



**GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH**

**EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA**

7283 Nelson Avenue, Burnaby, BC V5J 4C2

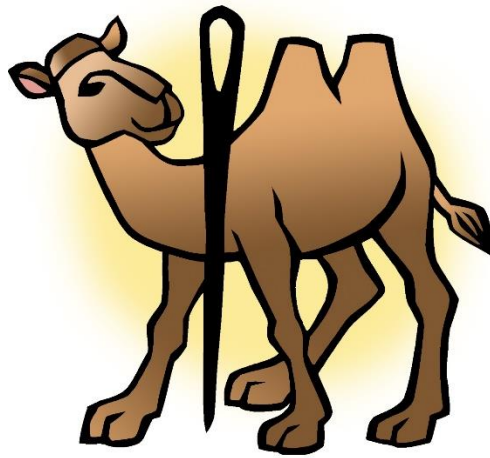
Phone / fax: 604-433-1515

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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**Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost**

**October 10, 2021**

**ELW Holy Communion, Setting Ten**

The rich man who comes to ask Jesus what he should do to inherit eternal life is a good man, sincere in his asking. Mark's gospel is alone in saying that Jesus looked on him and loved him. Out of love, not as judgment, Jesus offers him an open door to life: sell all you own and give it to the poor. Our culture bombards us with the message that we will find life by consuming. Our assemblies counter this message with the invitation to find life by divesting for the sake of the other.

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 Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh (Squamish) peoples.

## GATHERING

### CALL TO WORSHIP

In the name of God Sovereign, Saviour, and Spirit, we come to worship with humble hearts, not looking to increase ourselves but only to praise our God and be reminded of God's eternal grace.

**Amen.**

**GATHERING HYMN:** Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us with Your Love (#708) verses 1,2,4

### GREETING

The unlikely grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
the impossible love of God,  
and the accessible communion of the Holy Spirit  
be with you all.

**And also with you.**

### PRAYER OF THE DAY

O God, you alone are holy and good. Help us to let go of our preconceptions of love and grace that we might be able to wholeheartedly embrace your wisdom and your Word that welcomes us into your holy realm where all are equal, valued, and beloved, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

## WORD

### FIRST READING: AMOS 5:6-7, 10-15

A reading from Amos.

*Amos was a herdsman by profession and a prophet by God's call. During a time of great prosperity in the northern kingdom of Israel, the prophet speaks to the wealthy upper class. He warns his listeners that fulfilling God's demand for justice brings blessing, while corruption and oppression incur God's wrath.*

<sup>6</sup>Seek the LORD and live,  
or he will break out against the house of Joseph like fire,  
and it will devour Bethel, with no one to quench it.

<sup>7</sup>Ah, you that turn justice to wormwood,  
and bring righteousness to the ground!

<sup>10</sup>They hate the one who reproves in the gate,  
and they abhor the one who speaks the truth.

<sup>11</sup>Therefore because you trample on the poor  
and take from them levies of grain,  
you have built houses of hewn stone,  
but you shall not live in them;  
you have planted pleasant vineyards,  
but you shall not drink their wine.

<sup>12</sup>For I know how many are your transgressions,  
and how great are your sins—  
you who afflict the righteous, who take a bribe,  
and push aside the needy in the gate.

<sup>13</sup>Therefore the prudent will keep silent in such a time;  
for it is an evil time.  
<sup>14</sup>Seek good and not evil,  
that you may live;  
and so the LORD, the God of hosts, will be with you,  
just as you have said.  
<sup>15</sup>Hate evil and love good,  
and establish justice in the gate;  
it may be that the LORD, the God of hosts,  
will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph.

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

**PSALM: Psalm 90:12-17**

<sup>12</sup>So teach us to number our days  
that we may apply our hearts to wisdom.  
<sup>13</sup>**Return, O LORD; how long will you tarry?  
Be gracious to your servants.**  
<sup>14</sup>Satisfy us by your steadfast love in the morning;  
so shall we rejoice and be glad all our days.  
<sup>15</sup>**Make us glad as many days as you afflicted us  
and as many years as we suffered adversity.**  
<sup>16</sup>Show your servants your works,  
and your splendor to their children.  
<sup>17</sup>**May the graciousness of the Lord our God be upon us;  
prosper the work of our hands; prosper our handiwork.**

**SECOND READING: Hebrews 4:12-16**

A reading from Hebrews.

