



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA

7283 Nelson Avenue, Burnaby, BC V5J 4C2

Phone / fax: 604-433-1515

Website: www.graceburnaby.com

Email: office@graceburnaby.com

pastor@graceburnaby.com

Follow us on Twitter! @GraceLutBurnaby



Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

June 28, 2020

ELW Holy Communion, Setting Eight

The welcome of baptism is for all God's children. This baptismal gift sets us free from the power of sin and death. In today's gospel, Christ promises that the disciple who gives a cup of cold water to the little ones serves Christ himself. From worship we are sent on our baptismal mission: to serve the little ones of this world and to be a sign of God's merciful welcome.

A warm welcome to those who are here worshipping 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.

GATHERING

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

We are called by name to gather, to worship, and to be welcomed to serve.

Amen.

Let us confess our sin to God
whose lovingkindness endures forever.

O Lord our God,

**You have taught us to love you and neighbour,
but we have not walked in the light of your love.
Forgive us for the ways of sin we have followed.
We know that the wages of sin is death,
yet we trust in your gift of forgiveness,
which is freedom and life
in and through Christ,
with whom we pray.
Amen.**

Friends, by the mercy of Christ your sins are forgiven and washed away.

Be at peace, for you have been freed from the bondage of sin and shame, allowing you to love and serve with righteousness in the knowledge of God's grace and welcome, through Jesus Christ.

Amen. Thanks be to God.

GATHERING HYMN: There's a Wideness in God's Mercy (#588)

GREETING

The welcoming grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the expansive love of God, and inclusive fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Steadfast God, you greet us with a love that is patient beyond measure, and your faithfulness is great. May we offer and receive that same kindness to all whom we encounter, knowing that it is you who is greeted through the mystery and majesty of Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord.

Amen.

WORD

FIRST READING: Jeremiah 28:5-9

A reading from Jeremiah.

Through a symbolic action Jeremiah insisted that Judah and all the surrounding nations should submit to the king of Babylon (Jer. 27). Hananiah contradicted the word of Jeremiah, who in reply insisted that Hananiah's rosy prediction should not be believed until it came true. God confirmed the word of Jeremiah and sentenced the false prophet Hananiah to death (vv. 16-17).

⁵The prophet Jeremiah spoke to the prophet Hananiah in the presence of the priests and all the people who were standing in the house of the LORD; ⁶and the prophet Jeremiah said, "Amen! May the LORD do so; may the LORD fulfill the words that you have prophesied, and bring back to this place from Babylon the vessels of the house of the LORD, and all the exiles. ⁷But listen now to this word that I speak in your hearing and in the hearing of all the people. ⁸The prophets who preceded you and me from ancient times prophesied war, famine, and pestilence against many countries and great kingdoms. ⁹As for the prophet who prophesies peace, when the word of that prophet comes true, then it will be known that the LORD has truly sent the prophet."

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 89:1-4, 15-18

- ¹Your love, O LORD, forever will I sing;
from age to age my mouth will proclaim your faithfulness.
- ²**For I am persuaded that your steadfast love is established forever;
you have set your faithfulness firmly in the heavens.**
- ³"I have made a covenant with my chosen one;
I have sworn an oath to David my servant:
- ⁴**"I will establish your line forever,
and preserve your throne for all generations.'"**
- ¹⁵Happy are the people who know the festal shout!
They walk, O LORD, in the light of your presence.
- ¹⁶**They rejoice daily in your name;
they are jubilant in your righteousness.**
- ¹⁷For you are the glory of their strength,
and by your favor our might is exalted.
- ¹⁸**Truly, our shield belongs to the LORD;
our king to the Holy One of Israel.**

SECOND READING: Romans 6:12-23

A reading from Romans.

Sin is an enslaving power which motivates us to live self-serving, disobedient lives. Sin's final payoff is death. We, however, have been set free from sin's slavery to live obediently under God's grace, whose end is the free gift of eternal life.

