



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



Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

August 2, 2020

ELW Holy Communion, Setting Eight

In today's first reading God invites all who are hungry or thirsty to receive food and drink without cost. Jesus feeds the hungry multitude and reveals the abundance of God. At the eucharistic table we remember all who are hungry or poor in our world today. As we share the bread of life, we are sent forth to give ourselves away as bread for the hungry.

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 are gathered in the name of an abundantly generous God, who gives us good things especially when we don't deserve it.

Amen.

So in this abundant generosity, we give thanks for the gift of baptism. We give thanks for the refreshing coolness it offers and the cleansing purity of the water. We give thanks for the restorative properties that come from the sight, the sound, and the sensation of this physical manifestation of God's love for us.

If you are so inclined, I ask that you dip a finger in the water and mark yourself with the sign of the cross on your forehead or on the forehead of others in your homes, and be reminded that through this gift, we have been welcomed into God's abundant grace and mercy and been recreated to be children of God. And after you have crossed or been crossed, feel the water with your hands, run the drops along your fingertips and through your fingers, be aware of the water running across your palm, the back of your hand, maybe even down your forearm if you are especially sloppy. But enjoy it. Revel in it. Feel God present in this gift, and be thankful for it.

For all honour and glory belong to God, through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with God and the Holy Spirit, now and forever.

Amen.

GATHERING HYM: We Come to the Hungry Feast (#479)

GREETING

The generous grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the lavish love of God, and the fulfilling fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Good and generous God, all of creation looks to you and you give food in due season. May we see and accept your open hand toward us, that we might know the satisfaction and joy found in the Bread of Life, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

WORD

FIRST READING: Isaiah 55:1-5

A reading from Isaiah.

God invites Israel to a great feast at which both food and drink are free. God also promises to make an everlasting covenant with all peoples, with promises that previously had been limited to Israel. As David was a witness to the nations, these nations shall now acknowledge the ways in which God has glorified Israel.

¹Ho, everyone who thirsts,
come to the waters;
and you that have no money,
come, buy and eat!
Come, buy wine and milk
without money and without price.
²Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread,
and your labor for that which does not satisfy?
Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good,
and delight yourselves in rich food.
³Incline your ear, and come to me;
listen, so that you may live.
I will make with you an everlasting covenant,
my steadfast, sure love for David.
⁴See, I made him a witness to the peoples,
a leader and commander for the peoples.
⁵See, you shall call nations that you do not know,
and nations that do not know you shall run to you,
because of the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel,
for he has glorified you.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 145:8-9, 14-21

⁸The LORD is gracious and full of compassion,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.
⁹**LORD, you are good to all,
and your compassion is over all your works.**
¹⁴The Lord upholds all those who fall
and lifts up those who are bowed down.
¹⁵**The eyes of all wait upon you, O LORD,
and you give them their food in due season.**
¹⁶You open wide your hand
and satisfy the desire of every living thing.
¹⁷**You are righteous in all your ways
and loving in all your works.**
¹⁸You are near to all who call upon you,
to all who call upon you faithfully.
¹⁹**You fulfill the desire of those who fear you;
you hear their cry and save them.**
²⁰You watch over all those who love you,
but all the wicked you shall destroy.
²¹**My mouth shall speak the praise of the LORD;
let all flesh bless God's holy name forever and ever.**

SECOND READING: Romans 9:1-5

A reading from Romans.

This begins a new section in Paul's letter in which he will deal with the place of Israel in God's saving plan. He opens by highlighting how Israel's heritage and legacy include being God's children, having God's covenants, being given God's law, participating in worship of God, and receiving divine promises.

¹I am speaking the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience confirms it by the Holy Spirit—
²I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. ³For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my own people, my kindred according to the flesh. ⁴They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises; ⁵to them belong the patriarchs, and from them, according to the flesh, comes the Messiah, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (p. 188)

GOSPEL: Matthew 14:13-21

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

After John the Baptist is murdered, Jesus desires a time of solitude. Still, his compassion for others will not allow him to dismiss those who need him, and he is moved to perform one of his greatest miracles.

¹³Now when Jesus heard [about the beheading of John the Baptist], he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. ¹⁴When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. ¹⁵When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves." ¹⁶Jesus said to them, "They need not go away; you give them something to eat." ¹⁷They replied, "We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish." ¹⁸And he said, "Bring them here to me." ¹⁹Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. ²⁰And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. ²¹And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

Generous and providing God, by your Spirit may we be fed by your Word. Fill us with your bread of life and empower us with your compassion and love, through Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Can you believe that it's been 21 weeks since we started having worship online? Meaning it's been 22 weeks since we had a worship service together in person in this space. Which means it's been at least 23 weeks since many of you have even stepped foot in the building...

