

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

16 July 2017

Bulletin for the 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

**HYMNS:** 336 361 329 54 847 390

**INTROIT:** You receive praise in silence in Zion, O God, and vows to You will be fulfilled.

O You who hear prayer, to You all human beings will come.

Iniquitous things have been prevailing over me. You Yourself will provide atonement for our rebellious actions.

Blessed is the person whom You choose and whom You bring near, that he may dwell in Your courts! We shall be satisfied with the good things of Your house, the holiness of Your temple.

You answer us in righteousness with awesome deeds, O our saving God, the Confidence of all the ends of the earth and of the most distant sea.

He is the One who sets the mountains in place by His strength, the One who puts on strength like a waistcloth.

He is the One who calms **the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves,** and the turmoil of the peoples.

Those who live at the ends of the earth have been in awe of Your miraculous signs. You make the places where morning dawns and the places where evening fades shout for joy.

Psalm 65:1-8

**COLLECT:** Blessed Lord, since You have caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning, grant that we may so hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

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. Since people cannot honestly hold two differing confessions at the same time, they cannot honestly commune with those whose confession is in conflict with their own. If any do this nevertheless, they deny their own confession, and so deny Christ Himself (2 Cor. 6:14-18). **We ask visitors who are communicant members in a church not in fellowship with the AELC, or are not familiar with the *AELC Statement of Faith*, to refrain from communing today. If you have questions, please speak with the pastor after service.**

**READINGS:** Isaiah 55:10-13 My Word will accomplish what I desire  
Romans 8:12-17 Those who are led by God's Spirit are God's children  
Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23 The parable of the sower of the seed

**SERMON:** Ephesians 2:4-10 By grace I'm saved, grace free and boundless

<sup>4</sup> However, God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love for us, <sup>5</sup> also made us, even when we were dead in trespasses, alive with Christ. It is by grace that you have been saved. <sup>6</sup> Moreover, in Christ Jesus, God raised us with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms, <sup>7</sup> in order to show, in the coming ages, the immeasurable riches of His grace by being kind to us in Christ Jesus. <sup>8</sup> For by grace you have been saved through faith. This is not of yourselves. It is the gift of God, <sup>9</sup> not of works, that no one may boast. <sup>10</sup> For He has made us what we are, creating us in Christ Jesus for good works, which God has prepared in advance, in order that we may live in them.

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### God's Word, or the Government's.

A couple weeks ago, a prominent Minister of the Turnbull government was caught out saying that same-sex 'marriage' could happen sooner than everyone thinks, even though the government says again and again that their policy is for the issue to be taken to a plebiscite. Now, it has been reported that there is a secret bid among the Liberal Party to legalise same-sex 'marriage.' The Opposition has already stated too that if it wins government at the next election, same-sex 'marriage' will become a reality.

Let's be honest, no matter who governs us, it is almost probable that eventually same-sex 'marriage' will be coming to Australia. As citizens and Christians, we must continue to stand up against this abomination. We have just as much right to be heard as the next person, although our voices are quite often drowned out by the merciless cry of those who want to call us bigots, homophobes, etc.

One question that has arisen from the debate about same-sex 'marriage' is, "Will pastors and registered civil celebrants be forced to conduct same-sex ceremonies?" While this question has so far been answered in the negative, time will tell just what the government here will attempt to force upon churches and celebrants.

Anyhow, it has been reported in Sweden, where the Swedes have a national church, which happens to be Lutheran, that the Prime Minister, Stefan Löfven, has told the priests of that church that if they don't want to perform same-sex "marriages," they should "do something else." He went on to say that a willingness to participate in a gay wedding "should be a requirement for ordination" and his party "is working to ensure all Church of Sweden priests will 'marry' same-sex couples."

Although the Church of Sweden is quite liberal (for example, they allow gay "marriages" and openly gay or lesbian clergy), they do allow priests to choose whether or not they want to perform a gay "marriage." Half of the bishops in this denomination signed a letter "condemning the introduction of same-sex 'marriage' into the church."

Basically, this government official has decided that, to be a Christian clergy, you must agree with the government, not the Bible, on the issue of same-sex "marriage." He's making himself, not God's Word, the authority for morality. He's basically put himself in the position of God!

