



**GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH**

**OF SOUTH BURNABY, BC**

**EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA**

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**Christ the King Sunday**

**November 24, 2024**

**ELW Holy Communion, Setting 10**

Even after Israel had experienced the vagaries of kings, the people still longed for a true king to set things right. He would have the king's title of Anointed One (Messiah); he would be the "one like a human being" (Son of Man) given dominion in Daniel's vision. Jesus is given these titles, even though he is nothing like an earthly king. His authority comes from the truth to which he bears witness, and those who recognize the truth voluntarily listen to him. We look forward to the day he is given dominion, knowing his victory will be the nonviolent victory of love.

A warm welcome to those who are here worshipping in-person and on-line with us today! Here at Grace Lutheran we believe God is active in your life. Even you being here now is testament of God's calling and leading in your heart, which you have faithfully heeded. So we welcome you, and pray that today you will be nurtured and that the gifts that God has graciously given you will be stirred for the sake of God's mission in the world.

Grace Lutheran worships, prays, and serves on the traditional and unceded lands and territories of the hən̓q̓əmin̓əŋ (Musqueam) and Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) peoples.

## GATHERING

### CALL TO WORSHIP

We gather in the name of Jesus, our Lord and King, who is robed in majesty and armed with strength, the one who created the world and who cannot be moved. For since the beginning of time, this everlasting throne has been established and we have been welcomed to be citizens of this kingdom full of God's might, God's grace, and God's love. So we worship and bow down before the Lord our God who is true and sure and holy, forever and forevermore. **Amen.**

**Thanks be to God.**

**GATHERING HYMN:** Crown Him with Many Crowns (#855)

### GREETING

The reigning grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the sovereign love of God, and the identifying fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

**CANTICLE OF PRAISE** (p. 204)

### PRAYER OF THE DAY

Eternally ruling God, Jesus showed us how true power is found in humble and loving service to you and neighbour and you reveal your reign of peace through us and our communities. Give us all the will and strength to see you present in our lives, giving us every good and perfect gift and filling us with your redeeming love, through Christ and by the power of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

## WORD

### FIRST READING: Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14

A reading from Daniel.

*To the community for whom this passage was written, it seemed as though the oppression they were experiencing would never end. Daniel's message is: It shall end. The Ancient One, who is judge, will call all nations to account and will give dominion to "one like a human being," the Messiah.*

<sup>9</sup> As I watched,  
thrones were set in place,  
and an Ancient One took his throne;  
his clothing was white as snow  
and the hair of his head like pure wool;  
his throne was fiery flames,  
and its wheels were burning fire.

<sup>10</sup> A stream of fire issued  
and flowed out from his presence.  
A thousand thousands served him,  
and ten thousand times ten thousand stood attending him.  
The court sat in judgment,  
and the books were opened.

<sup>13</sup> As I watched in the night visions,  
I saw one like a human being  
coming with the clouds of heaven.  
And he came to the Ancient One

and was presented before him.  
<sup>14</sup> To him was given dominion  
and glory and kingship,  
that all peoples, nations, and languages  
should serve him.  
His dominion is an everlasting dominion  
that shall not pass away,  
and his kingship is one  
that shall never be destroyed.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**PSALM: Psalm 93**

<sup>1</sup> The LORD is king, robed in majesty; the LORD is robed in majesty and armed with strength.  
The LORD has made the world so sure that it cannot be moved.  
<sup>2</sup> **Ever since the world began, your throne has been established;  
you are from everlasting.**  
<sup>3</sup> The waters have lifted up, O LORD, the waters have lifted up their voice;  
the waters have lifted up their pounding waves.  
<sup>4</sup> **Mightier than the sound of many waters, mightier than the breakers of the sea,  
mightier is the LORD who dwells on high.**  
<sup>5</sup> Your testimonies are very sure,  
and holiness befits your house, O LORD, forever and forevermore.

**SECOND READING: Revelation 1:4b-8**

A reading from Revelation.

*The book of Revelation begins by celebrating the Almighty God, who spans all of time. Similarly, Jesus is celebrated as the firstborn from the dead who rules over the world's rulers. He is the one whose return we eagerly await.*

<sup>4b</sup> Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, <sup>5</sup> and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth.

