

CONGREGATIONS OF THE AELC
TRINITY OAKEY, ST PAUL'S GREENWOOD, ST JOHN'S AUBIGNY, BETHLEHEM TOOWOOMBA
TRINITY MARBURG, ST JOHN'S MINDEN, OUR SAVIOUR LOWOOD

3 May 2020

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

ORDER OF SERVICE WITHOUT HOLY COMMUNION

THE INVOCATION

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

HYMN 426 WHAT A FRIEND WE HAVE IN JESUS

1	2	3
What a friend we have in Jesus, All our sins and griefs to bear! What a privilege to carry Everything to God in prayer! O what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear, All because we do not carry Everything to God in prayer.	Have we trials and temptations? Is there trouble anywhere? We should never be discouraged; Take it to the Lord in prayer. Can we find a friend so faithful, Who will all our sorrows share? Jesus knows our every weakness, Take it to the Lord in prayer.	Are we weak and heavy-laden, Cumbered with a load of care? Precious Saviour, still our refuge! Take it to the Lord in prayer. Do thy friends despise, forsake thee? Take it to the Lord in prayer; In His arms He'll take and shield thee, Thou wilt find a solace there.

THE CONFESSION

Dear friends in Christ: Let us draw near to God our Father with a true heart to confess our sins, and ask Him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to forgive us.

Our help is in the name of the Lord. **He made heaven and earth.**

I said, I will confess my sins to the Lord. **Then He forgave the guilt of my sin.**

Almighty God, our Maker and Redeemer, we confess to You that by nature we are sinful and unclean, and that we have sinned against You by thought, word and deed. Therefore we flee for refuge to your infinite mercy and plead for Your grace for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Most merciful God, You have given Your only Son to die for us: Have mercy on us, and for His sake grant us forgiveness of all our sins. By Your Holy Spirit increase our knowledge of You and Your will, and make us obedient to Your Word, so that by Your grace we may come to eternal life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, has had mercy on us, and has given His only Son to die for us, and for His sake forgives us all our sins. To those who believe in His name He has given the right to become the children of God, and has given them His Holy Spirit. He who believes and is baptised will be saved. Grant this, Lord, to us all. Amen.

THE 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

THE GLORY TO THE FATHER

Glory to the Father and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning is now and will be for evermore. Amen.

THE LORD HAVE MERCY

Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy.

THE GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST

Glory to God in the highest.

And on earth peace, among men with whom He is pleased. We praise You, we bless You, we worship You, we glorify You, we give thanks to You for Your great glory, O Lord God, heavenly king, God, the Father Almighty. O Lord, the only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father: You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us. You take away the sin of the world; receive our prayer. You are seated at the right hand of God the Father; have mercy on us. For You alone are holy, You alone are Lord, You alone, O Christ, with the Holy Spirit, are most high in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

THE COLLECT

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

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.

THE FIRST READING

The First Reading for _____ is written in chapter _____ of _____, beginning at verse _____.

After the reading:

This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

THE SECOND READING

The Second Reading is written in chapter _____ of _____, beginning at verse _____.

After the reading: This is the Word of the Lord.

Hallelujah Hallelujah Hallelujah.

THE GOSPEL

The Holy Gospel is written in the _____ chapter of the Gospel according to _____, beginning at verse ____.

Glory be to You, O Lord.

After the Gospel: This is the Gospel of the Lord. **Praise be to You, O Christ.**

THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty, from thence He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

HYMN 391 THE KING OF LOVE MY SHEPHERD IS

<p>1 The King of love my shepherd is, Whose goodness faileth never; I nothing lack if I am His And He is mine for ever.</p>	<p>3 Perverse and foolish oft I strayed, But yet in love He sought me, And on His shoulder gently laid, And home, rejoicing, brought me.</p>	<p>5 Thou spread'st a table in my sight; Thy unction grace bestoweth; And O what transport of delight From Thy pure chalice floweth!</p>
<p>2 Where streams of living water flow My ransomed soul He leadeth, And where the verdant pastures grow With food celestial feedeth.</p>	<p>4 In death's dark vale, I fear no ill With Thee, dear Lord, beside me; Thy rod and staff my comfort still, Thy cross before to guide me.</p>	<p>6 And so through all the length of days Thy goodness faileth never: Good shepherd, may I sing Thy praise Within Thy house for ever.</p>

SERMON - JESUS IS THE DOOR FOR THE SHEEP John 10:1-10

HYMN 387 THE LORD'S MY SHEPHERD

<p>1 The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want; He makes me down to lie In pastures green; He leadeth me The quiet waters by.</p>	<p>3 Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale, Yet will I fear no ill; For Thou art with me, and Thy rod And staff me comfort still.</p>
<p>2 My soul He doth restore again; And me to walk doth make Within the paths of righteousness, E'en for His own name's sake.</p>	<p>4 My table Thou hast furnished In presence of my foes; My head Thou dost with oil anoint, And my cup overflows..</p>
<p>5 Goodness and mercy all my life Shall surely follow me; And in God's house for evermore My dwelling place will be</p>	

