



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA

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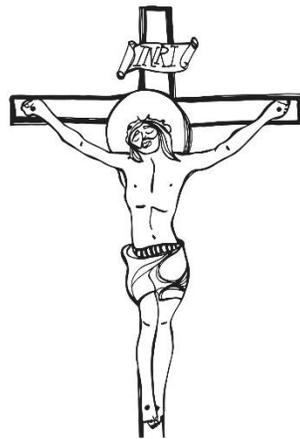
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Christ the King Sunday November 20, 2022 ACS Holy Communion, Setting 12

Jeremiah's promise of the execution of "justice and righteousness in the land" finds ironic fulfillment in the execution of Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews. It appears utterly contradictory that a king should be crucified with a criminal. This victory appears for all the world as humiliating defeat. Yet through the gate of death Jesus opens the door to paradise.

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

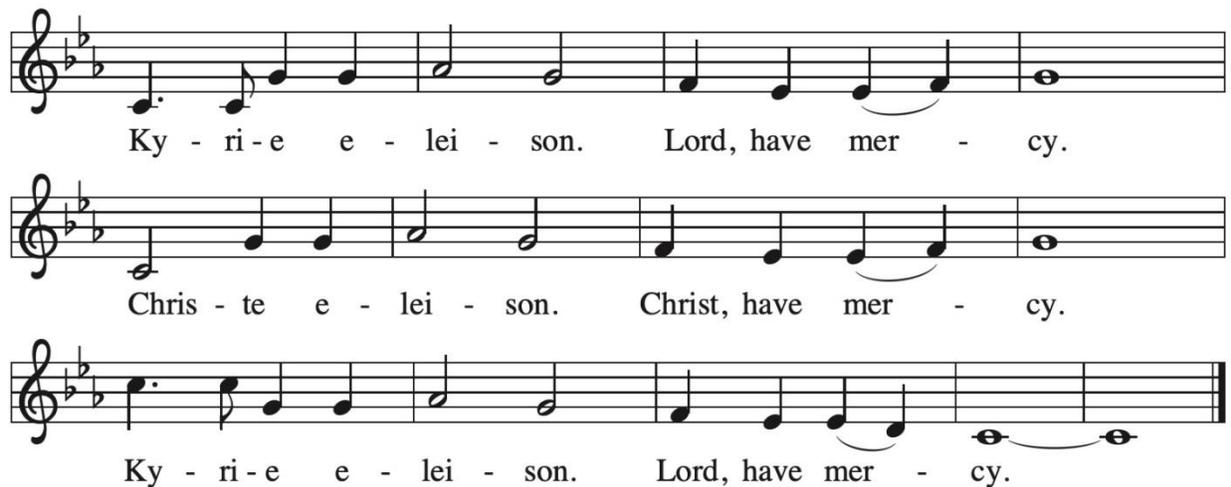
We gather together in the name of our God, our refuge and strength, our present help in times of trouble. While the world moves and shakes around us, we shall not have any fear for God is in our midst, speaking to all a Word of truth, grace, and peace. And so we come into the presence of God, regard all the works of the Lord and stand in awe in the knowledge of the true God, reigning forever in our hearts and our communities, eternally exalted in our churches and congregations, and saving us all from sin and death, through Jesus Christ, name above all names. **Amen. Thanks be to God.**

GATHERING SONG: Crown Him with Many Crowns (#855) verses 1,3,4,5

GREETING

The saving grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the royal love of God, and the eternal community of the Holy Spirit be with you. **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

God of all times and places, we know that you are here with us, leading and guiding us and speaking to us through your holy Word. Open our ears to hear you, open our eyes to see you, and open our hearts receive your saving love that empowers us to act in your creation for all the world, through Jesus Christ our Saviour and Lord. **Amen.**

WORD

FIRST READING: Jeremiah 23:1-6

A reading from Jeremiah.

Today's reading builds on the common, ancient Near Eastern metaphor of the king as shepherd. Judah's unjust rulers have caused their people, their "flock," to be scattered. Nevertheless, God will raise up a new and righteous shepherd who will rule a restored Judah.

¹Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! says the LORD.

²Therefore thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning the shepherds who shepherd my people: It is you who have scattered my flock, and have driven them away, and you have not attended to them. So I will attend to you for your evil doings, says the LORD. ³Then I myself will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the lands where I have driven them, and I will bring them back to their fold, and they shall be fruitful and multiply. ⁴I will raise up shepherds over them who will shepherd them, and they shall not fear any longer, or be dismayed, nor shall any be missing, says the LORD.

