



## 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



### Holy Trinity

May 30, 2021

### Now the Feast and Celebration

When we say God is the triune God, we are saying something about who God is beyond, before, and after the universe: that there is community within God. Our experience of this is reflected in Paul's words today. When we pray to God as Jesus prayed to his Abba (an everyday, intimate parental address), the Spirit prays within us, creating between us and God the same relationship Jesus has with the one who sent him.

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

### THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

As we are gathered while apart we remember how we are joined by the Spirit throughout time and space, and how by God's grace, our community is not and cannot be hindered by distance. This can be seen and felt through the gift of baptism, for which we give thanks.

For in baptism it is not just the water but what it represents: purity, rejuvenation, and life. In it, we see the clarity of the gospel and the holiness of God. By it, we feel refreshed and empowered as God's children in the world. And because of it, we are given the life that truly is life by the steadfast love of God through the power of the Spirit.

So those of you with water in front of you, you may use it to mark your foreheads with a sign of the cross. Allow yourself to see and feel God present in your midst, and dare to be made alive through the life and resurrection of Jesus and the anointing of the Spirit.

**Amen. Thanks be to God.**

**GATHERING HYMN:** Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty! (#413)

### GREETING

The unifying grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the uniting love of God, and the undivided fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**And also with you.**

**KYRIE** (p. 3)

**NOW THE FEAST** (p. 4)

### PRAYER OF THE DAY

Holy God, you are our source of all goodness, as you gave your Son for the life of the world and sent your Spirit to abide with us in your love. Lead and strengthen us to love each other this day, that we might have life abundantly in your name through Jesus Christ by the power of the Spirit. **Amen.**

## WORD

### FIRST READING: Isaiah 6:1-8

A reading from Isaiah.

*This reading narrates Isaiah's vision of the Lord surrounded by angels. They sing "Holy, holy, holy," a song the church sings at the beginning of the great thanksgiving. This liturgical text invites the church and all creation to sing in praise of God's glory. That glory is God's mercy toward sinners.*

<sup>1</sup>In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lofty; and the hem of his robe filled the temple. <sup>2</sup>Seraphs were in attendance above him; each had six wings: with two they covered their faces, and with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. <sup>3</sup>And one called to another and said:

"Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts;  
the whole earth is full of his glory."

<sup>4</sup>The pivots on the thresholds shook at the voices of those who called, and the house filled with smoke. <sup>5</sup>And I said: “Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; yet my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!”  
<sup>6</sup>Then one of the seraphs flew to me, holding a live coal that had been taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. <sup>7</sup>The seraph touched my mouth with it and said: “Now that this has touched your lips, your guilt has departed and your sin is blotted out.” <sup>8</sup>Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” And I said, “Here am I; send me!”

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

### **PSALM: Psalm 29**

<sup>1</sup>Ascribe to the LORD, you gods,  
ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.  
<sup>2</sup>**Ascribe to the LORD the glory due God’s name;  
worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.**  
<sup>3</sup>The voice of the LORD is upon the waters; the God of glory thunders;  
the LORD is upon the mighty waters.  
<sup>4</sup>**The voice of the LORD is a powerful voice;  
the voice of the LORD is a voice of splendor.**  
<sup>5</sup>The voice of the LORD breaks the cedar trees;  
the LORD breaks the cedars of Lebanon;  
<sup>6</sup>**the LORD makes Lebanon skip like a calf,  
and Mount Hermon like a young wild ox.**  
<sup>7</sup>The voice of the LORD  
bursts forth in lightning flashes.  
<sup>8</sup>**The voice of the LORD shakes the wilderness;  
the LORD shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.**  
<sup>9</sup>The voice of the LORD makes the oak trees writhe and strips the forests bare.  
And in the temple of the LORD all are crying, “Glory!”  
<sup>10</sup>**The LORD sits enthroned above the flood;  
the LORD sits enthroned as king forevermore.**  
<sup>11</sup>O LORD, give strength to your people;  
give them, O LORD, the blessings of peace.

### **SECOND READING: Romans 8:12-17**

A reading from Romans.

