



## GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA

7283 Nelson Avenue, Burnaby, BC V5J 4C2

Phone / fax: 604-433-1515

Website: [www.graceburnaby.com](http://www.graceburnaby.com)

Email: [office@graceburnaby.com](mailto:office@graceburnaby.com)

[pastor@graceburnaby.com](mailto:pastor@graceburnaby.com)

Follow us on Twitter! @GraceLutBurnaby



### Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

July 19, 2020

### ELW Holy Communion, Setting Eight

It is an age-old question: why is there evil in the world? In the parable of the wheat and the weeds Jesus suggests that both grow together until the harvest. With Paul, we long for the day that all creation will be set free from bondage and suffering. Having both weeds and wheat within us, we humbly place our hope in the promises of God, and from the Lord's table we go forth to bear the fruit of justice and mercy.

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

#### THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

We gather in our homes, in our personal spaces, in our perpetually imposed isolation... yet together... together in the name of God Sovereign, Saviour, and Spirit.

**Amen.**

We take this time to remember our baptism. To give thanks for it. To be reminded of the open invitation for all people to gather and worship, baptized or not, that God is a welcoming God and ready to receive us just as we are.

So we give thanks for baptism. We give thanks for the refreshing water that gives and sustains life. We give thanks for the cleansing away of our shame and guilt through the grace of God, making us whole again to enjoy the fellowship of all the saints. We give thanks for the generous invitation to join God in the story of creation, recreating us as God's children, granting us new life, and invigorating us to be God's people in all the world.

If you are so inclined, I ask that you dip a finger into the bowl of water you have in front of you and use that water to mark a sign of the cross on your forehead. Or you can mark the forehead of those in your homes that you are watching this with. And this isn't for just a random religious action, but it is to help you tangibly remember the gift of water, the gift of God's love through Christ, and the power instilled in us to serve, to minister, and to be a part of God's community and kingdom forever, with all the saints of all times and places, living together as the eternal body of Christ.

And after you have crossed or been crossed, put your hand back in the water. Feel the relative coolness of the liquid, revel in the purity and clarity of the water, and remember that you, child of God, are forgiven of all your sin through God's grace and mercy shown to us through the life and work of Jesus Christ our Lord. Be at peace, for you are beloved by God, by your community, and all the hosts of heaven, through Jesus Christ.

**Amen.**

#### GREETING

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

**And also with you.**

#### KYRIE (p. 184)

#### PRAYER OF THE DAY

Lord of all, you have planted in us a seed of hope, you have sown in us a life of love, and you have harvested a community of righteous relationships and faithful servants. May your gracious goodness, shining like the sun, be reflected in and through our lives, that our worship today be pleasing to you, through Jesus Christ, with whom we pray.

**Amen.**

## WORD

### FIRST READING: Isaiah 44:6-8

A reading from Isaiah.

*There are no other gods besides God: the word of the LORD does not fail to come to pass. We can trust in God, through whom Israel—and we—are redeemed.*

- <sup>6</sup>Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel,  
and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts:  
I am the first and I am the last;  
besides me there is no god.
- <sup>7</sup>Who is like me? Let them proclaim it,  
let them declare and set it forth before me.  
Who has announced from of old the things to come?  
Let them tell us what is yet to be.
- <sup>8</sup>Do not fear, or be afraid;  
have I not told you from of old and declared it?  
You are my witnesses!  
Is there any god besides me?  
There is no other rock; I know not one.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

### PSALM: Psalm 86:11-17

- <sup>11</sup>Teach me your way, O LORD, and I will walk in your truth;  
give me an undivided heart to revere your name.
- <sup>12</sup>**I will thank you, O Lord my God, with all my heart,  
and glorify your name forevermore.**
- <sup>13</sup>For great is your love toward me;  
you have delivered me from the pit of death.
- <sup>14</sup>**The arrogant rise up against me, O God, and a band of violent people seeks my life;  
they have not set you before their eyes.**
- <sup>15</sup>But you, O Lord, are gracious and full of compassion,  
slow to anger, and full of kindness and truth.
- <sup>16</sup>**Turn to me and have mercy on me;  
give your strength to your servant, and save the child of your handmaid.**
- <sup>17</sup>Show me a sign of your favour, so that those who hate me may see it and be put to shame;  
because you, LORD, have helped me and comforted me.