⁵The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. ⁶In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. And this is the name by which he will be called: "The LORD is our righteousness."

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 46

¹God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.

²**Therefore we will not fear, though the earth be moved,
and though the mountains shake in the depths of the sea;**

³though its waters rage and foam,
and though the mountains tremble with its tumult.

⁴**There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy habitation of the Most High.**

⁵God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be shaken;
God shall help it at the break of day.

⁶**The nations rage, and the kingdoms shake;
God speaks, and the earth melts away.**

⁷The LORD of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our stronghold.

⁸**Come now, regard the works of the LORD,
what desolations God has brought upon the earth;**

⁹behold the one who makes war to cease in all the world;
who breaks the bow, and shatters the spear, and burns the shields with fire.

¹⁰**"Be still, then, and know that I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations; I will be exalted in the earth."**

¹¹The LORD of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our stronghold.

SECOND READING: Colossians 1:11-20

A reading from Colossians.

An early Christian hymn praises the mystery of the political, personal, and mystical Christ, the one who was present at creation and is eternally reigning with God.

¹¹May you be made strong with all the strength that comes from his glorious power, and may you be prepared to endure everything with patience, while joyfully ¹²giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light. ¹³He has

rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son,¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

¹⁵He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; ¹⁶for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. ¹⁷He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. ¹⁹For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, ²⁰and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



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



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

GOSPEL: Luke 23:33-43

The holy gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Amid scoffing and slander from those who sarcastically call him Messiah and king, Jesus reveals that to be Messiah and king is to give one's life for others. Here he uses his power to welcome a despised sinner to paradise but puts his own death into God's hands.

³³When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. ³⁴[[Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing."]] And they cast lots to divide his clothing. ³⁵And the people stood by, watching; but the leaders scoffed at him, saying, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah of God, his chosen one!" ³⁶The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine, ³⁷and saying, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!" ³⁸There was also an inscription over him, "This is the King of the Jews."

³⁹One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, "Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!" ⁴⁰But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation?" ⁴¹And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong." ⁴²Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."

⁴³He replied, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

Lord God, open our hearts to receive your Word; by your Spirit free us from all that oppress us and reveal to us the gracious inheritance of the saints of light, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

“He saved others, let him save himself if he’s the Messiah!”

“If you’re the King of the Jews, save yourself!”

“Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!”

Is it me, or are these ancient folk really obsessed with saving? Save me, save yourself, save this, save that, so on and so forth. It’s like that’s all they can think about, nothing else is on their minds. And I guess if we’re honest, can we really blame them? I mean, we talk about saving all the time as well. We save a certain percentage of our paycheques for our retirement, we save our work and progress on our computers and drives and clouds, we save our leftovers so we aren’t so wasteful. We try to save animals, rainforests, and schools. Maybe we don’t have saving on our minds all the time like the ancient Israelites seem to in this story we get today, but I think we can still very confidently say that saving is good and it’s something that we want to happen to us and to others, and if push comes to shove we’d probably want the Messiah to save as well.

But what does it actually mean to be saved by the Messiah? What does it mean to be forgiven by a King? What does it mean to be remembered by Jesus?

Well, in light of how we use the term these days, I would say “to save” basically means to preserve. So we preserve our money by putting it in banks and try to invest it wisely so none of it is lost, we preserve our knowledge and memories through endless pictures and writing things down and even putting it up on the internet where they’ll last forever, we do what we can to preserve our lives by being healthy, eating right, and ingest whatever we’re told that would help us in this goal. So when we ask to save something or to be saved, we are asking that it not be changed, diminished, or taken away. We want it to remain, to be safe, to be kept the way we want it, the way it has been, the way perhaps it should be.

And don’t get me wrong, there’s nothing wrong with this. I myself very much like being alive and so I will do what I can to stay that way, just as I like how those around me are alive and so I do what I can to protect them. That instinct to survive is ingrained in all of us, so much so that our bodies are hardwired for self-preservation. If you don’t believe me, try holding your breath until you pass out. You’ll find that it can’t be done. Your body won’t allow it. It will override your willpower in order for you to survive.

