

Australian Evangelical Lutheran Church
BETHLEHEM TOOWOOMBA, OUR SAVIOUR LOWOOD, ST JOHN'S AUBIGNY,
ST PAUL'S GREENWOOD, TRINITY MARBURG, TRINITY OAKEY
18th August Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

HYMNS: 499 357 364 839 291 416

INTROIT: Psalm 34:12-22

Who is the man who delights in life and loves a long life, that he may see good?

Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceitfully!

Turn away from evil and do what is good! Try to find peace and pursue it!

The eyes of the LORD are on righteous people, and His ears are attentive to their cry.

The face of the LORD is against those who do evil, to cut off the memory of them from the earth.

People have been crying out, and the LORD has been hearing them and has been rescuing them out of all their troubles.

The LORD is near to those who have broken hearts and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

The righteous person has many troubles, but the LORD rescues him from them all.

He protects all his bones. Not one of them is broken.

Evil will kill the wicked person, and those who hate the righteous person will suffer punishment.

The LORD redeems the lives of His servants, and none who take refuge in Him will suffer punishment.

COLLECT:

Almighty God, whom to know is everlasting life, grant us to know Your Son, Jesus, to be the way, the truth, and the life, that we may steadfastly follow His steps in the way that leads to life eternal; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Welcome to all worshipping with us!

Pastor Ziebell can be contacted via phone/text at 0407 583922.

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

Email him at paziebell@gmail.com or to the church office at ddaalc@gmail.com. Pastor is usually in his office Tuesday-Wednesday for anyone who would like to call in. Other days of the week are set aside for visits.

READINGS: Proverbs 9:1-10 The invitation of wisdom.

Ephesians 5:6-21 Live as wise, Spirit-filled people.

John 6:51-69 Jesus' flesh and blood give life.

Proverbs 9:1-10

¹ Wisdom has built her house. She has cut out her seven pillars. ² She has slaughtered her animals. She has mixed her wine. She has also set her table. ³ She has sent out her servant girls. She is calling out on the highest place in the city: ⁴ "Anyone who is gullible should turn in here!" She has been telling the one who lacks sense: ⁵ "Come, people, eat my bread and drink the wine that I have mixed! ⁶ Forsake gullible people and live! Walk straight on the road of understanding!" ⁷ **A person who corrects a mocker gets an insult, and a person who rebukes a wicked person incurs abuse.**

⁸ Do not correct a mocker, that he may not hate you! Correct a wise person, that he may love you!

⁹ Give instruction to a wise person that he may become still wiser! Teach a righteous person that he may increase in insight!

¹⁰ The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

Ephesians 5:6-21

⁶ Do not let anyone deceive you with empty words! For because of these sins God's anger comes on disobedient people. ⁷ Therefore, do not be partners with them! ⁸ For once you were darkness but now you are light in the Lord. Live as people who belong to the light! ⁹ For light produces everything that is good, righteous and true. ¹⁰ Approve what is pleasing to the Lord! ¹¹ Do not have anything to do with the works of darkness, from which no good can come, but instead continue to expose them! ¹² For it is a shame even to mention the things that they do in secret. ¹³ All things that are exposed are made visible by the light. ¹⁴ For everything that is revealed is light. For this reason, it is said: "Wake up, you who sleep! Rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you!" ¹⁵ Therefore, be very careful how you live! Do not live as unwise people but as wise people! ¹⁶ Make the most of every opportunity! For the days are evil. ¹⁷ Therefore, do

not be foolish but understand what the Lord wants! ¹⁸ **Do not get drunk on wine,** which leads to wild living! Instead, be filled with the Spirit! ¹⁹ Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs and sing and make music in your hearts to the Lord! ²⁰ Always give thanks to God the Father for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ! ²¹ Be subordinate to one another out of respect for Christ!

John 6:51-69

⁵¹ I am the living Bread that has come down from heaven. If anyone eats of this Bread, he will live for ever, and the Bread that I shall give is My flesh, for the life of the world.”

⁵² Therefore, the Jews kept arguing sharply with one another: “How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?”

⁵³ Therefore, Jesus told them, “Truly, truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. ⁵⁴ He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I shall raise him up on the last day. ⁵⁵ For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. ⁵⁶ He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood remains in Me, and I in him. ⁵⁷ As the living Father has sent Me, and as I live because of the Father, so that person who feeds on Me will also live because of Me. ⁵⁸ This is the Bread that has come down from heaven. It is not like the bread that the fathers ate, they died. He who eats this Bread will live for ever.”

