

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

25 December 2018
Bulletin for Christmas Day

HYMNS: 627 46 624 26 33 34

INTROIT: Why have the nations been restless, and why do the peoples plot for no purpose?

The kings of the earth take their stand, and the rulers conspire together, against the LORD and against His Anointed One, saying: "Let us tear up their chains and throw their ropes away from us!"

The One enthroned in heaven laughs. The LORD ridicules them.

Then He speaks to them in His anger, and terrifies them in His glowing anger, saying: "Nevertheless, I Myself have consecrated My King on Zion, My holy mountain."

shall proclaim the decree of the LORD: He has said to Me: "You are My Son. Today I have begotten You.

Ask Me, that I may make the nations Your inheritance and the ends of the earth Your property.

You will break them with an iron rod. You will smash them to pieces like a vessel of pottery."

Now therefore, you kings, act with insight! Take advice, you judges of the earth!

Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling!

Fervently kiss the Son, that He may not become angry, and that you may not perish in your way! For His anger may blaze up in a short time. Blessed are all who take refuge in Him!

Psalm 2

COLLECT: Almighty God, grant that the birth of Your only-begotten Son in the flesh may set us free from the bondage of sin; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

READINGS: Isaiah 52:7-10 The good news about salvation.

Hebrews 1:1-12 God reveals Himself through His Son.

John 1:1-14 The Word became a human being.

SERMON: John 1:1-14 In the beginning was the Word

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.**

Joseph – Mystery Man

If you ask people to name the people in the Bible's account of Christmas, they'll usually say Mary, Joseph, and the Baby Jesus. Further discussion will reveal that few people know very much about Joseph. What do we know about Jesus' earthly father?

Scripture tells us that Joseph was descended from the line of David, which is why he and Mary went to Bethlehem to register for the census that Caesar Augustus had ordered. The Bible describes him as a carpenter (Matthew 13:55). At the time they married, Mary was probably quite young. Joseph, however, may have been older, since the Bible does not mention him after Jesus visited the temple at age 12. Matthew 13:55-56 reveals that Jesus had at least four brothers - James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas - and some sisters.

Joseph was a kind man. Under Jewish law, he and Mary were promised to each other in marriage. Betrothal was a binding contract in Joseph's day, requiring a divorce decree to end it, just like marriage. Because of this law, they referred to each other as husband and wife; therefore, when Mary told him she was expecting a baby, he decided it might be best to divorce her (Matthew 1:18-25). Though he no doubt felt hurt and betrayed, Joseph showed his concern for Mary. The typical punishment for being pregnant outside of marriage would have been stoning, but Joseph wanted to spare Mary from such an act. He set out to divorce her quietly.

It is at this point that we see that Joseph was also a righteous man of faith. After the angel appeared to him in his dream, Joseph took Mary as his wife. He believed the words the angel spoke to him and prepared to become the earthly father of the Christ Child. We also see this when he had Jesus circumcised (Luke 2:21) and brought Him to the temple for redemption as the firstborn (vv. 22-24) according to Jewish law. Later, he quickly moved to protect his family from death when an angel warned him of Herod's plot to kill the child (Matthew 2:13-15).

As Jesus grew, Joseph evidently taught Him his trade; thus, the Bible also calls Jesus a carpenter (Mark 6:3).

Joseph observed the Jewish customs, bringing his family to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover (Luke 2:41-42). After this, however, Joseph's role as Jesus' earthly father disappears from Scripture. The Bible mentions Jesus' mother and siblings, but not Joseph. This omission seems to indicate that Joseph probably had died. The man who was Jesus' earthly father had joined his Father in heaven.

Luther once wrote, "The comfort is this, that in your deep anxieties - in which your consciousness of sin, sadness, and despair is so great and strong that it penetrates and occupies all the corners of your heart - you do not follow your consciousness. For if you did, you would say: "I feel the violent terrors of the Law and the tyranny of sin, not only waging war against me again but completely conquering me. I do not feel any comfort or righteousness. Therefore I am not righteous but a sinner. And if I am a sinner, then I am sentenced to eternal death." But battle against this feeling, and say: "Even though I feel myself completely crushed and swallowed by sin and see God as a hostile and wrathful judge, yet in fact this is not true; it is only my feeling that thinks so. The Word of God, which I ought to follow in these anxieties rather than my own consciousness, teaches much differently, namely, that 'God is near to the brokenhearted, and saves the crushed in spirit' (Ps. 34:18), and that 'He does not despise a broken and contrite heart' (Ps. 51:17)." AE 27:26

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

Pastor Peter Ziebell, Phone 0407583922.

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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

| 30 December 1 Christmas | 1 January 2019 New Year's Day | 6 January Epiphany |
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| 8.30am TMBA HC 8.30am OAK LR 9.00am GRN LR 10.30am AUB HC | 9.30am AUB HC | 8.30am OAK HC 8.30am TMBA LR 9.30am AUB LR 10.00am GRN HC |
| Sunday, 30 December | | |
| READINGS: Exodus 13:1-3a, 11-15; Colossians 3:12-17; Luke 2:22-40 | | |
| HYMNS: 23 (part 1) 25 319 (741 789) 23 (part 2) | | |
| Tuesday, 1 January | | |
| READINGS: Numbers 6:22-27; Galatians 3:23-29; Luke 2:21 | | |
| HYMNS: 36 277 161 398 292 219 | | |

ANNOUNCEMENTS

A note from the AELC High School Kids Social Group:

Last Saturday we had a movie night at Toowoomba church. We watched a movie called "Letters to God" about a young boy with cancer, who inspired his community through his faith. Previously we have done bike riding, ball games and had a mechanics lesson. We have discussed things to do with talking to people outside the church about God and Christianity. Anybody in high school is welcome to come and join in the fun.