

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

24 May 2020

Bulletin for the 7th Sunday of Easter

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 111 HAIL THE DAY THAT SEES HIM RISE. ALLELUIA

1	3	5
Hail the day that sees Him rise. <i>Alleluia!</i>	Lo, the heaven its Lord receives,	Still for us He intercedes,
To His throne above the skies: <i>Alleluia!</i>	Yet He loves the earth He leaves;	His prevailing death He pleads,
Christ, the Lamb for sinners given, <i>Alleluia!</i>	Though returning to His throne,	Near Himself prepares our place,
Enters now the highest heaven. <i>Alleluia!</i>	Still He calls mankind His own.	He the first-fruits of our race.
2	4	6
There for Him high triumph waits;	See, He lifts His hands above;	Lord, though parted from our sight,
Lift your heads, eternal gates;	See, He shows the prints of love;	Far above the starry height,
He has conquered death and sin;	Hark, His gracious lips bestow	Grant our hearts may thither rise,
Take the King of glory in.	Blessings on His Church below.	Seeking Thee above the skies.

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

God will arise. His enemies will scatter, so that those who hate Him will flee from Him.

As smoke is blown away, You will blow them away. As wax melts before the fire, wicked people will perish before God. Nevertheless, righteous people will be glad. They will rejoice before God. They will be glad and rejoice.

Sing to God! Sing praise to His name! Prepare a road for Him who rides through the deserts! His name is the LORD. Be very glad in His presence!

God, who is in His holy dwelling place, is the Father of the fatherless and the Defender of widows.

God places lonely people in homes. He leads prisoners out into prosperity, but rebellious people live in a scorched land.

O God, when You went out before Your people, when You marched through the wilderness — the earth quaked, the heavens indeed poured down rain before God, the One of Sinai, before God, the God of Israel.

You caused a plentiful rain to fall, O God. You firmly established Your weary inheritance.

It was Your dwelling place in which they settled. Out of Your goodness, O God, You prepared for needy people.

Psalm 68:1-10

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.**

O king of glory, Lord of hosts, uplifted in triumph far above all heavens, leave us not without consolation, but send us the Spirit of truth, whom You promised from the Father; for You live and reign with Him 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 392 HOW FIRM A FOUNDATION

1
How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in His excellent Word!
What more can He say than to you He has said
Who unto the Saviour for refuge have fled?

2
Fear not, He is with thee, O be not dismayed;
For He is thy God, and will still give thee aid:
He'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,
Upheld by His righteous, omnipotent hand.

5
The soul that on Jesus has leaned for repose
He will not, He cannot, desert to its foes;
That soul, though all hell will endeavour to shake,
He never will leave and will never forsake.

3
When through the deep waters He calls thee to go,
The rivers of woe will not thee overflow;
For He will be with thee, thy troubles to bless,
And turn to thy good e'en thy deepest distress.

4
When through fiery trials thy pathway will lie,
His grace, all-sufficient, will be thy supply;
The flame will not hurt thee: His only design
Thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.

SERMON - HOLY FATHER, KEEP THEM IN YOUR NAME John 17:1-11

HYMN 457 MIGHTY GOD, WE PRAISE THY NAME

1
Mighty God, we praise Thy name!
Lord of all, our hearts adore Thee.
All creation must proclaim
Thy great works, and bow before Thee.
Ages roll, but Thou wilt be
Lord throughout eternity.

2
King of glory, God's own Son,
Humbly our poor nature sharing,
Now to save us Thou art come,
All our sin and sorrow bearing;
Thou hast brought us saving grace,
Freed from guilt our sinful race.

3
O have mercy on us, Lord!
Shed on us Thy richest blessing,
Keep us steadfast in Thy Word,
Ever Thy great name confessing.
Lord, we trust alone in Thee,
Thine we are eternally.