*In describing the new life of faith, Paul refers to all three persons of the Trinity: the Spirit leads us to recognize that we are children of God the Father and joint heirs with Christ the Son.*

<sup>12</sup>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.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (p. 8)

### GOSPEL: John 3:1-17

The holy gospel according to John.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

*Jesus' miracles prompt Nicodemus to visit him in secrecy. Jesus tells him about being born of the Spirit and about the Son who has been sent by God to save.*

<sup>1</sup>Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. <sup>2</sup>He came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God." <sup>3</sup>Jesus answered him, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above."

<sup>4</sup>Nicodemus said to him, "How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?"

<sup>5</sup>Jesus answered, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. <sup>6</sup>What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. <sup>7</sup>Do not be astonished that I said to you, 'You must be born from above.' <sup>8</sup>The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."

<sup>9</sup>Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" <sup>10</sup>Jesus answered him, "Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?"

<sup>11</sup>"Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. <sup>12</sup>If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? <sup>13</sup>No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. <sup>14</sup>And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, <sup>15</sup>that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

<sup>16</sup>"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

<sup>17</sup>"Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him."

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

### SERMON

God, giver of life, breathe your Spirit into us that we might hear you speak to us this day, that by the grace of Jesus we might be able to love as you so deeply love. **Amen.**

So we got some good news from our health officials this past week, it looks like our province has been doing pretty good in terms of our COVID numbers and as a result, we'll be soon allowed to do a lot of the things that we've been missing for the past year and a bit. While we won't be back to fully "normal" for a few more months yet, we'll at least be able to get back to some semblance of our prior social lives and how we are able to connect and interact with others that don't live in our specific homes. We might even be able to have church indoors really soon...

And I'll be honest, I am having mixed feelings about this. Don't get me wrong, I do want to get back in person and I do want to be able to see and worship with you all in the same room again... it's just that this whole pandemic has been such a huge event in our collective lives, and I was thinking... or perhaps hoping... that we might be able to bring about some real positive change in society throughout this time. Positive change in the way we live, in the way we act, and especially in the way we treat each other.

Because really? I don't think the old way was working. I don't think the old way of the rich get richer, the old way of privilege being the highest indicator of success, the old way of distributing power in very racist and sexist ways. Well, maybe it works for the rich, the privileged, and the non-racialized male, but for the rest of the world it's been a tough go.

But here we are and to me, it seems like we had our chance to change, but we blew it. It's like we had like 15 months to re-evaluate the systems of society but instead we kept pushing to get things back to the way they were. We were given an opportunity for a rebirth and renewal, but we just stood there sort of dumbfounded and wondering "how can anyone be born after having grown old?"

This of course was the question that the Pharisee Nicodemus asks Jesus in today's gospel reading. He wanted to know more about Jesus, his teachings, and about God. But instead Jesus drops this bomb on him and says that he needs to be born of above. And of course, Nicodemus doesn't get it, and he asks how can these things be as they sound so fantastical and ridiculous.

Poor Nicodemus, he just might be one of the dumbest smart people we read about in the bible. We know he's smart as he's a Pharisee and thus an educated intellectual. And I guess to be fair, we don't know that he's "dumb" per se, just that he totally doesn't get Jesus' metaphor here, which in all fairness, is pretty confusing to begin with.

See the thing is in those days, there weren't too many options of how society could be run. There weren't too many interpretations of what is right and what is wrong. There weren't too many differing opinions of who or what God could even be. So when Jesus came along reinterpreting everything and giving people options and showing them a new and different and perhaps better way of living life, it was unsettling for those in power. Mostly because the change will run the risk of them losing their power. And we all know that once you have that power, it is hard to give it up. Once you're comfortable and get a taste of the "good life," then it's hard to live in anything that isn't as good. Once you are accustomed and feel entitled to the "way things have always been," then it's really hard to even conceive of any kind of change whatsoever.

And so the Pharisees and those in power pushed back against Jesus' revolution. They resisted his teachings and philosophies. They scoffed at any call to change and did all they could to preserve the status quo, the "how it's always been", the old ways of the rich getting richer and the poor getting more and more stepped on.