¹²Do not let sin exercise dominion in your mortal bodies, to make you obey their passions. ¹³No longer present your members to sin as instruments of wickedness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and present your members to God as instruments of righteousness. ¹⁴For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

¹⁵What then? Should we sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! ¹⁶Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? ¹⁷But thanks be to God that you, having once been slaves of sin, have become obedient from the heart to the form of teaching to which you were entrusted, ¹⁸and that you, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. ¹⁹I am speaking in human terms because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to greater and greater iniquity, so now present your members as slaves

to righteousness for sanctification.

²⁰When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. ²¹So what advantage did you then get from the things of which you now are ashamed? The end of those things is death. ²²But now that you have been freed from sin and enslaved to God, the advantage you get is sanctification. The end is eternal life. ²³For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (p. 188)

GOSPEL: Matthew 10:40-42

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

When Jesus sends his disciples out as missionaries, he warns them of persecution and hardships they will face. He also promises to reward any who aid his followers and support their ministry.

[Jesus said to the twelve:] ⁴⁰“Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. ⁴¹Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward; and whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous; ⁴²and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple—truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward.”

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

Loving God, as we hear your Word, may your Spirit equip and inspire us to see your grace-filled hospitality in the center of our lives, through Jesus Christ, who is your very Word. **Amen.**

So as I was writing this sermon I was feeling extremely frustrated. I know, you’d think I should be on top of the world now that I got my haircut, but truthfully I was ready to pull my hair out, I was so frustrated. And it isn’t what you think, it has nothing to do with the current health and/or political climate of the world, it has nothing to do with the kids finishing school so that 1-2 hours a day of them doing schoolwork has been translated to 1-2 hours a day that they’re distracting me, and it doesn’t even have anything to do with the fact that I’m totally reaching for a new and original sermon topic.

It’s just that... this drawer in my home office won’t stay closed.

I have this desk in my new pandemic home office which came with a bunch of drawers which I have yet to install properly, actually right now this unit is just sitting on top of the desk. Don’t judge me. Anyway, one of the middle drawers just WON’T CLOSE. It’s not too full or anything, it closes fine but it just doesn’t stay that way. No matter what I do, it just keeps slowly opening on its own. Here, I’ll show a video of what I mean...

SEE?!? So annoying. It wasn't always like this, though. When I first set it up, it opened and closed like a normal drawer. And it was really handy because I could keep stuff in there and grab what I needed, which is what drawers are for. It was a great set up. But as time went on and I worked in this home office more and more, more and more stuff got piled onto the thing and I guess the weight shifted a bit. And so the extra weight combined with the probably slightly off level desktop and the protective cardboard shield I put under it to prevent scratches, all contributed to turning this very useful tool into the bane of my existence.

Funny how just a small shift can change the trajectory of something so much, huh?

But I figured the reason it keeps opening is because it isn't on a level surface. And I guess I *could* mount it properly, but that sounds like a lot of work. I'm a pastor, not a desk-builder. So the really easy fix that I found (after about a half hour of shutting the drawer using different shutting methods), I just shifted the whole unit just a bit to the right. I just twisted it so it is leaning slightly in a different direction. And you know what? It did the trick.

I know, I'm just talking about a dumb desk drawer, but I share this because it applies to many areas of life. How a small change in environment, a small tweak in context, a small shift in paradigm can change things drastically down the road.

Take today's gospel reading for example. Growing up, I've always understood this as a command for us to be welcoming. I read it as Jesus saying "when you welcome others, you welcome me, so if you love me, you better be welcoming". And I understood it this way because in my upbringing, I've been taught that the bible is God's rule book and we use it to direct our moral compass. So we need to follow these rules because, you know, they're rules.

And even after all my years of studying Lutheran theology and working as a Lutheran pastor, I admit that I still read it that way this week as I was preparing for this service. So my tendency to interpret scripture as law runs deep, and maybe it does for you too. I mean, how many of us heard Jesus' words today and thought about how we should be more welcoming? Or how many of us maybe patted ourselves on the back because we feel like we've already been the good and faithful servant in the welcoming department? How many of us heard this and automatically internalized it, and in this current climate of racism and all, thought that Jesus was talking specifically of how well we welcome others, especially those who typically don't fit in our circles?

