



DAILY DEVOTIONS

A thought to comfort and encourage you



Light Lutheran Church
Pastor Geoff Kuchel

May 2026
Sunday 24th - Sunda 31st

This week's Devotions are by Mark Lieschke

Mark Lieschke is a retired pastor living on the Sunshine Coast in Queensland and is a member of Immanuel Lutheran Church Buderim. He served in parishes in Adelaide SA, Palmerston North and Marton in New Zealand and Wagga Wagga NSW (school and congregation), before being elected as bishop of the LCANZ's New South Wales District. He and his wife, Meredith, have four children (two of whom live in Canada) and two grandchildren. Mark enjoys spending time with family and friends, travelling, walking on the beach and resting.



LUTHERAN CHURCH

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A THOUGHT TO COMFORT AND ENCOURAGE YOU



PEACE BE WITH YOU

By Mark Lieschke

Again Jesus said, 'Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.' And with that he breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit' (John 20:21,22).

Read [John 20:19–23](#)

The Christian faith is rejected by most people in the world today. Its truths are no longer generally believed or followed. And it can seem to many, both outside and even to some within the church, that the Christian faith is no longer the power it once was or an effective force in the world.

Maybe, in the back of our minds, there's the same nagging suspicion. We look around us and see the many other things in the world that influence people, and we can wonder just what kind of influence the church has today. Has it lost its power? Have we lost our way? Are we becoming more and more of a lost cause?

On the day Jesus rose from the grave, the disciples gathered behind closed doors, and there was a good deal of confusion in *their* minds.

Their hopes about participating in a glorious kingdom lay shattered; their Lord and friend had been put to death. The years they had spent following and listening to him may have seemed wasted.

But when Jesus appeared and stood in the middle of them and said, 'Peace be with you', their fear was changed into joy. Doubt and confusion were transformed into belief. Despair and anxiety were replaced by excitement and a desire to share what they had seen and heard.

A change took place within them that would have a lasting impact on their lives, and in turn, on the lives of millions of others.

That power is still at work – despite what we may see and experience. The Holy Spirit continues to come today to empower, encourage, equip, transform, strengthen and motivate us.

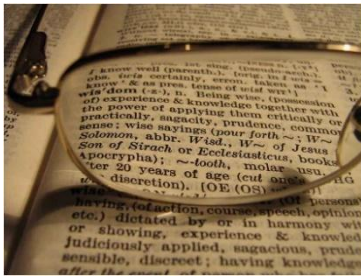
The peace of the Lord Jesus be with you today. May your life be enriched as you receive this peace. And may the Holy Spirit give you courage as Jesus sends you to share that peace.

Merciful God, your Son Jesus Christ is the resurrection and the life, who gives hope and joy even as we live and serve in a world that can seem to oppose us at every turn. Fill us with your Holy Spirit and empower us to share your peace with those around us, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THOUGHT TO COMFORT AND ENCOURAGE YOU

WHO AM I?

By Mark Lieschke



They will be called the Holy People, the Redeemed of the Lord; and you will be called Sought After, the City No Longer Deserted (Isaiah 62:12).

Read [Isaiah 62:1-12](#)

What a tremendous reminder! Prophesied by Isaiah hundreds of years before, come to fruition with the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, convinced of this truth by the Holy Spirit, you and I can be confident that we are special people.

Just think of what we are called: 'a crown of splendour', 'a royal diadem', 'no longer deserted', 'the Lord's delight', 'Holy People', 'the Redeemed of the Lord'.

God rejoices over us. And he doesn't keep quiet about the people he loves! 'For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, for Jerusalem's sake I will not remain quiet' (Isaiah 62:1). Zion and Jerusalem are references to the people of God's church. And he wants his love and devotion to be shouted all over the world.

What is most remarkable is why he loves us. God didn't fall in love with us because of the wonderful qualities and upstanding characteristics he found in us. In fact, there is nothing righteous of our own in us.

