



## 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)

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### **Second Sunday after Epiphany January 17, 2021 ELW Holy Communion, Setting Ten**

All the baptized have a calling in God's world. God calls not just pastors and deacons but also the youngest child, like Samuel. The story of the calling of Nathanael plays with the idea of place. Nathanael initially dismisses Jesus because he comes from Nazareth. But where we come from isn't important; it's where—or rather whom—we come to. Jesus refers to Jacob, who had a vision in a place he called "the house of God, and . . . the gate of heaven" (Gen. 28:17). Jesus says he himself is the place where Nathanael will meet 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

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

As we gather together while apart, God continues to call us to come and see what God is doing in the world, through our ministry, through our service, and through our worship. And so in our time of worship, we give thanks for the gift of baptism, a gift that has been given freely to us all, showing us the width and breadth of God's love and welcome. It is by these water that we see God's righteousness. It is through these waters that we hear God's promises of grace and mercy. It is in these waters that we feel God enveloping our whole lives, claiming us as God's own, declaring to our communities and the world that we are indeed loved.

And so those of you with water in front of you may dip your hand in it. See. Hear. Feel. Know that God is with us, calls us, and empowers us to be God's people in the world. And as a physical and tangible reminder, we use this water to make a sign of the cross on our foreheads or on the foreheads of those in our homes with hearts of thankfulness and praise. May this reminder colour our worship this day, and may the light of Christ shine in and through it, both now and forever.

**Amen. Thanks be to God.**

**GATHERING HYMN:** Here I Am, Lord (# 574)

#### GREETING

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

**And also with you.**

**KYRIE** (p. 203)

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

#### PRAYER OF THE DAY

O God, you invite us to live in your ways, and you give us to each other to know and to love as we journey in this life. May we strive to see you in all areas of the world, the church, and in our lives that the truth of your goodness might be reflected in the words and actions to which we are called to say and do, through Jesus Christ our Saviour and Lord. **Amen.**

## WORD

#### FIRST READING: 1 Samuel 3:1-10

A reading from 1 Samuel.

*At a time when visions are rare and unexpected, the LORD comes to Samuel and calls him to speak the divine word. Though just a boy, Samuel responds to God obediently, as Eli the priest has taught him to respond. This marks the beginning of Samuel's prophetic ministry.*

<sup>1</sup>Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the LORD under Eli. The word of the LORD was rare in those days; visions were not widespread.

<sup>2</sup>At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his room; <sup>3</sup>the lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the

temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was. <sup>4</sup>Then the LORD called, "Samuel! Samuel!" and he said, "Here I am!" <sup>5</sup>and ran to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call; lie down again." So he went and lay down. <sup>6</sup>The LORD called again, "Samuel!" Samuel got up and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call, my son; lie down again." <sup>7</sup>Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, and the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him. <sup>8</sup>The LORD called Samuel again, a third time. And he got up and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." Then Eli perceived that the LORD was calling the boy. <sup>9</sup>Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down; and if he calls you, you shall say, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

<sup>10</sup>Now the LORD came and stood there, calling as before, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

### **PSALM: Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18**

<sup>1</sup>LORD, you have searched me out;

O LORD, you have known me.

<sup>2</sup>**You know my sitting down and my rising up;  
you discern my thoughts from afar.**

<sup>3</sup>You trace my journeys and my resting-places  
and are acquainted with all my ways.

<sup>4</sup>**Indeed, there is not a word on my lips,  
but you, O LORD, know it altogether.**

<sup>5</sup>You encompass me, behind and before,  
and lay your hand upon me.

<sup>6</sup>**Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;  
it is so high that I cannot attain to it.**

<sup>13</sup>For you yourself created my inmost parts;  
you knit me together in my mother's womb.

<sup>14</sup>**I will thank you because I am marvelously made;  
your works are wonderful, and I know it well.**

<sup>15</sup>My body was not hidden from you,  
while I was being made in secret and woven in the depths of the earth.

<sup>16</sup>**Your eyes beheld my limbs, yet unfinished in the womb; all of them were written in your  
book;  
my days were fashioned before they came to be.**

<sup>17</sup>How deep I find your thoughts, O God!  
How great is the sum of them!

<sup>18</sup>**If I were to count them, they would be more in number than the sand;  
to count them all, my life span would need to be like yours.**

## **SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 6:12-20**

A reading from 1 Corinthians.

