



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA

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Second Sunday after Pentecost

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ELW Holy Communion, Setting Eight

A house divided against itself cannot stand. Jesus makes this observation in light of charges that he is possessed. He is possessed, not by a demon, but by the Holy Spirit. We who have received the Holy Spirit through baptism have been joined to Christ's death and resurrection and knit together in the body of Christ. Those with whom we sing and pray this day are Jesus' family. With them we go forth in peace to do the will 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

THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

In our gathering while still apart, we are united together in the Spirit of truth and wisdom, joined as one by the waters of baptism for which we give thanks.

For in these waters we feel God present with us, granting us love and peace and joy in the providence of creation. In these waters we see God's wisdom and truth, leading us on the path of righteousness and justice. In these waters we know that God unites us with grace and mercy, recreating us as God's children and joins us together as the one body of Christ.

So those of you with water in front of you, you may dip your fingers in it. Know that you aren't alone in this journey of life but are given companions, a community, a whole kin-dom of God's people working together for the good of all. And when you are ready and are willing, you may use the water to make a sign of the cross on your forehead. Be reminded of who you are and ultimately whose you are, for the sake of the gospel for a world in need.

Amen. Thanks be to God.

GATHERING SONG: Rise, Shine, You People! (#665)

GREETING

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

And also with you

KYRIE (p. 184)

CANTICLE OF PRAISE (p. 185)

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Holy God, maker and redeemer of all things, you wait for us as we slowly find our way in this world. You reach out to us with your hand of forgiveness even when we try to hide from your face. You bring us into your household and declare us as your family. Help us to see beyond the temporary and live fully in the eternal knowing that you are with us, uniting us with each other and all the saints, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

WORD

FIRST READING: Genesis 3:8-15

A reading from Genesis.

Immediately after Adam and Eve eat the forbidden fruit, they hide from God. Neither takes responsibility for their sin, instead blaming each other, the snake, and even God. The curse on the snake was understood as a messianic prophecy by the early church, who associated Eve's "offspring" with Christ.

⁸[Adam and Eve] heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.⁹ But the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, "Where

are you?" ¹⁰He said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself." ¹¹He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" ¹²The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate." ¹³Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent tricked me, and I ate." ¹⁴The LORD God said to the serpent,

"Because you have done this,
cursed are you among all animals
and among all wild creatures;
upon your belly you shall go,
and dust you shall eat
all the days of your life.

¹⁵I will put enmity between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and hers;
he will strike your head,
and you will strike his heel."

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 130

¹Out of the depths

I cry to you, O LORD;

²**O LORD, hear my voice!**

Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplication.

³If you were to keep watch over sins,

O LORD, who could stand?

⁴**Yet with you is forgiveness,**

in order that you may be feared.

⁵I wait for you, O LORD; my soul waits;

in your word is my hope.

⁶**My soul waits for the Lord more than those who keep watch for the morning,**

more than those who keep watch for the morning.

⁷O Israel, wait for the LORD, for with the LORD there is steadfast love;

with the LORD there is plenteous redemption.

⁸**For the LORD shall redeem Israel**

from all their sins.

SECOND READING: 2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1

A reading from 2 Corinthians.

Life in the present is transitory and cannot compare with the eternal home God has prepared for us. So we do not despair no matter what life might bring because we know that as God raised Jesus from the dead, God promises to bring us into eternal life.

¹³Just as we have the same spirit of faith that is in accordance with scripture—"I believed, and so I spoke"—we also believe, and so we speak, ¹⁴because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus, and will bring us with you into his presence. ¹⁵Yes, everything is for your sake, so that grace, as it extends to more and more people, may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God.

¹⁶So we do not lose heart. Even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷For this slight momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all measure, ¹⁸because we look not at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen; for what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal.

^{5:1}For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (p. 188)

GOSPEL: Mark 3:20-35

The holy gospel according to Mark.

Glory to you, O Lord.