God loves the people of his church, despite our sins and imperfections. This inexplicable love for sinners is what caused Jesus to give his life for us on the cross. In Christ, our sins have been forgiven. We have been credited with his righteousness. And it is this righteousness that makes us so attractive to the Father.

Because of Jesus, God delights in us. What an extraordinary fact!

Celebrate that again today. Rejoice in who you are. Praise God for his grace in and through Jesus Christ.

Loving Father, we stand in awe of what you have done for us in Jesus Christ. May your Holy Spirit continue to convince us of this truth and inspire us to share this incredible news with those around us, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

A THOUGHT TO COMFORT AND ENCOURAGE YOU



ANOTHER PENTECOST NEEDED?

By Mark Lieschke

And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions (Joel 2:28).

Read [Joel 2:28–32a](#)

In his sermon on the day of Pentecost, the Apostle Peter quotes these words from the prophet Joel. Pentecost in Acts 2 was the outpouring of the Holy Spirit among believers, fulfilling Joel's prophecy and marking what is usually called the birth of the church.

The Holy Spirit has come, is with us and will remain in God's people until Jesus returns. While we may desire the Spirit to work more powerfully and want to be more open to his influence in our lives, we can be confident that he is at work in our lives every day. As Christians, as people who are 'in Christ', we have the Holy Spirit. We couldn't be Christians if we didn't have the Spirit. "No one can say Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit' (1 Corinthians 12:3). The Holy Spirit is not a feeling or an experience. He's a person who lives in every believer.

So, we don't have to sit around and wait for a 'move of the Spirit'. For those in Christ, the Spirit is already present. We are Spirit-filled right now.

Wanting another Pentecost suggests that the first Pentecost wasn't enough. It wasn't sufficient. Joel's prophecy needs updating!

After Peter quoted Joel's words, he immediately pointed his hearers to Jesus. He spoke about his life, death and resurrection. That's the prime work of the Holy Spirit – pointing us to Jesus.

The response from the people: 'Brothers, what shall we do?' Peter replied, 'Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'

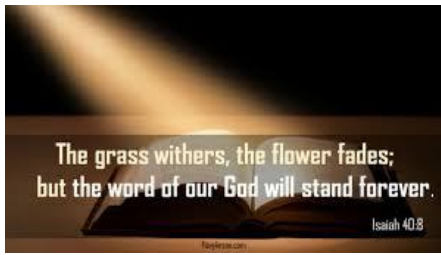
They received the Holy Spirit. We have received that same Spirit. And with that Spirit, we are enabled, equipped and encouraged to live as the Spirit-filled people that we are, pointing others to Jesus.

Gracious God, you promised to pour out your Spirit on all people. We thank you for keeping your word and filling us with your Spirit. Empower us by your Spirit to be witnesses of your grace to the world. In Jesus' name, Amen

A THOUGHT TO COMFORT AND ENCOURAGE YOU

BEING WITH JESUS

By Mark Lieschke



When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realised that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus (Acts 4:13).

Read [Acts 4:5–21](#)

What a change there was in Peter! Just a couple of months earlier, he had been scared to death, deserting Jesus while he was on trial for his life and pretending he didn't even know him. Not long after, Peter spoke to the very same people who had Jesus crucified. He told it like it was – that, though they killed Jesus, God raised him from the dead, and now Jesus was the only source of salvation for everyone on earth.

That wasn't the kind of thing the leaders expected to hear from Galilean fishermen – either Peter or John! What could give them courage like that? Luke tells us: 'They recognised that they had been with Jesus.'

Peter and John were different from what they once were – because they had been with Jesus, the one who loved them so much he gave his life for them on the cross. They had spent three years living with him, seeing what kind of a person Jesus was – his daily patient, gracious love; his hardworking endurance as he cared for the crowds; his kindness to the people nobody else cared about.