Time flies, huh? And I know many of you are tired of this. Many of you are tired of restricted activities, restricted contact with others, restricted menu selection at your favourite restaurants. Many of you are tired of having to wear masks, washing masks, and frowning on those not wearing masks. Many of you are just tired and want things to go back to the way they were.

And I'm with you. I feel that too. But truth be told I also long for the days of old, the days when we'd gather here in this place, sing some hymns, pray some prayers, liturg some liturgy, and then have some coffee, tea, and delicious goodies that all you never failed to bring. I miss seeing you in person, laughing, hearing your stories, and just being in the same space. I miss the way things were, and quite honestly this new way is tiring. Draining, even. Learning how to be a church in these times is exhausting. Finding the time write, record, and edit these services has been the source of so much of my fatigue that when it finally came time for my holidays a few weeks ago, I was on the verge of collapse. I had enough of this pandemic and the end of it could not come soon enough.

So I get the fatigue. I get the exhaustion. I get how this whole thing can be so draining to the point that we feel like there is nothing left. No more energy, no more emotion, no more anything to give to just make it through this with any kind of semblance of who we were before it began.

And many would say, we aren't the only ones. We aren't the only ones who have felt at the end of our ropes and burnt out. We aren't the only ones who have been so emotionally drained that just getting out of bed in the morning seemed like a monumental task in itself. We aren't the only ones who feel like we have nothing left to give and just want to be left alone. In fact, while a pandemic like this is the first in this generation, it isn't the first ever in history. Generation after generation inside and outside of the church have faced countless catastrophic events and emotional apocalypses (apocalypsi? apocalypsis?) other catastrophic events that could make this pandemic look like a walk in the park.

And above all, we know Jesus went through this as well. We know this because we read about it in today's gospel lesson. Today's story starts off with Jesus catching wind that his cousin, his friend, and some say his mentor, was executed for speaking truth. He was arrested out of spite, murdered out of malice, and humiliated just to prove a point. So Jesus broke down. The King of Kings, Lord of Lords, Prince of Peace, lost it. He might have felt deflated, emotionally discharged, and just done so he went to take some time to recharge and regroup... alone.

But that's not what happened. Instead, just as Jesus finally got some alone time, he was approached by a bunch of strangers who wanted to learn, wanted to be healed, wanted to have hope. And Jesus could have just said "nope" and rowed to another spot or walked further up the mountain, or maybe hide in a bush until everyone passed by. Rather, Jesus saw them and their ailments, their brokenness, their neediness, and had compassion for them. And so out of his deep love for all people Jesus said "yup".

Even after his disciples protest, he said yup. Even after they tried to shoo the people away to go home, he said yup. Even after they had the very valid excuse that there is no way they could feed all these people, Jesus said yup.

He said yup, follow me. Yup, learn from me. Yup, find nourishment for your souls and your bodies for this gospel that I preach is about a God who is gracious, full of compassion, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

And we might think, ok, that's nice. I can't do that. When I'm tired, I'm tired. When I'm exhausted, I have nothing left to give. When I'm burnt out, I'm done. So when it's time for me to tap out and let someone else take over, you better believe that I'll be tapping out. No amount of compassion or strangers asking for help is going to change that.

And I know, that might have been our initial reaction. That might be what we think the take away is for this text. Some have said that the miracle of the feeding wasn't a miracle in multiplying the food, but a miracle in multiplying the compassion Jesus felt by everyone sharing what they had until all were fed. Some have said that Jesus, even in a state of emotional exhaustion, was able to dig deep and find more to give because the people depend on it. Some have said that we can do the same, that we can be like Jesus and have our compassion multiplied and used to strengthen us in our ministry, our community, and throughout our lives.

You know what? I don't know if I buy that. I don't think that Jesus expects us to never take breaks regardless of how tired we are. No, I don't think that it is an act of faithlessness to be burnt out and just want to quit. But I do think that the common denominator here is Jesus. I do think that the source of all compassion and strength is Jesus. I do think that the point here is Jesus, not as the one who demands more of us, but the one who gives us more than ourselves.

See, we are like the crowds following Jesus in this story. Wanting to learn, wanting to eat, perhaps wanting to rest. Jesus doesn't tell them to go away and dig deep and find a way to get theirs, but rather, Jesus gives. Jesus feeds. Jesus loves with a compassion so strong that even the smallest bit of food turns into a feast. A feast of love, a feast of community, a feast of God's abundant blessing and grace reminding us that in God, life is worth it. We are worth it. You are worth it.

