



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA

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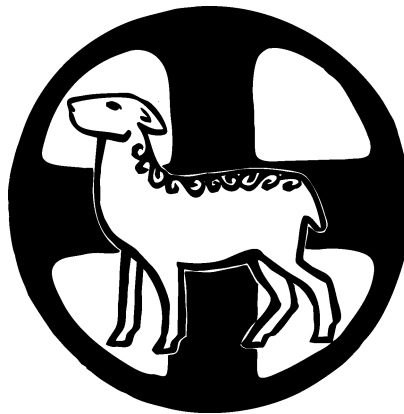
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**Second Sunday after Epiphany
January 15, 2023
ACS Holy Communion, Setting 12**

Today's gospel opens with further reflection on Jesus' baptism. He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world and the one anointed by the Spirit. In the liturgy we come and see Christ revealed among us in word and meal. We go forth to invite others to come and worship the Holy One and to receive the gifts of grace and peace made known among us.

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 hə́n̓qə́m̓iṇ̓ə́m̓ (Musqueam) and Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh (Squamish) speaking peoples.

GATHERING

CALL TO WORSHIP

We gather in patient waiting of our Lord, who promises to lift us up out of the desolate pit and making our footing sure, set upon the high cliff of righteousness and peace. And so we come to sing songs to our Lord, songs of praise to our God as we stand in awe and put our trust in Christ. For God has done great wonders, more than we can count, and has incomparable plans for us full of love and truth.

But it's not sacrifice that God desires, but our genuine gratitude and obedience, moving us follow God's will and love God's laws and righteousness, living faithfully in all our hearts.

Amen. Thanks be to God.

GATHERING SONG: Songs of Thankfulness and Praise (#310) verses 1, 3, 4

GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb, the love of God, the Holy One, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit that invites us to come and see, 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

Holy God, you sent to us your son to be the light of the world, that all might see your love shining bright throughout the earth. Fill us with your grace, that we too, might be able to reflect this light upon all whom we encounter, as we faithfully serve you through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

WORD

FIRST READING: Isaiah 49:1-7

A reading from Isaiah.

Here the servant, identified as Israel, speaks for herself and describes her honored mission. Called before her birth like Jeremiah and John the Baptist, the servant is not only to restore Israel. The servant's ultimate assignment is to bring news of God's victory to the ends of the earth. God in faithfulness has chosen Israel for this task.

¹Listen to me, O coastlands,
pay attention, you peoples from far away!
The LORD called me before I was born,
while I was in my mother's womb he named me.
²He made my mouth like a sharp sword,
in the shadow of his hand he hid me;
he made me a polished arrow,
in his quiver he hid me away.
³And he said to me, "You are my servant,
Israel, in whom I will be glorified."
⁴But I said, "I have labored in vain,
I have spent my strength for nothing and vanity;
yet surely my cause is with the LORD,
and my reward with my God."
⁵And now the LORD says,
who formed me in the womb to be his servant,
to bring Jacob back to him,
and that Israel might be gathered to him,
for I am honored in the sight of the LORD,
and my God has become my strength—
⁶he says,
"It is too light a thing that you should be my servant
to raise up the tribes of Jacob
and to restore the survivors of Israel;
I will give you as a light to the nations,
that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth."
⁷Thus says the LORD,
the Redeemer of Israel and his Holy One,
to one deeply despised, abhorred by the nations,
the slave of rulers,
"Kings shall see and stand up,
princes, and they shall prostrate themselves,
because of the LORD, who is faithful,
the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you."

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 40:1-11

¹I waited patiently upon the LORD,
who stooped to me and heard my cry.
²**The LORD lifted me out of the desolate pit, out of the miry clay,
and set my feet upon a high cliff, making my footing sure.**
³The LORD put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God;
many shall see, and stand in awe, and put their trust in the LORD.
⁴**Happy are they who trust in the LORD!
They do not turn to enemies or to those who follow lies.**
⁵Great are the wonders you have done, O LORD my God! In your plans for us, none can be
compared with you!

Oh, that I could make them known and tell them! But they are more than I can count.

⁶**Sacrifice and offering you do not desire;**

you have opened my ears: burnt-offering and sin-offering you have not required.

⁷And so I said, "Here I am; I come.

