

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

22 April 2018

Bulletin for the 4th Sunday of Easter (Good Shepherd Sunday)

HYMNS: 387 151 200 391

INTROIT: The LORD is my shepherd. I shall not lack anything.
He makes me lie down in green pastures. He **leads** me **to water**
where there is quiet.

He restores my soul. He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His
name's sake.

Even though I walk through the valley of deep darkness, I shall fear no
evil. For You are with me. Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You
anoint my head with oil. My cup overflows.

Surely, goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life, and I
shall dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

Psalm 23

COLLECT: Almighty God, merciful Father, since You have wakened
from death the Shepherd of Your sheep, grant us Your Holy Spirit
that, when we hear the voice of our Shepherd, we may know Him
who calls us each by name and follow where He leads; through the
same 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 4:1-12 Peter and John are brought before the
Council.

1 John 3:16-24 Let us love in deeds and in truth.

John 10:11-18 "I know My own and My own know Me."

SERMON: Psalm 23:1a The LORD is my Shepherd

Christians and politics

Although we probably get sick of them and complain about their incompetence at times, yet Christians will take an interest in what our elected members of parliament and our government are doing (or not doing). We strike a balance between becoming too comfortable with the ways of the world, as Lot did (Ge 19:1), and becoming isolationists who withdraw from the world (cf. the movement of monasticism). We are in the world but not of the world (cf John 17:14, 16). Jeremiah told the exiles in Babylon to take an interest in the affairs of their land of captivity. He wrote, "Seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper," (Jer. 29:7). Likewise we must also pray for the good of the land in which we live.

Christians will be interested in improving the temporal welfare of the citizens of earthly kingdoms. However, we will not think that government will ever establish a utopia on earth. The idea that government will eventually eliminate poverty, discrimination, disease, war, and perhaps one day even control the weather is a pipe dream. The nature of mankind is sinful from conception on. The LORD Himself says, "... for the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth," (Gen. 8:21), and David writes for all of us when he says, "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me," (Psalm 51:5). The Lord has told us that things will not get better on this earth during the New Testament era. Politicians may promise a heaven on earth, but that will never be. Sin will be with us until the end of time. Poverty, war, discrimination, and disease will also be with us until the end of time.

Christians certainly may get involved in politics, with the motivation being the desire to serve our fellow citizens in response to God's love for us. The Lutheran Confessions state:

Concerning public order and secular government it is taught that all political authority, orderly government, laws, and good order in the world are created and instituted by God and that Christians may without sin exercise political authority; be princes and judges; pass sentences and administer justice according to imperial and other existing laws; punish evildoers with the sword; wage just wars; serve as soldiers; buy and sell; take required oaths; possess property; be married; etc. (AC XVI:1, 2 [German text])

The Augsburg Confession condemned the Anabaptists of their day for forbidding the things that were mentioned. Christians rightly can serve in public office.

What does a Christian do while holding public office if he must administer a law that permits what God forbids? For example, what will a Christian judge do if a couple appears before him asking for a divorce? This must be tough on judges who are Christian, as biblically, there may be no grounds for divorce for a couple he must decide upon. Yet the state has a no-fault approach to divorce, granting it to anyone who asks for it. The judge will have to administer the laws of the state. He may grant the divorce to the couple because the state permits it.

When discussing politics, Christians will need to be charitable toward one another. It is possible for two Christians to differ on what a government should do, and we have to be careful that we don't condemn another person's political views as unchristian simply because they don't agree with our views. As we listen to candidates running for public office, we will listen to all that they have to say. We will try to judge them by their qualifications for the office. We will look for and pray for honest public servants who will serve the public and not themselves.

Welcome to all worshipping 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
 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

29 April 5 Easter	6 May 6 Easter	10 May Ascension Day
		Thursday
8.30am OAK LR 8.30am TMBA LR 9.00am GRN LR 9.30am AUB LR	8.30am OAK HC 8.30am TMBA LR 9.30am AUB LR 10.00am GRN HC	7.30pm OAK HC
Sunday, 29 April		
READINGS: Acts 8:26-40;	1 John 4:1-11;	John 15:1-8
HYMNS:461 181 170 279		
Sunday, 6 May		
READINGS: Acts 10:44-48;	1 John 5:1-8;	John 15:9-17
HYMNS: 101 322 420 (177 333) 197		

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Pastor will be away next Sunday.

Saturday, 5 May, 10.00am. Combined CoC/Seminary Committee meeting at Troy's Road, Toowoomba. Please forward any agenda items to the secretary, Ian Manz at igm64@hotmail.com

Bible Studies are set to resume in May.