*Paul helps the Corinthians understand that God has claimed the entirety of their lives through the death of Christ. Hence Christian relationships and conduct, including areas of human sexuality, are to reflect the reality that we belong to Christ and that the Holy Spirit lives within us.*

<sup>12</sup>“All things are lawful for me,” but not all things are beneficial. “All things are lawful for me,” but I will not be dominated by anything. <sup>13</sup>“Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food,” and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is meant not for fornication but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. <sup>14</sup>And God raised the Lord and will also raise us by his power. <sup>15</sup>Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Should I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! <sup>16</sup>Do you not know that whoever is united to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For it is said, “The two shall be one flesh.” <sup>17</sup>But anyone united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. <sup>18</sup>Shun fornication! Every sin that a person commits is outside the body; but the fornicator sins against the body itself. <sup>19</sup>Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own? <sup>20</sup>For you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (p. 205)**

### **GOSPEL: John 1:43-51**

The holy gospel according to John.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

*In John’s gospel, Jesus’ ministry begins with the call of disciples, who then bring others to Jesus. Philip’s friend Nathanael moves from skepticism to faith when he accepts the invitation to “Come and see.”*

<sup>43</sup>The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, “Follow me.”

<sup>44</sup>Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. <sup>45</sup>Philip found Nathanael and said to him, “We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth.” <sup>46</sup>Nathanael said to him, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” Philip said to him, “Come and see.” <sup>47</sup>When Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him, he said of him, “Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!” <sup>48</sup>Nathanael asked him, “Where did you get to know me?” Jesus answered, “I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you.” <sup>49</sup>Nathanael replied, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!” <sup>50</sup>Jesus answered, “Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these.” <sup>51</sup>And he said to him, “Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.”

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## SERMON

By your Spirit, O God, open our ears, our eyes, our hearts, and our minds to hear, see, feel, and understand your Word for us through Christ, that it might lead and guide us as your beloved children along with Jesus your Son, our brother. Amen.

I want take this chance and platform that I have as a preacher to clear something up with all of you watching this. Last week I led a service and preached a sermon that I wrote when I was admittedly a bit charged up with the events that occurred a week and a half ago in the US capitol. After that service was done, I received comments both on how good the service was, and also how bad it was. I'm not apologizing for the service or the sermon in any way, but I do feel that it perhaps came off the wrong way in that I was somehow acting in a partisan way in my preaching and that I was using the pulpit to try to sway others in their views on politics.

I just want to assure you that nothing can be further away from the truth. In fact, when I first started here at Grace so many years ago, I was told by a now late member here that politics had no place in the pulpit. And while many of you might have differing opinions on this, I had to agree with this member. Not because I feel like politics are somehow holier than God. Not because I don't think God has anything to do with the governing of the nations of the world. And certainly not because I'm afraid to talk about my personal viewpoints. No, I agreed with him because I quite honestly know very little about politics so I probably have no business preaching about it.

I mean, I know about the different parties and those running for office. I try to keep up with the news regarding our government in our city and the riding that I live in as well as the country if I can. And I like to keep up to date with just what's going on for if and when the topic comes up in conversation. But ask me the history of our Canadian politics? Or what a majority government is? Or even what a caucus does? I have no idea. I had a buddy in seminary who was a political science major, and he'd every now and then try to teach me this stuff and I'd just stare at him blankly without a single clue of what he was talking about. Yeah, we're not really friends anymore.

Anyway, to reiterate my point, I don't think I'm qualified to try to sway your political slant any which way, and so that isn't what I've been trying to do in last week's service or any time. That isn't my purpose or my goal. That isn't even what I feel like I'm called to do here at Grace. Rather, I'm here as a preacher, proclaiming to you all where I see God in all the mess that we collectively see. I'm here as a pastor trying to make sense of everything with a theological lens that I've spend an almost embarrassing number of years in school training and honing. I'm here as a called and ordained minister of Christ, excited for God working in the world, and wanting to take you all by the hand and urge you to come and see.

This is what I believe I'm called to do. In fact, this is what I think we're all called to do in varying degrees and methods. This is what Philip is doing in today's gospel reading, when he runs up to his buddy Nathanael and says to him literally, "come and see."