*We cannot hide our thoughts, desires, and actions from God, to whom we are completely accountable. Nevertheless, Jesus understands our human weakness and temptations, because he also experienced them. Therefore we can approach the throne of grace to receive divine mercy from Christ.*

<sup>12</sup>Indeed, the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. <sup>13</sup>And before him no creature is hidden, but all are naked and laid bare to the eyes of the one to whom we must render an account.

<sup>14</sup>Since, then, we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession. <sup>15</sup>For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin. <sup>16</sup>Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

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

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION** (p. 205)

## **GOSPEL: Mark 10:17-31**

The holy gospel according to Mark.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

*Jesus has been teaching his disciples about what is most valued in God's eyes. Now, a conversation with a rich man brings his message home to the disciples in a way that is surprising but unforgettable.*

<sup>17</sup>As [Jesus] was setting out on a journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" <sup>18</sup>Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. <sup>19</sup>You know the commandments: 'You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; You shall not defraud; Honour your father and mother.'" <sup>20</sup>He said to him, "Teacher, I have kept all these since my youth." <sup>21</sup>Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said, "You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me." <sup>22</sup>When he heard this, he was shocked and went away grieving, for he had many possessions.

<sup>23</sup>Then Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!" <sup>24</sup>And the disciples were perplexed at these words. But Jesus said to them again, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! <sup>25</sup>It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God." <sup>26</sup>They were greatly astounded and said to one another, "Then who can be saved?"

<sup>27</sup>Jesus looked at them and said, "For mortals it is impossible, but not for God; for God all things are possible."

<sup>28</sup>Peter began to say to him, "Look, we have left everything and followed you." <sup>29</sup>Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields, for my sake and for the sake of the good news, <sup>30</sup>who will not receive a hundredfold now in this age—houses, brothers and sisters, mothers and children, and fields, with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life. <sup>31</sup>But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first."

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## **SERMON**

O God, may your Word be revealed to us this day, as it lives and is active in the world by the power of your Spirit, that our hearts be pierced with your love and our minds opened by your grace and we are brought to dwell with you in your kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

So in my random surfing of the internet, I came across this fable that I thought was very interesting and I want to share it with you. So I apologize if you've heard it before (oh wait, no I don't).

The story is about this donkey who was running around yelling the "grass is blue." This donkey was happy as heck, yelling out his truth at the top of his lungs. But then he came across a tiger and kept yelling that the grass blue. The tiger looks at the donkey like he's crazy and is like,

“no, the grass is green.” But the donkey kept insisting that it is blue. They went back and forth for a while and it started to get heated, and so the tiger said that they should take it to the lion, the king, to settle the matter.

They made it to the king, and the donkey blurts out first, “the grass is blue!” and the lion just looks at the donkey. The donkey continues, “the tiger insists that I’m wrong and he should be punished.” The wise lion looks at the tiger, who is fuming and back at the donkey. He says, “yes, the grass is indeed blue. The tiger shall be punished. You may go on your way, donkey.”

The donkey happily accepts the lion’s ruling and hops away, still yelling, “the grass is blue” while the tiger looks dumbfounded at the lion’s judgement. He asks, “why did you side with the donkey when you know that the grass is green? Why are you punishing me when I am right?”

The lion replies, “I am not punishing you because of the colour of the grass, I’m punishing you for wasting both of our time by arguing with a stupid donkey.”

Doesn’t that story just hit the nail on the head? I mean, we all know people like the donkey, don’t we? You know, those stubborn folk who push logic and common sense aside in favour of fundamental fanaticism and extremist zeal. This story is telling us, don’t waste your time arguing with them, just let them be and you’ll be much happier for it.

I chuckled when I saw this story as it felt poignant for today. Then I casually scrolled over to the comments and the top “liked” comment was something like “and now every single donkey in the world thinks that they’re a tiger”.

