



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA

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Twenty-Third Sunday after Pentecost

November 13, 2022

ACS Holy Communion, Setting 12

The end is near. There is no doubt about it. The warnings are dire. The tone of today's texts is ominous. But the baptized know how to live in the meantime. The baptized are strengthened for the living of these days in word and sacrament. The baptized rally around the invitation of the apostle: "Do not be weary in doing what is right."

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 together as a congregation to worship the Lord who has done marvelous things and whose right hand and holy arm have brought us into salvation. This victory is made known among the nations as God's steadfast love and faithfulness are seen all over the earth. And so with the seas and lands and all that are in them, let us proclaim the righteousness and justice of God as we joyfully lift our voices, rejoice, and sing to the Lord, for the sake of the world brought into equity in God's grace. **Amen. Thanks be to God.**

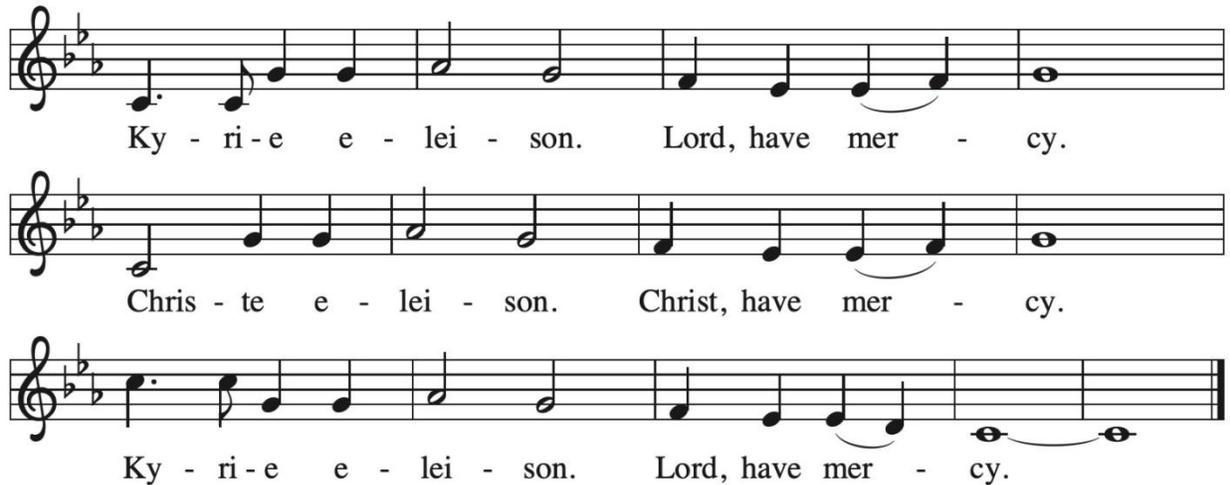
GATHERING SONG: If You But Trust in God to Guide You (#769)

GREETING

The reassuring grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the consoling love of God, and the everlasting fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

KYRIE



Ky - ri - e e - lei - son. Lord, have mer - cy.

Chris - te e - lei - son. Christ, have mer - cy.

Ky - ri - e e - lei - son. Lord, have mer - cy.

SONG OF PRAISE



1 Glo - ry to you, God, for yours is the earth;
2 Glo - ry to you, God, for yours is the earth;
3 Glo - ry to you, God, for yours is the earth;



yours is the prom - ise, the bless - ing, the birth.
yours the ho - san - nas, the dy - ing, re - birth.
yours the a - noint - ing, the ra - di - ant worth.



Ours the re - joic - ing for Word giv - en frame;
Ours the re - joic - ing for na - ture re - claimed;
Ours the re - joic - ing for spir - its a - flame;



ours the thanks - giv - ing to your ho - ly name.



Ours be the tell - ing of deeds great - ly done;



yours be the glo - ry, O God, yours a - lone.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

O God our Redeemer, all creation sings your praise, for you love us with justice and mercy, and you forgive us with grace. Strengthen us in our faith to see you in the world, leading us to serve and to be served, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

WORD

FIRST READING: Malachi 4:1-2a

A reading from Malachi.

Malachi, whose name means "my messenger," warns that "the day is coming." On that day, the evil will be destroyed like stubble in a fire, but the "sun of righteousness" will shine on those who honor God.

¹See, the day is coming, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble; the day that comes shall burn them up, says the LORD of hosts, so that it will leave

them neither root nor branch. ^{2a}But for you who revere my name the sun of righteousness shall rise, with healing in its wings.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 98

¹Sing a new song to the LORD, who has done marvelous things,
whose right hand and holy arm have won the victory.