Come and see what God is doing in the world. Come and see where God is present in and around our communities. Come and see how God is providing for us, caring for us, and loving us in a way that we may not have thought possible.

But don't get me wrong, just because I believe we're all called to this, that doesn't mean that such an endeavour is easy. In fact, it is super hard because even we who are called to proclaim, might have the same sentiment as Nathanael and think, "can anything good come out of such-and-such?" Whether such-and-such is a person, place, or thing is up to you, but don't we all face that battle within ourselves sometimes, wondering how can anything good come from that?

Especially now, when the state of the world seems dire with this raging pandemic. Especially now, when the tempers are flaring with all the political unrest in the States, in Canada, and around the globe. Especially now, when the church in general is at an all-time low when it comes to attendance, seemed relevance, and influence.

And it's really easy for us to just no. No, there is nothing good to come out of such-and-such a person, place, or thing. There is nothing good that can be had in the situations that we face. There is nothing good that comes out of all this stuff that we just don't like.

But you see, that is where we'll be wrong. Because as God continually shows us time and again, that God can be present in whatever situation we find ourselves in. God can be present in whatever hurt or pain we might be feeling. God can be present in that individual that we just don't like, however deplorable we might see them as.

Earlier this past week as I saw this Tweet by writer and activist Anne Lamott, where she says, and I quote, "I hope Trump and his kids go to prison. But God loves this gross, violent, insane man. That's the mystery of grace. I've said I'd wash Dick Cheney's feet and I know he'd wash mine; while I'm not there w/Trump yet, I'd get him a glass of water. God and the pope would. Biden would." And I know, not everyone is going to share this negative sentiment about Trump or positive sentiment about Cheney, Biden, the pope, or even God, but that isn't the point. The point is God's grace is big enough to cover even those whom we don't like very much or even borderline hate. God's love is bigger than us.

Lutheran pastor and author Nadia Bolz-Weber retweeted Anne Lamott's sentiment and added her own take, "this is why grace is not the most popular topic – because it is \*\*\*\*ing offensive. I will never understand why God isn't more discerning" and then replies to herself, "to be clear: I don't see anything redeemable about the man. I just need to believe that somehow God does." Again, this doesn't have to do specifically with President Trump, but it has to do with God's grace, which again is bigger than us, bigger than our ability to even forgive, bigger than our inability to love. And not necessarily our ability to forgive and/or love Trump specifically, but anyone that we might not be able to stand. Be it our boss that inexplicably fired us. That ex-significant other that hurt us so much. That hypocritical friend that crossed that line for the last time. We don't have to see anything redeemable about these people, we just need to believe that God does.

And this, my friends, is what I want to proclaim. This is what I want to shout out from the rooftops. This is what I am called to help you all come and see. It isn't my political agenda or bias. It isn't any partisan opinion or viewpoint. It isn't even to draw to light how little I actually know about politics. But it is about God's grace. God's peace. God's redeeming love for each and every one of us, wonderfully and marvelously made in God's own image, held and blessed as God's own, and called to share this good news with all people.

It doesn't matter if you're a young child like Samuel. It doesn't matter if you're an arrogant know-it-all like Paul. It doesn't even matter if you're sarcastic and cynical naysayer like Nathan...ael (who is totally who I meant, not myself). But God's grace is big enough to cover even these. Even me. Even you. And God's grace not only covers us, forgives us, and redeems us into God's kingdom, but it also calls us to share this good news with others. Equips us, empowers us, encourages us with a love that truly surpasses any kind of understanding.

This is me. And I'd like to believe that this is you as well. This is us, God's beloved children, working together to navigate this wild and crazy world, flawed but forgiven, wretched yet redeemed, lousy and somehow and some way, still dearly loved by God.

In this season after the Epiphany, may we heed the call to not just proclaim God's good news, but to believe it to be true for ourselves that we might be excited to go out into the world and beckon others to come and see this God that is pure love. Thanks be to God. Amen.