Sound familiar?

Even after 2000 years of hindsight, we especially in the Western world and church resist that change. We like to scoff at those who work to reveal the injustices of the ways that always

have been and liberate the oppressed. We often put up barriers between us and that which might make us uncomfortable to perhaps subconsciously block us from any kind of progress.

“It’s never been done that way” or “there is too much at risk” or “that won’t work because it is too different” or even “let’s table that discussion for another day when we’re more prepared for it”. Excuse after excuse. Wall after wall. Misunderstanding question after misunderstanding question. It is hard for us to change when there is so much that we put in our way.

But.

That doesn’t mean that we can’t change. It doesn’t mean that we aren’t called to act in the will of God as God’s hands and feet in the world. It certainly doesn’t mean that God hasn’t empowered us, strengthened us, and blessed us to do this life changing work in our lives, in our communities, and in all the world.

It doesn’t sound easy. It doesn’t sound comfortable. It might not even sound wanted or desired. But I do believe that God has called us act. God has called us to live lives full of grace, mercy, and love. God has called us to change not for change’s sake, but change for the better for the gospel’s sake and the sake of our neighbour.

For God loves this world so much that God had sent to us Jesus, not to condemn us for our wrongdoing and misdeeds, but to save us from our own harmful and destructive selves through his teachings of compassion and generosity, his deeds of hospitality and community, and his examples of forgiveness and love.

Today is Holy Trinity Sunday, the only Sunday of the church year that we dedicate not to an event in the Christian history, but to a doctrine. And not an easy doctrine to understand, at that. But a doctrine that helps us to see the unity of God, the diversity of God, and the inclusion of God for all walks of life and classes, all genders and orientations, and certainly all spectrums of colour translated by our melanin levels, welcoming us all into this wide and vast kingdom and community, bringing us up in right relationship.

And it is in this Trinity, this diverse, uniting, paradoxical nature of God, that we can find the strength to see how we can welcome others. It is in the complex and near-impossible-to-understand understanding of God that we are empowered to live in radical grace and life-altering community. It is in this love of God that surpasses all comprehension and human abilities that we can be born again, made anew, and be changed in the image of this Triune God, all in one and one in all, holy and complete, and be filled with the hope of a gospel extended to all people of all times and all places, through the salvation freely given to us all.

So it is my hope for us as we finally draw near to the end of the pandemic, that we are able to see each other with a new light. That we are able to regard each other with a grace from God that we perhaps didn’t think was possible before. That we are able to treat each other with compassion and love, taking down the walls that have been built up between us and see the bridges that gap our difference and unites us all as one body, one community, one kin-dom for all time.

As we move into this time after Pentecost, this ordered time of the church year where we look at church growth and flourishing, may we hear God the Sovereign calling us, may we see God the Saviour saving us, and may we feel God the Spirit leading us with love into new heights of community and relationship through to the end of this pandemic and always. Thanks be to God. Amen.

**HYMN OF THE DAY:** Here I Am, Lord (#574)

**CREED** (p. 9)

Joined with the church of all times and place, 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**

Led into community and relationship, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. Each petition will end with "in your saving love, O God," and you all may respond with hear our prayer. In your saving love, O God, **hear our prayer.**

God our Counsellor, all glory and strength is yours and you are above any other god. You invite us into your kingdom and welcome us into your community. May our acceptance of your invitation be a source of joy for us, that our praise to you be everlasting. In your saving love, O God, **hear our prayer.**

God the Christ, we give the glory due to your name in our gathering and worship, even in this pandemic. Continue to strengthen our ministry to others and let us not be held back by inconvenience and misunderstandings, but allow us to flourish in new and innovative ways in these changing times. We pray also 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 congregations of the BC Synod. In particular, we pray for Peace Lutheran Church in Abbotsford and their interim pastor Cliff Reinhardt; and for Emmaus Lutheran Church in Burnaby and their pastor Timo Saarinen. In your saving love, O God, **hear our prayer.**