They saw him walk steadfastly to his death. And they saw him alive after God raised him from the dead – and so they knew that Jesus was in fact the true Son of God, the Saviour of the world. In his hands, they were safe forever.

And that's true for us, too – because we also belong to Jesus. As we spend time with him in his word, in holy communion and in service, we discover the way he feels about us – the faithful love he has for us and the delight he takes in us. We come to realise more and more that he will never leave us or let us down. And that gives us courage to live for him, too.

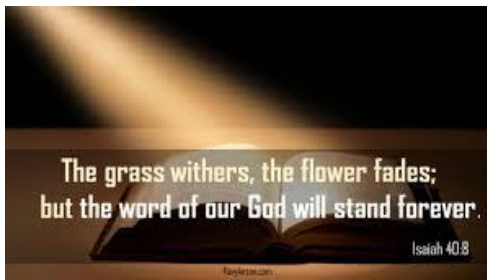
We have been with Jesus, and that means we are new people – children of God, sharing his message with the world.

Lord God, Heavenly Father, we thank you for the gift of your word and the gospel of salvation. Grant that we, like Peter and John, may never be ashamed of the name of Jesus. Give us the boldness to speak of your grace in our homes, workplaces and community, trusting that your Spirit works through our confession. Protect your church from the pressures of the world. In Jesus' name, Amen

A THOUGHT TO COMFORT AND ENCOURAGE YOU

BEING BOLD

By Mark Lieschke



Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness (Acts 4:29).

Read [Acts 4:23–31](#)

I wouldn't describe myself as being bold. I really don't take too many risks. I'm careful, cautious and restrained. I'm not a person who 'lives on the edge'. I have, at times, opened packets of biscuits from the end that says to 'open other end'. But that might be the extent of my daring!

So, when it comes to adapting to change, being open to new ventures and especially sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ, I have been hesitant. It's been my 'job' to share the good news for many years. It's what I was paid to do. So, I had to do it. But in the back of my mind, I knew that wasn't the right motivation.

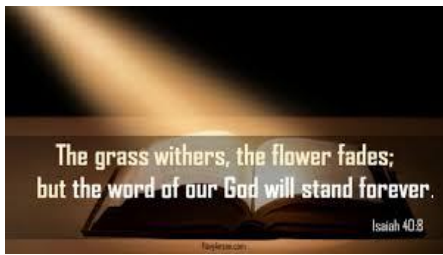
However, in doing it, I became much more confident. God's Holy Spirit was at work, even when there was questionable motivation, even when I stayed silent, even when I doubted my ability. God was at work. There was gentle (and not-so-gentle, at times) pushing, opportunities to learn and grow, and inspiration and encouragement from people around me.

The journey continues for me. Boldness to share the good news of Jesus Christ will always be something I strive for. And I have the confidence that the Holy Spirit will continue to grow, challenge, comfort and equip me.

I continue to be blown away by the courage of Peter and John. They stood up in the face of rejection, imprisonment and threat of death. They prayed that they would be able to speak with boldness. And 'after they prayed ... they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly' (Acts 4:31).

That's my prayer and my prayer for all believers. That the Holy Spirit will continue to fill us with his power, so that we can grow in our courage to speak the word of God boldly. *Holy Spirit, renew me again today. Refresh me, encourage me, make me bold. Give me all I need so that I can reflect the heart of Jesus in all I do and say. Thank you for giving me all I need to point people to Jesus. In his name I pray. Amen*

A THOUGHT TO COMFORT AND ENCOURAGE YOU



WHAT HAPPENED TO SIMON?

By Mark Lieschke

Then Simon answered, 'Pray to the Lord for me so that nothing you have said may happen to me' (Acts 8:24).

Read [Acts 8:14-25](#)

What happened to Simon? He came to Peter and John after seeing them place their hands on people and then receiving the Holy Spirit. And he wanted to be able to do the same.

