



**GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH**

**EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA**

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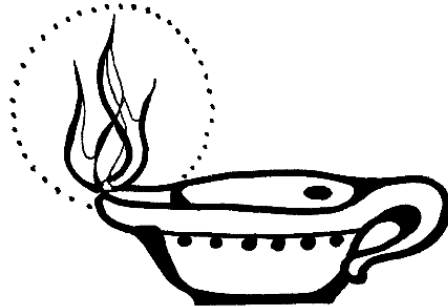
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**Fifth Sunday after Epiphany  
February 5, 2023  
ACS Holy Communion, Setting 12**

Light shines in the darkness for the upright, the psalmist sings. Isaiah declares that when we loose the bonds of injustice and share our bread with the hungry, the light breaks forth like the dawn. In another passage from the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus, the light of the world, calls his followers to let the light of their good works shine before others. Through baptism we are sent into the world to shine with the light of Christ.

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) speaking peoples.

## GATHERING

### CALL TO WORSHIP

We gather together in worship in love and respect for our God, in whose commands we take delight, for God declares us as blessed heirs of the promise of salvation and community in the world. We are invited and welcomed to take part in God's righteousness, and God's light will shine in and through our lives forever, reflecting onto all people with a heart of love and compassion, bringing healing and declaring God's peace to all people. May our hearts be filled in our gathering, that we together grow in ministry and generosity and in God's justice and honour, now and forever. **Amen. Thanks be to God.**

### GATHERING SONG: God, Be the Love to Search and Keep Me



1 God, be the love to search and keep me; God, be the prayer to  
2 Bind to my-self the name of Ho - ly, great cloud of wit - ness -  
3 Bright-ness of sun and glow of moon-light, flash - ing of light - ning,  
4 Walk - ing be-hind to hem my jour - ney, go - ing a - head to  
5 Christ in the eyes of all who see me, Christ in the ears that



move my voice; God, be the strength to now up - hold me:  
es en - fold; proph - ets, a - pos - tles, an - gels wit - ness:  
strength of wind, depth of the sea to soil of plan - et:  
light my way, and from be - neath, a - bove, and all ways:  
hear my voice, Christ in the hearts of all who know me:




O Christ, sur - round me; O Christ, sur - round me.

### GREETING


The enriching grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the empowering love of God, and the fulfilling communion 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

Holy God, you gave us the law to reveal the ways of your righteousness and justice for all. Help us to receive your commandments as your grace, that we might live as your obedient people of faith, through which your light shines through, bestowing on all your goodness and grace, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## WORD

### FIRST READING: Isaiah 58:1-9a

A reading from Isaiah.

*Shortly after the return of Israel from exile in Babylon, the people were troubled by the ineffectiveness of their fasts. God reminds them that outward observance is no substitute for genuine fasting that results in acts of justice, such as feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, and clothing the naked.*

<sup>1</sup>Shout out, do not hold back!

Lift up your voice like a trumpet!

Announce to my people their rebellion,  
to the house of Jacob their sins.

<sup>2</sup>Yet day after day they seek me  
and delight to know my ways,

as if they were a nation that practiced righteousness  
and did not forsake the ordinance of their God;  
they ask of me righteous judgments,  
they delight to draw near to God.

<sup>3</sup>“Why do we fast, but you do not see?

Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?”

Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day,  
and oppress all your workers.

<sup>4</sup>Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight  
and to strike with a wicked fist.

Such fasting as you do today  
will not make your voice heard on high.

<sup>5</sup>Is such the fast that I choose,  
a day to humble oneself?

Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush,  
and to lie in sackcloth and ashes?

Will you call this a fast,  
a day acceptable to the LORD?

<sup>6</sup>Is not this the fast that I choose:  
to loose the bonds of injustice,  
to undo the thongs of the yoke,  
to let the oppressed go free,  
and to break every yoke?

<sup>7</sup>Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,  
and bring the homeless poor into your house;  
when you see the naked, to cover them,  
and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

<sup>8</sup>Then your light shall break forth like the dawn,  
and your healing shall spring up quickly;  
your vindicator shall go before you,  
the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard.  
<sup>9a</sup>Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer;  
you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am.