God our Creator, you are seen and heard in the might and beauty of the waters, skies, and lands that you have made. Help us to honour you with our stewardship of all that you have entrusted to us, and may your love and providence continue to empower us all. In your saving love, O God, **hear our prayer.**

God our Sovereign Lord, your voice is powerful and full of splendor and authority and can be heard throughout the earth. May all our world leaders and politicians listen and heed to your voice, that your wisdom might abound in all the nations. We pray especially for those whom we have sponsored to come and live in our country: Solyana Amanuel; and Maekele Kiflu, Selam Haile, and their children, that their journey might be swift and without complication. In your saving love, O God, **hear our prayer.**

God our Saviour, you bless us with strength and healing and you grant us your peace. Be with all who are sick, who mourn, or who feel lonely, that your saving love be apparent to us all. Especially we pray for Marie; Diana; Ron, Tess, and Mineko; Bev and family; Paula; Laura; Kandie; Thomas; Cindy; Linda; Charlotte; those who have contracted or been affected by COVID 19; and all those we name aloud or quietly in our hearts at this time...  
In your saving love, O God, **hear our prayer.**

God the Spirit that unites us all, you sit enthroned as king forevermore and you bring us into your eternal kingdom with you and all the saints. May the lives of those we've loved and lost continually be in our hearts and minds, that we always be joined with them and you as the one body of Christ in all times and places. In your saving love, O God, **hear our prayer.**

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in the truth of your Son Jesus, through the power of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

#### **PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

**OFFERATORY HYMN:** As the Grains of Wheat (p. 10)

#### **OFFERING PRAYER**

God of mercy, we give you thanks for all that you provide for love and for life: your Word, your presence, and the nourishment for our bodies, minds, and spirit. Bless this food before us, that it remind us of all that you first give us and we in turn can be generous in our communities and beyond, through the grace of Jesus Christ.

**Amen.**

#### **MEAL**

#### **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 God, through our Saviour Jesus Christ, who is joined with you and the Spirit to bring us together as your people, that we might in turn be joined with the choirs of angels, the hosts of heaven, and the whole church on earth in praising your name with this unending hymn:

## **HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (p. 11)**

### **GREAT THANKSGIVING**

O Lord we ascribe to you the glory and strength due to your name, for we worship you for your beauty and holiness. For your voice is mighty and powerful and full of splendor as it rings throughout the earth, declaring to all creatures, all plants, and all lands that you are our glorious God. You sit enthroned above our transgression, above our shortcomings, above our sin and you redeem and save us through the life and ministry of your Son, Jesus, whom you sent to us to be one of us, and who...

...on the night he was betrayed, sat with his friends for a meal and took some bread, gave you 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 through this breaking and sharing of food that we are given strength and blessings of peace, even as we declare this mystery of faith:

**Christ has died.**

**Christ is risen.**

**Christ will come again.**

For even in our times of trouble, O God, you rip open the heavens and enter into our lives, manifesting yourself in the world, in our communities, and even in the food we eat, through the teachings and ministry of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, as one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

## **LORD'S PRAYER (p. 13)**

Gathered together with God 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 unifying love.  
**Thanks be to God.**

#### **COMMUNION**

**COMMUNION HYMN:** Lamb of God (p. 14)

#### **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Holy God, we give you thanks for giving us your Word of life, joining us by your Spirit, and empowering us to be your people in the world. May we continually rely on your promises of grace and steadfast love, that we not be hindered by our distance or this pandemic, but we continually praise you through our lives through Jesus Christ, by the power of the Spirit. **Amen.**

#### **SENDING**

#### **BLESSING**

May God our Sovereign Creator hold us in truth and freedom,  
God the Saviour Christ bring to you hope and grace,  
and God as the Spirit Counsellor that flows through us all, bless you with peace, love, and the life that truly is life, now and forever.  
**Amen.**

**SENDING SONG:** God of Tempest, God of Whirlwind (#400)

#### **DISMISSAL**

Go in peace, sent by God to love and be loved.  
**Thanks be to God.**