

**Australian Evangelical Lutheran Church**  
**BETHLEHEM TOOWOOMBA, OUR SAVIOUR LOWOOD, ST JOHN'S AUBIGNY,**  
**ST PAUL'S GREENWOOD, TRINITY MARBURG, TRINITY OAKEY,**

19 December 2021

The 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Advent

**HYMNS:** 7 21 17 452

**INTROIT:**

Listen to us, O Shepherd of Israel, You who lead Joseph like a flock. You who dwell between the cherubim, shine forth before Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh. Stir up Your strength; and come to save us.

O God, restore us, and cause Your face to shine, that we may be saved.

O LORD God of hosts, how long will You smoulder in anger against the prayer of Your people?

You have made them eat the bread of tears, and You have given them tears to drink three times over.

You make us a source of conflict to our neighbours, and our enemies are laughing among themselves.

O God of hosts, restore us, and cause Your face to shine, that we may be saved.

Psalm 80:1-7

**COLLECT:** Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come and help us by Your might, that the sins that weigh us down may be quickly lifted by Your grace and mercy; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

**READINGS:** Micah 5:2-5a The time when a mother will have a Child.  
Hebrews 10:5-10 You have prepared a body for Me.  
Luke 1:39-55 Blessed is the Child who will come.

**SERMON:** Micah 5:2-5a A RULER FROM BETHLEHEM

*Welcome to all worshipping with us today!* Pastor Peter Ziebell, Phone 0407583922.  
Email him at [paziebell@gmail.com](mailto:paziebell@gmail.com) or to the church office at [ddaelc@gmail.com](mailto:ddaelc@gmail.com).

***Please notify pastor of anyone who is unwell or in need of a visit.***

## **The Power and Reward of Christian Faith**

*By faith Enoch was taken away so that he would not see death and “he was not found, because God had taken him.” For, before he was taken away, he had this testimony, that he had pleased God. <sup>6</sup> Without faith it is impossible to please God. For he who comes to God must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly search for Him. Hebrews 11:5-6*

By faith Enoch was taken away and had the testimony that he had pleased God. Maybe we ask, what faith, faith in whom or in what? The writer of Hebrews does not expressly say what the object of his faith was, but we know from Scripture that it was faith in the Promised Seed of the woman who would come and crush the head of the Serpent, the Evil one who had led man into sin. No other faith is known to the saints and no other faith pleases God, and no other faith gives man the power to walk with God as Enoch did; and in Genesis we are told that “Enoch walked with God” (Gen. 5:24). To “walk with God” means to live with Him as though He were near and to obey His commandments (1 John 5:1-3). It was faith that had given Enoch the power to walk with God in an evil world. Christian faith is not an idle thought, but a powerful thing. This is also evident from what we read about Enoch in another place, Jude 14-15: *“Enoch, the seventh in descent from Adam, prophesied about them also. He said, “Look! The Lord has come with ten thousands of His holy ones, <sup>15</sup> to carry out judgment on all and to convict every soul for all the ungodly things that they have done in their ungodliness and for all the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.”* A towering picture! Enoch stood up and threatened the extremely wicked world of his day (Gen. 6:5) with the impending judgment of God. From where did Enoch get such insight, assurance, and courage? It was rooted in Enoch’s faith. Enoch believed God’s Word and promise, which includes that God is not only merciful, but also just and holy; and because he believed that about God, he had rebuked and warned the world of God’s judgment. If he had not had such a faith, he would not have spoken as he did.

The same power that we see in Enoch’s faith is given to faith today, *if* it is the same kind of faith that Enoch had. Wherever there are people today that have the faith of Enoch, there the power of faith will show itself in the same way, it will “prophecy” to a crooked, perverse, and godless world, that the Lord is coming with thousands of His holy ones to carry out judgment on all. But, like in Enoch’s day, the voices that rise in protest and condemnation of the godlessness, hypocrisy and permissiveness of our age are few and far between.

So we pray, “Lord, increase our faith” and give us the faith of Enoch!