And we aren’t the only ones like this, pretty much every sentient being or species has this desire for survival in them, except for maybe lemmings, according to urban myth. So wired are we for survival and self-preservation that anything against that wiring just seems wrong. So we frown on people being irresponsible when it comes to their health or the health of others especially during the pandemic. We frown on any kind of planned death whatsoever no matter how much it makes sense for the person. We frown on any kind of change that threatens too much our way of life, our way of doing things, our definitions of what really is life.

This is what it means for us to save. This is how we want to be saved. This is how we, and the ancient people deriding Jesus, expected him to save himself. I mean, we know he can do it, he’s done a lot of miracles already from healing people to feeding people and to even bringing

some people back from the dead even. All he has to do now is pop out those nails, jump down off the cross, and then he'll show them once and for all that he is who they claim him to be, the true Messiah and King. But he doesn't do it. He doesn't come down from the cross. He doesn't defeat his enemies the way a king should and save himself.

Well, he doesn't in the way that we think he should, at least.

Because somehow, by dying he saves. Somehow, by his life ending, life is preserved. Somehow, by seemingly falling at the hands of his enemies, Jesus is declared to be King over all and his reign lasts forever.

This is the great paradox of the Christian faith, where we're taught that the first is last and the last is first. This the counter culture of Jesus' teachings where he can be called the Servant King. This is the shift in mindset and paradigm, where we see true power found in grace, humility, and love.

Because if it were up to us, Jesus would have jumped off the cross. If it were up to us, all evil and sin would be obliterated from the earth. If it were up to us, we'd be in paradise already. But none of that happened or happens. None of what we want comes to pass. Nothing that we expect is actually what Jesus does.

So again, what does it mean to be saved by the Messiah and King when it seems like nothing is saved... or preserved the way that we want?

The thing is, we aren't saved by staying the same. Our salvation isn't dependant on the preservation of our paradigms and interpretations. Jesus remembering us doesn't mean we have to hold onto this version of us forever.

Rather, Jesus saves us by changing us. Changing the way we see the world and each other. Changing how we understand ourselves and our position in God's love and kingdom. Changing who we are... from sinners condemned by our own making to a life apart from God to fully redeemed and forgiven, invited and welcomed, beloved members of God's church and community declared as God's own people.

This nature of salvation then means that it's not our lives as we know it that is preserved or saved, but it is through our being changed that joins us with the truth and message of Christ that does indeed last forever. God's grace doesn't allow us to keep our traditions as the only true traditions forever, but rather opens our minds and hearts to see how God is present in so many forms and customs. God's love for us isn't because we have been rigid in keeping the traditions of the past and shunning any change that might come our way, but it's because no matter who we are, how much we have in the bank, where or how we worship, or even what gender we identify with, God decides to reach out to us, remind us who we are, and lifts us up out of the guilts and shames that the world puts on us. This then moves us to be more gracious and accepting, more loving and forgiving, more in line with who God is and reforming us in our faith and understanding. So we are changed from our past selves, we are rescued from our erroneous understanding of how life should be revolving around us, we are saved from the consequences of sin in relationship with God and each other.

But still, this is hard. Change is always uncomfortable. Learning to see the world as God sees it, learning to understand God's grace as Jesus taught it, which quite frankly, is what got him killed, learning to follow the leading of the Spirit to be reformed often seems impossible. But this is what we're called to do, this is what we're empowered to be, this is how we are saved.

Today is Christ the King Sunday, a day that not just ends the church year but serves as the culmination of all that we've learned over the past 12 months. It's a day that we remember the Kingship of Jesus, the Reign of God, and the counter cultural Spirit that helps us to see and understand how this all works and how they affect our lives. And above all, it's a day where we remember how Jesus hung on the cross and died, showing us all how a King needn't be militaristically mighty or politically powerful or religiously rich, but a king, like our true King, can be humble, gracious and loving. A King can protect not by preserving but by changing. A King can save us all through grace, through mercy, through love.

On this Christ the King Sunday, may we submit not to our own narrow mindedness and presumptions of how things should be, but to the loving change, the softening of our hearts, and the opening of our minds to God's presence in the world, reforming us and molding us to faithfully be God's hands and feet in the world. Thanks be to God. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY: Beautiful Savior (#838)

CREED (p. 104)

With all those welcomed into God's salvation, 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 be saved by the grace of Christ, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. Each petition will end with, "by your saving mercy, O Lord," and you all may respond with **hear our prayer**. By your saving mercy, O Lord, **hear our prayer**.

