



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



Twenty-second Sunday after Pentecost

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ELW Holy Communion, Setting Ten

Can we pray the way Bartimaeus prays? People try to hush him up because by addressing Jesus as “Son of David” he is making a politically dangerous claim that Jesus is the rightful king. Could our prayers ever be heard as a threat to unjust powers that be? Bartimaeus won’t give up or go away quietly, but repeats his call for help more loudly. Do we ask so boldly? And are our prayers an honest answer to Jesus’ question, “What do you want me to do for you?”

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

We are brought together in body and spirit to worship our God, having our eyes and ears opened to the gospel of our Lord.

Amen.

GATHERING HYMN: Rise, Shine, You People! (#665) verses 1, 3, 4

GREETING

The healing grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the uplifting love of God, and the eye-opening fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

God of power and mercy, you gather your people with love of a parent for a child. You hear our cries in the night and in the day and you answer with healing and hope. Gather us into your strength and feed us with the wisdom of your Word, incarnate in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

WORD

FIRST READING: Jeremiah 31:7-9

A reading from Jeremiah.

This passage speaks not only of the southern kingdom, Judah, and its homecoming from exile in Babylon, but also of the northern kingdom ("Israel" or "Ephraim") and its restoration. The northern tribes of Israel had been lost in exile to Assyria more than a century before Jeremiah prophesied.

⁷Thus says the LORD:

Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob,
and raise shouts for the chief of the nations;
proclaim, give praise, and say,
"Save, O LORD, your people,
the remnant of Israel."

⁸See, I am going to bring them from the land of the north,
and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth,
among them the blind and the lame,
those with child and those in labor, together;
a great company, they shall return here.

⁹With weeping they shall come,
and with consolations I will lead them back,
I will let them walk by brooks of water,
in a straight path in which they shall not stumble;
for I have become a father to Israel,
and Ephraim is my firstborn.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 126

¹When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion,
then were we like those who dream.

²**Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy.
Then they said among the nations, "The LORD has done great things for them."**

³The LORD has done great things for us,
and we are glad indeed.

⁴**Restore our fortunes, O LORD,
like the watercourses of the Negeb.**

⁵Those who sowed with tears
will reap with songs of joy.

⁶**Those who go out weeping, carrying the seed,
will come again with joy, shouldering their sheaves.**

SECOND READING: Hebrews 7:23-28

A reading from Hebrews.

Human priests of old offered sacrifice for their own sins and served only until their death. In contrast, Jesus is God's Son, the holy, sinless, resurrected high priest. Death did not terminate his priestly service, but through his death he has interceded for our sins.

²³The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office; ²⁴but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever.

²⁵Consequently he is able for all time to save those who approach God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

²⁶For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, blameless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. ²⁷Unlike the other high priests, he has no need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for those of the people; this he did once for all when he offered himself. ²⁸For the law appoints as high priests those who are subject to weakness, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (p. 205)

GOSPEL: Mark 10:46-52

The holy gospel according to Mark.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Bartimaeus comes to Jesus with faith, asking that he might see again. Recognizing Jesus' identity, Bartimaeus is the first person to call him "Son of David" in the Gospel of Mark.

⁴⁶As [Jesus] and his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus son of Timaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside. ⁴⁷When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" ⁴⁸Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" ⁴⁹Jesus stood still and said, "Call him here." And they called the blind man, saying to him, "Take heart; get up, he is calling you." ⁵⁰So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came

to Jesus. ⁵¹Then Jesus said to him, “What do you want me to do for you?” The blind man said to him, “My teacher, let me see again.” ⁵²Jesus said to him, “Go; your faith has made you well.” Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way.

The gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

God of light, let your Holy Spirit come into our darkness and open our hearts, that your word may show us the blessing you intend for all creation, through Jesus our Lord. **Amen.**

This sermon is prepared by Bishop Greg Mohr for the 2021 BC Synod Convention

The journey begins with One; one solitary figure: Jesus. It is time, the right time, the holy time.

Jesus sets his face toward Jerusalem and this final stage of his journey begins. The 12 are there as well, accompanying him on this journey. So, too, is the crowd. Soon they will be throwing their blankets and cloaks and palm branches on the ground. But today, they are on the way from Jericho, a throng of people. There is hustle and bustle; the activity of journey. Excitement and fear, Hope and foreboding.

But then . . . a voice. A solitary voice. One, calling out in the wilderness; the wilderness of time and space, the wilderness of forgotten-hood, of living on the shoulder, on the margins; being pushed aside, ignored, perhaps invisible. This one, on a wilderness journey of just trying to survive, out there on the margins, on the side of the road.