While he may have had good intentions, his offer of money to buy this power was met with a stern rebuke from Peter and a call for him to repent. Simon's response was 'Pray to the Lord for me so that nothing you have said may happen to me' (Acts 8:24).

And then nothing more about Simon. What happened to him? And what happened to the man with leprosy and the paralytic that Jesus healed, the centurion and his daughter, the widow and her son, the woman who anointed Jesus, the demon-possessed man, Jairus and his daughter, and the woman who touched Jesus' cloak? We don't know. It would be great to hear these stories, the kind of experiences they may have had and how their witness may have influenced others. But there is silence. What we do have is a glimpse of one particular time in their lives when they were touched by Jesus and/or his Holy Spirit. That's what is most important.

Our stories are important. Whether they include the miraculous or seem to be rather ordinary, they are stories of how the Holy Spirit has worked and is working within us. We can celebrate, give thanks for and share those stories with others.

And central to those stories is the Spirit's work – his influence, encouragement, equipping, strengthening and empowering. We are the recipients of his gifts. We are the work of his hands. We are people enabled to love, serve and care.

Thank you, Holy Spirit, for working in the lives of many people over the ages. Thanks for your presence in our lives today. Touch us so that today our hearts can burn with a desire to reflect Jesus. Give us joy as we serve. In Jesus' name. Amen.

A THOUGHT TO COMFORT AND ENCOURAGE YOU



GOD'S MASTERPIECE

By Mark Lieschke

What is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them? You have made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honour (Psalm 8:4,5).

Read [Psalm 8](#)

God the Father, the great artist, once created a masterpiece. This world was crafted by him – and it was perfect. But the masterpiece was wrecked. Instead of it being what it was intended to be, it became a place of brokenness, tragedy, greed, abuse, crime, terror, war, pain and distress of every imaginable kind.

But the Father didn't give up on what he loved. He knew what seemed beyond repair could be restored, so he put a plan in place to restore this world and us to its original glory.

That plan was put into effect by Jesus. Jesus came, and by his death and resurrection made it possible for people's lives and this world to be transformed and restored.

It cost him his life, but he was prepared to pay that price so that God's original plan for his people and his creation might be a reality once again. That plan is an ongoing one. It won't be completed until Jesus comes to this world again.

We're a special, precious part of God's masterpiece. We're the crowning glory of God's creation.

We're part of a creation that has been torn apart, and we have to live with the consequences of that. But through the painstaking and sacrificial work of the master artist's only son, we're privileged to be a part of a restoration process that's continuing today.

We've been called and chosen by God to be part of a team, with him and with each other, that's working to bring peace and harmony here, and so give people a glimpse, a taste of what they can enjoy in heaven.

Despite our sin, failures, mess-ups, frustrations, fears, doubts and disillusionments, God still comes to us in Jesus to assure us that we are a treasure to him. And that one day we will live with him in the fully restored, magnificent, new creation in heaven.

Lord God and Father, we are filled with awe and wonder at your magnificent creation and your boundless love for humanity. Your name is majestic in all the earth, and your glory is displayed in the heavens above. Thank you for revealing yourself to us and for inviting us into relationship with you. May our lives reflect your glory and your goodness to the world around us. Amen

A THOUGHT TO COMFORT AND ENCOURAGE YOU



STRAP IN! YOU'VE GOT THE JOB!

By Sal Huckel

Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations' (Matthew 28:18,19a).

Read [Matthew 28:16–20](#)

The Great Commission! What a job! Whatever our gifts and talents, we all get the same job description from Jesus' instructions in the final chapter of the Gospel of Matthew. Whatever age or walk of life you are from, here are your instructions! Go and make disciples of all nations, baptise them, and teach them to obey 'everything I have commanded you', says Jesus. Not only that, but this instruction also comes from the top. The 'top, top'! Jesus has all authority in heaven and on earth. There's no override, no way out, and no exceptions, whatever we feel are our limitations.