The word of the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**

**PSALM: Psalm 112:1-9**

<sup>1</sup>Hallelujah! Happy are they who fear the LORD  
and have great delight in God's commandments!  
<sup>2</sup>**Their descendants will be mighty in the land;  
the generation of the upright will be blessed.**  
<sup>3</sup>Wealth and riches will be in their house,  
and their righteousness will last forever.  
<sup>4</sup>**Light shines in the darkness for the upright;  
the righteous are merciful and full of compassion.**  
<sup>5</sup>It is good for them to be generous in lending  
and to manage their affairs with justice.  
<sup>6</sup>**For they will never be shaken;  
the righteous will be kept in everlasting remembrance.**  
<sup>7</sup>They will not be afraid of any evil rumors;  
their heart is steadfast, trusting in the LORD.  
<sup>8</sup>**Their heart is established and will not shrink,  
until they see their desire upon their enemies.**  
<sup>9</sup>They have given freely to the poor, and their righteousness stands fast forever;  
they will hold up their head with honor.

**SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 2:1-12**

A reading from 1 Corinthians.

*Though people such as the Corinthians are enamored with human philosophy and wisdom, Paul continuously presents God's hidden wisdom which is Jesus Christ crucified. True spiritual maturity involves judging ourselves and others in light of God's revelation in the cross.*

<sup>1</sup>When I came to you, brothers and sisters, I did not come proclaiming the mystery of God to you in lofty words or wisdom. <sup>2</sup>For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified. <sup>3</sup>And I came to you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. <sup>4</sup>My speech and my proclamation were not with plausible words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power, <sup>5</sup>so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God.

<sup>6</sup>Yet among the mature we do speak wisdom, though it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to perish. <sup>7</sup>But we speak God's wisdom, secret and hidden, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. <sup>8</sup>None of the rulers of this age understood this; for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. <sup>9</sup>But, as it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard,

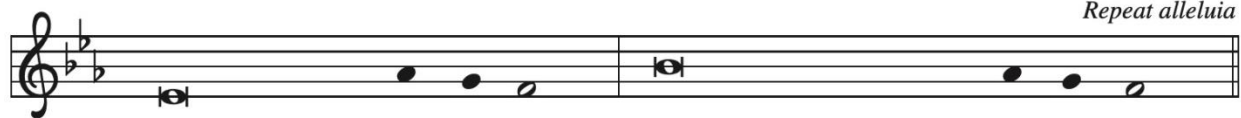
nor the human heart conceived,  
what God has prepared for those who love him” —  
<sup>10</sup>these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. <sup>11</sup>For what human being knows what is truly human except the human spirit that is within? So also no one comprehends what is truly God’s except the Spirit of God. <sup>12</sup>Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that is from God, so that we may understand the gifts bestowed on us by God.

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: Matthew 5:13-20

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

*In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus encourages his followers to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world, doing good works and keeping God’s commandments.*

[Jesus said:] <sup>13</sup>“You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot.

<sup>14</sup>“You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. <sup>15</sup>No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house.

<sup>16</sup>In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

<sup>17</sup>“Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. <sup>18</sup>For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. <sup>19</sup>Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. <sup>20</sup>For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.”

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

## SERMON

O Lord, by the power of your Spirit, open our eyes and understanding of your truth. Help us to receive your commandments as grace that our obedience to you and your righteousness be fulfilling and joyful, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

About a week ago I came across this interesting movie on Netflix that you may have heard of or even seen. It's called "Glass Onion: A Knives Out Mystery." Basically, it is a whodunit type movie that stars quite a few big names, with about 4-5 of them coming from various Marvel properties, which is what caught my eye from the beginning. I thought the movie was really interesting not just in its story, but in the structure that the movie takes in telling its story. And no, it's not like that Kaleidoscope choose-your-own-adventure type show I talked about a few weeks ago. From the very first scene of this movie, the main theme is introduced with the playing of Bach's Little Fugue in G Minor, which I'm sure all of you are as familiar with as I was, which was pretty much not at all. And movie's creators figured that no one would know anything about this piece, so they actually explain what it's all about in the movie, with the help of none other than Yo Yo Ma: \*\*vid

