



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



Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost

September 26, 2021

ELW Holy Communion, Setting Eight

Someone who isn't part of Jesus' own circle is casting out demons in Jesus' name, and the disciples want him stopped. They appeal to Jesus, as Joshua did to Moses about the elders who prophesied without official authorization. Like Moses, Jesus refuses to see this as a threat. Jesus welcomes good being done in his name, even when it is not under his control. The circle we form around Jesus' word must be able to value good being done in ways we wouldn't do it, by people we can't keep tabs on.

A warm welcome to those who are here worshipping in-person and 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.

Grace Lutheran worships, prays, and serves on the traditional and unceded lands and territories of the hən̓q̓əmiñəm̓ (Musqueam) and Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) peoples.

GATHERING

CALL TO WORSHIP

We gather in worship here in the space as well as online, in the name of God, Sovereign, Saviour, and Spirit, whose teaching is life, whose presence is sure, and whose love is endless. **Amen.**

GATHERING HYMN: We All Are One in Mission (#576)

GREETING

The courageous grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the bold love of God, and the fellowshiping communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

God of unquenchable fire and overflowing grace, cast out all that oppresses us and causes us to stumble. But lead us into your realm that brings us life and season us with your love and peace, that we might faithfully proclaim your Word to all, through Jesus Christ, by the power of the Spirit. **Amen.**

WORD

FIRST READING: Numbers 11:4-6, 10-16, 24-29

A reading from Numbers.

What constitutes legitimate need and legitimate leadership is the focus of this reading. God provides manna in the wilderness, yet the people crave meat. What is truly needful? God bestows the spirit on seventy elders, yet two men not designated as leaders prophesy in the power of God's spirit. What constitutes real leadership?

⁴The rabble among them had a strong craving; and the Israelites also wept again, and said, "If only we had meat to eat! ⁵We remember the fish we used to eat in Egypt for nothing, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic; ⁶but now our strength is dried up, and there is nothing at all but this manna to look at."

¹⁰Moses heard the people weeping throughout their families, all at the entrances of their tents. Then the LORD became very angry, and Moses was displeased. ¹¹So Moses said to the LORD, "Why have you treated your servant so badly? Why have I not found favor in your sight, that you lay the burden of all this people on me? ¹²Did I conceive all this people? Did I give birth to them, that you should say to me, 'Carry them in your bosom, as a nurse carries a sucking child, to the land that you promised on oath to their ancestors'? ¹³Where am I to get meat to give to all this people? For they come weeping to me and say, 'Give us meat to eat!' ¹⁴I am not able to carry all this people alone, for they are too heavy for me. ¹⁵If this is the way you are going to treat me, put me to death at once—if I have found favor in your sight—and do not let me see my misery."

¹⁶So the LORD said to Moses, "Gather for me seventy of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them; bring them to the tent of meeting, and have them take their place there with you."

²⁴So Moses went out and told the people the words of the LORD; and he gathered seventy elders of the people, and placed them all around the tent. ²⁵Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke to him, and took some of the spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders; and when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied. But they did not do so again.

²⁶Two men remained in the camp, one named Eldad, and the other named Medad, and the spirit rested on them; they were among those registered, but they had not gone out to the tent, and so they prophesied in the camp. ²⁷And a young man ran and told Moses, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp." ²⁸And Joshua son of Nun, the assistant of Moses, one of his chosen men, said, "My lord Moses, stop them!" ²⁹But Moses said to him, "Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the LORD's people were prophets, and that the LORD would put his spirit on them!"

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 19:7-14

⁷The teaching of the LORD is perfect and revives the soul;
the testimony of the LORD is sure and gives wisdom to the simple.

⁸**The statutes of the LORD are just and rejoice the heart;
the commandment of the LORD is clear and gives light to the eyes.**

⁹The fear of the LORD is clean and endures forever;
the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.

¹⁰**More to be desired are they than gold, more than much fine gold,
sweeter far than honey, than honey in the comb.**

¹¹By them also is your servant enlightened,
and in keeping them there is great reward.

¹²**Who can detect one's own offenses?
Cleanse me from my secret faults.**

¹³Above all, keep your servant from presumptuous sins; let them not get dominion over me;
then shall I be whole and sound, and innocent of a great offense.

¹⁴**Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight,
O LORD, my strength and my redeemer.**

SECOND READING: James 5:13-20

A reading from James.

Marks of the Christian community include praying for those who are sick and in need, celebrating with those in good health, restoring those who have strayed, confessing sins to one another, and offering forgiveness to each other.

¹³Are any among you suffering? They should pray. Are any cheerful? They should sing songs of praise. ¹⁴Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven.

¹⁶Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective. ¹⁷Elijah was a human being like us, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. ¹⁸Then he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain and the earth yielded its harvest.

¹⁹My brothers and sisters, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and is brought back by another, ²⁰you should know that whoever brings back a sinner from wandering will save the sinner's soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (p. 188)

GOSPEL: Mark 9:38-50

The holy gospel according to Mark.

Glory to you, O Lord.