⁵⁹ He said these things in the synagogue, while He was teaching at Capernaum.

⁶⁰ Therefore, when they heard this, many of His disciples said, “This is a hard statement. Who can listen to it?”

⁶¹ Since Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples were grumbling about this, He asked them, “Does this offend you? ⁶² Then what if you see the Son of Man go up to where He was before? ⁶³ The Spirit is the One who gives life. The sinful human nature is of no help at all. The Words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life. ⁶⁴ However, there are some of you who do not believe.”

For Jesus knew from the beginning who those were who did not believe and the one who would betray Him. ⁶⁵ He went on to say, “That is why I have told you that no one can come to Me unless it has been given to him by My Father.”

⁶⁶ After this, many of His disciples went back and did not walk with Him any longer. ⁶⁷ Therefore, Jesus asked the Twelve, “Surely you too do not want to go away?”

⁶⁸ Simon Peter answered Him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the Words of eternal life. ⁶⁹ We have come to believe and know that You are the Holy One of God.”

WHAT IS WISDOM?

Sermon for the 13th Sunday after Pentecost 2024 Proverbs 9:1-10, Ephesians 5:6-21, and John 6:51-69

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is based on all three of our readings today, Proverbs 9:1-10, Ephesians 5:6-21, and John 6:51-69:

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth, Your Word is truth. Amen.
Dear friends in Christ,

Proverbs 11:30 says, “*The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and whoever captures souls is wise.*” Solomon speaks of “a tree of life,” and the last chapter of the Bible speaks of the tree of life in paradise (Revelation 22:2, 14, 19). This is the final inheritance of the righteous that is received from Jesus Himself. Jesus is the wisdom and power of God.¹

This is the theme that runs through all our readings for today. Our First Reading from Proverbs is *the call of wisdom to walk in the way of insight*. The Second Reading from Ephesians calls us to *walk as children of the light and to look carefully at how we walk, not as unwise but as wise*. And in the Holy Gospel for today, from John 6, we learn *where to go to find this wisdom for our walk by coming to the One who has the words of eternal life*. Here is wisdom. Let’s now spend some time in the Word of God, looking at wisdom.

Where does wisdom begin? As we continue our walk to eternal life, where does wisdom fit in?

Our First Reading from Proverbs tells us. In fact, wisdom herself, wisdom personified, calls out and says to the one who lacks sense, “**Come, people, eat my bread and drink the wine that I have mixed! ⁶ Forsake gullible people and live! Walk straight on the road of understanding!**”

Wisdom starts with a call to repentance. It’s recognising that we lack sense, that we lack insight, that we lack the wisdom we need for our walk. True wisdom requires a healthy dose of humility and being open to correction. “**Correct a wise person, that he may love you! ⁹ Give instruction to a wise person that he may become still wiser! Teach a righteous person that he may increase in insight!**”

I am sure that we could all use some help as we live our lives, walking as children of God. We can’t look inwardly at ourselves. We must admit that we don’t have it all together but are open to growing and learning. We ask the Lord to open our ears to hear His Word. We admit our faults, confess our sins, and ask to receive wisdom for our walk.

¹ 1 Corinthians 1:24

Where does wisdom begin? Proverbs tells us: “**The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom.**” What is meant by “*the fear of the LORD*”?

Well, certainly, in the broad sense, it means awe and reverence for the LORD. It definitely means that we know who the LORD is. We know that He is the One who has made the heavens and the earth. We know that He is the only true God, and all other gods are idols. We know that the LORD is the God who has revealed Himself in His Word, who has acted in history to save and deliver His people, and so on. The fear of the LORD begins with that basic recognition of who God is. But it is more than that. The fear of the LORD means that we take God *seriously*. It means that we take His Word seriously, both His commands and His promises. It means that we take His threats and His wrath seriously, as well as His love and His mercy and His blessings. The fear of the LORD means that we do not casually dismiss or ignore what He says and does.

And so it is with that understanding of the fear of the LORD that our reading from Ephesians begins.

St. Paul has just counselled against a number of sins that exemplify the lost and foolish ways of the world, such as sexual immorality, impurity, and covetousness. And then he warns us, saying, “**Do not let anyone deceive you with empty words! For because of these sins God’s anger comes on disobedient people.**” Paul takes seriously the wrath of God against unrepentant sinners, and that is a sign of wisdom to do that. Let us do likewise, recognising that God’s judgment is real, and His wrath will fall on the disobedient.