In the scroll of the book it is written of me:

⁸**I love to do your will, O my God;**

your law is deep within me.'"

⁹I proclaimed righteousness in the great assembly;

I have not restrained my lips, O LORD, you know.

¹⁰**I have not hidden your righteousness in my heart; I have spoken of your faithfulness and your deliverance;**

I have not concealed your steadfast love and truth from the great assembly.

¹¹You are the LORD; do not withhold your compassion from me;

may your steadfast love and your truth continually keep me safe.

SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 1:1-9

A reading from 1 Corinthians.

Though God's church in Corinth is a fractious congregation beset with many conflicts, Paul opens this letter by spotlighting the multiple ways God has enriched and sustained its life as part of the divine call into the fellowship of our Lord Jesus Christ.

¹Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and our brother Sosthenes,

²To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, together with all those who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours:

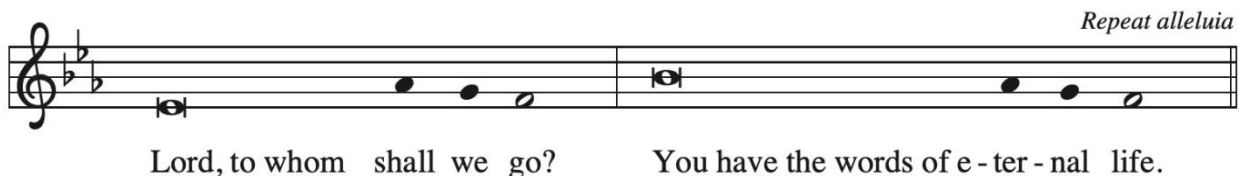
³Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

⁴I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, ⁵for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind—⁶just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you—⁷so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁸He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



GOSPEL: John 1:29-42

The holy gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

John the Baptist's witness to Jesus initiates a chain of testimony as his disciples begin to share with others what they have found.

²⁹[John the Baptist] saw Jesus coming toward him and declared, "Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"³⁰This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'³¹I myself did not know him; but I came baptizing with water for this reason, that he might be revealed to Israel."³²And John testified, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him."³³I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.'³⁴And I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God."

³⁵The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples,³⁶ and as he watched Jesus walk by, he exclaimed, "Look, here is the Lamb of God!"³⁷The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus.³⁸When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, "What are you looking for?" They said to him, "Rabbi" (which translated means Teacher), "where are you staying?"³⁹He said to them, "Come and see." They came and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon.⁴⁰One of the two who heard John speak and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.⁴¹He first found his brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated Anointed).⁴²He brought Simon to Jesus, who looked at him and said, "You are Simon son of John. You are to be called Cephas" (which is translated Peter).

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

Send your Spirit upon us, O God, that our ears be opened to the truth of your Word and the testimony of Christ be strengthened among us, that our recognition of you and your work in the world fulfill us and bring us to new heights in our community, ministry, and love, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

"What are you looking for?"

This is what Jesus asks his would-be-disciples-but-for-now-stalkers. And this isn't an easy question to answer. Heck, I ask myself that same question like one out of every five times I walk into a room and completely forget why I went in there.

"What are you looking for?"

It's a tough question, one that perhaps a lot of people wonder and ask about on first dates and at the start of relationships, and a question that perhaps a lot of people generally would try to avoid. Not because they don't want a relationship, but because probably because they really don't know what the answer would be for themselves.

“What are you looking for?”

And I guess that’s the question, isn’t it? If we could answer it then we might have a bit more direction in our lives, a bit more focus, and maybe eventually a bit more fulfillment and accomplishment. If we could answer it, then maybe we will have a bit better chance of being truly happy.

And maybe that’s what we’re actually looking for, to be happy, to be fulfilled, to have meaning for who we are and what we’re doing here. Still, that doesn’t really answer the question of what we want, because we’d need to be more specific in how we could even get there. What achievements must we accomplish to obtain this goal? What are we actually looking for that would finally satisfy?