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 515 ON WHAT HAS NOT BEEN SOWN

1
On what has not been sown,
Thy blessing, Lord, bestow;
The power is Thine alone
To make it spring and grow.
Do Thou the gracious harvest raise,
And Thou alone shalt have the praise.

2
To Thee our wants are known,
From Thee are all our powers;
Accept what is Thine own,
And pardon what is ours.
Our praises, Lord, and prayers receive,
And to Thy Word a blessing give.

3
O grant that each of us
Who meet before Thee here,
May meet together thus
When Thou and Thine appear,
And follow Thee to heaven our home.
E'en so, Amen, Lord Jesus, come!

By the Rivers of Babylon

(Taken from 364daysofthanksgiving.com, edited)

They were strangers living in a strange land – carried off into exile by a conquering nation. They watched their homes burned and their temple destroyed. They felt isolated, alone and rejected by God.

To add insult to injury, their captors asked that they entertain them with their famous songs of joy from their homeland – their “Psalms.” As they sat “by the rivers of Babylon,” the Jewish exiles wept – remembering the temple and the way things used to be.

“How can we sing the songs of the Lord while in a foreign land?” they asked. (Psalm 137:4)

As we sit in our societally imposed exile, we can relate (even though restrictions are gradually lifting). To be honest, our exile is exceedingly more luxurious than that of the Jewish people. We don’t sit by the rivers of Babylon. We sit in fully furnished homes with central heating and air conditioning, big screen TV’s and iPhones. Our biggest struggle through all this has been making sure we have enough toilet paper.

Yet we do feel the same isolation and loneliness. We long for the way things used to be. As Christians, we especially struggle with not being able to worship together. A few weeks ago, I, together with Christians around the world, lamented the fact that we couldn’t physically worship together in our churches on Good Friday and Easter Sunday. Our hearts ached and yearned to sing the joyous songs of Easter together. It’s just not the same watching it on a screen.

Like the Israelites of old, we ask: How can we sing the songs of the Lord while in exile? We can sing for joy to the Lord, because His promises are still true. Even as they sat in exile, God promised to be with His people and bless them. He promised to bring them home one day. He promised their Saviour from sin would still be born.

God kept every one of His promises to the nation of Israel and He will keep every promise He has made you. He will be with us (Matthew 28:20). He will make everything in our lives – even a pandemic – work out for our eternal good (Romans 8:28). And most importantly, He will give to you and all who believe in Jesus the gifts of forgiveness and heaven Jesus has won for us. You can be sure of that, because His tomb is empty. Death had no power over Jesus and therefore it has no power over those who follow Him. With His death and resurrection, Jesus has won the victory for us over sin, death and the devil.

Because He lives, we can face tomorrow. Because He lives, all fear is gone. Because He lives, we may sing our songs of joy to the Lord, even as we sit in exile – even as our churches sit empty.

Like the exiled Jews, we achingly long for the day when we shall gather together again in God’s house to worship Him. Meanwhile, though, don’t stop singing your songs of praise to your Saviour God. Don’t stop worshipping Him with joy. Even though our churches sit empty, so does the tomb.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Sunday, May 31 at Bethlehem Toowoomba, pastor will be available from 8.00am to 12.00pm for members to come along and receive Holy Communion.

Sunday, 7 June at St John’s Minden, pastor will be available from 9.00am to 11.00am for members to come along and receive Holy Communion.

During these times, 9 members at a time will be able to come into the church where we shall hold a short HC service (about 25 mins). We should be able to hold 2 services an hour. We still have to adhere to social distancing (keeping 1.5m apart), and while members are in the church, those waiting outside can stay in their cars or gather outside. Up to ten can congregate outside together.

Instructions on seating in the church and receiving the Lord’s Supper will be given on the day. Hand wash will also be available. If you are not feeling well, please stay at home, and if any of you cannot make any of the services, please let me know so that I can arrange to come to you.

Divine services will still continue to be recorded and made available.

I am not planning on resuming Bible Studies, Women’s Guild etc for at least another month yet.