²**O LORD, you have made known your victory,
you have revealed your righteousness in the sight of the nations.**

³You remember your steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel;
all the ends of the earth have seen the victory of our God.

⁴**Shout with joy to the LORD, all you lands;
lift up your voice, rejoice, and sing.**

⁵Sing to the LORD with the harp,
with the harp and the voice of song.

⁶**With trumpets and the sound of the horn
shout with joy before the king, the LORD.**

⁷Let the sea roar, and all that fills it,
the world and those who dwell therein.

⁸**Let the rivers clap their hands,
and let the hills ring out with joy before the LORD, who comes to judge the earth.**

⁹The LORD will judge the world with righteousness
and the peoples with equity.

SECOND READING: 2 Thessalonians 3:6-13

A reading from 2 Thessalonians.

Some members of the Thessalonian community, because of their belief in the nearness of Christ's return, had ceased to work, living off the generosity of other members of the community. The writer of this letter warns them bluntly that if they want to eat, they need to work.

⁶Now we command you, beloved, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to keep away from believers who are living in idleness and not according to the tradition that they received from us. ⁷For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us; we were not idle when we were with you, ⁸and we did not eat anyone's bread without paying for it; but with toil and labor we worked night and day, so that we might not burden any of you. ⁹This was not because we do not have that right, but in order to give you an example to imitate. ¹⁰For even when we were with you, we gave you this command: Anyone unwilling to work should not eat. ¹¹For we hear that some of you are living in idleness, mere busybodies, not doing any work. ¹²Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living. ¹³Brothers and sisters, do not be weary in doing what is right.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Al-le-lu - ia, al - le-lu - ia, al-le-lu - ia.



Repeat alleluia

Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of e - ter - nal life.

GOSPEL: Luke 21:5-19

The holy gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

As history moves toward God's fulfillment there will be frightening signs and events. Before the end, believers will draw strength from their relationship to God and will be given the words they need to testify and to endure without fear.

⁵When some were speaking about the temple, how it was adorned with beautiful stones and gifts dedicated to God, [Jesus] said, ⁶"As for these things that you see, the days will come when not one stone will be left upon another; all will be thrown down."

⁷They asked him, "Teacher, when will this be, and what will be the sign that this is about to take place?" ⁸And he said, "Beware that you are not led astray; for many will come in my name and say, 'I am he!' and, 'The time is near!' Do not go after them.

⁹"When you hear of wars and insurrections, do not be terrified; for these things must take place first, but the end will not follow immediately." ¹⁰Then he said to them, "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; ¹¹there will be great earthquakes, and in various places famines and plagues; and there will be dreadful portents and great signs from heaven.

¹²"But before all this occurs, they will arrest you and persecute you; they will hand you over to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors because of my name. ¹³This will give you an opportunity to testify. ¹⁴So make up your minds not to prepare your defense in advance; ¹⁵for I will give you words and a wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to withstand or contradict. ¹⁶You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, by relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death. ¹⁷You will be hated by all because of my name. ¹⁸But not a hair of your head will perish. ¹⁹By your endurance you will gain your souls."

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

Almighty God, reveal to us the way of salvation through your Word and the power of the Spirit, that we be strengthened by the hope in your promises and energized by your grace, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

So it's been a while since I talked at all about the Marvel movies, and so it's probably high time that I do. The second Black Panther movie finally came out this past week after being pushed back a few times due to lot of drama around the production of the movie. There were some disagreements and friction among the cast, the pandemic of course slowed things down quite a bit, but the main reason that production was delayed was the untimely death about 2 years ago of Chadwick Boseman, who played King T'Challa, aka the Black Panther, who obviously is the titular character in these movies. His death was a huge surprise because he kept his health issues a secret from the masses. And because he was so perfect in the role and played it so well, Marvel Studios announced that they wouldn't tarnish his memory and legacy by recasting the role or bringing him back with CGI or whatever, meaning that the character of T'Challa dies in the MCU along with the actor that played him. This then of course called for a complete rewrite of the script, and pushed everything back until this past week.

I'll be honest though, I thought their decision to not recast was pretty weird.

I mean, the MCU has done a bunch of recasting of characters over the years, and the most recent one that I know of, welcoming Harrison Ford into their ranks, was due to a death as well. And I get that Chadwick Boseman is a really good actor and all, but to just hang up the character of T'Challa like this seems like such a shame because there is just so much story left to tell about him. He and the Black Panther are like main characters in the comics, so it's hard to imagine a Marvel Cinematic Universe without him. I mean, it can be done, but I can't see it being as good. The overarching stories might still be captivating, but it just won't seem complete. I might still be a huge fan of it all, but I feel like it'd be different enough to know that it's just not right. It'd be like having your favourite meal but missing a key ingredient, like maybe peanut butter with no jam, cereal with no milk, or ham with no burger.