Oof.

The commenter isn’t wrong. While I do know many stubborn and closed minded people that I would consider to be the donkey in the story, not a single one of them would agree with me and would say that they’re actually the tiger wasting their time arguing with other donkeys. So then, if the donkeys aren’t capable of admitting that they’re donkeys... does that mean... maybe we... could be donkeys?

No, that can’t be. There’s no way we’re donkeys, is there? Well, that might just be what a donkey would say...

Whatever the case, I think it’s pretty clear that Jesus would be a bonafide tiger in today’s gospel lesson. Jesus, who is just minding his own business when this random kid comes up to him and asks something that might have been asked of him a million times before, “what must I do to get into God’s good books?”

I wonder if Jesus gave another one of those awkward full body eye rolls at this question, but instead of arguing with this kid’s theology he just says to keep all the commandments. But then the donkey kid actually says something like, “oh those? Yeah I totally completed those. Nailed it.”

Now I don’t know if Jesus actually gave a full body eye roll at the first question but I am pretty sure he would have now. This kid is saying that he’s followed every commandment? We’re not

just talking about the 10 that we all know and love, but all of the estimated 613 commandments that we find throughout the Old Testament? Uh, yeah sure whatever you say.

However, this donkey kid was probably feeling pretty good about himself, maybe just waiting for Jesus' validation in crowning him the greatest who ever lived or something. But of course, it doesn't come. The kid had completely missed the point. The point of the eternal life that he was seeking, the point of the current life that he was living, the point of this law that he has claimed to follow so religiously for most of his life. Right. Over. His head.

See, we often look at the biblical commandments as a "holiness checklist" in which we can give ourselves this divine to-do list, or a divine *not-to-do* list, as it were. We keep those to the best of our ability and perhaps even we tell ourselves that we have kept them all since our youth, and boom, tiger status. We think we're right with God and we should be able to hang with the best of the best.

And I'd say that is just partially right. I mean, really, we are right with God and we can hang with the best of the best, depending on how you would define that. But it has nothing to do with the law. It has nothing to do with our discipline, our obedience, or our ability to lie to ourselves about our discipline and obedience. Instead, our being right with God is because of God's grace, which as you know goes hand and hand with the law. But it's just that the law, well it isn't like a list of demands that we have to follow in order to get eternal life, despite Jesus alluding to that today. Rather, the law is more like the description of the perfect kind of human being, which apparently is NOT like the donkey kid in the story. The perfect kind of human that has no hatred in their bones, no malice on their minds, no kind of evil in their heart. The perfect kind of human is, according to those some 613 odd commandments, someone that is completely unattainable.

That doesn't seem fair, does it? That there is this unattainable standard set up for us and we're punished for not being able to reach it? Well, yeah, it is unfair if you put it that way, just as it was unfair that the tiger gets punished for being right about the colour of grass. But technically, the law isn't set out there for us to attain, but it's to remind us of just how much we fall short. It reminds us of how much we miss the mark compared to God's holiness. It reminds that perhaps maybe we aren't the tiger after all but we're actually the donkey thinking that we're the tiger.

And that is where the grace comes in, the gospel, telling us that while we fall so very darned short of the law, God forgives us, continues to love us, and saves us out of our guilt and shame. That is what the young donkey man didn't understand, he thought he needed to act right to be right with God. The disciples didn't get it, they argued about who among them was the greatest and defended themselves with how much they've given up to follow Jesus. And I wonder if we still don't get it, us being these tiger donkeys who often act like we can just save ourselves.

Jesus tells his disciples that it is hard for those who have wealth to be able to enter the kingdom of God. And he's not wrong. But while it's true for those who have wealth, it is also true for those who don't. It is also true for those who are male as well as those who are female. It is true for the young, the old, the smart, the not so smart, the donkeys, the tigers, everyone. In fact, according to that law we talked about, it is impossible for any one of us to ever get into God's kingdom.

But the gospel tells us, that with God, all things are possible.

