

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

1 November 2020
Bulletin for All Saints' Day

HYMNS: 402 213 164 609 (292) 854

INTROIT: Praise the LORD! Sing to the LORD a new song, His praise in the assembly of devout people!

Let Israel rejoice in its Maker! Let the children of Zion be joyful over their King! Let them praise His name with dancing! Let them make music to Him with tambourine and lyre!

For the LORD takes pleasure in His people. He glorifies humble people with salvation.

Let devout people be jubilant in glory! Let them shout for joy on their beds!

Let the high praises of God be in their throats, and double-edged swords in their hands, to carry out vengeance on the nations, and punishments on the peoples, to tie up their kings with chains, and their nobles' feet with iron shackles, to carry out the judgment that has been written against them! This is an honour that belongs to all His devout people. Praise the LORD!

Psalm 149

COLLECT: Almighty and everlasting God, You knit together Your faithful people of all times and places into one holy communion, the mystical body of Your Son, Jesus Christ. Grant us so to follow Your blessed saints in all virtuous and godly living that, together with them, we may come to the unspeakable joys that You have prepared for those who love You; through Jesus Christ, 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: Revelation 7:2-17 The great multitude in white robes.

1 John 3:1-3 "See what great love the Father has given to us."

Matthew 5:1-12 The Beatitudes.

SERMON: Revelation 7:2-17 The Dead Alive, and the Live Dead

Welcome to all with us today!

Pastor Peter Ziebell, Phone 46333604 or 0407583922.

Email him at paziebell@gmail.com or to the church office at ddaelc@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.

Heaven

Just what is heaven like? We really would like to know. In its essence it is simply this: In heaven we shall perfectly enjoy life with Christ and accordingly also with all the saints and angels who are there with us.

That life is eternal. In heaven we shall never again experience death. It is important to remember the essential definition of death: Death is separation. In Genesis 3, when Adam and Eve sinned, they experienced the first kind of death, the death that is a separation from God in unbelief and rebellion. Horrible indeed was that separation. Just read the account again of their encounter with God after they had sinned. What do you see? You see fear as they hide from Him, anger when He speaks to them, loathing of God and of each other as Adam seeks to pin the blame for his sin first on God, then on God's greatest gift to him, his wife.

Few indeed can say that they have never experienced in life this kind of death. Our sins too bring this kind of separation. In our guilt we hide from God and foolishly hope either that He did not see us or doesn't care enough to be bothered about our guilt. But then the sins come, as we say, home to roost. We suffer pain or loss. We get sick and lose loved ones. Conscience will not leave us alone. And so we get angry with God: "Why did you let this happen to me? It's all your fault! You could have prevented my folly! But now I suffer in shame! Yes, and it's also the fault of my parents/my spouse/my friends/society/my lousy job/demanding relatives!"

All of that is death, a separation from God brought about by our sin. But the whole purpose of the gospel from Genesis 3 to Revelation 22 is to show us the Saviour who has removed that death, that separation, by His coming and by His death and resurrection for us and for our salvation. Often in this life that sweet message of the gospel has brought us to life, to real life, the life that trusts in the blood-bought forgiveness. We nevertheless prove our need for the gospel again and again when we return to death by further wilful sin. But in it all Jesus keeps calling to us with life, just as He said, "I have come that they may have life and have it abundantly." "I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep" (John 10:10-11).

In heaven, our life will never again experience this kind of death, this spiritual death of separation from God in rebellion and unbelief. That is no small blessing: Never again to be afraid of God or anything else; never again to feel the gnawing of conscience on the soul; never again to know the temptations that threaten to rip us away from the enjoyment of peace with God, peace with our own soul, and peace with those around us. So great will that blessing be that it is scarcely possible for us to imagine it in the here and now. St. Paul sums it up when he says shortly before his own death, *“The Lord will deliver me from every evil deed and save me for His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory for ever! Amen!”* (2 Timothy 4:18).

Just as heaven will be an eternal life without any more spiritual death, so it will also be eternal life without any physical death. For after all is said and done, physical death and all the sickness and pain that announce its advent are nothing more than the result of spiritual death. That’s what God told Adam (Genesis 3:19). And that’s what every cemetery witnesses to us each day. But with spiritual death gone, so too will physical death disappear together with all that announces its approach. Hunger and thirst, pain and sickness of every sort, these all are heralds of death; they announce its inevitability. While they may be satisfied or softened or put off for a while, they always return to declare, *“You are fragile, you are frail, you are mortal; and the day is coming when need and pain will not be put off but will win the victory over the mortal body. As strong as you think you are and as wise, one day a tiny germ, a bit of cholesterol in the blood stream, or a microscopic virus will do you in.”* As that ancient grave-stone put it so well: *“Where you are, I once was; where I am, you too soon shall be!”*

In heaven that is all past and gone, just as its causes of temptation and sin and guilt are gone. How tenderly, how beautifully, how perfectly that condition is described in the last book of the Bible: *“They will not be hungry any longer or thirsty any longer. The sun will certainly not beat on them or any scorching heat,¹⁷ because the Lamb, who is in the middle of the throne, will be their Shepherd and lead them to springs of the water of life. God will wipe every tear from their eyes”* (Revelation 7:16-17).

The picture is perfect! Jesus is at its centre. And we, each one of us, are the tender objects of the Father’s love for the sake of the Lamb. His sacrifice has placed us, as it were, in the Father’s lap as his dear children. Who would not long for such a blessed state! Who could keep from love unbounded for such a Saviour, such a Father and, yes, such a Holy Spirit who has brought us even now to foretaste of that bliss in the enjoyment of His Word and Sacraments!

COMING SERVICES

8 November 23 Pentecost	15 November 24 Pentecost	22 November Last Sunday of the Church Year
8.30am OAK LR 8.30am TMBA LR 9.00am GRN LR 9.30am AUB LR 9.00am LOWOOD LR	8.30am OAK LR 8.30am TMBA LR 9.00am GRN LR 9.30am AUB LR 9.00am MINDEN LR	8.30am OAK LR 8.30am TMBA LR 9.00am GRN LR 9.30am AUB LR 9.00am LOWOOD LR
Sunday, 8 November		
READINGS: Amos 5:18-24; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Matthew 25:1-13		
HYMNS: 16 385 489 458		
Sunday, 15 November		
READINGS: Zephaniah 1:7-16; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11; Matthew 25:14-30		
HYMNS: 315 485 372 169		

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Pastor is taking holidays from 4-25 November. If there is an emergency still contact him on 0407 583922.