In response to charges that he is possessed, Jesus wonders aloud how anyone who is demon-possessed can cast out demons. Those who do the will of God are possessed by the Holy Spirit, siblings of Christ.

[Jesus went home;] ²⁰and the crowd came together again, so that [Jesus and the disciples] could not even eat. ²¹When his family heard it, they went out to restrain him, for people were saying, "He has gone out of his mind." ²²And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, "He has Beelzebul, and by the ruler of the demons he casts out demons." ²³And he called them to him, and spoke to them in parables, "How can Satan cast out Satan? ²⁴If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. ²⁵And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. ²⁶And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but his end has come. ²⁷But no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his property without first tying up the strong man; then indeed the house can be plundered.

²⁸"Truly I tell you, people will be forgiven for their sins and whatever blasphemies they utter; ²⁹but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit can never have forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin"—³⁰for they had said, "He has an unclean spirit."

³¹Then his mother and his brothers came; and standing outside, they sent to him and called him. ³²A crowd was sitting around him; and they said to him, "Your mother and your brothers and sisters are outside, asking for you." ³³And he replied, "Who are my mother and my brothers?" ³⁴And looking at those who sat around him, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! ³⁵Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother."

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

O God, it is in your Word that we find hope. By the power of your Spirit may we hear you speaking wisdom into our hearts and steadfast love into our lives, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

You know I always kind of laugh a bit inside when I read this portion of the Adam and Eve story that we got in our first reading today. I laugh not because of the years of misogynistic rule that could have stemmed from it. I laugh not because of the theological summersaults scholars

went through over the centuries in interpreting it. I laugh not even at the thought of a talking snake. But I laugh at how so darn relatable this is.

“Me? Uh no, it was her.” “Oh me? No, no, it was the snake.” “Me now? Not my fault your people are so gullible.”

Basically excuse after excuse, finger pointing after finger pointing, shifting blame after shifting blame. Yeah, totally sounds like Adam and Eve are this old married couple who can't seem to own up to their part they played in the relationship. Those of you who are married or have been in a long term relationship whether it be romantic or plutonic know what I mean. It isn't easy to admit wrong, it isn't easy to see our own faults, it isn't easy to actually look at ourselves and see our role in the friction or conflict that we might find ourselves in. It always seems to be the other person's fault that the relationship isn't perfect. It's just easier to swallow that way.

But really, there is no relationship, marriage or not, that is perfect. Although we might want others to believe that ours is or we see how others portray theirs as perfect on social media and what not, the fact of the matter is that when there is a relationship between two separate individual people with any shred of an opinion or original thought, there will be disagreements. The disagreement doesn't have to escalate into conflict, mind you, but it totally can. Especially when they continue to disagree in spite of all the very sound logic that you present, then really it gets hard not to bring up the vocal fisticuffs from time to time. Like I said, it's normal. It's part of any relationship. In fact, some would say that it's one of the defining factors of a strong relationship, as many counsellors (that I know at least) often raise a brow when a married couple claim that they “never fight”.

So if disagreements are normal in relationships, what is the deal with Jesus' reaction to his family's disagreeing with him in today's gospel lesson? You know, I've always thought it to be unnecessarily harsh, and quite frankly something that I would never get away with if I had tried it with my own family. To me, the family just showed concern for Jesus' wellbeing and maybe sanity as they saw how hard he was working and all the crazy things he was saying against the establishment and they just wanted him to stop and maybe take a break. Sure, maybe they were cramping Jesus' style a bit by saying he was out of his mind, but I don't know if that warrants full blown disownment. So what gives? Why was Jesus so harsh with his own vocal fisticuffs?

Well, the thing is I don't know if it was the actual conflict that set Jesus off here. It wasn't the being called crazy. It wasn't even just the disagreement of how Jesus should be spending his time. I think it was the failure on his family's part to see and recognise the restorative work that Jesus was doing and the forgiveness that he was revealing. Instead of being able to accept this gracious gift of love, they, and technically the scribes that showed up to this episode as well, not only denied who it was coming from but perhaps also denied that they even needed it.

