



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA

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Fifth Sunday after Epiphany

February 6, 2022

ELW Holy Communion, Setting Eight

The fifth Sunday after Epiphany continues to highlight unlikely instruments and circumstances appointed to reveal God's glory. "Who will go for us?" God asks. A person of unclean lips, a former persecutor of the church of God, and three fishermen who couldn't catch a thing. More surprising still, perhaps, is that we are also called.

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.

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

GATHERING

CALL TO WORSHIP (Paraphrase of Psalm 138)

We come and enter into this space of worship and praise together while apart, giving thanks to the Lord our God with our whole hearts. For God's steadfast love and faithfulness moves us and reveals to us the very nature of God and God's grace, caring for the lowly and calling us into safety and security even as we walk in the midst of trouble. God gives us purpose in this world, and will not abandon us in the midst of it, through the calling and faith of Jesus Christ.

Amen. Thanks be to God.

GATHERING SONG: You Have Come Down to the Lakeshore (#817)

GREETING

The inviting grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the strengthening love of God, and the emboldening fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Holy God, earth and heaven reverberate with your glory, and we sing your praises with the angels and all of creation. Open our minds to your breathtaking work in the world, even as you call us to spread the good news of Jesus Christ, our mentor and Saviour, with and in and through whom we pray. **Amen.**

WORD

FIRST READING: Isaiah 6:1-8

A reading from Isaiah.

Through a vision in the temple, the eighth-century prophet Isaiah is called by God to announce judgment against Israel. Aware of his sinfulness and shortcomings, Isaiah is initially hesitant. But when God calls, Isaiah responds, "Here am I; send me!"

¹In 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. ²Seraphs 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. ³And one called to another and said:

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

⁴The pivots on the thresholds shook at the voices of those who called, and the house filled with smoke. ⁵And 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!"

⁶Then one of the seraphs flew to me, holding a live coal that had been taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. ⁷The 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." ⁸Then 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.

SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 15:1-11

A reading from 1 Corinthians.

Paul delivers in a nutshell the story of the gospel that was given to him. In the lineage of the Christian faith, we have received the good news of God's love from generations of believers before us, and we continue to tell this story to the world.

¹Now I would remind you, brothers and sisters, of the good news that I proclaimed to you, which you in turn received, in which also you stand, ²through which also you are being saved, if you hold firmly to the message that I proclaimed to you—unless you have come to believe in vain.

³For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, ⁴and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, ⁵and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. ⁶Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. ⁷Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. ⁸Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. ⁹For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. ¹⁰But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me has not been in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them—though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.

¹¹Whether then it was I or they, so we proclaim and so you have come to believe.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (p. 188)

GOSPEL: Luke 5:1-11

The holy gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus' teaching of God's word has begun to draw great crowds. For Simon, James, and John, Jesus' teaching inspires hospitality, then obedience, and then risk. After Jesus' creative power is revealed, fear and amazement leads these three fishermen to leave everything behind to become apostles.

¹Once while Jesus was standing beside the lake of Gennesaret, and the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, ²he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake; the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. ³He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little way from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. ⁴When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch." ⁵Simon answered, "Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets." ⁶When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break. ⁷So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink. ⁸But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!" ⁹For he and all who were with him were amazed at the catch of fish that they had taken; ¹⁰and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. Then Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be

afraid; from now on you will be catching people.”¹¹ When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him.

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

SERMON

God of steadfast love and faithfulness, your name is exalted above all else. By the power of your Spirit, help us to hear your voice and heed to your leading, that we might not be afraid but confident in your truth and love, through Jesus our Lord. **Amen.**

I want to let you in on a little secret: I was a horrible student in school. I know, that might not come to a surprise to any of you, especially those who actually went to school with me... or my parents... or any of my teachers for that matter... It school was just something that was always hard for me, like I just wasn't into their way of learning and absorbing information. And it's not like I didn't try, it's just that... well... ok maybe I didn't really try. But only because it was really hard for me. Also it wasn't like I was failing all my classes or anything, just a couple of them here and there. Not ones that mattered at least. And I wasn't all bad, I almost had straight B's on one report card, which isn't too shabby if I do say so myself.

So when I started getting serious about my career goals of being a pastor, I thought I'd get more serious in school because you know, I want to do well so I'd be good at my job. But as you might have guessed, old habits die hard and apparently new bad habits are easy to make, and so I wasn't the greatest student during in my post-secondary degrees either.