The world will give us the answers, that’s for sure. Things like that well paying job or that fancy house or the latest and greatest gadgets that would be able to hold a livestream without any glitches for once. The world tells us to aim for the most respect, the most influence, the most power. We are told that we need to strive for the coolest toys, the best things, and the most likes on our social media posts. But we’ve found time and again that even after gaining or achieving those things, we are left not as satisfied or fulfilled as we thought we’d be. When we finally get that thing or reach that goal that we thought would make us truly happy, we just aren’t, not in any kind of lasting way, at least. And so we move onto the next thing and the next thing and the next thing, continually and perpetually searching for that which we are looking for.

So is true happiness then but a pipe dream? It is even attainable? Can we even get there with what we know and can do? Or are we just destined to jump from thing to thing, forever running the rat race with no end in sight?

At first glance, this might seem to be the case with John’s disciples that turned into those Jesus stalkers. From what I understand in those days, being someone’s disciple was a bit of a commitment. You don’t just latch onto anyone who is accepting applications, but you have to really admire the person, look up to them with utmost respect, and really devote yourself to learning all you can from them. So I’d think that John’s disciples would be no different. They would be devoted, dedicated, disciplined. But then one day John points out to them Jesus, the Lamb of God, the one who will take away the sins of the world, and his disciples just drop him like a wet paper towel in favour of following Jesus. I get that is kind of the point of John’s teachings, but really? It just seems a bit wishy washy to me.

So what were they looking for? What were they hoping would satisfy them? What did they think would make them happy?

And this is exactly what Jesus asks them, “What are you looking for?” And it sounds like the best they could do on short notice was just, “uh where are you staying?” Sounds kind of cringey, right? I mean, we’d think that they could have given a better answer than that. They could have said that they were looking for a new teacher, or they want a different direction in where they’re going, or maybe even tell the truth, and say that they want to find the meaning of life. They want to be happy. They want to be part of something bigger than themselves and make a difference in the world.

Because that is what the Lamb of God is about, right? John declares that Jesus came to take away the sin of the world. And who wouldn't want to be a part of that? But the best these jokers could say is "where are you staying?"

Well, actually it isn't a bad answer, as there is something lost in translation. The word used for "stay" is the Greek "menno", which means to abide, to be present, to fully and wholly live.

So these disciples aren't asking Jesus just where he hangs his hat, but they are asking where does he reside. They want to see with whom he has community. They want to learn in what does he find life. Because in learning all of these things, especially from Jesus, I would think would be the ultimate factor for bringing meaning into anyone's life. I mean, this is the Messiah, the one who would save the world. This is the Word made flesh, who would lift them up and show them the life that truly is life. This is the Lamb of God, the one who would take away all their sin and reveal to them their true position in God's kingdom, one without prerequisite or condition, one of welcome and inclusion, one full of peace and love. So how could they not want to see where he will abide, be where his full presence could be found, and learn all they could from him and find meaning, fulfillment, and happiness?

This is what the Lamb of God is about, this is what the image would bring up for them, this is why they were so filled with hope, enough to leave John their master in favour for this other guy. See the lamb was seen as a gift out of appreciation back to God for all the abundance and blessing. It was customary to give back a bit of all the good that was given. Sure, it is translated as a sacrifice these days and maybe it can be difficult to give our very best, but it always done not out of obligation or obedience, but out of love.

So the Lamb of God? It was God's way of giving us even more, not because we gave God so much, but because God loves so much. This was God's way of revealing the nature of God's love, one that is pure, full, and so graciously given. This was God's way of telling us who we are: beloved and redeemed children worthy of being saved.

So was it painful when people rejected this gift? When people spat on him? When people derided, disgraced, and ultimately destroyed this Lamb given out of love? Well, probably. But that didn't stop God. That doesn't stop God. And that will not stop God from continuing to love and forgive and welcome.

But this is the love that those disciples were looking for. This is the love that Jesus offers. This is the love that fills all of us with meaning, brings us all the joy of community and relationship, lifts us up and leads us into peace.

And I know, life is still hard. Life can get rough. Life throws us unexpected curveballs and takes us on these rollercoaster rides and rips our hearts into shreds. We are beaten and battered. We are tossed and turned. We are exasperated and exhausted.

But it is in that turmoil that God is most present. It is when we are desperately calling out in despair that God appears to us with an outstretched hand ready to pull us back in. It is when we are most confused of what we are looking for that we are given the gift of love, peace, and hope.