As Lutherans, we take the command to baptise in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit very seriously. Are we as familiar with the practice of 'discipleship'? I've had the privilege of being discipled by older women in the faith, and I've been privileged to mentor and disciple other women myself, as well as, together with my husband, our own children. The harvest is plentiful, and the labourers are few. Discipleship is not only in the remit of pastors.

Who is there in your life, either new to the faith or not yet 'of the faith', whom you can disciple or teach, in accordance with the instructions God has given to you through the Great Commission?

Jesus also says, 'Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another' (John 13:34). We display our involvement in the Great Commission whenever – and wherever – we follow this command. However, we also need to go out, make disciples, teach the faith and labour in kingdom work. How do we do that? Tune in tomorrow as we find out some of the ways.

Lord, I accept the Great Commission as your call on my life, wherever I am, whatever I am doing, to labour in your kingdom vineyard. To bring the news of your love and gospel message to those who need it. To teach and disciple those around me who need to learn more of you, whatever my material or worldly circumstances. Please show me who needs to learn more about you. Help me fulfil my role in your kingdom. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Sal is the wife of Matthew, pastor at Moorabbin–Dandenong Lutheran Church and assistant bishop of the LCA Vic–Tas District. They are blessed with six children who all love and serve the Lord in their different walks of life, from high school to post-grad. Sal is currently studying a master's degree in counselling practice. She loves writing, speaking and walking to the beach at any opportunity

PSALM 121

*I look up to the
mountains.*

*Does my strength come
from the mountains?*

No!

*My strength comes from
God.*

*He made heaven,
and earth,
and the mountains.*

*Your guardian God will
not fall asleep.*

Not on your life!

*Israel's Guardian will
never doze nor sleep.*

*God is your Guardian,
right at your side to
protect you:*

*shielding you from
sunstroke and sheltering
you from moon-stroke.*

*God guards you from
every evil.*

He guards your very life.

*The Lord keeps watch
over you as you come
and as you go.*

A LETTER

FROM THE PASTOR

BUILDING A SAFE COMMUNITY

This Sunday is the Sunday we focus on our mission in the community. One of our means of reaching people in our community is through the opportunities we have to support ministry in schools, government schools in particular. In the north we provide support for Pastoral Care Workers at the two Kapunda schools. In the south, we support and encourage Pastoral Care Workers at the Roseworthy and Wasley's schools. And at Freeling we are involved in the Breakfast Club. There were also some encouraging relationships forged by both Carli and Astrid with the Wellbeing seminars also involving students from the Freeling school. Today, both Carli and Astrid are sharing with us their role in caring for vulnerable children in their schools.

We are also using this Sunday as an opportunity to focus on how we are attempting to build a safe community, not only for our children, but for all vulnerable people. This is critical in the light of a history of abuse which has tormented the church and those have been victims of spiritual, emotional, physical and sexual abuse.

My focus this Sunday will be on Jesus as our safe place, our safe person. In the past when we have talked of making ourselves safe, there have been different images, most of them directly out of the Old Testament.

The Lord is my Refuge and Strength.... The God of Jacob is my Fortress! (Psalm 46). We sing the Reformation Battle Hymn: A mighty Fortress is our God.

Psalm 18 uses a number of images, both military and personal: "The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold."

The image that King David first penned is the one that I have often called on: The Lord is my shepherd. In that song the safe place that we need, the safe person that we need, is framed in the shape of a person, a shepherd. Jesus takes that image when he talks about the role he has in our lives.

But there is an even more comfortable image that Jesus uses. "I call you friends." Jesus speaks to his disciples in this way to encourage them to be confident in his presence. In John 15 Jesus is changing the framework of the disciples' relationship with him, from one of obedience alone, to a relationship of intimacy, trust, love and mutual commitment.

It is Jesus' claim on us as his friends which guarantees our safety and comfort in a place that is fraught with danger.

Your shepherd-servant and brother in Christ.

Pastor Geoff