And quite honestly, I still get nightmares about being a bad student to this day. I dream that I'm back in high school, not being able to find my locker, wandering around the halls totally lost and being the oldest in the school because they realised that I didn't actually graduate and in order to keep my degrees I'd need to complete that one course that I was missing. And as dreams would have it, I couldn't remember what the course was or even what classroom it was held in, so the dream continues with me feeling aimless, isolated, and totally and completely inadequate.

This anxiety that I have over my history of schooling issues I think comes from this thing I heard a while back. Something about how pastors used to be known as the town intellect, like the local minister was the one people would go to as the expert on philosophy, literature, and of course religion. And hearing this bit of information really bothered me because I'm totally not that. I barely graduated and earned any degree, and now I'm supposed to be the smartest person on the block? So I guess I started to feel like a fraud, like I'm not good enough, like I've made a horrible mistake in following this call that I got to be a pastor.

Maybe you know what I'm talking about. Perhaps not about being a pastor per se, or even a bad student, but being put in a position where it's almost like you were set up to fail. Maybe being asked to do something you know you're not good at, or expected to fill a role that was way too big for your skillset. Sure, maybe ambition filled those gaps and you were able to do it, but what if that thing was something that you really didn't want to do? Or something that you never thought you'd be able to do? What if it was something that you just unexpectedly found yourself in the middle of and you felt totally unprepared and inadequate?

I wonder if this is what the disciples felt in today's gospel lesson, when they were out all night trying to catch some fish but coming up with nada. This would be embarrassing for professing fishers. After all, this was their job, their livelihood, their place in the world. And being not good at it? Well, that's just lemon juice in the wound.

No actually that would just be the wound, the lemon juice is when this carpenter comes and just sits in their boats without even asking, and then goes and carpenter-splains how to catch more fish. Can you believe the nerve of this guy? Making himself at home on Peter's boat, maybe scaring away all the fish from all the yammering about God and stuff, and then actually thinking that he has the authority to tell Peter, a trained and experienced fisher, how to catch fish? I don't know about the rest of you, but it'd take my everything not to "accidentally" rock the boat too much to cause this land lubber to lose his footing and maybe fall in. Not my fault he doesn't have sea legs.

But Peter is a bit more polite than me as it turns out, but you can almost hear his eyes rolling as he says "if you say so, I'll let down the nets". It's almost like Peter is doing this to shut Jesus up, and is just waiting to pull up more disappointment and be all, "any other bright ideas?"

But that isn't what happens, is it? These once empty and underworked nets were now full with fish, so much so that they were beginning to break. These once bored boats with completely unmet potential in their craftsmanship now were struggling to stay afloat under the weight of this newfound catch. These once skeptical and deflated fishers perhaps questioning their life choices and direction as clearly they aren't any good at fishing, are now called to do exactly that: fish.

Granted, they are fishing in a different kind of water and are going for a different kind of catch, but they are still called to fish in spite of their poor fishing record. I was still called to be a pastor in spite of my poor academic record. We all are called to serve God and neighbour in spite of our tendency to just rather not.

And at first thought, that might be kind of scary. We might doubt the wisdom of God calling us to do anything that we might not be good at. We might doubt those around us who might be encouraging us to go in this direction that we just don't want to go in. We might doubt ourselves for ever being able to get the unfinishable job done. And to be honest, there isn't anything wrong with that.

There isn't anything wrong with Isaiah perhaps having doubts that he could bear God's message. There isn't anything wrong with Paul thinking that he's inadequate to be an Apostle of Christ. There isn't anything wrong with this dumb kid who couldn't buy a decent grade if his life depended on it, feeling anxious about the call that he was given.

Because it isn't by our talent alone that things get done and done well. It isn't by our own wisdom and understanding and faith that allows us to see God in the world. It isn't by our own strength that we can withstand the lies of the enemy saying that we don't have value or worth and just aren't good enough.

But rather we are granted the gifts of the Spirit in order to fulfil our calling. We are given the faith of Christ to see and recognise God working in and through us. We are strengthened by

our community and those around us to be integral parts of this church, this body, this people of God.

So whatever you might feel like you're called to do, whether it be vocational ministry, or ministry within your current vocation, God is working within you. Wherever you feel led to go, be it to another part of the world or staying right where you are, God walks alongside you. However you might feel about yourself answering God's beckoning, whether you're totally excited or perhaps a bit anxious, God continues to love you and fill you with value and worth, lifting you up in grace and mercy, surrounding you with support and community, and holding your hand as you venture through this life of faith and hope.

