

DARLING DOWNS PARISH OF THE AELC
TRINITY OAKEY, ST PAUL'S GREENWOOD, ST JOHN'S AUBIGNY,
BETHLEHEM TOOWOOMBA

21 May 2017
Bulletin for 6 Easter

HYMNS: 420 322 874 828

INTROIT: Bless our God, you peoples, and cause the sound of His praise to be heard!

He is keeping our souls among the living, and has not allowed our feet to slide.

For You have tested us, O God. You have refined us as silver is refined.

You have brought us into the net. You have laid hardship on our backs.

You have let men ride over our heads. We have gone through fire and through water. Nevertheless, You have brought us out to abundance.

I shall go into Your temple with burnt offerings. I shall fulfil to You my vows, which my lips promised and my mouth spoke when I was in trouble.

I shall sacrifice fat animals to You with the sacrificial smoke of rams. I shall prepare bulls and goats.

Come and listen, all you who fear God, that I may declare what He has done for my soul!

I cried to Him with my mouth, and my tongue has given high praise.

If I had been aware of injustice in my heart, the Lord would not have listened, but God has certainly heard me. He has paid attention to the sound of my prayer.

Blessed be God, who has not rejected my prayer, or turned His mercy away from me!

Psalm 66:8-20

COLLECT: O God, the giver of all that is good, by Your holy inspiration grant we may think those things that are right and by Your merciful guiding accomplish them; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

READINGS: Acts 17:16-31 "God did this so that men would seek Him."

1 Peter 3:13-22 The water of Baptism saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

John 14:15-21 "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments."

SERMON: 1 Peter 3:13-22 The hope we have as baptised children of God

Until you get the answer you want. . . studying the ordination of women in the Lutheran Church in Australia¹

I love the scene in the movie *Moonstruck* in which the character played by Olympia Dukakis keeps asking her question until she gets the answer she thinks is correct. In her case the question is why men chase women (personal since her husband is having an affair). Her almost son-in-law finally blurts out "Because they are afraid of death!" "That's it!" she insists. Her almost son-in-law is not so sure but she is. It is the one answer she thought correct and she had waited for someone finally to confirm it.

We do exactly the same thing in so many different ways. Children ask the same question to both parents in search for different answers, one of which will be the one they want to hear. It happens in politics and it happens in church. We study things until end up with the conclusions that confirm what we entered the study to find. In other words, we are less interested in the fruits of our study and where it might lead that confirming the presupposition with which we began this study. We study ourselves into the answers we want.

Conservative Christians are usually accused of doing this. Because we give weight to tradition, we study things with a view toward maintaining the position of Scripture and tradition and it takes a great deal to convince us that we got Scripture wrong or that tradition erred. The masters of the idea of studying something until you get the answer you want, however, are on the other side. Those in favor of the ordination of women study and study and study until they find something that supports their initial position in favor of the ordination of women. Those in favor of same sex marriage keep reviewing the old passages and perspectives of the Judeo-Christian tradition until they come up with a different way of reading those passages that will justify their own acceptance of the GLBTQ agenda. In my own Missouriian circles, we have studied close(d) communion in this way, "lay" ministry, deacons doing Word and Sacrament ministry, and a host of other hot button issues -- usually looking for a way to calm things down if not settle them but few minds seem to be changed.

In the Lutheran Church in Australia, the issue of women's ordination (once settled before the merger that created that church body) has now become a hot button issue again and, sure enough, it is being studied and restudied in the pursuit of a different answer than the one settled on when that church body began. In other words, the goal of the study is not to come

¹ Taken from <http://pastoralmeanderings.blogspot.com.au/2017/05/until-you-get-answer-you-want-studying.html?m=1>. Authored by Pastor Peters, an LCMS pastor.

to consensus but to find enough doubts and questions about the current position and enough support for changing to give cover to those who are intent upon foisting this upon the Lutheran Church in Australia.

In 1989 the LCA CTICR (Commission on Theology and Inter-Church Relations) established a subcommittee to study the issue of women's ordination. The deck was stacked already then. Among the five members, only one upheld the teaching of Scripture and the church for the ordination of men only. The study ended as so many designed for changing doctrine -- it was neither pro or anti the ordination of women but began the slide by suggesting that it was not such a big deal, perhaps not even church dividing but the arguments for the ordination of women were now fully introduced into that church body.

It was followed later a more popular study booklet for the church as a whole and it was, of course, written by a proponent of women's ordination. In the year 2000, the first official vote took place and it did not prevail (not because there was not support for the ordination of women but because the threshold to make the change was high -- a 2/3 majority).

While that might have signaled defeat, instead it only heralded a call for more -- you guessed it -- study. Members of the CTICR went on the road throughout Australia holding seminars in every District -- under the guise of information, to be sure, but by failing to offer an opinion, the door was opened to considering the move to ordain women as a legitimate one.

So another vote came and went without the 2/3 majority but with the advance of the cause for the ordination of women simply by the fact that the voting tally narrowed considerably and encouraged those who believed that with more study (really an agenda pro the ordination of women), the next vote might well give the necessary majority approval to the introduction to a practice already settled when the church began life.

A third vote taken last year -- encouraged by prayers that the LCA be led into the truth of the matter by the Holy Spirit -- still ended up shy. So, again, you guessed it. Another study was begun with even more overt direction to support the change and ordain women as pastors. Another vote will be taken next year and another study booklet will try to prevent the Holy Spirit from coming up a few votes shy again. In other words, the LCA must study this issue until they get it right (that is, until they change enough minds to support rejecting the position of Scripture and tradition).

It is happening in Australia among Lutherans but it happens everywhere. The position of the enlightened is that enlightenment (generally heresy or at least diversion from Scripture and tradition) will come after study (study that masquerades as neutral but is, in reality, the most potent arguments in favor of the change that they changers can make!).

So the change moves from being wrong to not so clearly wrong to perhaps not even forbidden to it could be acceptable, to perhaps good to it must be right, god-pleasing, and we have no choice but to approve it. . . and the Spirit must be throwing his wings up in disgust!

Welcome to all with us today! May God bless our worship of Him by His serving of us!

Pastor Peter Ziebell, Phone 46912276, or 0407583922.

Email him at paziebell@gmail.com

Weekly sermons and bulletins are available at www.aelc.org.au.

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

COMING SERVICES

25 May Ascension Day	28 May 7 Easter	4 June Pentecost
THURSDAY		
7.30pm OAK HC	8.30am OAK HC 8.30am TMBA LR 9.30am AUB LR 10.00am GRN HC	8.30am TMBA HC 8.30am OAK LR 9.00am GRN LR 10.30am AUB HC
Thursday, 25 May		
READINGS: Acts 1:1-11;	Ephesians 1:15-23;	Luke 24:44-53
HYMNS: 771 169 106 356 840 115		
Sunday, 28 May		
READINGS: Acts 1:12-26;	1 Peter 4:12-19; 5:6-11;	John 17:1-11
HYMNS: 113 392 352 (175 177) 508		

ANNOUNCEMENTS