As Christians, we are called to put those worldly ways behind us. God has given us a better way to walk, which is different from the ways of the people of this world. Paul writes: “**Therefore, do not be partners with them!** ⁸ **For once you were darkness but now you are light in the Lord. Live as people who belong to the light!** ⁹ **For light produces everything that is good, righteous and true.** ¹⁰ **Approve what is pleasing to the Lord!**” The ways of the world are darkness. The people of this world are groping around in the dark, lost, blind, and not knowing God. And there would we be, too, according to our sinful nature.

But God has called us out of darkness into His marvellous light.² It is the light of Christ, who is the light of the world, who gives life and light to our souls and to our senses. In Christ, we know God for who He truly is. We know Him as the God of mercy, who forgives our sins freely for Christ’s sake. We have light to see our way forward. In our baptism, we have been enlightened by the Holy Spirit, who gives us the gift of faith and the gift of a new life, to walk now in God’s ways, the way of wisdom. Therefore, Paul writes, “**Wake up, you who sleep! Rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you!**” It’s time to stop sleepwalking. It’s time to walk with eyes wide open in the light that Christ provides.

² 1 Peter 2:9

This walking in the light will take specific shape in the things we put behind us and avoid and in the things we say and do and think now, as the new people we are in Christ. That's what Paul gets at next: **“Therefore, be very careful how you live! Do not live as unwise people but as wise people! ¹⁶ Make the most of every opportunity! For the days are evil. ¹⁷ Therefore, do not be foolish but understand what the Lord wants! ¹⁸ Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to wild living! Instead, be filled with the Spirit! ¹⁹ Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs and sing and make music in your hearts to the Lord! ²⁰ Always give thanks to God the Father for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ! ²¹ Be subordinate to one another out of respect for Christ!”** (5:15-21).

Drunkenness, debauchery, things like that - that's the way of the world. Those things belong to the old sinful nature and not to our new nature in Christ. We put those things behind us when we were *baptised*. God has called us out of darkness and into His light. To walk in the new way of Christ - that is wisdom. It is a life led by the Holy Spirit, who will lead us on paths of righteousness. It is a walk of joy, the Spirit filling our hearts with the joy of the Lord, which will then find expression in how we sing, talk, and think. Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs will come off our tongues in worship and gratitude.

Now, if I were just to tell you, *“Walk in the way of wisdom by avoiding sin and walking in righteousness,”* that may be good advice, but you would not have the power or the strength to carry it out. You would compare your life and all the ways you fall short, and you would feel the prick of your sins nagging in your conscience, and I'd just be piling guilt and despair on you as you contemplate the wrath of God against sinners and you see how you're one of them, for you surely do not measure up. Well, guess what? Neither do I. Neither does anyone here today. We all are sinners in need of forgiveness and help. ***We need Jesus Christ to find wisdom and forgiveness and strength and light for our way.***

And these are what Jesus comes to bring. He gives us food for our souls, light from above, and even the words of eternal life. Today we hear the ending of Jesus' Bread of Life discourse, which we've been hearing the last couple of weeks. **“I am the living Bread that has come down from heaven,”** Jesus says. **“If anyone eats of this Bread, he will live for ever, and the Bread that I shall give is My flesh, for the life of the world.”**

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has come down from heaven to give life to the world, to give life to us poor sinners. He gives us this life by giving His own life, giving His own flesh for us on the cross, shedding His blood for our forgiveness. He bore our sins in His body on the tree. This is how He redeemed us, purchased and won us from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil. Now, we are free to live as God's beloved children, redeemed by Christ and filled with the Spirit. We have a new life ahead of us - indeed, *eternal life*. When Christ comes again, He will raise us up on the Last Day. This changes everything. This puts our life in a new perspective. We have a new identity, a new power to live, and a sure hope for our eternal future.

But we have this life and this hope *only as we feed on Christ*. There is no other way. And so some people find this to be a hard saying, and they turn away from following Christ and no longer walk with Him. Which way will you go? Will you grumble? Will you take offence? Or, on the contrary, will you recognise your need and recognise in Jesus, the One who meets your need and gives to you so freely? For that is the way of faith, that is the way of wisdom, to come to Jesus and to receive from Him. Jesus asked His disciples, “Are you going to be like those people who just walked away, or are you going to stay and continue following as my disciples?” And Peter answered and said, **“Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the Words of eternal life.”** A wise answer! For only Jesus has the words of eternal life. Only Jesus can give life, real life, true life, new life, eternal life.