Because really, why would any of us need forgiveness if none of us do anything wrong?

You know what I mean, don't you? It's a lot easier to justify our actions, rationalize our opinions, and even come up with total nonsensical excuses before we admit wrong. The fundamental problem with the “I said/they said” debates, the “devil made me do it” excuses, and the “I don't agree with them so they must be out of their minds” mentality is that we have

such a hard time admitting wrong, and I wonder if that then relates to our having a hard time accepting forgiveness.

Of course, there are consequences to our actions, and we will have to own up to those whether we like to or not, but people in general seem to fail to recognise the joy in diversity, the fullness in difference, maybe even the growth in conflict. I'm not saying we need or should go and pick fights with our spouses or others because it'll make us better people, but we do need and should see that even in our disagreements, even in our conflict, even in our vocal fisticuffs where things might have been unintentionally said in the heat of the moment, that there is forgiveness. There is restoration. There is unity in the Spirit even when we don't feel all that united.

See, we all know that we're not perfect. We all know that we make mistakes. The goal of community and relationship isn't to stamp out the imperfections and flaws, it isn't to blot out the weaknesses and shortcomings, it isn't even to stop others from sinning. But the point is to see how even when there is all this messiness in life, we are all forgiven. We are all welcome. We are all dearly and wholly loved. Not because we've earned it, but because God chose it. And also, because we need it. Like really badly.

And so the fact that God freely forgives and loves and welcomes, unites us in relationship, community, and in God's kin-dom. However, if we deny our need for that forgiveness and love, then that effectively divides us. If we hold to the thought that we are always right no matter what evidence is stacked against us, then we face our own self-righteous exclusion. If we decide not to welcome others because they are too different or just not like us enough, then we doom ourselves to be unwelcomed.

See this is the unforgiveable sin that Jesus talks about. I know that term sounds really scary because we're afraid that we might accidentally commit it, but the blaspheming of the Spirit is not so much an action as it is a mentality. It isn't something that you can unintentionally do and God is like, "whoop, too bad, you aren't forgiven". It isn't something that we can fall into. But it is a decided worldview that you are perfect and don't need forgiveness. It is an intentional opinion that you are always right and anyone who disagrees is just out of their minds. It is an idea that we are better than others and they can be better if they just agree with us so we decide that we should control and manipulate and dictate to them how they should live their lives and we effectively try to be their god.

I know it sounds harsh when put that way. I know many if not all of you will be thinking that it doesn't pertain to you and that you are humble enough to stay united with God in the Spirit. I know it isn't easy to admit that maybe, just maybe, we need to do some work ourselves as well.

A couple weeks ago now some horrific news came down about the 215 deceased bodies of Indigenous children, some as young as 3 years old, were found at an old residential school site in Kamloops. I'll admit, when I heard the news, I was shocked. I couldn't believe that such an awful and evil thing could have happened in our country and in such recent history. But I was even more surprised when I spoke with an Indigenous friend of mine about it and she was like, "well, yeah, of course there were 215 bodies found, I'm more surprised that it took them this long to find them."

See this was her lived experience. The whole residential school system was her and her family's reality for years. She wasn't surprised about this news because she knew that there were and still are many missing Indigenous people and children who have gone unreported or overlooked. Even in our country there are systems in place that lead us to believe that we are somehow free from the evils of the rest of the world. We are taught that anything that happens to us is actually someone, anyone else's fault. We are conditioned to think that we are not in need of forgiveness.

Well. Jesus reveals to us that we are. And then he gives it.