You know what I mean, don't you? We get accustomed to something or the way things are, that a disruption seems almost too jarring to handle. Any kind of change to these things could bring too much discomfort and leave us disoriented. When they get too different, then we get anxious and maybe even afraid because suddenly the future becomes unpredictable and out of our control.

In this case it was the death of a very talented actor and thus a beloved character, but it could also be the death of a person that we actually know and love, or the end of a relationship (even a bad one), or maybe being put in a position where we need to close some kind of chapter in our lives. It could be a move into a different home, a different city, or a different country. It could be a change in our status in society from a good one to a not as good one. It could be the loss of a job, our sense of security, or even our church.

Now, I know we just celebrated our 70th anniversary last week and I did wonder out loud how many more milestone anniversaries we have left in us, but I assure you that I'm not in any way hinting that we should be closing our doors any time soon. But I'm referring to today's gospel lesson, when Jesus predicts the destruction of the temple and just a whole lot of bad times to follow. Actually, it isn't even a prediction as much as it's Jesus telling them that this will happen.

I don't know if we can ever truly appreciate how scary this is for the disciples to hear. Think about how scary it is for us to even think about losing our building, this building that we've spent so much time caring for, all the memories that we share of this church from the past 70

years, all the faces that have come through this sacred space and have met the living God here, and then ramp that up by about a thousand. I mean, for the ancient Jewish people the temple was the centre of not just religious life, but it was the centre of all life. It was the epitome of who they worship, who they identify as, who they are. It was to them the embodiment of all that God is, all that God does, and all that God had promised to them. To them, the temple was everything.

So even just the thought of it no longer being there would have rocked them to the core. The idea of life without the temple would have been unbearable. The prospect that this centre of all that they were, all that they are, and all that they hope to be, might no longer exist would have just ripped their hearts into shreds.

And Jesus tells them just that. He warns them of all that is to come after the temple's destruction, the wars and insurrections, the natural disasters and famines, the plagues and signs of the end times. All this would have been really scary stuff, but Jesus tells them that they will endure it and that endurance will save their souls.

Uh what? I don't think the disciples were even over the temple being destroyed part. They weren't even ready to hear the endurance part. But the worst part of it all was that it all happened. All of it. The temple was destroyed. There were wars and famines and earthquakes. There have been signs in every generation reminding us all just how much we've fallen, how broken we've become, just what sins we were capable of. It all happened. Jesus' words came to pass and continue to be true to this day. We still hear of wars and threats of violence. We still suffer division and political turmoil. We still mourn the loss of church buildings and congregations both in our Lutheran church and other denominations. Everything Jesus said was and continues to be accurate... all the bad stuff of course, but also the good... our endurance, our resilience, our salvation.

See Jesus was telling his disciples and us that bad times are brewing, kingdoms and nations will fall, lives will be lost, worlds will end. But in the midst of it all, God's faithfulness and grace prevail. God's strength in us will help us weather these storms of life. God's Spirit residing in all of us will allow us to see the joy and hope in life.

In spite of all my reservations around Black Panther 2, I still did see it on opening day as I normally do with all the new Marvel releases. But I went in thinking that I wouldn't like it because Chadwick Boseman's T'Challa wouldn't be in it, and they were planning on continuing the universe without him. I was thinking that my nerdy comic inaccuracy radar would be blaring because they'd have to change the story too much for me to really appreciate it. I was expecting to be disappointed by yet another Marvel franchise because of them not wanting to change and recast the role and character.

But I was pleasantly surprised. While still not at all comic accurate, the story that they told was phenomenal and the themes of succession, healing, and growth were all true. Yes, T'Challa wasn't in it and he isn't coming back, but the Black Panther and all that the title stands for remains. The movie was named Wakanda Forever, Wakanda being the fictional country that the Black Panther is from, but title could have been "hope forever", as the story pushed past the change, grew bigger than a single character, and brought out a message that even though things don't always stay the same and can even get really bad, hope can remain, hope can endure, hope can be forever.

And with the nation of Israel and all of God's people, the message of hope has survived through the centuries of change, of destruction, and of pain. We, as the messengers of this hope have endured through persecution, oppression, and ostracization. The Spirit of hope living in us has strengthened us, redeemed us, and continues to save us.

So the world around us might look like it is ending. Our own personal worlds might have ended a few times over. Life as we know it might feel like it's crumbling away leaving us broken and in despair, without a name or a place to call our own. But in the midst of it all, God remains true. God remains to be all love and peace. God remains as our hope.

