



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



**Thanksgiving Sunday
(Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost)
October 11, 2020**

In Isaiah we are given a vision of the great feast to come, when God will wipe away death forever. In Jesus' parable about a great banquet, those invited do not come, so the invitation is extended to others. In our liturgy God spreads a table before us. Even amid anxiety and hardship we rejoice in the peace of God which surpasses all understanding. With great joy we feast at the table of the Lord, and we go forth to share the wonderful invitation with others hungering and thirsting for the abundant life of God.

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

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

We gather on this day of Thanksgiving in thanksgiving to God and the gracious welcome extended to us to God's banqueting table.

Amen.

And in our thanksgiving we remember the gift of baptism for us and all people as a reminder of God's presence in our lives, God's love freely given, and the welcome of God into God's kingdom and community. It is in the waters of baptism that God continuously reveals to us refreshing joy, cleansing forgiveness, and all-encompassing love and peace. And so those of you at home, if you have a bowl of water with you, you may use the water to make a sign of the cross on your forehead or on the forehead of those in your home while I make a sign of the cross on all those here in the space.

May we together give thanks to God for this gift that has lasted and continues on throughout all of time, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen. Thanks be to God.

GREETING

May the reaching grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the embracing love of God, and the welcoming communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Holy God, you set before us a bounty of good things. You bring us to your feasting table, hungry for your Word, eager to welcome and be welcomed, that we can together celebrate at all times and places the peace and community that is life with you, through Jesus Christ our Saviour and Lord. **Amen.**

WORD

FIRST READING: Isaiah 25:1-9

A reading from Isaiah.

After a hymn of praise acknowledging God as a shelter for the poor, the prophet portrays a wonderful victory banquet at which death—which in ancient Canaan was depicted as a monster swallowing up everyone—will be swallowed up forever. The prophet urges celebration of this victory of salvation.

¹O LORD, you are my God;
I will exalt you, I will praise your name;
for you have done wonderful things,
plans formed of old, faithful and sure.

²For you have made the city a heap,
the fortified city a ruin;
the palace of aliens is a city no more,
it will never be rebuilt.

³Therefore strong peoples will glorify you;
cities of ruthless nations will fear you.
⁴For you have been a refuge to the poor,
a refuge to the needy in their distress,
a shelter from the rainstorm and a shade from the heat.
When the blast of the ruthless was like a winter rainstorm,
⁵the noise of aliens like heat in a dry place,
you subdued the heat with the shade of clouds;
the song of the ruthless was stilled.
⁶On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples
a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines,
of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear.
⁷And he will destroy on this mountain
the shroud that is cast over all peoples,
the sheet that is spread over all nations;
⁸he will swallow up death forever.
Then the Lord GOD will wipe away the tears from all faces,
and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth,
for the LORD has spoken.
⁹It will be said on that day,
Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might save us.
This is the LORD for whom we have waited;
let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 23

¹The LORD is my shepherd;
I shall not be in want.
²**The LORD makes me lie down in green pastures
and leads me beside still waters.**
³You restore my soul, O LORD,
and guide me along right pathways for your name's sake.
⁴**Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil;
for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.**
⁵You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil, and my cup is running over.
⁶**Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.**

SECOND READING: Philippians 4:1-9

A reading from Philippians.

Though writing from prison and facing an uncertain future, Paul calls on the Philippians to rejoice and give thanks to God no matter what the circumstance. God's peace is with us and binds together our hearts and minds in Jesus Christ, especially when things around us do not seem peaceful.

¹My brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved.

²I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. ³Yes, and I ask you also, my loyal companion, help these women, for they have struggled beside me in the work of the gospel, together with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life.

⁴Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. ⁵Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. ⁶Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

⁸Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. ⁹Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL: Matthew 22:1-14

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus tells a parable indicating that the blessings of God's kingdom are available to all, but the invitation is not to be taken lightly.

