb, by either the Jews, the Romans, a grave robber, or the disciples. It is firstly important to remember that the Jewish chief priests, the Pharisees, the Roman soldiers, the women, and the disciples all knew which tomb Jesus was in, and the Roman soldiers guarded this tomb (Matthew 27:62-66; Mark 15:47, Luke 23:55). In Roman Military Law, being assigned to guard a tomb, and failing to do so meant you could have faced execution, especially if you were negligent or asleep. Sceptics believe that Jesus’ body was stolen from the tomb, either by the Jews, the Romans, a grave robber, or the disciples. This is simply wrong because: **1)** If the Jews had stolen the body, then when the disciple’s claimed Jesus was risen, they could have shown the body and said, “*No he is dead*” and Christianity would have fallen apart. The Jews had no intention of stealing the body, because they wanted to make sure the body was in the tomb (Matthew 27:62-66); **2)** If the Romans had stolen the body, they also would have simply shown the body, because Rome did not want uprisings of any kind against their authority, and showing Jesus’ dead body would have stopped this growing movement instantly. Both the Romans and the Jews both persecuted the early Christians, and both groups wanted Jesus’ body to remain in the tomb, which is why they posted guards to the tomb (Matthew 27:62-66). For this reason, this prevents either **3)** a grave robber or **4)** the disciples stealing the body, because the Roman soldiers were guarding the tomb.

**Argument #3: The “Hallucination” Theory.** This theory suggests that Jesus appearing to the 11 disciples (John 20:26) and to 500 people at once (1 Corinthians 15:6) was simply a hallucination experienced by all of them. However, this is obviously ridiculous because two people do not hallucinate the same thing, let alone 7, 11, or 500. Even if all these people were genuinely hallucinating, it would only take one look in the tomb to find Jesus’ dead body and prove he was not risen. Therefore, this theory – concocted by sceptics – is also false.

**Argument #4: The “Mistaken Identity” or “Twin” Theory.** This theory claims that the disciples and followers of Jesus mistook another person for Jesus, suggesting that Jesus may have had a secret twin who now claimed to be Him after His death.

However, there are two main issues with this theory: **1)** The disciples lived with Jesus for over three years, so they would absolutely know if the person claiming to be Jesus was someone else, especially if that person had different mannerisms and ways of speaking; and **2)** All it would take is a quick look in the tomb to see Jesus' dead body, proving He was not risen and that the person claiming to be Jesus was an imposter.

**Argument #5: The “Lettuce” or “Gardener” Theory.** This theory suggests that a gardener moved Jesus' body to a different tomb because he had planted a new garden and was annoyed that people walked over it. However, this theory is false because everyone knew which tomb Jesus was placed in, and they saw the stone being rolled in front of the tomb to seal it on Friday (Mark 15:46-7). Moreover, it is illogical because more people would have walked over his garden if that were true. This theory lacks any historical support and was only created by sceptics attempting to disprove the resurrection of Jesus.

#### **Argument #6: The “Fraud” Theory**

The most common theory is the “**fraud**” theory, which says that the disciples just lied and said Jesus rose from the dead. But this theory is also ridiculous because: (1) This theory claims that the disciples lied and then willingly got tortured, imprisoned, abused and ultimately were killed for a lie, which simply does not happen, and that none of the disciples ever recanted and took back what they said which they would have known to be a lie if they were making it all up, and (2) This theory relies on the fact that the tomb was empty but with no explanation as to why, in spite of the guards guarding it, and if the disciples were making the entire story up, all the Jews or Romans would have to do was show Jesus' dead body in the tomb and the entire movement would have stopped. This theory is also false.

All these theories show that there is no likely explanation given for why the tomb remained empty. Therefore, you can also say that it is a fact that the tomb was empty; and this fact changes everything. The most plausible remaining option is that Jesus did, in fact, rise from the dead, just as the New Testament says. Yes, you yourself know that people don't rise from the dead, but this is what you believe happened based on the evidence. This is a Christian's hope, this is your hope, that Jesus Christ did indeed rise from the dead. Believing that Jesus Christ did rise from the dead is a belief, but it is a confident belief by which everything in the world and in your life revolves around: Jesus Christ rose from the dead. And you now have eternal life! Praise be to God for this good news!