Do you know what crowds do when they're on the road and you are in the way? They push you aside, ignore you, trample over you. But there is that voice — calling out in the wilderness, calling to be seen, to be known: “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” “Turn your ear to me. “SEE me. See me as someone. Be in relationship with me. Be with me in my brokenness.” “As you, O Son of David, as you turn your face toward Jerusalem, turn now — NOW — turn your face toward me.”

Such voices, such individuals, are usually nameless. But here, we have a name: Bartimaeus. The nameless one is named. The one on the margins is no longer invisible.

Undeterred, though, the crowd surges on. “Shut up. Get back. Go back to being invisible to us. Go back to being nameless.” When Bartimaeus uses his voice to call out, the crowd reacts. They prefer him to be quiet, compliant, on the edge of nowhere. But he calls; he calls out ever more loudly and they react. “Shut up. Go away.”

This causes me to wonder: whose voices do we try to silence — overtly or systemically, slyly, ignorantly, prejudicially? Who do we silence? For often it is my voice, your voice, our voice that is in the way.

But in the midst of the throng of people, in the midst of the hustle and bustle of moving on the journey, there is the One who stops.

There is One who hears, One who stands still: Jesus. Speaking to the crowd, to the disciples, speaking to **me** and to **you**, Jesus says, “Call him here.” And that very act of stopping and acknowledging, of hearing and listening, brings about a change in the crowd.

The shift of what happens to the crowd is fascinating. They move from a position of standing over against Bartimaeus, pushing him down, deriding him, ostracizing him, to that of being agents of mercy. Instead of deriding Bartimaeus they become messengers, messengers of grace. Bartimaeus’ actions and Jesus’ response TRANSFORM them! They are forced to **see** Bartimaeus. Even in his shouting, they are forced to see him. They can’t stand his shouting, but it does mean they have to hear him, even if they do not like it.

“Call him here,” says Jesus. And the crowd amazingly responds to that Word of Grace. They call to Bartimaeus: “Take heart; get up, he is calling you.” What words of hope! Words of compassion, spoken by the one who calls, the one who is always calling, the one who shepherds; the one who seeks the last, the lost and the least. the one who sees beyond the margins, sees the person, the humanness.

I think of the many, many voices shouting right now. Voices hurting, drowning, choking. We can’t breathe. Storms are bearing down on us. Rising sea levels are threatening us. Arsenic and mercury are in our drinking water. The lungs of our planet are phlegmatic. All creation groans, groans . . . groans. Do we HEAR? We must. We must hear. We must stop and hear and LISTEN We must stop and hear and listen and act. The one who calls us into relationship so that we may be in relationship with others, be in relationship with our world, this one calls us to HEAR, to be, and to respond.

We are the crowd, journeying from our Jericho. And there are voices, a myriad of voices, calling out to us, calling from wilderness. See us. Hear us. Be reconciled to us. Other voices, too, are calling out to us, calling from the wilderness. See — see not just us — but see the WORLD! See this beloved creation. See how it is starving, choking, dying. The voices call us out, disturb us, make us uncomfortable. But in the calling, in the uncomfortableness, we are confronted, and we are called to be transformed.

This text from the Gospel of Mark could not be any more timely today! The lungs of our planet are sick and infected. Its beating heart is struggling. The life flow of water, our rives and streams and oceans, are infected and clogged. Son of David, have mercy. We are broken. But more than that, we — WE — have broken your earth, your creation. We have broken covenant. Call us out. Call us forth.

Our human hubris turns to “false gold” everything that we touch. Anthropocentrism shall be no longer, must be no longer. We like to be “in the know.” We like to be in charge. We like power and privilege. We like controlling things. But we’re no longer in control. We have messed up. We have messed up relationships, messed up community. We have messed up our relationship to land, to air, to creatures and place.

We are the ones who need to be imitators of Bartimaeus and call out — call out to those who might teach us, to those who might invite us into a journey, onto a journey, of learning, of humility, of reconciliation. We are the ones who need to call out, to call out to those who might teach us of land and mystery, of waters and life-giving seas. We are the ones who need to call out, to call out to those who might teach us what it means to be on the margins, put down,

trodden upon; to really know what matters, who matters, to help us learn what it means to stand over against the powers and principalities and to call forth justice.

Over these past eight years we have been stating time and again what might seem obvious: God is at work in the world. God is out there, ahead of us. And God calls us to join what God is doing out there, in our neighbourhoods, our communities, our world. A voice, calling, calling us to wake up, catch up, to join what God is up to. A voice, calling us to see God's activity in places we otherwise might not have thought to look. A voice, calling us to SEE life's Bartimaeuses, to hear their cry, to participate in God's love and care for the world.