On the way to Jerusalem, Jesus teaches his disciples about ministry that involves service and sacrifice. His disciples are slow to realize that these words apply to them as well as to others.

³⁸John said to [Jesus,] “Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us.” ³⁹But Jesus said, “Do not stop him; for no one who does a deed of power in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me.

⁴⁰Whoever is not against us is for us. ⁴¹For truly I tell you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ will by no means lose the reward.

⁴²“If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were hung around your neck and you were thrown into the sea. ⁴³If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life maimed than to have two hands and to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. ⁴⁵And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame than to have two feet and to be thrown into hell. ⁴⁷And if your eye causes you to stumble, tear it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and to be thrown into hell,

⁴⁸where their worm never dies, and the fire is never quenched.

⁴⁹“For everyone will be salted with fire. ⁵⁰Salt is good; but if salt has lost its saltiness, how can you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another.”

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

Holy God, by the power of your Spirit, enlighten our eyes and instruct our minds, that the words of my mouth and the meditation of all our hearts be acceptable and pleasing in your sight, through Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

I’m going to be honest with you all, I hate the fact that we’re still in pandemic. I hate that we had to make all these provisions around what we can or can’t do. I hate that we have to wear these masks and lose the ability to fully communicate with others face to face. And I really hate the fact that we’ve come down to having to show a vaccine passport just to be able to do the things that we’ve used to enjoy freely and without fear.

So yeah, I hate this pandemic.

And I don’t think I’m alone in this. It has been inconvenient, it has brought out the worst in some people, and it has really made us look at ourselves and perhaps discover who we really are. And I don’t know if I like what I’m seeing. Because really, this hate I have for the pandemic doesn’t mean that it’s not real or the guidelines put in place aren’t helpful. Just because I don’t like it doesn’t in any way mean that I shouldn’t consider others in how I comply to the guidelines. Just because it’s something different from what we’re normally used to doesn’t mean that it isn’t good for us moving forward.

At the same time, just because we don't agree with those who don't agree with us, doesn't make them evil or wrong or even dumb. This division between the "us" and the "them" has been more bothersome to me than the pandemic itself. But everyone has their opinions, and some hold to them much stronger than others. And sometimes those opinions butt up against each other, and that is when the true ugliness of the pandemic comes out.

I think the disciples were facing a similar pandemic of sorts, or at least an epidemic, in today's gospel lesson. See, this episode happens right after Jesus corrects them from arguing about who among them is the greatest and Jesus flips around what being "the greatest" even means. But in typical disciple fashion, they still don't get it. Or maybe they did get it, but completely misinterpreted their stance in the whole thing. As in, "To be the first I need to be last? Well, good thing I'm already last with what, my huge humble heart and total contrite spirit. I guess I'm still first then."

It's clear that they don't get something in what Jesus was saying, as right after Jesus tells them these things they go off and reprimand some random people for doing good in their community. Their excuse was that those randoms weren't part of their exclusive club and so they needed to be stopped. They aren't in the "Jesus in crowd" so they aren't special enough to be doing these things. They clearly aren't one of them, so the disciples had no choice but to exercise their right and duty to put an end to that nonsense.

And I imagine at this point Jesus gives them this huge face palm and maybe even an audible groan and perhaps one of those full body eye rolls that are kind of subtle but when we see it, we know exactly what it means.

So the disciples are still suffering from their own superiority complex, in that they are the most important people in the world and the whole world revolves around them. They continue the divide between the "them" and the "us". They see these actions by these randoms as actual hostility against them and their cause, when it really is for them and their cause but just hurts their egos. They continue to try to hold their supposed positions of number one, thinking that they are the only ones who have the rights, the only ones with the inside knowledge, the only ones who have this exclusive connection with the truth that they are, in fact, the greatest(s).

And so to drill it into their heads, Jesus says something that is pretty harsh. He's like if you cause someone to stumble, you going to die. If you cause yourself to stumble, you going to die. If you don't take the drastic measures to cut out all that causes you to stumble out of your life, you going to die. Harsh, right?

And so of course the disciples think they know exactly what Jesus is talking about, probably just like how we think we know exactly what he's talking about. We'd say that Jesus means we have to cut out the bad habits, avoid the bad triggers, shun those bad people who are unhelpful to us so we can ensure our place in heaven, right? I mean that is what seems to makes sense, that is perhaps what was taught to us in Sunday School and from the TV evangelists, and that what Jesus would probably say because Jesus was all about us saving ourselves, right? That we cut the crap from our lives and live our best selves for our own sake and our salvation, right?

You probably figured out by my overtly sarcastic tone that I don't think that is what Jesus is saying here. I mean, if he was saying that, then he probably wouldn't have told them to stop reprimanding those randoms, due to the stumble they were apparently causing the disciples. He probably wouldn't have told them to aim for last as last isn't where the glory is. And he probably wouldn't have told them that they were, still are, and will always be the salt of the earth.

Because really? These dullards? The salt of the earth? The backbone of everything that is good and flavourful and perhaps high in cholesterol (making it ironically even more good and flavourful)? Now that doesn't make sense.

