

MARBURG PARISH OF THE AELC
TRINITY MARBURG, ST JOHN'S MINDEN, OUR SAVIOUR LOWOOD

13 December 2020
Bulletin for the Third Sunday in Advent

HYMNS: 17 1 12 22

INTROIT: When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who were dreaming.

Then our mouths were filled with laughter and our tongues with shouts of joy. Then people said among the nations, "The LORD has done great things for them."

The LORD has done great things for us, and we are glad.

Restore our fortunes, O LORD, as you restore streams in the South.

Those who sow in tears will harvest with shouts of joy.

He who continually goes out weeping, carrying his bag of seed, will certainly come back with shouts of joy, carrying his bundles of grain.

Psalm 126

COLLECT: Lord Jesus Christ, we implore You to hear our prayers and to lighten the darkness of our hearts by Your gracious visitation: for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

READINGS: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11 The good news of God's deliverance.
1 Thessalonians 5:16-24 Readiness for the coming of the Lord.
John 1:6-8, 19-28 He who comes after me is standing among you.

SERMON: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11 THE GRACIOUS WORK OF JESUS CHRIST

Third Advent Candle: Proclamation and Joy

Scripture: Isaiah 9:6-7

⁶ For a Child will be born for us. A Son will be given to us. The government will be on His shoulder, and His name will be called: "Wonderful Counsellor," "Mighty God," "Everlasting Father," "Prince of Peace." ⁷ There will be no end to the growth of His dominion and peace. He will be on the throne of David and over His kingdom, to make it firm and to support it with justice and righteousness from that time on and for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.

Here is the reason for joy. This was the Child earlier prophesied by Isaiah in 7:14, the sign scorned by Ahaz but fulfilled by Christ. *"His name will be called: "Wonderful Counsellor," "Mighty God," "Everlasting Father," "Prince of Peace."* These names describe the power and authority of the new king. Psalm 72 defines what these characteristics mean for the Davidic king. Jesus, from David's kingly line (Luke 2:4), fulfils all of these promises and with the Kingdom brings all of these gifts for people (cf Mark 1:15). While these titles may apply, in part, to an earthly king, in their fullness they belong only to God. Luther says: "In the kingdom of Christ there is grace, comfort, forgiveness of sins, joy, peace. He does not deal with the transgressor in sternness, but as a father. The forgiveness of sins is justification, and peace follows justification. This peace is not only peace of mind but also plenty and soundness of mind and good health of the body. Such is the reign of Christ: It is extended by killing; it is fertilized by the blood of the believers; and the more distress there is, the more peace grows in the heart" (AE 16:101).

As we light the candle of Proclamation and Joy, may our hearts be forever filled with the joy of His coming.

Prayer: Father, we are filled with joy because we have hope and peace that You have sent Your Son for us. Help us to be the voices that proclaim grace and truth. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

Welcome to all worshipping with us today!

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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

20 December 4th Sunday in Advent	24 December Christmas Eve	27 December 1 Christmas
8.30am TMBA LR 9.30am AUB LR 10.00am OAK/GRN Children's Christmas Program 6.30pm MARBURG Children's Christmas Program	7.30pm OAK HC 25 December Christmas Day 8.00am MARBURG HC 8.30am OAK LR 8.30am TMBA LR 9.00am GRN LR 9.30am AUB LR	8.30am OAK HC 8.30am TMBA LR 9.30am AUB LR 10.00am GRN HC 9.00am LOWOOD LR
Sunday, 20 December		
READINGS: 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16; Romans 16:25-27; Luke 1:26-38		
HYMNS: 4 2 21 627		
Thursday, 24 December		
READINGS: Isaiah 7:10-14; 1 John 4:7-16; Matthew 1:18-25		
HYMNS: 24 633 634 25 623 629		
Friday, 25 December		
READINGS: Isaiah 52:7-10; Hebrews 1:1-12; John 1:1-18		
HYMNS: 26 624 622 (628 33) 34		

No vacancy?! Not With Jesus!

We had been driving non-stop for days, at least it seemed that way to my young mind. It was getting late and we started looking for a motel. No vacancy. Driving a little further, no vacancy. Driving still further, no vacancy. A rodeo was in town and every room was taken. It seemed like our endless journey would keep on going. My dad's emotions ran the gamut from frustration to anger to desperation. I was whining, "Are we there yet?" Which I'm sure didn't help. Mum was trying to keep us all calm. At 9:30, we finally found a room in a cheap motel in another town. More than anything, we were extremely grateful for a place to spend the remainder of the long, arduous night.

It all started with a "no vacancy sign at the local inn." But the world's inhospitality for Jesus would get worse. Recall King Herod's slaughter of every baby boy 2 years of age and under – just so he doesn't miss Jesus. Recall how the religious authorities harass and pester and try to entrap Him every chance they get. Once Jesus went back to His home town of Nazareth, and not even His home town had room for Him anymore. They drove Him out of town and tried to throw Him over a cliff. The crowds in Jerusalem shouted "Crucify Him." Crucifixion is the ultimate form of inhospitality. They had no room for Him. Wherever He goes, it seems, it's often the same message. "There's no room for You here." At the inn of Bethlehem, and often in our own hearts, and on our calendars, "there's no room for You here." Yet in an inhospitable world, Jesus has come to be the perfect host. We see Him welcoming sinners into His company. He eats with them, tells them of God's love.

On the cross He shed His blood not for a select few but for a world of sinners. No matter who you are or what you've done, no matter your shortcomings and failures, there's room and welcome for you at the manger in Bethlehem. His is a hospitality that took you in at the baptismal font, and adopted you. On that day He said to you, "You're Mine now. I'm going to love and care for you. I will forgive you, and will never let you go."

Jesus has a great promise. "In My father's house are many rooms. I am going there to prepare a place for you." There will be no "No Vacancy" signs posted on the gates of heaven. Such is the grace of God and the hospitality of Jesus. No, there's room and welcome for you in the tiny heart of that newborn infant lying in the manger.