What is important to know is that this is not Greg Mohr's idea. This is not Greg Mohr's mission. This is a calling placed upon us by the one who journeys from life's Jerichos. This is a call to catch up to what God is doing in loving and blessing the world. Over these past few decades, we as church, have undergone significant and challenging shifts in terms of our presence and ministry in our society. The church is no longer in a place of privilege and power and influence.

We need to live into this liminal time, to sit in it, learn from it, discern from it. Yet in the midst of this dislocation, our ministry continues. The call to be agents of grace and mercy continues. The call to care for the world continues. We are ever mindful of that passage from the book of Micah: "What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" (Micah 6: 8) This is our call. People come and go, leaders come and go, bishops come and go. But our calling remains. God's call to love and serve the world remains. This is not about me; this is not about you. This is about God's mission, God's calling, God's activity in the world.

There, on the side of the road, are life's Bartimaeuses. Do today's Bartimaeuses have something to teach us? Can they show us the way? A young woman from Sweden, one from Kenya, from South Africa, one from Indonesia, from India, one from Vancouver and Iqaluit and Tk'emlúps ... Ones such as these shall lead us. Bartimaeus will lead us. They will teach us because they KNOW!

May our eyes be wide open. May our ears hear. May our hearts turn. The one who journeys from Jericho calls out to us ...

HYMN OF THE DAY: What Wondrous Love Is This (#666) verses 1, 2, 4

CREED

With the whole church gathered this day, 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 to trust God's guidance and leading, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. Each petition will end with "God, in your mercy for us," and you may respond with **hear our prayer**. God, in your mercy for us, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, the works of your hands bring us hope as we dream of the goodness to where you lead us. As our BC Synod Convention comes to a close may all the delegates and elected council members and bishop lean on that sense of hope as we are guided together by your gracious hand into the future. God, in your mercy for us, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, the great things you do fill our mouths with laughter and our tongues with joy. May we faithfully proclaim this goodness to the world, that all might know of your unending love. We pray especially for our neighbouring faith communities; our partner Anglican Church of Canada; our current bishop Greg, assistant to the bishop and now bishop elect Kathy; and national bishop Susan; and our companion churches of the BC Synod. In particular we pray for Oakridge Lutheran Church in Vancouver and their interim pastor Matthew Senf; and Redeemer Lutheran Church also in Vancouver and their pastor Katrina Vigen and all the pastors that are helping their ministry as Pastor Katrina is on parental leave. God, in your mercy for us, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, you have indeed done great things throughout all of your creation, and you have made us glad with all that you give us. Strengthen our stewardship of this planet and all its creatures as you and your providence are continually revealed in this world. God, in your mercy for us, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, restore to us your justice and strengthen us to lean on your wisdom. May all the nations of the world look to you in hope as you open our collective eyes to your grace and peace. We pray especially for all areas facing political turmoil and violence, and for those that we've sponsored to come into our country: Solyana Amanuel; and Maekele Kiflu, Selam Haile, and their children, that they can be brought here soon. God, in your mercy for us, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, in our anguish you wipe away our tears and bring us songs of joy. Bring comfort to all who are sick, who mourn, or who feel lonely, and may we all lean on your restoring healing and wholeness. We pray especially for Paula; Diana; Marie; Beulah; Ron, Tess, and Mineko; Bev and family; Laura; Kandie; Thomas; Cindy; Linda; Charlotte; William; those who have been affected by COVID-19; and all those we name aloud or quietly in our hearts at this time...
God, in your mercy for us, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, you welcome us to live with you and all the saints in your eternity, bringing us back in joy, shouldering the community you place us in as the one body of Christ. Remind us of our connection to you and all the saints, that we be encouraged and empowered in our faith and hope in Christ Jesus. God, in your mercy for us, **hear our prayer.**

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your leading and guidance found in the wisdom of 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, to at all times and places give thanks and praise to you, O God, through our Saviour Jesus Christ, who leads us and guides us into the life that truly is life, bringing to us the joy of your salvation.

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

Then after they had eaten, Jesus 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 in this heavenly food that we see the love and joy that you provided as we declare together this mystery of faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

To you, O God, we give all honour and praise, through the grace of Jesus, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, as one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered 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

Take and eat, see God's love for us all.

Thanks be to God.

COMMUNION

COMMUNION HYMNS: Lamb of God (p. 208)
When the Poor Ones (#725)
We Are an Offering (#692)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Holy God, you have fed us again with your Word and you love, bringing us to the joy of your salvation. Continue to lead us by your grace, that our proclamation of your Word be heard by all, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

SENDING

BLESSING

May the God who hears our needs and answers the cries of our hearts be with you,
a sure and certain strength,
blessing you and keeping you,
now and always.

Amen.

SENDING HYMN: Great Is Thy Faithfulness (#733)

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, walk in the joyous ways of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.