But Jesus isn't saying they are the salt because they are good, or smart, or even anywhere near the greatest (which would be the last, which would mean the first, which... you know what I mean). The disciples didn't will themselves to be salt just like how actual salt doesn't will itself to be salt. But they were just *created* that way. They were made to be salt as actual salt was made to be salt. It is the doing of the Spirit's fire that creates and recreates us, forms and reforms us, deems and *redeems* us all.

And salt, will always be salt. It cannot be anything else. Just as we are God's children. We cannot be anything else, no matter what we say or do or even believe. We are God's children.

So then Jesus wasn't telling the disciples and us to be careful of those people who cause *us* to stumble and cut *them* out of our lives, but he is telling us to watch out for the ways that *we* cause others to stumble, and cut those attitudes or actions out of *our* lives. He isn't telling us that we are powerless in our reaction to our triggers so all we can do is just avoid them, but he is saying that we need to realise why those triggers even trigger us, and deal with it at an internal (and not finger-pointing) level. He isn't even telling us that this is how we ensure your place in heaven, but he is saying to recognise and be humbled by our being saved by grace, that our service and care for others can be pure and free of selfishness.

So this whole pandemic thing? Yeah, I can still hate it but by adopting these attitudes that Jesus talks about, I can accept it as it is and make the best of it even though I don't have my first world comforts that I'm only lucky to enjoy in the first place. I can still not like my mask, but I will continue to wear it knowing that even if it isn't protecting me, it can and will protect others and is a necessary inconvenience for the good of all. And I can still lament that we aren't "normal" yet, but I can embrace the fact that "normal" is but a construct and that regardless of what is going on around us, that God will continue to be with us, God will continue to love us, and God will continue to salt us with the fire of the Spirit.

So as we continue in this pandemic through this season after Pentecost, may we be continually reminded that we are, by God's grace, the salt of the earth, bringing not destruction and stumbling, but hope and good news for the good of all. Thanks be to God. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY: Rise Up, O Saints of God! (#669) verses 1, 2, 5

CREED

With all those living in God's love, 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 courageous witness, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. Each petition will end with "in your redeeming grace, O God," and you may respond with **hear our prayer**. In your redeeming grace, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, your teachings are perfect and wise, and they revive us into life and service to others. Strengthen us with your wisdom, that we be secure in our identity as your children in the world and bearers of your good news to all people. In your redeeming grace, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, we rejoice in your presence among us, as our eyes are opened to your truths and promises. May our ministries reflect your love and grace in our neighbourhoods, our cities, and in our country. 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 Living Faith Lutheran Church in Sechelt and their interim pastor Richard Hergesheimer; and Lord of Life Mission in Sandspit and their interim pastor Jim Whaley. In your redeeming grace, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, your love shown to us through your creation is righteous and endures forever. Strengthen our stewardship of all that you have given us and allow this planet to flourish in its beauty and life giving resources. In your redeeming grace, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, we desire your judgements for they are enlightened and full of grace. Empower all world leaders and politicians to govern with such grace, that the world might learn to work together toward peace and equality for all. We pray especially for those that we've sponsored to come into our country: Solyana Amanuel; and Maekele Kiflu, Selam Haile, and their children; that they remain hopeful during this trying time. In your redeeming grace, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, you watch over us and cleanse us from our guilt and shame. You bring us to wholeness when we are sick, we mourn, or we feel lonely. Be especially with those among us who are in

need, and make your love known to all. In particular we pray for Beulah; Diana; Marie; Ron, Tess, and Mineko; Paula; Bev and family; Laura; Kandie; Thomas; Cindy; Linda; William; those who have been affected by COVID-19; and all we name aloud or quietly in our hearts at this time...

In your redeeming grace, O God, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, by your redeeming grace our sin has no dominion over us, but we are raised up to into holiness to live as your children with all the saints. May our connection to you and them through your grace inform us always of our faith, and may we look to the examples set before us as inspiration for wisdom. In your redeeming grace, O God, **hear our prayer.**

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in the inclusive grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen.

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

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.

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

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 the night that he was betrayed, he sat with his friends for a meal, and taking some bread and thanking you for it, after having broken and shared it he 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."

Remembering this grace of our Lord, we proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

May this heavenly food be for us a reminder of your steadfast love and acceptance, providing for our every need and welcoming us into your presence, where you live and reign with our Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit, as one God, now and forever.

Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Seasoned into love 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 reaching out to you in love.

Thanks be to God.

COMMUNION

COMMUNION HYMNS: Lamb of God (p. 191)

Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ (#674)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

May this food, O God, the very body of our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen us and keep us in your unending and steadfast grace.

Amen.

SENDING

BLESSING

May the love of the Lord our Creator rest upon you,
the Word that is our Lord the Christ live within you,
and the glory made alive by the Lord as Spirit shine around you,
now and forever.

Amen.

SENDING SONG: Lord of Glory, You Have Bought Us (#707) verses 1, 3, 4

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, share God's love and grace with all people.

Thanks be to God.

From sundaysandseasons.com.

Copyright © 2021 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved.