



## GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA

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### Fifth Sunday in Lent

April 3, 2022

### ELW Holy Communion, Setting Three

Our God makes all things new. In the first reading God promises it. In the gospel Mary anticipates it, anointing Jesus' feet with costly perfume in preparation for the day of his burial. In the second reading Paul recalls his transformation from the persecutor Saul into an apostle. In baptism, God's new person (you!) rises daily from the deadly mire of trespasses and sins.

A warm welcome to those who are here worshipping with us in-person and to those on-line! 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 (Paraphrase of Psalm 126)

We gather in person and online to worship the Lord, who has restored the fortunes of Zion and filled our mouths with laughter and tongues with shouts of joy. For God has done great things for us and we are glad indeed. So let our tears be wiped away and enter into worship with songs of joy, praising our God, thankful for our abundant blessing.

**Amen. Thanks be to God.**

**GATHERING SONG:** In the Cross of Christ I Glory (#324)

### GREETING

The abundant grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the fragrant love of God, and the charitable communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**And also with you.**

### PRAYER OF THE DAY

God our creator, you have formed us as your own, so even in our weeping or laughing, in our dreaming or shouting for joy, we are invited and welcomed to come home to you, through Jesus Christ, our Saviour, Lord, and brother. **Amen.**

## WORD

### FIRST READING: Isaiah 43:16-21

A reading from Isaiah.

*The prophet declares that long ago God performed mighty deeds and delivered Israel from Egyptian bondage through the waters of the sea. Now, God is about to do a new thing, bringing the exiles out of Babylon and through the wilderness in a new Exodus.*

<sup>16</sup>Thus says the LORD,  
who makes a way in the sea,  
a path in the mighty waters,  
<sup>17</sup>who brings out chariot and horse,  
army and warrior;  
they lie down, they cannot rise,  
they are extinguished, quenched like a wick:  
<sup>18</sup>Do not remember the former things,  
or consider the things of old.  
<sup>19</sup>I am about to do a new thing;  
now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?  
I will make a way in the wilderness  
and rivers in the desert.  
<sup>20</sup>The wild animals will honour me,  
the jackals and the ostriches;  
for I give water in the wilderness,  
rivers in the desert,  
to give drink to my chosen people,  
<sup>21</sup>the people whom I formed for myself  
so that they might declare my praise.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**SECOND READING: Philippians 3:4b-14**

A reading from Philippians.

*Writing to Christians in Philippi, Paul admits that his heritage and reputation could give him more reason than most people to place confidence in his spiritual pedigree. But the overwhelming grace of God in Jesus calls Paul to a new set of values.*

[Paul writes:] <sup>4b</sup>If anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more: <sup>5</sup>circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; <sup>6</sup>as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.

<sup>7</sup>Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. <sup>8</sup>More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ <sup>9</sup>and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith. <sup>10</sup>I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, <sup>11</sup>if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

<sup>12</sup>Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. <sup>13</sup>Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, <sup>14</sup>I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (p. 142)**

**GOSPEL: John 12:1-8**

The holy gospel according to John.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

*Judas willfully misinterprets as waste Mary's extravagant act of anointing Jesus' feet with costly perfume. Jesus recognizes that her lavish gift is both an expression of love and an anticipation of his burial.*

<sup>1</sup>Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. <sup>2</sup>There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. <sup>3</sup>Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

<sup>4</sup>But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, <sup>5</sup>"Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?" <sup>6</sup>(He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.) <sup>7</sup>Jesus said, "Leave her alone. She bought it so

that she might keep it for the day of my burial. <sup>8</sup>You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me.”

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

### **SERMON**

By the power of your Spirit, O God, break open for us the wisdom in your Word, that its fragrance of love and grace fills our hearts and our lives, anointing us to be your faithful servants in the world, through Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

In the past several days, if you have read the news, listened to the radio, watched any kind of tv, browsed social media of any sort, or just eavesdropped on someone’s conversation while standing in line at the grocery store or coffee shop, you must have learned about what happened at Oscars last week. But by the slim chance you didn’t, the main event was how comedian Chris Rock made a comment about Jada Pinkett’s shaved head and her husband Will Smith walked up to Chris and slapped him in the face in retaliation. I know, headline worthy for sure.

Now, I should say that I literally haven’t seen or even kept up with the news around the Oscars for the better part of 20 years as I don’t really care what some stuffy rich people thought about movies just as long as entertaining movies just kept coming out. But my goodness did I ever hear about this. Turns out Will Smith won best actor that night too, which I guess was a pretty big deal for him. But either case, no one is going to remember that. They’ll just remember the slap. No one is going to remember all the other nominees and award winners. They’ll just remember the slap. No one is going to remember the other exciting things that happened that people watch these award shows for, they’ll just remember the slap.

This was apparent in how much people kept talking about it all week. It’s like everyone forgot everything else that is happening in the world right now and all they can think about is why did Will Smith do this this and what did Chris Rock do wrong and hey let’s make meme after meme after meme. But what wasn’t so surprising to see was that as more and more interpretations of the event popped up all over the place, the division between people was exasperated. Some say any kind of violence is wrong while others say it’s ok to protect those that you love. Some say that comedians will be comedians and will say that they’ll say, while others say that everyone should be held accountable for their offenses of being offensive. Some say that there needs to be harsh consequences and accountability for being wrong, and still others just say who cares. This wedge between people keeps getting driven deeper and deeper over pretty much anything.

Because, really? Do we need another reason to hate?

I mean the world is divided enough as it is, do we really need to concern ourselves with what a couple of rich and famous people do on live television? Do we really need to take the effort to dissect the situation and psycho-analyse everyone involved? Do we really need to spend the prime time sermon real estate to even talk about it at all?

Whether we need to or not, it’s what happened and continues to happen. And it’s so surprise as people have always looked for a reason to hate, even in today’s gospel lesson, where we get

another reason why Jesus was taken to the cross, another reason for the division, another reason to hate.

“You’ll always have the poor with you, but you won’t always have me.”

This was Jesus’ response to Judas balking at the cost of this perfume that was just wasted all over Jesus’ feet. This pound of perfume was estimated to be worth about a year’s wages. That is indeed a lot of money and it probably could have done a lot of good for a lot of poor people. But Jesus claps back with this response and I’m wondering what it must have sounded like at the time. Because really, Jesus, do you have to throw it in Judas’ face like that? I know we have the privilege of reading that bracketed note of Judas being a scoundrel, but does that mean he deserves this kind of vocal open-handed slap? Without that comment in the brackets, this just sounds like a crispy burn directed at Judas.

So I’d imagine that Judas was hurt by this comment. I’d imagine Mary perhaps felt a bit awkward for coming in between them. I would imagine the disciples going “ooooohhh” and maybe snickering a bit under their breath, but perhaps also wondering what on earth Jesus meant by this statement.

I mean, if you take out that bracketed note about Judas being a thief, he actually has a point. That money could have been better spent almost anywhere else other than over Jesus’ feet. To be honest, I would have thought the same thing. Not because I’m a thief and want the money for myself mind you, but because I’m super cheap. I know I’d think twice and probably even thrice before spending that kind of scratch on perfume for someone’s feet.

But that’s just me. Maybe Judas was like that too, or maybe he really was just a thief. Mary clearly wasn’t like this at all, but wanted to openly show Jesus her love and devotion by sitting at his feet and listening to his words and spending exorbitant amount of money on helping him smell better. And the rest of the disciples watched on, perhaps not knowing what to think or what to do or even what to say. But it is clear there was tension in this room, and in the middle of it was Jesus, with is quippy type quip about the poor always being with them. Something that to us might sound so dismissive and almost selfish, something that could have tipped Judas over the edge on his betrayal plans, and something that I know leaves us scratching our heads.

But I also think it’s something that is more profound than perhaps we would recognise or give Jesus credit for. See, while it might sound like Jesus is being dismissive of the poor by saying it would be futile to give the proceeds of this perfume sale to them, Jesus is actually reminding them that we will always watch out for the poor, we will always care for them, we are called and commanded to always *have them*, like saying we got them, we got their backs.

In this light then if by “you always have the poor with you,” Jesus meant that we’ll always have the backs of the poor, then by “but you do not always have me” must mean that Jesus is foreshadowing not just how Judas will betray him, but how all the disciples will by abandoning him, denying him, and just losing their trust and faith in him.

Because that is exactly what happens. When the chips were down, each one of them ran in their own direction. When Jesus needed them the most they were nowhere to be found. When all Jesus did was ask them for a little faith, they just saw it as another reason to run, another reason to divide, another reason to hate.

This is what happened in that home of Lazarus, that is what happened in Jerusalem among all the people just a week later, this is what happens with us. Perhaps we too, get so offended by the things that Jesus says that we would just be like NOPE and get out of there. Perhaps we don't like how Jesus calls us to be forgiving and inclusive so much that we would intentionally interpret his words differently so we wouldn't have to. Perhaps we can't handle the amount of love that Jesus shows to those we don't like or even to ourselves, and instead of accepting it we use it as our reason to hate.

You see, my friends, Jesus doesn't call us to be divided but united in his name. Jesus doesn't call us to point our fingers at others and call them sinners but to understand how his grace and forgiveness and salvation are for all. Jesus doesn't call us to twist his words around and hate who we hate, but to listen to his words of generosity and charity, and strive to love as he first loved us.