So in this time of pandemic when we are feel tired and run down, take a break. Not take a break from the pandemic, I mean you still gotta be careful out there, but take a break from your daily life and find something that gives you joy. See how God is providing for you rest and support. Be fed by God's Word and have your souls nourished by God's generosity and gracious compassion, filling us with hope for a better world, joy in salvation, and a steadfast love that that blesses us beyond comprehension.

This doesn't mean that we'll never feel tired again, no we will and some of us still do right now as we speak. But it does mean that in our fatigue, in our emotionally drained state, in our inability to give any more than what we've already given, that Jesus is there with us, acting as our strength, acting as our support, and reminding us of a life that is full of hope and peace.

So maybe this pandemic will end soon, which will be great. If it does, know that you are loved and that Jesus is with you. Or maybe this pandemic won't end soon, which would be less than ideal. If that happens, know that you are loved and that Jesus is with you. Pandemic or not, we have been given a community with whom we can worship, pray, and be reminded of our position in Christ's compassion, our worthiness in the fellowship of the Spirit, and the nourishment and strength we receive from God's steadfast and abounding love.

In this season after Pentecost, may we find rest in Christ, that as we still have to face this pandemic that is taking its toll on us, we might be able to still feel the love, joy, and peace of God, giving us the hope that strengthens us to carry on. Thanks be to God. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY: Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ (#674)

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Called into God's abundant love and provision, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. Each petition will end with, "Lord, in your goodness," and you are all invited to respond with **hear our prayer**. Lord, in your goodness, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, you are gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. May we all see your abundant blessing in our lives, that we might live in joy and appreciation for all that you have done. Lord, in your goodness, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, you are good to all, and your compassion is over all your works. May we as your church proclaim this good news to all the earth, that all might know of your generosity and grace. 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 our companion churches of the BC Synod. In particular we pray for Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church in Langley and their pastor Kristen Steele; and for Hope Lutheran Shared Ministry in Mackenzie and the pastors and leaders that serve that community. Lord, in your goodness, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, the eyes of all creation wait upon you, and you feed us all in due season. Help us to be instruments of your care of this planet, and quell the greed over and hoarding of resources that we might all live in harmony with all things, living and non. Lord, in your goodness, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, you are righteous in all your ways, and loving in all your works. You are near to all who call upon you with faith, and you hear our cries for justice. Teach your mercy and grace to all world leaders and politicians, allowing them to lead by example with goodness and compassion. We pray especially for Solyana Amanuel, that her arrival into our country might be swift. Lord, in your goodness, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, you fulfill our desires for healing and wholeness, and you watch over us. Continue to be with those among us who are sick, who mourn, or who feel lonely, that your love may always rule in all our hearts. We pray especially for Paula; Bev and family; Beulah; Ron, Tess, and Mineko; Diana; Laura; Kandie; Thomas; Linda; Cindy; Chris; those who have contracted or been affected by COVID-19; and all those we name aloud or quietly in our hearts...
Lord, in your goodness, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, our mouths sing praises to you and your holy name be blessed forever and ever. Remind us of the connection you make between us and you and all the saints, living as the one eternal body of Christ, welcomed into your kingdom for eternity. Lord, in your goodness, **hear our prayer**.

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your generous providence shown to us through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

MEAL

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (p. 190)

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

O God, you are gracious and full of compassion, you are slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. You are good to all, and your compassion is over all your works. You uphold all who fall and lift up those who are bowed down. And as all eyes were waiting upon you, in due season you have fed us with your Word, Jesus Christ, whom you sent to us to show us how you satisfy our every need. For you are righteous in all your ways and loving in all your works. You save us through faith by your grace as we have been shown through the ministry of Christ.

For on the night that he was betrayed, Jesus took bread, gave thanks, broke it and gave it to his disciples who were with him and said, "Take and eat, this is my body broken for you for the forgiveness of sin. 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 see God near, knowing that we are loved and saved, even as we declare this mystery of faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

O Lord, our mouths shall sing of your praises and all beings great and small shall bless your holy name forever and ever, through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, as one God, now and always.

Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into God's abundant blessing 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

Taste and see God's steadfast love and compassion.
Thanks be to God.

COMMUNION

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

Loving and generous God, you have again provided for us and blessed us in more ways than we can number. May our lives reflect your generosity and steadfast love, that your compassion for all people might be seen and felt through our ministry, through Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

SENDING

BLESSING

May God our Saviour be gracious to you,
God our Sovereign be generous with you,
and God in the Spirit show you compassion and give you peace,
now and forever more.

Amen.

SENDING HYMN: I Am the Bread of Life (#485)

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, live in God's generosity and grace.
Thanks be to God.