### SECOND READING: Romans 8:12-25

A reading from Romans.

*For Paul, true spirituality means that we experience the reality of the Spirit, which enables us to pray as God's children, keeps us in solidarity with creation, and gives us unseen hope that God will liberate us and creation from bondage to death and decay.*

- <sup>12</sup>So then, brothers and sisters, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—  
<sup>13</sup>for if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the  
deeds of the body, you will live. <sup>14</sup>For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God.  
<sup>15</sup>For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit

of adoption. When we cry, “Abba! Father!”<sup>16</sup> it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God,<sup>17</sup> and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

<sup>18</sup>I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us.<sup>19</sup> For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God;<sup>20</sup> for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope<sup>21</sup> that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.<sup>22</sup> We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now;<sup>23</sup> and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies.<sup>24</sup> For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen?<sup>25</sup> But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION** (p. 188)

**GOSPEL: Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43**

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

*Jesus tells a parable about the coexistence of good and evil in this world. God’s judgment will remove all evildoers and causes of sin, but not until the end of human history.*

<sup>24</sup>[Jesus] put before [the crowds] another parable: “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field,<sup>25</sup> but while everybody was asleep, an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and then went away.<sup>26</sup> So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared as well.<sup>27</sup> And the slaves of the householder came and said to him, ‘Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where, then, did these weeds come from?’<sup>28</sup> He answered, ‘An enemy has done this.’ The slaves said to him, ‘Then do you want us to go and gather them?’<sup>29</sup> But he replied, ‘No; for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them.<sup>30</sup> Let both of them grow together until the harvest; and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.’”

<sup>36</sup>Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples approached him, saying, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.”<sup>37</sup> He answered, “The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man; <sup>38</sup>the field is the world, and the good seed are the children of the kingdom; the weeds are the children of the evil one, <sup>39</sup>and the enemy who sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels.<sup>40</sup> Just as the weeds are collected and burned up with fire, so will it be at the end of the age.<sup>41</sup> The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers,<sup>42</sup> and they will throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

<sup>43</sup>Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Let anyone with ears listen!”

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## SERMON

Holy God, as we listen for your voice, may your Spirit lead our hearts in the way of your everlasting truth and grace, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

So I want to again welcome myself back from holidays, and while I admit that I still worked here and there throughout, it was a pretty good holiday nonetheless. I was able to spend more time with my family in the past couple weeks than I did in the last 3 and a half months, so that was nice. Too bad about the weather though. And all in all, I do feel quite rested.

I did some reflection on my feeling rested, and I think it didn't come from what you'd think. It didn't come from working less or from sleeping more or doing things that are more life-giving per se, but I think it mostly stemmed from me not being on my computer as much. And because I'm not staring at a computer monitor as much, I was also not on social media as much. Honestly lately I haven't been on social media that much anymore anyway, but on holidays I had even less reason to go on.

And you know what? It was nice.

I've read in a number of places of how we should and need to take regular breaks from social media, but I guess I never really felt it to be true because maybe I never really took a substantial enough of a break before to see the benefits. But having taken this break in the past little while, I can see what those experts mean now. So I guess they actually earned that title of expert. However, most of the stuff I read about the "social media fatigue" is from us comparing ourselves to the good image of the lives led by those we follow and thus feeling inadequate because no one can live up to that image, not even those who are posting it. But my respite came from a different place.