As we approach the end of this season after Pentecost and look forward to the season of Advent, may we hold onto the hope of God's promises, God's love, God with us. Thanks be to God. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY: O Christ, Our Hope (#604) verses 1,3,4,5

CREED (p. 104)

With all those whose hope is in the Lord, 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 live in faith and love, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. Each petition will end with "by your everlasting mercy, O God," and you all may respond with **hear our prayer**. By your everlasting mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, we sing to you a new song for you have done marvelous things throughout the earth. May we continually see your hand at work in and around our lives, that we always be filled with hope in your promises and your love. By your everlasting mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**. O Lord, you reveal to us your righteousness and redemption, and we are moved to serve you and neighbour for all time. Strengthen us in our ministry that your love and promises be

proclaimed through all that we do. Especially we pray for our neighbouring faith communities; our partner Anglican Church of Canada; our bishop Kathy, assistant to the bishop Rebekah, and national bishop Susan; and our companion congregations of the BC Synod. In particular, we pray for Grace Lutheran Church in Victoria and all the pastors and leaders that continue to serve there; Mount Olive Lutheran Church in Surrey and their interim pastor Lori-Anne Boutin-Crawford; and for all prison ministries and their chaplains. By your everlasting mercy, O God, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, your steadfast love and faithfulness are seen in all the ends of the earth, through all that you do and all that you have made. May our stewardship of this planet be responsible and pleasing to you as we look forward to what we leave behind for the future generations. And we pray for those living in areas facing harsh weather and natural disasters, that all might find safety and security. By your everlasting mercy, O God, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, you bring joy to all people throughout the lands, even when its people don't recognize your presence. Be with all world leaders, politicians, and people of influence, that your love might lead all people into peace. We pray especially for all nations that face war and political turmoil, that your hand of healing and reconciliation be on them. And we pray for those that we've sponsored to come into our country: Solyana Amanuel; and Maekele Kiflu, Selam Haile, and their children; that their journey to our country might begin soon. By your everlasting mercy, O God, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, your creatures fill the seas and the lands and you watch over us all and lead us into joy. Bring your healing to all who suffer, in pain, or mourn, and remind us all that you are with us always until the end of the age. We pray for your hand of healing especially for Bryan; the Prasad family; Ron, Tess, and Mineko; Bev and family; Laura; Kandie; Thomas; Cindy; William; Chris; Larry; Jack; Walter; and all those we name aloud or quietly in our hearts at this time... By your everlasting mercy, O God, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, in your righteousness you bring us all into equity with you and all the saints, welcoming us all into eternal life in your kingdom. Remind us always of the faith of the past, that we might be inspired to live faithfully into the future. By your everlasting mercy, O God, **hear our prayer.**

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your steadfast 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.

PREFACE

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 Saviour Jesus Christ, who gives us hope in your steadfast love and reminds us of
 our unchanging position in your kingdom, as we are joined together with all the saints,
 the choirs of angels, and whole church on earth
 in praising your name with this unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and
 God of might, heav - en and earth are full of your
 glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est.
 Bless - ed is the one who comes in the name of the
 Lord. Ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.
 Ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Holy God, merciful and mighty, you alone have the power to save and the love strong enough to heal. You quell our fears and calm our anxieties as you remain faithful in your promises and redeem us from our sin. Through your Son Jesus, we are brought into hope in knowing that you join us together in the community of all the saints, forever praising your name to the ends of the earth.

For on the night that he was betrayed, your Son 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 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 bread and cup that we are reassured of your love and faithfulness, even as we declare this mystery of faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

O God, your holiness blesses us in this place, your Spirit is infused in this bread and cup, and your love brings us into the everlasting hope of your eternal glory and unending grace, lifting us up out of sin and joining us into your kingdom, through Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER (p. 112)

Gathered together into God's eternal grace, 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 steadfast love for all people.

Thanks be to God.

COMMUNION

COMMUNION HYMNS: Lamb of God (ACS booklet)

Let Us Go Now to the Banquet (#523)

Bread of Life From Heaven (#474)

LAMB OF GOD



Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on
us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the
world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Holy God, we again thank you and praise you for feeding us with your Word and nourishing us with your Spirit, moving us to be your hands and feet in the world. May your love always be on our lips as we proclaim to all people the hope found in your promises, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

SENDING

BLESSING

May the grace of God the Shepherd bless you and keep you,
The love of God the Saviour shine on you and be gracious onto you,
The power of God the Spirit look upon you with favour, and give you peace.

Amen.

SENDING SONG: Soon and Very Soon (#439)

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, live without fear and love without reserve.

Thanks be to God.