¹Once more Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying: ²"The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son. ³He sent his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding banquet, but they would not come. ⁴Again he sent other slaves, saying, 'Tell those who have been invited: Look, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready; come to the wedding banquet.'⁵But they made light of it and went away, one to his farm, another to his business, ⁶while the rest seized his slaves, mistreated them, and killed them. ⁷The king was enraged. He sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. ⁸Then he said to his slaves, 'The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. ⁹Go therefore into the main streets, and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet.'¹⁰Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both good and bad; so the wedding hall was filled with guests.

¹¹"But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing a wedding robe, ¹²and he said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe?' And he was speechless. ¹³Then the king said to the attendants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

¹⁴"For many are called, but few are chosen."

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

O God, may the feast of your Word feed us this day, that as our hearts and minds are opened by your Spirit, we might hear your call and welcome throughout our lives and in the lives of others, through Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Today's gospel lesson has a story of a wedding feast. And I'll be honest, every time I read about a wedding in the bible, I think about my own wedding that happened all those years ago. I think about all the food that was served that I didn't have time to eat. I think about all the guests that my parents invited that I didn't even know. I think about all that money that was spent on that one day that really could have been invested in a nice new car instead.

Don't get me wrong, in spite of the countless hours of planning and preparing and getting those little party favours ready, I still really did have fun at my wedding. Mostly because I like being the center of attention, even if among strangers. But throughout the night, it became clear that this celebration was more for my parents than anyone else. Like I said, I didn't even know like half of these guests, and to this day I'm still meeting people that I've never met before saying, "hey, I was at your wedding."

It was still a celebration of course, I mean, my wife and I still love each other (I think), but looking back I just wonder how much of a celebration it was for everyone else. Like, what do all those strangers who attended care that I was getting married? Even some of my friends who were there, I wonder how much they even cared to be there. Some of my friends kids, who were busy playing on their handheld devices, were definitely not interested at all. So what was the point of all that money spent?

Granted, I know not all wedding celebrations were like the one I had. I know not all families go all out the way my parents did. But I'm sure that many if not all of you know what I'm talking about when I say that there are times when we are invited to some kind of celebration but we just don't want to go because we don't feel like it's a celebration at all. Like, it doesn't have to be a wedding of a friend's kid that you've never met. It could be an engagement party for a couple that you really don't think should be engaged. Or a birthday party for someone that you don't really like. Or a gender reveal party that you don't really get because you're going to find out the gender of the baby in a couple months anyway.

Whatever it is, you might have tried to make an excuse as to why you couldn't make it. Or you arrive late and "have to leave early". Or worse yet you simply don't go and claim that you just forgot. Whatever the case, there are reasons for us not to want to celebrate even when others totally do.

This seems to be what is happening in this parable that Jesus gives us today too. This king is throwing a wedding feast for his son, and all his invited guests really couldn't care less. They have excuse after excuse as to why they can't go, so much that the king ridiculously goes out and kills them and burns their towns (which by the way, by nature of him being king, he was burning his own towns as well). And he goes and invites just basically anyone to the party, but then kicks some guy out for not wearing the proper attire to a wedding that he was literally just dragged to right after his town was on fire.

Rude, I know. And very nonsensical. But perhaps this is why no one wanted to go to this king's party, because the dude was nuts.

Some of you very keen church goers might have noticed that this isn't the usual texts that we get for Thanksgiving Sunday. Normally we get the story of the 10 Lepers but this year I felt that the regular texts for this 19th Sunday after Pentecost seemed to fit a lot better because I feel like we can relate with those guests who just didn't want to go to the party. I gave a bunch of examples of different events that we are invited to but just might not want to go for whatever reason, but another example would be perhaps a Thanksgiving service during a super long pandemic which hasn't inspired any kind of thanksgiving at all.

Whatever reasons those in the parable had for not going to the wedding, we have a better one. We've had our lives flipped, turned upside down in the past 6-7 months. We have been told to be afraid of each other, of any kind of physical contact with any person or any thing, or even just being outside of our homes. We haven't been able to celebrate anything anyway, as we can't gather more than 50 people and we need to keep our bubbles small.

Now let's be clear, I'm not in any way saying that we shouldn't be following these guidelines or that they are an overreaction, I'm just saying that it has taken a toll on us, our ability to cope, and our views on life and community. So it wouldn't be a surprise that it'd be hard for us to feel thankful in a time such as this.

All the other holidays that we got since this pandemic started were weird in a way, sure, but we made do because we were able to find a way to make it fit. We had Pentecost telling us that the Spirit moves through and empowers us even through the most difficult times. We had Easter where we emphasized how death couldn't keep Jesus down, so neither could a virus. And we had most of Lent during the pandemic which actually helped to make Lent even more Lent than any other Lent that we've ever had.

But Thanksgiving? Seems a bit more difficult. Sure, Thanksgiving isn't really a religious time of the year, but the principles of Thanksgiving are. The principles of... well... being thankful, for one. But also the principles of sharing and generosity. The principles of community and relationship. The principles of appreciating and even *celebrating* what we have, even when it doesn't feel like much.

Hm. Maybe we can fit this holiday into this pandemic.

Because if you think about it, just because life is different now, there is still much to be thankful for. Just because we don't feel like we have much good in our lives, there is still a lot of good that has been given to us. Just because we don't want to celebrate the wedding, that wedding is still going to happen.

And that is what the kingdom of God is like. In the midst of declined invitations and fashion faux pas, the wedding celebration is still on. Even when this pandemic has taken over so much of our personal, professional, and even religious lives, we are still welcoming 7 new members into our community today. Even when we don't feel like giving any thanks for whatever reason, we are still given much to be thankful for, today on Thanksgiving, and always.

See we often equate God as the king in this parable and think that it's saying how God will kick you out of God's kingdom if you don't dress the part. Or that God will retaliate if you don't accept the invitation. Or that God is absolutely nuts enough to burn down whole cities in

vengeful anger. But I don't think that it is at all. I think this parable is revealing to us just how absurd the kingdom can be in finding time to celebrate even when things don't seem all that celebratory. It is showing us how the reasons for joy and thanksgiving cannot be contained. It is teaching us to not focus on the difficulties and hardships of life to the point that it drowns everything out, or we might miss the fact that at the center of it all there is a wedding. A celebration. A community, a relationship, a union in love. One that can stand the test of time, or at least, the test of different trials and tribulations and continues to welcome, celebrate, and be joyous and thankful for all that God has done and will do out of grace, mercy, and peace.

And so today, we are given a reason to celebrate. Today we are welcoming seven new members to our community, that even in a time when we cannot meet in person, sing together or shake each other's hands, we can still grow. We can still see God working in our midst. We can still love. And that is enough to be thankful for.

So on this day of Thanksgiving may we quite literally give thanks for all that God has done, is doing and will continue to do in this community, in our lives, and among all our relationships. Thanks be to God. Amen.

PRESENTATION OF NEW MEMBERS

This is a weird time in our history. A time when we are meeting almost exclusively online with minimal contact with our communities and congregations. A time when hugging, shaking hands, and even singing in an enclosed room is frowned upon. A time when we feel like there isn't much to be thankful for because things have seemed so bleak for so long. But today, today on this day of Thanksgiving we have much to be thankful for. Not only does God continue to love and welcome each one of us into God's community, today we welcome seven new members into ours here at Grace Lutheran. So we give thanks for the gifts God gives, we give thanks for God present in our lives even at times like these, we give thanks for these seven individuals who join us into the life and ministry of our congregation.

APOSTLES' CREED

With all of God's welcomed and elect, let us confess our faith.

**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.**

ADDRESS AND QUESTIONS

By God's grace, we are welcomed into the body of Christ and worshipping communities, and sent to share in the mission and ministry of God. We are all called to live among God's people, to hear God's word and to proclaim the good news in Christ through word and deed, to serve all people, and following the example of Jesus, to strive for justice and peace in all the earth.

Sisters and brothers in Christ,
do you intend to continue in the covenant of your faith
among God's people in this place?

Those being welcomed respond.

I do, and I ask God to help and guide me.

The minister addresses the assembly.

People of God,
do you promise to support and pray for these new members in their life in Christ?

We do, and we ask God to help and guide us.

WELCOME

Let us welcome *these* sisters and brothers in Christ to this community of faith.