See, the thing is much of my social media usage is for research, I explore different things that would give me the widest and most broad view of things. And often I would stumble across a topic or a thread that I just don't agree with. Perhaps it is around racism. Perhaps it is around politics. Perhaps it's around whether or not we should wear masks. Whatever the topic or opinion, I found that the more I read, the more angry I would get. The more I would disagree, the more I shook my head at what I saw as logical and theological fallacies. The more nonsensical debate and poor reasoning I encountered, the more *hate* I felt for those on the opposing end.

Yes, *hate*.

Like, I can't understand why people would defend racism. I can't understand why people would be so angry when asked to just wear a mask for the good of their community. I can't understand why people would promote such hate for others... and that ironically caused me to hate on them.

And what I found during my break is that hate takes a lot of energy.

It took energy in me to think of ways I could argue my point but also passive aggressively belittle those whom I'm arguing with. It took energy to harbour strong feelings against those with whom I disagreed. It took a great deal of energy to even try to fathom what I saw as sheer stupidity and to understand how anyone could ever veer away from what I understand as

truth and right living and then let them know my very strong feelings on the matter. It was energy that I then didn't have to spend with my kids. It was energy that I couldn't use to be a better husband. It was energy that robbed me from some of the joys in life, because I was spending so much of it to just hate.

In today's gospel, Jesus alludes to this and tells us to just let go of that hate. Today Jesus gives us a parable of wheat and weeds, how a farmer went and planted some wheat and an enemy, for some strange reason thinking that the best way to stick it to the farmer wasn't to burn the land or trample the seeds or the most hilarious option to replant the seeds to make inappropriate words or images, but this enemy thought to plant weeds in with the wheat.

Mmkay, I guess that's one way to show the farmer what's up. Then as the crop came up with the wheat, the farmhands wanted to separate them. But the farmer said to leave them all be and just separate them at the harvest.

Now, I'm no farmer by any means, so I can't say for sure if that is how it should be done. But it's always been my understanding that you want to get rid of the weeds as soon as possible, because those annoying little buggers will make it so the crop, the stuff you actually want, won't grow very well. At least, that's how it worked on every single lawn that I've ever had the pleasure of mowing.

But this farmer was like no, let them grow together. Don't worry about those weeds, not yet anyway. In the end, they'll be taken care of.

As a farmhand, this might be a relief because I don't know how many of you have pulled weeds before, but if it's anything like pulling crabgrass, it isn't really all that fun. So to be told to not worry about it, well that's kind of liberating. That energy could be used elsewhere, maybe like to tend to other crop or helping this crop to grow better or I don't know, milk a cow or something.

And so I see this as a gift to us as well, in that instead of trying to weed out those we don't agree with, those who do things differently than us, or those that we just don't like, we can just let it go and let God deal with it. Instead of spending all that energy in trying to correct other people, or trying to prove them wrong, or hating on them, we can spend it on loving those who we love and maybe then we can learn to love those we don't. Instead of taking it on ourselves to try and figure out who is worthy and who isn't, who is deserving and who isn't, who is in and who is out, we can treat everyone like the wheat and let God's grace do the rest.

See, this is a gift. Allowing us to rest from draining task of being right all the time, the debilitating responsibility of putting those who are wrong in their place, the misplaced need to point out the faults of those who we don't see eye to eye with. We are relieved from that duty of self-righteousness, a duty that was never ours to begin with.

For our hope rests in our salvation. Our identity is founded on grace. Our position as God's beloved children comes not from our ability to be right and not wrong, or to see right and wrong, or to point out without a doubt what is right and what is wrong, but it comes from God's love for us as we are, where we are, how we are, flaws and all.

So maybe, just maybe, if we see that love and can accept it, we can then in turn learn how to love others who also haven't earned it but, by God's mysterious grace, deserve it.

You see, we have been given the freedom to make mistakes and not feel shame. We have been given the freedom to be imperfect and to not feel guilty about it. We have been given the freedom to not hate but be strengthened to love instead. This is a gift.

So in this season after Pentecost, this season of the church year that we look at and promote church growth, this season in which we look at how the Spirit is at work within us and our community, may we let go of our tendency to be separated and give in to the ability and empowerment to live as an eternal body of Christ, joined with God and each other for the sake of God's grace, mercy, and love. Thanks be to God. Amen.

**HYMN OF THE DAY:** Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us with Your Love (#708)

### **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Called into love and right relationship, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. Each petition will end with "Lord of the harvest," and you are all invited to respond with **hear our prayer**. Lord of the harvest, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord you teach us your ways and we walk in your truth. Undivided our hearts that they may revere your name and give you praise for all that you have done. Instill in us your will, that we might follow you and be strengthened by your community and kingdom. Lord of the harvest, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, with our whole hearts we will glorify your name forevermore. In our gatherings, in our quiet time, in our going out and coming in, may our lives reflect your love and grace to all, and may our worship be pleasing to you. We remember in prayer our neighbouring faith communities, our partner Anglican Church of Canada, our bishop Greg, assistant to the bishop Kathy, and national bishop Susan, and all our companion congregations of the BC Synod. In particular we remember Hills of Peace Lutheran Church in Kelowna and their pastor Jane Gingrich and our Global Mission Companion, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Peru. May you bless all your children serving your name. Lord of the harvest, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, your love is great toward us, and you have created for us a planet to live in, whose beauty we enjoy. Help us in our stewardship of all you have made, that all things living and non may be treated with respect and reverence by your grace. Lord of the harvest, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, evil in the world rises up and seeks to end the life of goodness and grace. Rise up righteous leaders to help you bring peace to the world, that all citizens of this planet might know of your love and providence for us all. We pray especially for Solyana Amanuel, that she be brought out of her situation and into the safety of this country. Lord of the harvest, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, you turn to us and have mercy on us. You strengthen us and save us from our troubles. We pray especially for those among us who are sick, who mourn, or who feel lonely, that your love would not be unnoticed by any of us. In particular, we pray for Bev and family, Paula, Beulah, Ron, Tess, and Mineko, Diana, Laura, Kandie, Thomas, Linda, Cindy, Chris, those who

have contracted or are affected by COVID-19, and all those we name aloud or quietly in our hearts at this time...

Lord of the harvest, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, you show us signs of your favour, for you help us and you comfort us and welcome us into your kingdom and community, joining us with you and all the saints as the one body of Christ, part of your story and living in your eternity, now and forever. Lord of the harvest, **hear our prayer.**

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your gracious love shown to us by Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

### **PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

### **PICTURE PRESENTATION**

#### **MEAL**

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

O Lord you teach us your ways and you allow us to walk in your truth as we revere your name and thank you with all our hearts, glorifying your name forevermore. For great is your love, O God, as you have delivered us from the pit of death. You are gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and full of kindness and truth. And in the fullness of time, you send to us Jesus, to show us how to live and love to the glory of your name.

For it was on the night that he was betrayed that Jesus took some 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 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 we have been given a sign of God's favour, who helps us and comforts us, even as we declare this mystery of faith:

**Christ has died.**

**Christ is risen.**

**Christ will come again.**

To you, O God, be all honour and glory, through the name of Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, as one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**



## **LORD'S PRAYER**

As we are gathered into one love 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.**

## **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

All are welcome to know that God is indeed good.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **COMMUNION**

### **POST-COMMUNION PRAYER**

Holy Lord, you have again fed us with your Word, your love, and your Spirit, and we give you thanks for the gift of faith that moves us to be your disciples in the world. May the gifts we have received from you this day be multiplied and reflected to all those whom we encounter through the abundant blessing of Jesus Christ, our Saviour and friend.

**Amen.**

## **SENDING**

### **BLESSING**

May God our Sovereign,  
Christ our Saviour,  
and the Spirit who gives us breath  
bless you and keep you this day and forevermore.

**Amen.**

**SENDING HYMN:** Rise Up, O Saints of God (#669)

### **DISMISSAL**

Go in peace, live in hope and be confident in God's promises.

**Thanks be to God.**