This afternoon we'll be having our Annual General Meeting, a meeting that most people don't get too excited about. At this meeting we elect or most likely appoint council members and we look ahead to the ministry that is before us for this year. In our deliberations and discernments, it is my hope that we are all open to God's voice and calling, that we might be led into new heights of ministry and community, and allowed to serve with confidence not just in our own abilities, but in the fact that God is with us, now and always.

In this season after the Epiphany, AGM or not, may we be sensitive to God's call for our lives, however big or small, and move in the faith of Christ given to us by a generous and gracious God. Thanks be to God. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY: Will You Come and Follow Me (#798)

CREED

With all of God's people called into service, 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 into a life of faith and love, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. Each petition will end with “in your steadfast love and faithfulness, O Lord,” and you all may respond with **hear our prayer**. In your steadfast love and faithfulness, O Lord, **hear our prayer**.

God of new beginnings, we give you thanks with our whole hearts, singing your praises and doing your will in the world. Strengthen us in our faith and service, and may we find the confidence present in your love. In your steadfast love and faithfulness, O Lord, **hear our prayer**.

God of new ventures, your name is glorified above all things, and you have declared us as your children in your church. Increase our strength within us, that our ministry in our communities and beyond be effective and pleasing to you. We pray especially for our neighbouring faith communities; our partner Anglican Church of Canada; our bishop Kathy and national bishop Susan; and our companion congregations of the BC Synod. In particular, we pray for St. Paul’s Lutheran Church in Maple Ridge and their pastor Roland Ziprick; and for Matsqui Lutheran Church in Matsqui and their interim pastor Art McCaughan. In your steadfast love and faithfulness, O Lord, **hear our prayer**.

God of new life, your truth and word are embodied in all that you have made as it fills us with joy and moves us to praise you. You call us to care for this planet with love and compassion, and you strengthen us in this ministry. Continue to be with us and guide us in our stewardship. In your steadfast love and faithfulness, O Lord, **hear our prayer**.

God of new relationships, your ways are great and your glory fills the earth. May the rulers of this earth hear the words of your mouth, that they be inspired to move forward with grace and dignity for all. We pray for all areas of the world that are facing political hardship and we ask for unity for all people. And we especially pray for those that we’ve sponsored to come into our country: Solyana Amanuel; and Maekele Kiflu, Selam Hailie, and their children; that they might be able to leave the threat of danger soon. In your steadfast love and faithfulness, O Lord, **hear our prayer**.

God of new birth, you care for us, your lowly servants, and you keep us safe in the midst of trouble. Be with us who are sick, who mourn, or who feel lonely, and bring to all your healing and wholeness. Especially we pray for Paula; Ron, Tess, and Mineko; Diana; Bev and family; Laura; Kandie; Thomas; Cindy; Linda; Charlotte; William; Jenny; Chris; those who have been affected by COVID 19; and all those we name aloud or quietly in our hearts at this time... In your steadfast love and faithfulness, O Lord, **hear our prayer**.

God of new purpose, your love for us endures forever, and you don’t abandon us but bring us together with you and all the saints. Make your calling for our lives apparent to us always, and strengthen us to heed that call and go wherever it may take us. In your steadfast love and faithfulness, O Lord, **hear our prayer**.

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your ever present love and grace, through 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 the gifts that you give us, enabling us to serve you and neighbour and to proclaim your love in the world. And thus we are called to be God's hands and feet in the world, acting as the body of Christ, joined together as God's people.

Just as on the night that Jesus was betrayed, where he sat with his friends for a meal, and upon taking some bread, he gave thanks to God as he broke and shared it saying, "Take and eat, this is my body broken for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

And then after they ate it, Jesus took the common cup, gave thanks for it, and gave it to the others 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."

So it is in this food given to us that we are joined together, we are strengthened by God's grace, and we are reminded how we are all called to live with and serve one another, as we together declare the mystery of this faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

For this and all that you do, O God, all glory and honour be to your name, through Jesus Christ, our risen Saviour and Lord and brother, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Called and led into one body 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.

COMMUNION HYMNS: Lamb of God (p. 191)

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Taste and see God connecting us together as one.
Thanks be to God.

COMMUNION

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Holy God, you have fed us with your Word and nourished us with your truth. May your presence and calling in our lives continue to be apparent, that we might faithfully follow you wherever you might lead, through Jesus Christ our Saviour and friend. **Amen.**

SENDING

BLESSING

May the Holy God of the universe fill you with awe,
Christ our teacher amaze you with grace,
and the Holy Spirit increase your strength in service, now and forever.
Amen.

SENDING SONG: Here I Am, Lord (#574)

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, don't be afraid.
Thanks be to God.