This is a tall order, I know. And it isn't easy as a lot of people out there give us a lot of reasons to hate. But an important question to ask ourselves is, "does Jesus hate these people like I hate these people, or does he love them in spite of my feelings for them?" Because even though Jesus knew exactly what Judas was about, he still welcomed him in. Even though Jesus knew exactly how each and every one of his disciples would abandon and desert and even deny him, he still calls them. Even though Jesus is fully aware of how we all will stumble and fall and disappoint and not show up, but he continues to bridge the divide between us him with arms open wide and a heart of peace and love.

And so maybe, just maybe, our eyes could be opened by God's graciousness, our arms could be spread out in light of God's welcome, and our hearts be softened by God's love, as we do our best to faithfully serve our God, follow Jesus' example, and be guided by the leading of the Holy Spirit.

As we are here at the end of Lent, may we move forward toward the triumphal entry and passion of our Lord with grace, healing, and love. Thanks be to God. Amen.

**HYMN OF THE DAY:** Beneath the Cross of Jesus (#338)

**CREED**

With all of God's diverse and conflicted 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**

Led into God's justice in welcome and peace, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. Each petition will end with, "Lord, in your restoring mercy," and you all may respond with **hear our prayer**. Lord, in your restoring mercy, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, you remind us of our hopes and dreams for peace when you gather us together in spite of difference. Help us to see always your love and grace covering all people, that we can put down that which divides and lift up that which unites, for the sake of the world. Lord, in your restoring mercy, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, you fill our mouths with laughter and our tongues shout for joy for you have done great things for us. May our proclamation of this truth fall on open ears, that all people might hear of your gospel and find joy in your love. 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 Spirit of Life Lutheran Church in Vancouver and their pastor Aneeta Saroop; and for North Thompson Ecumenical Shared Ministry in Barriere and Clearwater and their Anglican priest Bruce Chalmers. Lord, in your restoring mercy, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, we are glad indeed for the great things you have done and this great creation that you have made. Strengthen our stewardship of all that you have entrusted to us, and help us in this planet's restoration. Lord, in your restoring mercy, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, you restore us into your kingdom, and you reveal to us true peace. May the leaders of the world yearn for this peace, that we might all learn to work together to achieve it. Especially we pray for Ukraine and all areas of the world that are facing conflict and turmoil, and for those that we've sponsored to come into our country: Solyana Amanuel; and Maekele Kiflu, Selam Haile, and their children. Lord, in your restoring mercy, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, we come to you with tears in our eyes but you lift us up that we might sing songs of joy. Continue to lift those among us who are sick, who mourn, or who feel lonely, that your love would shine throughout all of our lives. Especially we pray for Beulah; Diana; Ron, Tess, and Mineko; Bev and family; Paula; Laura; Kandie; Thomas; Cindy; Linda; Charlotte; William; Jenny; Chris; Mr. Cifuentes; Min; Katherine and family; Jessica; Lynn and Marie; those who have been affected by COVID 19; and all those we name aloud or quietly in our hearts at this time... Lord, in your restoring mercy, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, even in death you bring us back in joy, carrying the fruits of our lives of faith along with all the saints. Remind us always of our eternal connection with them and you, and continue to lead us along paths of righteousness. Lord, in your restoring mercy, **hear our prayer**.

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your gracious welcome into your kingdom, by Jesus Christ our Saviour and friend. **Amen.**

## **PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

## **MEAL**

### **DIALOGUE (p. 144)**

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, for you have done good things and brought us into the joy of your salvation, welcoming and accepting of all and revealing to us your steadfast and endless love.

For on the night that he was betrayed, our Saviour Jesus sat with his friends for a meal, where he took some bread, gave thanks, 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, he took the common cup, gave thanks, and 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 together that we see our equal welcome into God's presence and joy, even as we declare this mystery of faith:

**Christ has died.**

**Christ is risen.**

**Christ will come again.**

It is to you, O God, that all honour and glory belong, through Jesus Christ our risen Saviour, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

### **LORD'S PRAYER**

Gathered into one 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 how God loves us all.  
**Thanks be to God.**

### **COMMUNION**

**COMMUNION HYMN:** Lamb of God (p. 146)  
Let Us Break Bread Together (#471)  
Bread of Life from Heaven (#474)

### **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Holy God, we give you thanks for again feeding us and nourishing us with your truth and promises, giving us your Word to guide us through this life. May we take the community and wisdom we share out into the world, bringing your love and light to all whom we encounter, through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

### **SENDING**

### **BLESSING**

May God guide you through the desert places,  
may Christ lead you into knowing him more deeply,  
and the Holy Spirit fill you with faith overflowing  
that as you share in Christ's suffering, you will also trust in the power of his resurrection.  
**Amen.**

**SENDING SONG:** Go, My Children, with My Blessing (#543)

### **DISMISSAL**

Go in peace, live in faith, love, and discipleship.  
**Thanks be to God.**