We rejoice with you in the life of baptism.

**Together we will give thanks and praise to God
and proclaim the good news to all the world.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Welcomed to God's banqueting table, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. Each petition will end with, "O Lord, our Shepherd," and you are all invited to respond with **hear our prayer**. O Lord, our Shepherd, **hear our prayer**.

O God, we give you thanks for our new members welcomed into our community this day: Trevor, Audrey, Nisha, Rithic, Rohan, Sedi, and Tim. You have drawn them to yourself and to this household of faith that we might together, in your Spirit, continue to serve you and each other through our ministry, worship, and prayer. O Lord, our Shepherd, **hear our prayer**.

O God, you lead us beside still waters and you grant us peace, even when there seems to be none. Continue to guide us in our ministry, that as you grant us growth in faith and number, we may always spread your love to the neighbourhood through word and deed. We remember in prayer our neighbouring faith communities; our partner Anglican Church in Canada; our bishop Greg, assistant to the bishop Kathy, and national bishop Susan; and our companion churches and ministries of the BC Synod. In particular, we pray for Dunbar Lutheran Church in Vancouver and their pastor Thomas Keeley; and for our BC Synod Staff who help to keep things running smoothly. O Lord, our Shepherd, **hear our prayer**.

O God, you restore us into right relationship with you and all your creation. May our appreciation for all that you have done renew us and rejuvenate us in our stewardship, that we might care for this planet as you have intended. O Lord, our Shepherd, **hear our prayer**.

O God, in your name we have confidence not be fearful, for we know that you protect us from evil and death. Be with all world leaders and politicians, that they may properly care for their people and instill in them the same confidence in justice and peace. We pray especially for Solyana Amanuel, that her journey into our country be swift and without complication. O Lord, our Shepherd, **hear our prayer.**

O God, you bless us and anoint us always, even in the face of things that harm us. Continue to protect us and heal us, especially those among us who are sick, who mourn, or who feel lonely, that we might never forget your expansive and welcoming love. In particular, we remember in prayer Paula; Beulah; Bev and family; Ron, Tess, and Mineko; Diana; Laura; Kandie; Thomas; Linda; Cindy; Henry; all those who have contracted or been affected by COVID-19; and all those we name aloud or quietly in our hearts at this time...

O Lord, our Shepherd, **hear our prayer.**

O God, your goodness and mercy follow us always throughout this life and the next, as our journeys are accompanied by you and all the saints. May we always be aware of how we are all included in the one body of Christ, and may it show in our lives and community. O Lord, our Shepherd, **hear our prayer.**

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your inclusive welcome, shown to us by Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

MEAL

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

OFFERING PRAYER

We give you thanks, O God of grace, for all that you provide for us in our scarcity. Remind us of your abundant blessing and welcome always, that even the simple food we have before us act as symbols of your love and mercy, 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, to at all times and places give thanks and praise to you, O holy and almighty God, through our Saviour Jesus Christ, who invites and welcomes us as we are, where we are, and who we are, and lifting us up to join with all the saints of all times and places in receiving this heavenly food with praise in our hearts.

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

For you, O Lord, are our shepherd leading us into joy and peace. You reveal to us, even in our darkest times, the eternal welcome extended to all your people. And you give us confidence to accept your welcome and even to share it with others, that by the grace of our Lord Jesus, all might come to know of your great forgiveness and mercy.

For on the night that he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus sat with his friends for a meal, took some bread, gave thanks for it, 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 we have before us that we remember God's unending promise of love, welcome, and community, even as we declare this mystery of faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

For God deserves all our honour and praise through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with God and the Holy Spirit, as one God, now and forever.

Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Now as we are gathered into God's welcome 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 how God grants abundant blessing.

Thanks be to God.

COMMUNION

SENDING

BLESSING

Now may the invitation of the Spirit bring into all celebration and joy,
may the welcome of Christ enfold you and encourage you to welcome others,
and may the peace of God that surpasses all understanding guard your hearts and minds, both
now and forever.

Amen.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, rejoice in the Lord always.

Thanks be to God.