O God, our refuge and strength, your help is with us in our times of trouble and you are always present within our community. Remind us always of your unending grace, that we be filled with the confidence in your promises. By your saving mercy, O Lord, **hear our prayer.**

O God, in you we have no fear, for you are our strength and stronghold. May our ministry in and outside of our community be testament to the boldness in your name, that all might find the confidence of your promises. 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 for our companion congregations of the BC Synod. In particular we pray for Grace Lutheran Church in Dawson Creek and their United interim minister Marilyn Carroll; and for Deo Lutheran Church in Salmon Arm and their pastor Erik Bjorgan. By your saving mercy, O Lord, **hear our prayer.**

O God, by your power you made the earth, the mountains and the seas, and everything in them, and you charge us with the care of this planet. May our stewardship be faithful and our actions pleasing to you, as we consider the generations to come in all that we do. We also pray for those living in areas of harsh weather and natural disasters, that all might find safety and be protected from harm. By your saving mercy, O Lord, **hear our prayer.**

O God, you are in the midst of our cities, nations, and kingdoms, and you help us when the earth seems to shake. Instill a wisdom in all of us citizens of this planet, that we might learn to work together toward peace. We pray especially for those areas of the world that are facing war, violence, or turmoil, that your love might penetrate the hearts of all. We also 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 here might begin soon. By your saving mercy, O Lord, **hear our prayer.**

O God, the Lord of hosts, you are our stronghold and in you we find our security. Be with all among us who are sick, mourn, or feel lonely, and may we all be stilled by the greatness of your grace. We pray especially for Bryan; Prasad family, Bev and family; Ron, Tess, and Mineko; Laura; Kandie; Thomas; Cindy; William; Chris; Jack; Walter; Larry; and all those we name aloud or quietly in our hearts at this time...
By your saving mercy, O Lord, **hear our prayer.**

O God, you are exalted among the nations and in all the earth, for your eternal love and grace has welcomed us to live with you and all the saints in your kingdom. May the lives of faith of the saints always be inspiring to us, that we be moved to humbly serve each other in all that we do. By your saving mercy, O Lord, **hear our prayer.**

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your reign of peace and salvation, 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.

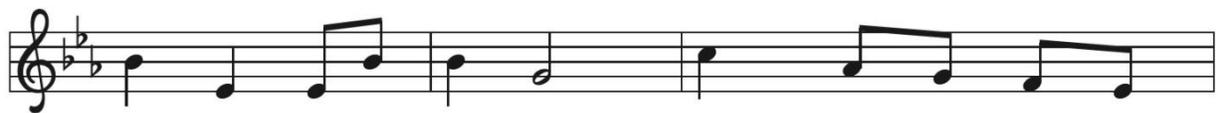
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

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 reigns over the world with a hand of grace and peace,
saving us all to be joined with all the saints, the hosts of heaven and the 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 and almighty God, we give you thanks for all that you are and all that you do, as you reign in our hearts with a grace and mercy that surpass all understanding. You lift us up out of our sin and you save us from our guilt and shame, and you bring us to live in harmony with you and all the saints. And in the fullness of time, you join us together through the life and teachings of your Son Jesus, who came to us as one of us to reveal the wideness of your love.

For on the night that he was betrayed, your Son Jesus sat with his friends for a meal, where he took some bread and after 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."

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."

For it is in this bread and cup that we see the fullness of our joy found in you, made possible by this connection we share as we declare the mystery of faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

Bless this meal, O God, with your love and shine your Spirit upon us as we submit to your reign and follow you in our communities out into all the world, proclaiming your truth and heralding the salvation found in your love and grace, through Jesus Christ who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER (p. 112)

Gathered into God's salvation by the 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 saving us all.

Thanks be to God.

COMMUNION

COMMUNION HYMNS: Lamb of God (ACS booklet)
Son Of God, Eternal Savior (#655)
Jesus, Remember Me (#616)

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, you feed us with your Word and nourish us with your Spirit, and you bring to us the joy of your loving reign in our hearts. Be with us as we go out into the world as your people, proclaiming your salvation in all that we do, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

SENDING

BLESSING

May the Holy Triune God, the visible and invisible, the holy and mighty, the Creator, Christ and King, guide your feet, strengthen your hands, and fortify your heart, this day and always. **Amen.**

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

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, saved by God, loved by Christ, and led by the Spirit.
Thanks be to God.