Our Lord says to us today: **“He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I shall raise him up on the last day. ⁵⁵ For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. ⁵⁶ He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood remains in Me, and I in him. ⁵⁷ As the living Father has sent Me, and as I live because of the Father, so that person who feeds on Me will also live because of Me.”**

Here is our way-bread, strength for our journey, and wisdom for our walk. It is Jesus Himself - Christ, the wisdom and power of God - Christ Jesus, whom God made our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Do you desire wisdom for your walk? Then come to Jesus, trust in Him, and He will walk with you. Amen.

The peace of God which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

PRAYER FOR THE THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

O Lord, we thank You for all Your goodness to us, but especially for the gift of Your Word and for the knowledge that we have of You through its message. We thank You for teaching us Your commandments, but, far more, we thank You for showing Yourself and Your limitless grace to us in Jesus Christ Your Son. Enable us to listen to Him in faith and to obey Him in love.

Send forth Your Word into our world today. Open doors of opportunity for us, and equip us to be active witnesses to Your Gospel, so that more and more may come to know Jesus Christ. Sow Your Word in the hearts and minds of people everywhere. Change their blindness to sight. Change their enslavement to sin, Satan, and death into the freedom that Christ alone gives.

Heavenly Father, let Your Word, as a living power, judge the thoughts and desires of our hearts. Increase our knowledge of what is good, and strengthen us to examine ourselves, amend our lives, and give up our pet sins. Grant that, through feeding on Jesus, the Son of Man, we may remain in Him, and He in us, and that, remaining in Him, we may be guided by His Word, and bring forth abundant fruit.

Let Your Word shine in our homes, that parents and children may live together in love, serve one another in kindness, and experience true joy, both in this life and the one to come.

Give the Spirit of Christ to all who are facing sickness, sorrow, hardship or need. Grant that they may find You quick to strengthen and bless them, and lead them to praise You for doing everything well.

Continue to keep us by the power of Your Holy Spirit; comfort us by Your Gospel, and sustain us by Your love.

This we pray in the name of Jesus, who gave Himself for us, that we might live through Him, and praise You for ever and ever. Amen.

Article: The LCA and the LM-A

Once again, women's ordination will be the main topic of conversation at the upcoming synod of the LCA (4-7 October). The LCA has released a document entitled "The Way Forward." This document basically states that the LCA can be one church with two practices of ordination. The following comes from a summary of the Way Forward Framework...

Impasse: Despite more than three decades of theological study and debate within the Lutheran Church of Australia and New Zealand (LCANZ), we remain divided on whether or not the Scriptures permit the ordination of women. There remain two widely held views on ordination within the Church.

2. Towards a way forward: At the 2023 in-person sessions of the 2021-23 Convention of General Synod, delegates voted by a strong majority to direct General Church Board and College of Bishops (GCB- CoB) to find a way for us to operate as 'one church with two different practices of ordination' and to report back with a detailed framework to the 2024 General Pastors Conference and General Synod. The Way Forward project appointed by GCB-CoB has diligently worked through the theological, constitutional and governance requirements to allow this directive to be accomplished.

3. The framework: The Way Forward Detailed Framework (Framework) offers an approach whereby both practices of ordination can exist within the LCA. The Framework has five key parts:

Part A: The Church makes the commitment to maintain its identity and form.

Part B: The Church changes its teaching to allow for the ordination of women and men.

Part C: The Church makes a commitment to pastors and pastoral ministry candidates that they will continue to be received and welcomed by the whole church in a respectful environment.

Part D: The Church makes a commitment to congregations and parishes that they may call a pastor who best aligns with their ministry plans.

Part E: The Church introduces a tenure-based provision for nomination for the roles of bishop and assistant bishop.

“One church with two different practices of ordination” simply will not work. The Lord has clearly stated in His Word (1 Corinthians 14:33-39; 1 Timothy 2:11-12) that women are not to be ordained into the public ministry of the Gospel. Nevertheless, the LCA will ordain women. It will become a church divided (if it isn’t already).