So Jesus' answer is for them and us to come and see where and how God abides in us and in our hearts. Come and see what God is doing in the world full of grace and truth. Come and see the blessings that are given to us out of a love that surpasses understanding.

In this season after the Epiphany, may we see God in the world, revealed in the person of Jesus Christ and the power of the Spirit, that we might find what we are truly looking for and be fulfilled. Thanks be to God. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY: Lamb of God (#336)

CREED (p. 104)

Together with all to whom God has been revealed, 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 follow Christ and see what God is doing, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. Each petition will end with, "by your loving mercy, O God," and you all may respond with **hear our prayer**. By your loving mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, we wait patiently for you as you lift us up out of sin and into your justice and grace. Let your love shine through us that all might know of your righteousness and peace through our ministry and proclamation. We especially remember in prayer 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 Hills of Peace Lutheran Church in Kamloops and their pastor Jane Gingrich; and for our Global Mission companion, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Peru and all their bishops, pastors, leaders, and members. By your loving mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, great are the wonders of your creation, there are too many to count, and you entrust us with it all as stewards of all that you have made. May our care for this planet be responsible and pleasing to you, that its incomparable beauty might remain and continue to be our home

for the generations to come. We pray for those living in areas of harsh weather and natural disasters, that they find safety and security. By your loving mercy, O God, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, you do not desire us to painfully sacrifice as your laws of righteousness and grace are written on our hearts. May the world leaders and politicians govern their jurisdictions with such righteousness and grace, that we might one day know true peace with all of our brothers and sisters, and may it be our goal to work together to achieve it. We pray especially for the areas of the world that face political turmoil, violence, and war, that they be protected from the horrors out of their control. 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 they might begin their journey soon. By your loving mercy, O God, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, you fill our hearts with your righteousness and you faithfully deliver us from harm. Be with all among us who are sick, who mourn, or who feel lonely, that we all might always be reminded of your steadfast love. Especially we pray for Bryan; Ron, Tess, and Mineko; Bev and family; Laura; Kandie; Thomas; Cindy; William; Chris; Walter; Larry; Piet; and all those we name aloud or quietly in our hearts at this time...

By your loving mercy, O God, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, you do not withhold your compassion and your steadfast love and truth continually keep us in your kingdom with you and all the saints of all times and places. May the connection we share with those that we've loved and lost always be inspiring to us and our faith, that we may move into the future with confidence in our community. By your loving mercy, O God, **hear our prayer.**

Into your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in the love that you show us through Jesus Christ the Lamb of God. **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 places give thanks and praise to you, O God, through our Saviour Jesus Christ, whom you sent to us to reveal your love for all, that we might join with the choirs of angels, the hosts of heaven, and the 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.

The musical score is written on six staves in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody is simple and hymn-like, with lyrics written below each staff. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

O Lord, you are holy and mighty, and in you we have no fear. Your love for us is beyond understanding and you bring us joy and peace. And in the fullness of time, you send to us your Son Jesus to show us your ways of righteousness and truth, allowing us to see ourselves and others for who you've created us to be.

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 with them 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 his bread and cup that we see our connection to God and each other, fueling our love, heightening our faith, and bringing us into community where we together proclaim and ponder the basis of our belief:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

For it is to our God that all honour and glory belong, blessing us as God's people, blessing this community as a church on mission, and blessing this meal as it feeds and nourishes us to be

God's hands and feet in the world, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with God and the Holy Spirit, now and forever.

Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER (p. 112)

Gathered together to see the glory of God's 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

Come and see God's welcome and love for us all.

Thanks be to God.

COMMUNION

COMMUNION HYMNS: Lamb of God (ACS booklet)

By Your Hand You Feed Your People (#469)

Let Us Break Bread Together (#471)

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, again you have fed and nourished us with your Word and your promises, filling us with your mercy and peace. Continue to strengthen us as we go from here, leaning on your truth and recognizing who we are in this world: your beloved children saved and redeemed by your grace, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

SENDING**BLESSING**

May God's steadfast love and mercy lead you,
God's everlasting justice and peace make your steps secure,
and God's unending blessing be on you and keep you on paths of righteousness and peace, now and forever.

Amen.

SENDING SONG: Lord Jesus, You Shall Be My Song (#808)

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, see how you are enriched by Christ.

Thanks be to God.

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