## Children's Address:

**Alleluia! Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia! Happy Easter, kids!**

Today is a happy day, isn't it! But have you ever been outside when it got really dark and you saw lightning, heard thunder, and rain and hail came down? Were you happy? Afraid? What could you use to keep from getting soaking wet? Well, a raincoat would help, and so would an umbrella and a flashlight. But what if the wind was really blowing, almost knocking you over, and the hail was really big? What could you do? How about finding a safe place to shelter from the storm? We'd call that place a "refuge."

In Psalm 16, we hear about King David facing danger. What did he do? Where did he go for refuge? He ran to God. He prayed, "Preserve me [keep me safe], O God, for in You I take refuge" (Ps 16:1). David trusted that God would protect him and be his refuge whenever trouble came. He believed that God was with him.

Have you ever been so scared that you started to shake? King David said that because God was at his right hand, right next to him, he would not be shaken (16:8).

God promises to be with us always, our refuge, no matter what storms or troubles we face. God loves us very much. We know that because He sent His Son, Jesus, to be put to death to take the punishment for our sins. And now on Easter, Jesus came back to life. He promises that because He rose from the grave, we, too, shall live even after we die.

King David believed that God wouldn't leave him dead but would at the end of the world bring his body back to life and take him to heaven, where there would be no more fear, crying, sickness, pain, sin, storms, darkness, or death. There will be joy and pleasures forever (16:11).

Until Jesus takes us to heaven, He promises that because He's alive again, He'll be with us always. And when Jesus is with us, all will be well. When we're scared and alone, there's always one safe place we can go: Jesus, our Refuge. He invites us to call on Him as David did when we're afraid, and He'll be there to help us. So today we can say, "Happy Easter," because Jesus' resurrection guarantees He'll never leave us, He's always with us, and one day we'll be with Him forever in heaven.

*Thank You Jesus for dying and rising for me. I know that You are always with me, and I look forward to the day when I shall see You face to face and rejoice forever in Your presence! Amen.*



## SERVICE TIMES

12 April 2 Easter	19 April 3 Easter	26 April 4 Easter (Good Shepherd Sunday)
8.30am OAK LR 9.00am TMBA LR 9.00am GRN LR 9.30am AUB LR 9.00am LOWOOD LR MS  Pastor is away 6-18 April	8.30am OAK HC 9.00am TMBA LR 9.30am AUB LR 10.15am GRN HC (Baptism) 9.00am MARBURG LR	8.30am OAK LR 9.00am TMBA HC 9.00am GRN LR 10.45am AUB HC 9.00am LOWOOD LR

Sunday, 2 Easter		
READINGS: Acts 5:29-42;	1 Peter 1:3-9;	John 20:19-31
HYMNS: 818 470 553 527		
Sunday, 3 Easter		
READINGS: Acts 2:14a, 36-41;	1 Peter 1:17-25;	Luke 24:13-35
HYMNS: 352 482 578 (570 623) 488		
GRN: 592 482 578 570 623 488		

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Tomorrow, 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!

**Friday, April 10, 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.

\*Please note once off change of day to Friday instead of Saturday

**Saturday, 11 April, 1.00pm.** Fellowship afternoon at Bethlehem Toowoomba. All are welcome to attend. Please bring something for a shared afternoon tea.

## WEEKLY READINGS

<b>Sunday, April 5</b>	Numbers 26-28 Matthew 2	<i>Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation (2017)</i> pp. 110 - 114, Eighth Commandment Questions 83 - 87
<b>Monday, April 6</b>	Numbers 29-31 Matthew 3	
<b>Tuesday, April 7</b>	Numbers 32-34 Matthew 4	
<b>Wednesday, April 8</b>	Numbers 35-36 Matthew 5	
<b>Thursday, April 9</b>	Jonah 1-4	
<b>Friday, April 10</b>	1 Kings 1-2 Matthew 6	
<b>Saturday, April 11</b>	1 Kings 3-5	

### AELC Member Congregations Details

Contact: [ddaalc@gmail.com](mailto:ddaalc@gmail.com)

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

Pastor Peter Ziebell: Ph. 0407583922 Email: [paziebell@gmail.com](mailto:paziebell@gmail.com)

The Church Office of the AELC: Email: [ddaalc@gmail.com](mailto: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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