In this season after Pentecost, may we see the importance of forgiveness in our lives and in our community, that we might more fully see how we are united in the Spirit of God's grace and steadfast love. Thanks be to God. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY: Build Us Up, Lord (#670)

CREED

United with the whole church of all times and places, 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 be united with God and each other, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. Each petition will end with, "God, in your gracious mercy," and you all may respond with hear our prayer. God, in your gracious mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, we cry to you out of the depths of our despair and sin, and you save us from our guilt and shame, and welcome us into your kingdom. May we always be mindful of your diverse blessing and be reminded that we are not separated by our difference, but joined because of them. God, in your gracious mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, your ears are attentive to our supplication and prayer, and you provide for us in our lives and in our communities. Expand our horizons to truly welcome all people, that our inclusiveness be felt throughout the nations. We pray especially 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 Mount Zion Lutheran Church in Smithers and all the pastors and leaders that help minister there; and our own congregation of Grace Lutheran Church here in Burnaby and our pastor Nathan Fong. God, in your gracious mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, you watch over us with a just graciousness and you allow us to stand among all that you have created. Empower us in our stewardship of this planet that you have entrusted to us and may it flourish in its beauty and resourcefulness. God, in your gracious mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, in you there is an expansive forgiveness, for you do not hold our transgressions against us but you show us a better way to live. May the sins of our nation's past assist us in our healing into the future, and may our nation's leaders stay committed to the process of truth and reconciliation among all peoples. We pray for those that we've sponsored to come into our country: Solyana Amanuel; and Maekele Kiflu, Selam Haile, and their children, that they might find the safety they seek. God, in your gracious mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, our souls wait for you as your word is our hope for community and healing. Be with all who mourn, who feel lonely, and who are sick, and restore us all into your wholeness and holiness. Especially we pray for Marie; Diana; Ron, Tess, and Mineko; Paula; Bev and family; Laura; Kandie; Thomas; Cindy; Linda; Charlotte; all those who contracted or are affected by COVID 19; the families and tribes that continue to be hurt by the horrific truth of the residential schools that plagued their peoples and especially those who mourn the loss of the 215 Indigenous children that were torn from them; and all others that we might name aloud or quietly in our hearts at this time...
God, in your gracious mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, with you there is steadfast love and plenteous redemption, as you join us with you and all the saints for all eternity. Remind us of the unity we share in your love, that no matter where or when we were born, we are welcomed as your children into your kingdom full of love, grace, and peace. God, in your gracious mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in the unity shared with us by the grace of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

OFFERATORY HYMN: Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ (#674)

OFFERING PRAYER

Holy God, you give us the opportunity to accept your gracious providence and to participate in your Spirit of faith. Bless this food we have, that it continue to join us together even when we are apart, through the love and mercy of Jesus Christ our Saviour and friend. **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 in all places
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,
through our Savior Jesus Christ;
who on this day overcame death and the grave,
and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life.
And so, with all the choirs of angels,
with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (p. 190)

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

O Lord, we cry to you out of the depths, and you hear us and are attentive to our supplications. You do not regard us in our sinfulness, but you forgive with an unbounded grace and mercy, giving us hope and steadfast love. And in the fullness of time, you sent to us your son Jesus, to live among us as one of us, leading us into obedience to you and unity with all the saints.

For on the night that he was betrayed, your son Jesus sat with his friends for a meal where he took some bread, and with thanksgiving he broke and shared it and said, "Take and eat, this is my body given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

And after they ate, he took the common cup, and continuing in his thanksgiving he gave it to them to drink from, 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 that we eat that we remember how we are united in Christ, even as we declare this mystery of faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

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

Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

United 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 the unity found in Christ.

Thanks be to God.

COMMUNION

COMMUNION HYMN: Lamb of God (p. 191)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Holy God, again we are fed and nourished by your Word and your grace, and we have been reminded of your unending and steadfast love. Continue to reveal to us the ways how we are united in your name, that we might all be able to work together in the hope of a better world through Jesus Christ.

Amen.

SENDING

BLESSING

May our Creator who seeks and finds us,
Christ, who calls and claims us,
and the Counsellor, who renews us day by day,
sustain us, redeem us, and unite us, now and forever.

Amen.

SENDING SONG: Blest Be the Tie That Binds (#656)

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, hope in the steadfast love that endures forever.

Thanks be to God.

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