Löfven, who claims he is not religious (though everyone is indeed religious), says that "the church must stand up for human equality... the church binds society together and provides security" especially in turbulent and frightening times. Now, where does he get the idea that

the purpose of the church is to “stand up for human equality” and to “bind society together”? Well, that’s nothing but his own opinion on what he thinks the purpose of the church is (and what he thinks “human equality” is).

As Christians, we are called to defend the helpless, such as orphans and widows (James 1:27), and Christians have been doing that since the time of Christ. Biblical teaching upholds the dignity of every human being and declares we’re all made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). Although males and females have different roles in the family and the church, in Christ, *there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus*, (Galatians 3:28), and, *God shows no partiality*, (Romans 2:11).

Christianity is all for equality - it’s taught in Scripture! It’s actually a Christian idea. What’s not taught in Scripture is the modern cultural idea that same-sex “marriage” is a civil rights issue. It’s not. It’s a moral issue. Homosexual behaviour is sinful (Romans 1:26-27) - that’s the truth from the Creator who designed marriage and sexuality. But, like any other sin, we can find forgiveness and freedom from our sin in Christ and what He has done for us on the cross (1 Corinthians 6:9-11). That’s the message the church must teach - the message of the gospel!

Contrary to what the Swedish Prime Minister says, the church’s task is to “*Go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*,” (Matthew 28:19)

So Löfven wants “human equality.” But what about equality for Christians? Shouldn’t they be allowed to live according to their beliefs, including their belief - based on God’s Word - that homosexual behaviour is sinful and that God’s design for marriage is for a man and a woman? Apparently “human equality” only extends to those who agree with the government.

And what about “human equality” for the unborn? Löfven agrees with the Swedish courts that a midwife must practice abortion in order to be a midwife in Sweden. What about equality for the unborn child? Apparently human equality doesn’t extend to those who are unborn, even though biblically and scientifically the unborn are 100% human. From the moment of fertilisation all the information needed to form a unique human being is present. And apparently “human equality” doesn’t extend to midwives who don’t want to commit murder (because that’s what abortion really is!).

Löfven is being highly inconsistent, like many secularists are. He’s picking and choosing who deserves equality - and Christians and the unborn don’t fit the bill in his opinion!

Here are a few verses Prime Minister Löfven needs to consider: *So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them*, (Genesis 1:27). *Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh*, (Genesis 2:24). “*Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’?*” (Matthew 19:4-5).

Because God is the author of marriage - and, yes, sexuality and thus sexual morality - we need to look to His Word, not the government or popular opinions, to determine what is right and wrong.

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

Pastor Peter Ziebell, Phone 0407583922.

Email him at [paziebell@gmail.com](mailto:paziebell@gmail.com)

Weekly sermons and bulletins are available at [www.aelc.org.au](http://www.aelc.org.au).

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

## COMING SERVICES

23 July 7 Pentecost	30 July 8 Pentecost	6 August 9 Pentecost
8.30am TMBA HC 8.30am OAK LR 9.00am GRN LR 10.30am AUB HC	8.30am OAK LR 8.30am TMBA LR 9.00am GRN LR 9.30am AUB LR (Pastor will be away for the day)	8.30am OAK HC 8.30am TMBA LR 9.30am AUB LR 10.00am GRN HC
<b>Sunday, 23 July</b>		
READINGS: Isaiah 44:6-8;	Romans 8:18-27;	Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43
HYMNS: 124 164 179 (65 67) 513		
<b>Sunday, 30 July</b>		
READINGS: Deuteronomy 7:6-9;	Romans 8:28-39;	Matthew 13:44-52
HYMNS: 334 386 149 771		

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

Saturday, 22 July, 10.00am. Combined CoC/Seminary Committee meeting at Minden.  
Please forward all agenda items to the secretary, Ian Manz at [igm64@netspace.net.au](mailto:igm64@netspace.net.au)

Bible Studies:

Friday, 21 July, 7.30pm. Greenwood.

Friday, 28 July, 7.30pm. Oak/Aub at Aubigny.

Pastor no longer has a home phone. PLEASE MAKE ALL CALLS TO:  
0407 583922.