From the brief account of Enoch’s life we also learn that faith such as Enoch’s, had a wonderful reward. Christian faith is not a good work done by man to earn God’s favour, but a divine gift or power that reaches out for and receives those things which God has promised to give for the Saviour’s sake. That is what Enoch did. He reached out for and laid hold on God’s promise given to Adam, that a Saviour would come from God to deliver men from death and the power of sin into which man had fallen by his own fault and incurred the wrath and displeasure of God. But, if sin be taken away, so Enoch rightly reasoned, then God’s displeasure with man must cease and peace rule again between God and man. In this way, by this faith, Enoch obtained the assurance that he “pleased God” and that God counted him righteous in His sight for the coming Redeemer’s sake. And that is the first reward of the faith that looks to Christ as the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world, it gives believers the assurance, that God’s wrath against the sinner is stilled, that we are now again members of God’s family and heirs of eternal life.

The other reward of faith, as we see it fulfilled in Enoch, is our “taking away”. We read: “*By faith Enoch was taken away so that he would not see death.*” God took him to Himself because of his faith. God has promised redemption from death by the Saviour who was to come. This Enoch believed. He believed in the resurrection of the body from death to everlasting life through the Redeemer, and what he believed, he received; he was taken up into heaven and eternal life, without seeing death. This was a special dispensation of God, intended to comfort and assure believers of all time that God will keep His promise to redeem man from death and the grave to live with God in peace forever.

On the basis of God’s promise we Christians, like Enoch, believe in “the resurrection of the body and in life everlasting,” a belief so astonishing that some churchmen today deny it, claiming that, when a man is dead, he is dead for good; there is nothing to indicate that he will ever see life again. But we, who believe God’s Word and promise like Enoch, are not shaken by such arguments. We know that God’s promise is sure and effective; He cannot lie and deceive, because He is truthful; and His power to do what He has promised is unlimited. Therefore we look forward with joy to the day of our being taken away from this mortal to immortality - faith’s final and wonderful reward.

## COMING SERVICES

25 December Christmas Day	26 December 1 Christmas	1 January 2022 New Year's Day
9.00am TMBA LR 9.00am GRN HC 9.00am LOWOOD LR	8.30am OAK LR 9.00am TMBA LR 9.00am GRN LR 9.30am AUB LR 9.00am MARBURG HC	9.30am AUB HC
<b>Saturday, 25 December</b>		
READINGS: Isaiah 52:7-10; Hebrews 1:1-12; John 1:1-18		
HYMNS: 627 622 634 (26 23 part 1 & part 2 if needed) 625		
<b>Sunday, 26 December</b>		
READINGS: Exodus 13:1-3a, 11-15; Colossians 3:12-17; Luke 2:22-40		
HYMNS: 28 33 27 (628 30) 630		
<b>Saturday, 1 January 2022</b>		
READINGS: Numbers 6:22-27; Galatians 3:23-29; Luke 2:21		
HYMNS: 166 36 161 155 291 514		

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

Saturday, 25 December. Any members who are attending Greenwood, please mark your offering envelopes back to your own congregations.

Pastor will be away from 2 January to 15 January. If there is an emergency during this time, do not hesitate to call. Otherwise, if it isn't urgent, contact your elders.

#### **The Lighting of the Fourth Advent Candle:**

Today we light the fourth candle of Advent. This is the candle of LOVE. Jesus demonstrated self-giving love in His ministry as the Good Shepherd. Advent is a time for kindness, thinking of others, and sharing with others. It is a time to love as God has loved us by giving us His most precious gift. As God is love, let us be love also. From the Gospel of John we hear: *"I am giving you a new Commandment, that you love one another. You also love one another, as I have loved you! By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another"* John 13:34-35.

Let us pray:

**Teach us to love, O Lord. May we always remember to put You first as we follow Christ's footsteps, that we may know Your love and show it in our lives. As we prepare for our celebration of Jesus' birth, also fill our hearts with love for the world, that all may know Your love and the One whom You have sent, Your Son, our Saviour. Amen.**