Don't feel bad if you fell into any of those categories, like I said I totally went there myself and I studied this stuff for a really long time. Studied by definition, that is. Not sure if I studied it well, apparently.

But if we look closely at the words, that isn't what Jesus is talking about at all. If we look at the context, we can see that he isn't giving a rule. If we take a step back and shift our perspective just a little, we'd see it isn't even about us doing the welcoming at all. But Jesus says "whoever welcomes *you*". See in our perspective, in our own interpretation, perhaps in our arrogance, we might have thought that Jesus was saying "go and welcome whoever", putting us in the driver's seat. But no, Jesus is talking about those who are welcoming *us*. Jesus isn't giving a command, but he is giving us a promise. A promise of welcome. He continues with whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet, a righteous person in the name of a righteous person, by offering a cup of cold water, these are the blessed ones. You know what Jesus is

saying here? If we take ourselves and our actions and our own preconceived value and worth, we see that Jesus is exalting those who even bother to welcome us, because welcome is the great equaliser between us all. When someone welcomes us, that is because they see us as worthy and valued. It is because they see us as deserving of what they have themselves. It's because they see us as they see themselves. Equal. That is why they welcome. That is why we are welcomed. That is why God is present in the midst of it.

This comes during that story of Jesus sending out his disciples. Go from town to town, minister to people as they need, but above all, accept the welcome that you get. If you don't get any, then ok, move on. But if you do... if you are welcomed, then notice those who welcome you, because they are the ones who see you, who value you, who also recognise your position as God's people. It takes one to know one, they say. It takes one of God's children to see one of God's children. It takes a saint to value another saint. It takes a sinner saved by grace to recognise other sinners saved by grace.

And so Jesus is saying be blessed by the welcome of others. Be strengthened by your recognised identity as prophets and people of righteousness. Be encouraged that even in your sin, in your misinterpretations of life, in your shifted worldviews that have drastically changed your trajectory, that God loves you, God forgives you, and God saves you into eternal life.

There is a reason why we have "all are welcome" on our church sign outside the building at all times. Because we mean that stuff. Or at least we try to. But as we say that, we remember that "all are welcome" applies to us as well. That it isn't us who belong to this church that are welcoming others, but we are also accepting that welcome that is being offered to us. We don't own it, but we give and receive that equalising welcome that reminds us that we are all in the same sinful boat but forgiven to be saints and empowered to be prophets proclaiming God's grace, love, and mercy to all the world through our words, through our actions, and through our welcome and being welcomed in community and God's kingdom.

So yes, all are welcome. Just as we are welcomed. And as our welcome reminds us of our value and worth in God's love, so does it remind us of the value and worth of our brothers and sisters around the world, also deserving of that welcome. Let's allow then, our paradigms and worldviews to be shifted that they could align with God's idea of love, community, and welcome, empowering us to be God's people and prophets in the world.

Then in this season after Pentecost, in this Ordinary Time, that is "time of good order," may we recognise our position in God's kingdom and family as forgiven sinners, and that welcome is as much ours to extend as it has been extended to us, that we can regard all people, of whatever race, whatever heritage, whatever sexual orientation, whatever level of ability or level of faith, equal as God's children: redeemed, saved, and loved into eternal life with God, Sovereign, Saviour, and Spirit. Thanks be to God. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY: All Are Welcome (#641)