As we celebrate this day of Thanksgiving in this season after Pentecost, may we continue to be humbled by the law and empowered by the gospel, that we might together live in peace as tiger and donkey alike. Thanks be to God. Amen.

**HYMN OF THE DAY:** God of Grace and God of Glory (#705) verses 1, 3, 4

### **CREED**

With the whole of God's people, 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 hear and follow God's Word Jesus, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. Each petition will end with "Lord, in your encouraging mercy," and you may respond with **hear our prayer**. Lord, in your encouraging mercy, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, you teach us, reveal to us your wisdom, and allow us to see the wonders of your grace. May we apply this wisdom to our hearts, that our lives reflect your love to all people in your name. Lord, in your encouraging mercy, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, you are gracious to us, your servants, in bestowing your love and forgiveness on us even when we were sinners. Strengthen our ministry in these changing times, and increase the reach of your gospel in the world. 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 upcoming Synod Convention where a new bishop will be elected; and our companion congregations of the BC Synod. In particular, we pray for Dunbar Lutheran Church in Vancouver and their pastor Thomas Keeley; and the rest of our BC Synod staff as they continue to navigate the upcoming transition of a new bishop and Synod council. Lord, in your encouraging mercy, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, your steadfast love is satisfying and you make our days glad through the wonders and beauty of your creation. May we keep the future in mind as we care for all you've entrusted to us, that the generations to come can continue to enjoy all the world has to offer. Lord, in your encouraging mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, you reach out to us and save us from adversity, and in your justice gladness abounds. Give all world leaders, politicians, and governments a glimpse of your wisdom, that their governing be for the good of all. We pray for all areas of the world facing violence and turmoil, and for those we've sponsored to enter into our country: Solyana Amanuel; and Maekele Kiflu, Selam Haile, and their children; that the delay to bring them here be minimized. Lord, in your encouraging mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, you lift us up out of our ailments and bring us into your splendor, where we can see your good works and love in the world. Continue to be among those who are sick, who mourn, or who feel lonely, and reveal your healing and wholeness to us all. Especially we pray for Ron, Tess, and Mineko; Beulah; Diana; Marie; Bev and family; Paula; Laura; Kandie; Thomas; Cindy; Linda; Charlotte; William; those who have been negatively affected by COVID 19; and all those we name aloud or quietly in our hearts at this time...  
Lord, in your encouraging mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, your grace is upon us as you welcome us to live in your eternal kingdom with you and all the saints. May our lives be inspired by the faith of the past, that we might be inspiring to the faith of the future. Lord, in your encouraging mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your unending grace and mercy shown to us by Jesus Christ our Lord. **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 places give thanks and praise to you, O God, through our Saviour Jesus Christ, who reveals to us your grace and mercy to this day, and especially on that night that he was betrayed, where he sat with his friends for a meal and upon taking some bread and giving thanks, he broke and shared it saying, "Take and eat, this is my body broken for you, do this for the remembrance of me."



And after they ate, he continued by taking the cup, giving thanks, sharing that and saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me."

It is in this bread and cup that it is revealed how all things are possible with God, even as we proclaim this mystery of faith:

**Christ has died.**

**Christ is risen.**

**Christ will come again.**

All honour and glory be to you, O God, for this food, for your love, for your unending grace to the nations throughout the generations, through our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

### **LORD'S PRAYER**

Gathered into God's grace 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 impossible love made possible for us all.

**Thanks be to God.**

### **COMMUNION**

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

The Numberless Gifts of God's Mercies (#683)

Ubi caritas et amor (#642)

### **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Holy God, again we are fed and nourished by your Word, your love, and your grace, empowering us to be your people in the world. May your strength flow through us, that our lives reflect your blessing in and welcome to the world, through Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

## SENDING

### **BLESSING**

May God, the first and the last, bless you and keep you,  
may God, the beginning and the end, shine on you and be gracious onto you,  
may God, the Alpha and the Omega, look upon you with favour, and give you peace.  
**Amen.**

**SENDING HYMN:** Love Divine, All Loves Excelling (#631) verses 1, 2, 4

### **DISMISSAL**

Go in peace, follow Jesus in life and love.

**Thanks be to God.**

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