**HYMN OF THE DAY:** Just As I Am, without One Plea (#592)

### **APOSTLES' CREED**

With the whole church called to proclamation, let us confess the Christian faith with the Apostle's Creed:

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

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

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

### **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Called to see and proclaim Christ in the world, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. Each petition will end with "show us your mercy, O God," and you are invited to respond with **hear our prayer**. Show us your mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, you reach out to us and you know and discern our thoughts from afar. You lead us to see and recognize your work in the world. May we strengthened to join in your work, that our service to you might be a blessing to all. Show us your mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, you are acquainted with our ways and you strengthen us where we are weak. You lead and guide us in our ministry and faithful service, even in these times of pandemic. As we continue to meet online, may your presence be apparent to us all, giving us the hope and confidence that we have not been abandoned but you shall always abide with us and our communities. We pray 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 churches of the BC Synod. In particular, we remember Hills of Peace Lutheran Church in Kamloops and their pastor Jane Gingrich; and our Global Mission Companion, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Peru. Show us your mercy, O God, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, you lay your loving hands upon us and encompass us in the wonders of your creation. May we properly care for this planet that you have entrusted to us and all that is in it to the glory of your name. Show us your mercy, O God, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, your wisdom and truth is amazing and wonderful that it might even feel unattainable. But you continue to fill us with your knowledge and lead us into peace. May all world leaders and politicians heed to your wisdom and peace, that we might all collectively work for the good of all rather than a select few. We also hold in prayer Solyana Amanuel, that she be able to come to our country and safety soon. Show us your mercy, O God, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, you have created our inmost being and marvelously knit and fashioned us together in your very image of love and grace. Remind us of this truth whenever we might lose sight of it, especially at times when we are sick, mourn, or feel lonely, so we all could lean on your strength and healing, knowing that we are not hidden from you but beheld in your love. We remember in prayer this day Paula; Beulah; Ron, Tess, and Mineko; Bev and family; Laura; Kandie; Thomas; Cindy; Linda; Henry; those who have contracted or been affected by COVID-19; and all those we name aloud or quietly in our hearts at this time... Show us your mercy, O God, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, your blessings are more numerous than the sands of the earth and the stars of the skies as you hold us in your presence with all the saints for eternity. May we continue to look to those whom we've loved and lost to be our examples of faithful living as we look forward to being reunited with them in your love. Show us your mercy, O God, **hear our prayer.**

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

**Amen.**

## MEAL

### PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

**OFFERATORY HYMN:** Lord, Be Glorified (#744)



## **OFFERING PRAYER**

Holy God, you have promised us that we would be able to see the heavens opened and the angels dancing in splendor as your presence is made known among us. May this food and drink before us serve as another reminder of your goodness and providence and your love revealed to us, 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 places give thanks and praise to you, O holy and almighty God, through our Saviour Jesus Christ, who revealed to us just how present you are in our lives, that we might be joined with the choirs of angels, the hosts of heaven, and the church on earth, in praising your name with this unending hymn:

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

## **THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE**

O Lord, you know us. You know our routines, our thoughts, our travels, and our words before we even say them, and yet you decide to be a part of our lives and you call us into your service. For you have created every part of us, every part of us is marvelously made. And you clothe us with your righteousness and you envelope us in your love as you bless us in ways that we cannot even count, culminating in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ your Son, whom you've sent to us to help us to see you in all your glory.

For on that night that he was betrayed, your Son Jesus sat with his friends, took some bread, gave thanks, then he 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 and said, "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 that we are reminded of how great are the thoughts of God, lifting us up out of our sin and calling us to see and serve, even as we proclaim this mystery of faith:

**Christ has died.**

**Christ is risen.**

**Christ will come again.**

All glory and honour belong to you, O God, for showing us your truth and righteousness and for giving us again this heavenly food, your Word made tangible, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit as one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

## **LORD'S PRAYER**

Called 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.**

## **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

Taste and see God's righteousness and goodness.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **COMMUNION**

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

## **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Holy God, we again see your blessing in this food we have been given, that nourishes our souls and bodies that we might heed to your calling in our lives. As we continue in this time of pandemic, continue to lead and guide us as your hands and feet in the world in need of your good news of love and grace, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

## **SENDING**

### **BLESSING**

The peace of Christ bless you and keep you, the love of God shine on you and be gracious onto you, the fellowship of the Spirit look upon you with favour, and give you peace, now and forever.

**Amen.**

**SENDING HYMN:** Will You Come and Follow Me (#798)

### **DISMISSAL**

Go in peace, trust in the Spirit's leading and guiding.

**Thanks be to God.**

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