CREED

With all who welcome and are welcomed in the name of Christ, let us confess the Christian faith with the words of 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 live in gracious community with God and each other, let us pray for the church, the world, and everyone in need. Each petition will end with "faithful God," and you are all invited to respond with **hear our prayer**. Faithful God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, we sing of your love and welcome, for your promises are true and everlasting. May we see you in all areas of our lives, that we be empowered to serve and minister and be ministered to always. Faithful God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, your steadfast love is the basis of our faith, and drives us to serve you and others for the sake of your kingdom and community. May your welcome be seen by us and others through our interactions and ministry, that we all recognise your love in and around our lives. We pray especially for our neighbouring faith communities, our partner Anglican Church of Canada, our bishop Greg, assistant to the bishop Kathy, and national bishop Susan, and our companion church of the BC Synod. In particular, we pray for Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Coquitlam and their pastor Eric Krushel; and for King of Life Lutheran Church also in Coquitlam and their pastor Lori-Anne Boutin-Crawford; as we all continue to be your church in this time of pandemic. Faithful God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, you have made a covenant with us, your people, of love and relationship with you, each other, and all of creation. Strengthen us in our stewardship of these relationships that we and this planet might flourish as you intended, allowing life to live freely in your joy. Faithful God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, you have promised us that your rule of grace and mercy will last forever throughout the generations. May your grace and mercy be learned by all world leaders and politicians, that we can faithfully work toward peace for all people. We pray especially for Solyana Amanuel, that she might be able to enter our country sooner rather than later, and she find safety and security with her family. Faithful God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, through your glory and favour, you welcome us into strength and might, allowing us to face the trials of this world. May our support for each other be unwavering, that your love be

always seen and felt by the sick, the downcast, and the lonely, joining us together always as your people. We especially remember in prayer Paula; Diana; Beulah; Ron, Tess, and Mineko; Bev and family; Laura; Kandie; Thomas; Linda; Chris; Cindy; those who have contracted or been affected by the COVID-19 coronavirus; and all those we name aloud or quietly at this time... Faithful God, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, you are our shield, protecting us from eternal shame and saving us from our own sinfulness. You welcome us into your kingdom, joined with you and all the saints to the glory of your name and your promises to all people, now and forever. Faithful God, **hear our prayer.**

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

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.
And also with you.

PHOTO CHALLENGE SLIDESHOW

MEAL

OFFERING PRAYER

Faithful God, we give you thanks for all that you have done through your love, grace, and welcome, and for this food that we have before us. May they all remind us of your presence in our lives and communities through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

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 in all places
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,
through our Saviour Jesus Christ;
who promises us welcome and unity in your name,
joining us with all the choirs of angels,
the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,
in praising your name with this unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (p. 190)

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

O Lord, we shall sing of your love forever and from age to age we shall proclaim your faithfulness. We are confident that your steadfast love will last forever, for your faithfulness is set firmly in the heavens. As you promised David an eternal rule, so does your love and graciousness rule in our hearts as you are continually present in our lives, in our communities, and in our ministry to each other. So we rejoice daily in your name, we are jubilant in your righteousness, for you have sent to us Jesus your Son, to live, to teach, and to love, showing us the ways of your faithful mercy and gracious forgiveness.

For on the night that he was betrayed, Jesus sat with his friends for a meal, took some bread, and with a thankful heart, he broke and shared it and said, "take and eat, this is my body broken for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After they ate, Jesus took the cup, gave thanks, and shared that 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 food before us that reminds us of our connectedness to one another, strengthened by God's glory and favour, even as we declare this mystery of our faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

O God, our Sovereign, Saviour, and Spirit, you are our shield, our hope, and our joy, as you welcome us into your kingdom, your community, your family, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, as one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

Welcomed into one by the Holy Spirit, 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.**

COMMUNION HYMN: Lamb of God (p. 191)

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

All are welcome to taste and see that God is good.

Thanks be to God.

COMMUNION

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

O Lord our God, you have again fed us and renewed us for your service. May we bring your welcome to all people, as we see how we are welcomed in your name, through Jesus Christ, with whom we pray.

Amen.

SENDING

BLESSING

May God our Sovereign protect you and keep you,
May God our Saviour shine on you and be gracious until you,
May God the Spirit, look upon you with favour, and welcome you into peace, both now and forever.

Amen.

SENDING HYMN: Light Dawns on a Weary World (#726)

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, live by the power and love of the Spirit.

Thanks be to God.