

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

20 May 2018
Bulletin for Pentecost

HYMNS: 280 122 775 848 64 437

INTROIT: O LORD, You have searched me, and known me.

You Yourself know when I sit down and when I rise. You have understood my thoughts from far away.

You have been measuring up my path and my lying down, and You have been familiar with all my ways.

For before there is any statement on my tongue, look! O LORD, You know it completely.

You have encircled me behind and in front, and laid Your hand on me.

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me. It is unattainable. I cannot reach it.

Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence?

If I climb up into heaven, You are there. If I make my bed in Sheol, You are there.

If I lift up the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there Your hand will lead me and Your right hand will hold me fast.

If I say, "Surely the darkness will grip me hard, and the light around me will become night," even the darkness will not be dark to You, and the night will shine like the day. For darkness is like light to You.

How difficult Your thoughts are for me, O God! How numerous their total amount is!

Psalm 139: 1-12, 17

COLLECT: O God, on this day You once taught the hearts of Your faithful people by sending them the light of Your Holy Spirit. Grant us in our day by the same Spirit to have a right understanding in all things and evermore to rejoice in His holy consolation; 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: Ezekiel 37:1-14 Ezekiel and the dry bones

Acts 2:1-21 The day of Pentecost

John 15:26-27, 16:4b-15 When the Spirit of Truth comes, He will lead you into the whole truth

SERMON: Ezekiel 37:1-14 Ezekiel and the valley of dry bones

¹ The hand of the LORD came on me. He brought me out by the Spirit of the LORD, and put me down in the middle of a valley. It was full of bones. ² He kept leading me past them and all around them. I saw very many of them on the surface of the valley, and saw that they were very dry. ³ Then He asked me, "Son of man, can these bones return to life?"

I answered, "Lord GOD, You Yourself know."

⁴ Then He told me: "Prophecy over these bones, and tell them, 'Dry bones, listen to the Word of the LORD!' ⁵ This is what the Lord GOD has said to these bones: "Look! I shall cause breath to enter into you, and you will live. ⁶ I shall put tendons on you, make flesh come on you, and cover you with skin. I shall put breath in you, and you will return to life. Then you will know that I am the LORD.'""

⁷ So I kept prophesying as I had been commanded. While I was prophesying, there was a noise, and suddenly a rattling sound, and the bones came closer together, one bone attaching itself to another.

⁸ While I kept looking, I saw that there were tendons on them, flesh grew on them, and skin covered them over. However, there was no breath in them.

⁹ Then He told me: "Prophecy to the breath! Prophecy, son of man, and tell the breath, 'This is what the Lord GOD has said: "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain people, so that they may return to life.'""

¹⁰ So I kept prophesying, as He had commanded me, and breath entered them. They returned to life, and stood up on their feet, an exceedingly large army.

¹¹ Then He told me: "Son of man, these bones are the whole family of Israel. Look! They are saying, 'Our bones are dry, and our hope is being lost. We have been completely cut off.' ¹² Therefore prophesy and tell them, 'This is what the Lord GOD has said: "Look, My people! I shall open your graves, and bring you up out of your graves. I shall bring you to the land of Israel. ¹³ Then, My people, you will know that I am the LORD when I open your graves and bring you up out of your graves. ¹⁴ I shall put My Spirit in you, you will live, and I shall settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I am the LORD. I have spoken, and I shall carry it out," declares the LORD.'"

Listen to the Word of the LORD

'Our bones are dry, and our hope is being lost. We have been completely cut off,' records Ezekiel (37:11). There is nothing for us but the grave. All around us is death, despair, and hopelessness. We see this in the world around us, in our personal lives, and in the church.

Today we have superior means of communication, yet we seem to have less and less worthwhile things to say. We have more food than ever before, yet an incredible amount of people the world over are starving. We have more education than ever before, yet one has to marvel at the stupidity often shown by so-called academics. Never before has Western civilisation had to work so little for so much. The result has been to exchange the problem of overwork for the problem of leisure. Nothing but bones that are very dry.

In our personal lives the dry bones continue to show up as inability to conquer a problem or to live with it, inability to find real satisfaction in our work, or even in the inability to find the right woman for a wife or man for a husband. The dry bones have had our best efforts. The bones still stay dry. We give up hope. When that hope is no longer alive, when we have tried with all our might to make the dead come alive and it refuses resurrection, we get to know what bones are like when they are very dry.

The life of the church too, can often seem like a valley full of bones, bones that are very dry. Since the time of the Reformation the church has lavished praise on the doctrine of the priesthood of all the baptised. In practice it has often meant that each man is now free to misinterpret the Bible in his own way, when what this doctrine really means is that each member of the church has the freedom to share Christ with his neighbour, to *“extol the wonderful deeds of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvellous light,”* (1 Peter 2:9).

These are some of the dry bones we find in the world, in our personal lives, and in the church.

Yet God raises a significant question to Ezekiel, *“Son of man, can these bones return to life?”* This question leaves us with only one answer, *“Lord GOD, You Yourself know.”* That is what God wants us to say, *“You Yourself know,”* instead of, *“I just don’t know.”* For in saying, *“You Yourself know,”* we begin to taste hope and victory because God does know. Thus, the LORD God says through Ezekiel, *“Dry bones, listen to the Word of the LORD!”* (37:4).

With all the difficulties we face in this world, our protection must be to always listen to the Word of the LORD. We must never grow lazy in doing this. The challenge we all face is that the calling of the world to listen instead to its words, deceptive as they are, is very powerful, and many find themselves taken captive through these words. When this happens, there is no longer any hearing of God’s Word, and no desire to worship Him. The church, and its wonderful gifts, take a back seat. God’s places of worship, where He offers free forgiveness of sins through Word and Sacrament ministry, soon fade away, and disappear. We see this all around us, as church membership gets smaller and smaller, with less interest shown in the activities of the church. It is so easy to find time for everything else, but nigh impossible to find a little quiet time with God. No wonder there are many dry bones. *“Dry bones listen to the Word of the LORD!”*

*Welcome to all worshipping with us today! May God bless our worship of Him by His serving of us!
Today Oliver Michael Fawkes is welcomed into God's family through Holy Baptism.*

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

27 May Trinity Sunday	3 June 2 Pentecost	10 June 3 Pentecost
8.30am TMBA HC 8.30am OAK LR 9.30am GRN LR 10.30am AUB HC	8.30am OAK HC 8.30am TMBA LR 9.30am AUB LR 10.00am GRN HC	8.00am TMBA Bible Study & 9.00am HC 8.30am OAK LR 9.30am GRN LR 10.30am AUB HC
Sunday, 27 May		
READINGS: Isaiah 6:1-8; Acts 2:14a, 22-36; John 3:1-17		
HYMNS: 139 140 457 (175 358) 779		
Sunday, 3 June		
READINGS: Deuteronomy 5:12-15; 2 Corinthians 4:5-12; Mark 2:23-3:6		
HYMNS: 500 463 329 (323 325) 416		

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Friday, 1 June, 7.00pm. Family Evening at Aubigny. Pizza etc is provided for a gold coin donation (usually start eating around 7.20), followed by games and activities, a devotion and hymns. The evening finishes with supper about 9pm, please bring a plate. Contact Jane Sippel 0488722074 for more info.

Saturday, 9 June, 10.00am. Combined CoC/Sem Com. meeting at Troys Road. Please forward all agenda items to the secretary, Ian Manz at igm64@hotmail.com. Each congregation, please make sure you have a representative at the meeting.