THE PRAYER

LORD'S PRAYER:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

THE BLESSING

The Lord bless us and keep us. The Lord make His face shine on us and be gracious to us. The Lord look upon us with favour, and give us peace. **Amen.**

HYMN 602 I AM JESUS' LITTLE LAMB

<p>1 I am Jesus' little lamb, Ever glad at heart I am; Jesus loves me, Jesus knows me, All things fair and good He shows me, Even calls me by my name: Every day He is the same.</p>	<p>2 Jesus is my staff and stay, Gently guiding day by day. When I hunger, Jesus feeds me; When I thirst, my Shepherd leads me Where the quiet waters flow, Where the sweetest pastures grow.</p>	<p>3 Should I not be always glad? Jesus would not have me sad. When my days on earth are ended, By my loving shepherd tended, In His arms I then will rest, There to be for ever blest.</p>
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Faith is not a Doing but a Receiving

Lately, I have been reading through the book of Acts. Chapter 16 tells of the time Paul and Silas were in chains in prison, and when reading this section, I couldn't help but think of Paul's great discourse on saving faith in Romans chapters 3&4. In those chapters, Paul declares that our salvation comes through a faith that knows the promises of God in Christ Jesus. It is a faith that knows man's fallen, sinful, and desperate condition and knows as well, the Saviour's work. It is a faith that trusts that God is true and that therefore God's promises apply even to me.

It is true that *we* believe. God doesn't believe for us, but the fact that we believe is entirely the gift of God through the gospel. We may put it this way: Faith is an act of man but a gift of God. How is it a gift? The knowledge comes from God in the gospel; the assent is created by the gospel; the trust or confidence that the gospel message applies to me is the work of the Holy Spirit through and never apart from the gospel. To put it another way: Faith is always a miracle performed by the Holy Spirit through the message of the gospel.

Anyhow, getting back to Acts 16. The jailer at Philippi had just experienced the earthquake, and he was terrified that his prisoners (Paul and Silas) had escaped. He was about to commit suicide in order to avoid the disgrace of being executed (execution was the punishment that the jailer could expect for letting his prisoners escape). But Paul shouted out and told him that they were all still there in the prison, that there was no need for the jailer to fear. The jailer, overwhelmed by this entire situation in which he himself had come so close to death either by the earthquake or by his own hands, cried out, "*Sirs, what must I do to be saved?*" The jailer assumed that salvation is by works. But what did the apostle answer? Does he say, "This is what you must do"? No, he and Silas replied, "*Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your family.*" Believing, having faith, in this passage as in Romans 4 and elsewhere **is not a doing but a receiving!** The apostle is telling the jailer in effect: "There is nothing for you to do; it has all been done by another, namely, the One we were preaching about in the city, the One we were singing about in the prison before the earthquake. He has done it all for the world - for you! Believe it! That is, trust that God would not lie to you, that He really means you!" "*For by grace you have been saved through faith. This is not of yourselves. It is the gift of God, not of works, that no one may boast*" (Ephesians 2:8-9).

What a wonderful thing that is, this faith that is knowledge, assent, and confidence, this faith that is a receiving activity of man but entirely a gift of God through the gospel! So, even when we call faith an activity of man, the emphasis remains that man is *passive*, and that God is *active* through the gospel. Therefore no one need think that he is excluded, since the gospel message is addressed to all (objective justification). Neither does anyone need to fear that perhaps he does not believe the gospel enough; for saving faith is not a work weighed on a scale that needs to reach a certain level before it is saving faith. Indeed, it can sometimes be misleading to speak of saving faith as being weak or strong, big or small, if that moves people to focus on whether they *feel faith strongly enough to really have it*; it is not the nature of faith to focus on itself, to navel gaze, so to speak. It is the nature of faith to look outside of self, **to focus on Christ**, His work for us, and His promise to us in His Word. The Bible speaks of weak and strong faith, but not when it is talking about saving faith. When talking about saving faith, it is either there or it isn't. Either we know who Jesus is and what He has done and trust that His promise and His work apply to us or we don't know and don't trust! There is no third alternative.

Our knowledge may be limited; our trust may be battered by all kinds of storms, even fears and doubts, but at bottom we either know and trust Jesus as Saviour or we do not. To speak too much of saving faith as weak or strong, big or little, may drive people again either to despair or to self-righteousness. It can push people in the direction of looking too much inside of themselves to see if their faith is enough to save them. Again, faith does best when it is focused outside of self, focused on Christ and the gospel. For Christ in the gospel is the content of saving faith; Christ in the gospel is the source of saving faith; Christ in the gospel is the goal of saving faith. The one who is worried about whether his faith is big enough or strong enough should focus attention on Jesus' beautiful assurance in John 6:37: "*I shall certainly not cast out the person who comes to Me.*"

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