There are those in the LCA, both pastors and laymen, who are afraid, for various reasons, to publicly denounce this horrible, ungodly teaching. However, these people will have to decide what is most important to them: loyalty to a man-made synod that teaches doctrine contrary to what they have been taught, or the Word of Christ.

In preparation for the fallout of this resolution, a group of laymen from the LCA established the LM-A (Lutheran Mission of Australia), which is based in Victoria. Pastor Matthew Anker has since resigned from the LCA and accepted the position of superintendent of the LM-A. They envisage that there will be those who will leave the LCA after October’s synod and hope that the LM-A will become an alternative church for them to attend.

The LM-A has been releasing bits and pieces of statements regarding what they believe and confess. While it is impossible at the moment to judge all that the LM-A confesses, as time goes on, more statements will be released for us to look through.

I have been in contact with the LM-A’s founding members, and this dialogue will continue. It would be good if we could continue to help guide them and offer advice.

The LM-A has now announced a series of forums to be held across the east coast of Australia. One such forum will be held at Redeemer Lutheran Church, Toowoomba, at 2.00pm on Sunday, August 25. This forum is open to all who would like to attend. I have been invited to attend, and the LM-A has also asked to meet privately after the forum.

Children's Message:

Have you ever received an invitation from someone? What's an invitation? An invitation says someone would like me to come to something they're offering - like maybe a birthday party invitation. That kind of invitation is nice, but we have another invitation today. Do you know what it is? This is



a very special invitation, and it's written for us in the Bible. Listen to these words from Proverbs: *"Wisdom has built her house. She has cut out her seven pillars. ² She has slaughtered her animals. She has mixed her wine. She has also set her table. ³ She has sent out her servant girls. She is calling out on the highest place in the city: ⁴ "Anyone who is gullible should turn in here!" She has been telling the one who lacks sense: ⁵ "Come, people, eat my bread and drink the wine that I have mixed! ⁶ Forsake gullible people and live! Walk straight on the road of understanding!"* (Proverbs 9:1-6).

Do you know who that invitation is from? It says it's from wisdom. Wisdom is preparing a house for company. One of life's more enjoyable experiences is getting together with friends and relatives for dinner. But there is one more important feast than earthly, physical food. Do you know what it is? Jesus Himself tells us! He says, *"Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God"* (Matthew 4:4). Wisdom invites us to feast on God's Word - by going to church and reading and sharing the Word at home and with friends.

Jesus invites us to come and receive a gift from Him. It's like a great big party, and the prize that you get is to know Him and to love Him forever and ever. Does that sound like a good invitation? What makes this invitation better than all those other ones? This invitation is not just for a few people. It's for everyone. And it doesn't just last for a week or a year. It lasts forever. And it doesn't cost you anything at all. It gives you everything because Jesus paid for it by dying on the cross. Would you like to say yes to an invitation like that?

Then let's pray. *Dearest Jesus, thank You for inviting me to know You. Please send Your Holy Spirit so that I may grow up more and more in faith and know and love You better. Amen.*

WEEKLY ANNOUNCEMENTS

25 August 14 Pentecost	1 September 15 Pentecost	8 September 16 Pentecost
8.30am OAK LR 9.00am TMBA LR 9.30am GRN LR 9.30am AUB LR 9.00am LOWOOD LR	8.30am OAK LR 9.00am TMBA LR 9.00am GRN LR 9.30am AUB LR 9.00am MARBURG LR	8.30am OAK HC 9.00am TMBA LR 9.30am AUB LR 10.15am GRN HC 9.00am LOWOOD LR
Sunday, 25 August		
READINGS: Isaiah 29:11-19; Ephesians 5:22-33; Mark 7:1-13		
HYMNS: 464 259 266 152		
Sunday, 1 September		
READINGS: Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-9; Ephesians 6:10-20; Mark 7:14-23		
HYMNS: 520 329 326 458		
Sunday, 8 September		
READINGS: Isaiah 35:4-7a; James 2:1-10; 14-18; Mark 7:31-37		
HYMNS: 16 450 818 (335 848) 618		

Saturday, August 24, 7.00pm, YAY (Young Adults and Youth) is on at Aubigny. The hall will be open for games and socialising from 6:30pm. All young adults and youth are most welcome to attend. Please remember to bring your Bible and something for supper.

Pastor is taking holidays from August 19 to September 2. If there is an emergency during this time, please contact your elders.

There will be NO Bible Studies through August.