To him who loves us and freed us from our sins by his blood <sup>6</sup> and made us a kingdom, priests serving his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

<sup>7</sup> Look! He is coming with the clouds;  
every eye will see him,  
even those who pierced him,  
and all the tribes of the earth will wail on account of him.

So it is to be. Amen.

<sup>8</sup> "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (p. 205)**

## **GOSPEL: John 18:33-37**

The holy gospel according to John.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

*In John's gospel, the story of Jesus and Pilate presents two different ways of exercising power: through force or with love.*

<sup>33</sup> Pilate entered the headquarters again, summoned Jesus, and asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" <sup>34</sup> Jesus answered, "Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?"

<sup>35</sup> Pilate replied, "I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?" <sup>36</sup> Jesus answered, "My kingdom does not belong to this world. If my kingdom belonged to this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here." <sup>37</sup> Pilate asked him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice."

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## **SERMON**

By the power of your Spirit, O God, may our hearts be opened to receive your wisdom, your love, and your truth, embodied in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

"What is truth?"

Those of you that know John's gospel really well would know that this is Pilate's question to Jesus right after the story that we get in today's gospel reading. A story, of course, that we are familiar with because we get it at least once a year and in basically every movie we ever get that is about Jesus. This is the trial scene during the Passion, and Jesus is squaring off with Pontius Pilate in this back and forth that quite honestly doesn't seem to really make much difference to the minds that have already been made up.

Specifically, the mind of Pilate is what I'm talking about that remains unchanged. Pilate is the governor of those there parts, working for the Roman empire and charged with overseeing all of Judea, making sure that these backwater religious Israelite folk stay in their lane and not cause any rabble for their Roman overlords. Essentially it's his job not to assimilate the people of his jurisdiction, but to ensure they stay out of trouble of the insurrection kind, and that they pay their taxes. His lines are pretty black and white. He knows what he needs to do to appease the Roman empire. Everything else outside of that, he really couldn't care less.

So when they bring this random fellow Jesus in, a commoner with an even more common name, it seems like it'd be a pretty open and shut case. They claimed that he professed to be a king, and thus he would be treading dangerously close to treason, which would land square on Pilate's list of reasons to discipline and punish. Now Pilate has to earn his living and get to the bottom of this. So he asks Jesus straight up, "Are you a king?"

Direct and to the point, but it also begs the question, why would Israel even want a king? Their history of kings isn't the greatest, and one might be able to trace the source of Israel's demise on their kings. Is this why they want to get rid of him?

I'm not sure if Pilate got the briefing on Israel's history, but we at least know that they started off as a nomadic bunch that was instrumental in the rise and fall of, at the time, the greatest empire the world has known of Egypt. They wandered around the desert for a while before making it to their so-called promised land, which they reaaaaallly loved and made part of who they are. But this group started off as wanting to be different, organized in a different way, apart from the politics and power grabs of the world around them. Their government began with just judges and prophets. They had laws, yes, but they were more about morals than they were about actions. They were different from what he, and we, would be used to.

But then this nation of Israel got to the point where they wanted to be a bit more like their neighbours. They saw what the rest of the world was about, and maybe they were a little jealous. Their patriotism pushed them a little past their borders and they found themselves wanting, asking for, and maybe even *coveting* a king.

They were warned by the prophets that a king will lord over them, call them to go to war, and demand labour. A king would create a social hierarchy, a financial system, and a way for them rank each other on the basis of their loyalty. A king would change their very way of living and being, and perhaps even threaten their identity as God's chosen people.

Still, they wanted a king and a king they got it. Many of them, in fact. Some good, most bad, but they got what they asked for. And this put them on the map. They were no longer nobodies, but somebodies. Still backwater somebodies, but somebodies nonetheless.

Fast forward a thousand years or so, a few dozen kings, and 2 exiles, and here we are in Pilate's office. Still on their land, I guess, with all the freedoms and rights afforded to them, but not completely in control of their destiny. Their king now was Caesar, a foreign conqueror that saw himself as the god that they should worship.

So Jesus, are you a king?

Are you the one who will redeem your people from this exilic oppression? Are you the one that will free your people from out of Roman rule? Are you the one who will change their lives forever?

Pilate just wants the truth. Who is this Jesus? What is he about? Is he who they say he claims he is?

It'd be a lot easier if Jesus just answers straight up, but he doesn't, does he. It'd be easier if Jesus spells it out for all of us so we know exactly what to believe and maybe shove down the throats of those that disagree with us. It'd just be easier if Jesus did exactly what we who are on his side hope he would: rain fire down from heaven and show everyone around him what was up. If only.

But instead, Jesus responds in riddles. He dances around the questions. He gives no definitive answers. So we, like Pilate, are left to interpret it ourselves.

And tries he does, he's like, "I'm not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?"

What have you done, Jesus, to have your own subjects turn on you, turn you in, and hope you turn out to be a fraud? What have you done, Jesus, to make the people hate you so much, not respect you at all, want you tried and convicted? What have you done, Jesus, to receive this treatment that not even the worst kings of their whole 1000+ years of history has ever received? What have you done, Jesus?

Well, Pilate really only had to flip back to the last 17 and a half chapters of John's gospel up to this point. Then he'll see that Jesus has done a lot.

He performed signs. He healed the sick. He welcomed the outcast. He taught them God's Word. He revealed how he *was* the Word. He manifested for them God's entire Word. He showed them how he wasn't a king in their traditional sense, but he was the living and breathing Son of God, there to show them God's face, reveal to them God's will, and bestow on them God's love and community. He did a lot.

And this is what I think is the whole point of this passage, the whole point of the whole Jesus story, the whole point of all that is good and righteous under God's ministry to us and everyone who has ever lived. Jesus answers that his kingdom doesn't belong to this world. It isn't of this world. It isn't bound by this world.

Rather this kingdom is the very real presence of God. This kingdom is the community and relationship that we are all invited to and welcomed in. This kingdom is everywhere and anywhere that is touched by God's grace, mercy, and love.

And Jesus is the physical embodiment of this.

So is Jesus a king? Yes, but not in the traditional sense. He doesn't rule or lord over us. He doesn't command us to go to war and demand us to strengthen our borders. He doesn't expect us to be loyal only to him and shun all others.

Rather, Jesus is a king in that he is everything that this kingdom is about. Jesus is king in that he is the very living and breathing incarnation of God's very Word. Jesus is king because he is very much so God With Us and changes our lives.

See Pilate asked for the truth because he didn't really know what was going on. Pilate needed the truth because he is bound by the laws and policies of the government that he was loyal to. Pilate wanted the truth so he could finish his business here and remind the people of his power.

But he asked the wrong question. The truth he is looking for isn't a "what", it's a "who".

The truth is Jesus, showing us welcome, love, and salvation. The truth is this Son of God who is God in the flesh with us and among us. The truth is this King whose kingdom isn't of this world but spans across time and space and is everywhere we need it to be, filling us with purpose and hope, and revealing to us our citizenship as God's beloved children welcomed in this kingdom forever.

So as we are here at the end of this season after Pentecost and look ahead to a new year of learning and growth, may we submit to the kingship of Christ, showing us that we are not bound but invited, not obligated but welcomed, not subjected but loved into a saving grace by the God who created all that is, was, and is to come. Thanks be to God. Amen.

**HYMN OF THE DAY:** Praise the One Who Breaks the Darkness (#843)

**CREED** (p. 104)

With all people living under the reign of Christ, let us confess the Christian faith with the Apostle's Creed:

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,**

was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.\*  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.

### PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Called to be faithful and humble servants, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. Each petition will end with “in your reign of mercy, O God,” and you all may respond with **hear our prayer**. In your reign of mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord our King, you are robed in majesty and we stand in awe of you. You are mighty and armed with strength, and you give to us a gospel message to proclaim to the world. Guide us in our ministry, that our work be faithful and pleasing in your sight. We remember in prayer our neighbouring faith communities; those that use this building for worship, work, and play; our partners Anglican Church of Canada and Moravian Church in Canada; and our bishops, rostered ministers, congregations, and ministries of the ELCIC. In particular, we pray for Peace Lutheran Church in Abbotsford and their pastor Dean Andersen; and for Emmaus Lutheran Church in Burnaby and their pastor Timo Saarinen. In your reign of mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord our Creator, the world you have made is sure in its beauty and wonder. Be with all areas of this planet that is facing severe weather and natural disasters and continue teaching us how to properly care for all things that you’ve entrusted to our stewardship. In your reign of mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord our Sovereign, you are mighty as you dwell on high, watching over us and showing us compassion and grace. Grant this compassion and grace to all world leaders and politicians, and allow them to see you as a source of wisdom and strength. We pray for all areas of the world facing political turmoil and violence, that the hope of peace may continue to live in all people. We pray for the continued support of those that we’ve sponsored to come into this country: Abraham Barhane; and Solyana Amanuel; and also for those that have not yet arrived: Maekele Kiflu, Selam Haile, and their children; and Filimon Abraha. In your reign of mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord our Saviour, we testify to the truth of your healing and wholeness as you bring us together as one community and body in your name. We pray for all those among us who are sick, who mourn, or who feel lonely, that your love and strength be reflected in us all. Especially we pray for Bryan and Chona; Ron, Tess, and Mineko; Debbie; Beulah; Bev and family; John and Betty; Sukhwant; Bishop Kathy; Pastor Kristen; Laura; Kandie; Thomas; Will; Chris; Larry; Walter; Piet; Hwee Yang; Ephraim; Georgina; Teddy and family; and all those we name aloud or quietly in our hearts at this time...  
In your reign of mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord our Spirit, you are holy and whole and we await the day we can rest with you and all the saints in your eternal house. May we draw from the strength and faith of those we've loved and lost until that day, that our time in this house be pleasing to you. In your reign of mercy, O God, **hear our prayer.**

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your eternal reign in our hearts through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

#### **PEACE (p. 106)**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

#### **MEAL**

#### **DIALOGUE**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

#### **PREFACE**

It is indeed right, our duty, and our joy, that we should at all times and places give thanks and praise to you, O God, through our Saviour Jesus Christ, who reveals to us all the expansiveness of your welcome into your kingdom, that joins us together with the choirs of angels, the hosts of heaven, and the whole church on earth in praising your name with this unending hymn:

#### **HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (p. 207)**

#### **THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE**

Yes Lord you are holy as you rule over our hearts and show us the ways of your love and grace. You join us together as your people and you bring peace to our communities that make up your kingdom. And in the fullness of time, you send to us your Son Jesus to live among us as one of us, to reign as king but also to be a humble servant who teaches us your truth of forgiveness and salvation.

For on the night that he was betrayed, your Son Jesus sat with his friends for a meal, where he took the bread, gave thanks, broke and shared it and said, "Take and eat, this is my body broken for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

Then after they ate, he took the cup, gave thanks, and passed it around the table for them to drink from saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me."

It is in this bread and cup that we can tangibly see your heavenly promises and love, even as we together declare this mystery of faith:

**Christ has died.**

**Christ is risen.**

**Christ will come again.**



It is by your love that we may love, it is by your grace that we may be saved, and it is by your wisdom that the truth is revealed to us all. So may all the honour and glory be directed to you, O God, through our Saviour Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

#### **LORD'S PRAYER** (p. 112)

Gathered together as citizens of God's kingdom, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**Our Father in heaven,**  
    **hallowed be your name,**  
    **your kingdom come,**  
    **your will be done,**  
        **on earth as in heaven.**  
**Give us today our daily bread.**  
**Forgive us our sins**  
    **as we forgive those**  
        **who sin against us.**  
**Save us from the time of trial**  
    **and deliver us from evil.**  
**For the kingdom, the power,**  
    **and the glory are yours,**  
    **now and forever. Amen.**

#### **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

Taste and see, God present and reigning in our hearts.

**Thanks be to God.**

#### **COMMUNION**

**COMMUNION HYMNS:** Lamb of God (p. 208)

What Wondrous Love Is This (#666)

#### **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Holy God, you have called us from every tribe, language, people, and nation to be together as the one body of Christ under you in your everlasting kingdom, to be fed by your Word and truth, and to serve you and one another as siblings in faith. We give thanks for these promises and we pray for the strength to follow in your ways, through Jesus Christ, our Lord and King. **Amen.**

#### **SENDING**

#### **BLESSING**

May God the Almighty Adonai and Alpha bless you and keep you,  
God the Omnipotent and Omniscient Omega shine on you with grace and mercy,  
God the Creator, King, and Counsellor look upon you with favour, and give you peace. **Amen.**

**SENDING HYMN:** Jesus Shall Reign (#434)

#### **DISMISSAL**

Go in peace, love and serve our King.

**Thanks be to God.**

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