Cool, right? So a fugue is a tune that plays over and over and on top of itself at different times and maybe different pitch and stuff like that to create something much larger and more beautiful than the original tune by itself. I found it fascinating that a musical number could do something so simple as play itself over on top of itself as the foundation, and sound like something completely different with much more depth and intricacies than just itself by itself. And the really cool thing is that at first glance, it seems like the introduction of the fugue has nothing to do with the movie (or this sermon for that matter), but as the movie began to peel back the layers of the characters, the stories, and the events as they unfolded, what was revealed was a very complex and structurally and artistically beautiful movie, much like how that little fugue does as the music progresses.

And all this layering and building on itself kind of reminded me of cooking, which, like music, I'm really not good at. But I am able to appreciate how ingredients can work with each other, how these seemingly bland pieces of the puzzle can mix together and create something more beautiful and tasty than each individual thing on their own. And with my limited knowledge of cooking, I always see at the base of all this, the foundation of flavour, the one ingredient that I feel like I personally can't really live without, is salt. I know, heart disease and all that stuff is a worry when we have too much of it throughout our lives, but just the right amount? Oh boy are we ever talking about delish. I know, I might be more of savoury snack guy than most, but I think everyone that can taste anything would instantly recognise the absence of salt.

To me, salt is that main ingredient that ties all the other ingredients together. Salt is the foundation that is built upon in such a way that makes that dish delicious. Salt, like the original tune of the fugue, is seemingly insignificant until it is mixed with everything else and is recreated and revealed as complex and beautiful.

And salt is what Jesus says that we are, of the world, in the world, and for the world.

Upon hearing this, being regarded as this important and even imperative ingredient, most of us might be like, "us? Salt? Nah we're too insignificant, too powerless, too miniscule in the great grand scheme of things to really be considered as important as salt of the earth." And I totally get that. I often feel the same way. I look at myself, an outsider in so many respects, a

Canadian born of Chinese descent who doesn't really belong in either culture, a horse with no name. And I can't see how I could be able to make a difference anywhere or for anyone.

But this is the beauty of Jesus' analogy of our identity. Salt in itself doesn't seem significant. It doesn't sound at all special or meaningful. Just looking at a grain of salt and it doesn't look like it would or could amount to much... by itself. And the salt cannot be anything but salt, it cannot change its properties or physical make up or even its function. So I wonder if salt would think highly of itself. I wonder if salt could walk around its counterparts on the spice rack and think that it's all that. I wonder if salt would hold its head high and see itself as the foundation of all that is flavourful and tasty.

I know, that sounds kind of ridiculous. But the point is that it isn't up to our self-perception to determine who we actually are. It isn't up to our self-esteem to solidify our place in the world. It isn't up to our attitudes, our beliefs, our *self-righteousness* to decide our identity as God's people, beloved and forgiven, redeemed and saved, invited and welcomed *salt* of the earth. Salt that cannot lose its saltiness, cannot change its position in the bigger picture of life, cannot be anything but what it is destined to be: salt.

This declaration comes during Jesus' Sermon on the Mount right after the passage we got last week, the Beatitudes. And just like that portion, the tone that Jesus takes here is indicative. He is telling it as it is. He isn't giving a condition, a command, or a requirement. But he is saying *you are the salt of the earth*. You are the foundation upon which something beautiful is built. You are an imperative ingredient that ties things together. You will fit together with others that perhaps are seemingly as insignificant as you might feel yourself to be, adding to the complex layers and facets of fullness and meaning in our collective community and story of life.

Still, it sounds kind of wild that little ol' us could be that significant. But this is the gift and grace of God. This is what we are called and empowered to be in the world. This is who we are as God's people, brought together in community, working together to proclaim and live the good news, recreated together to be the body of Christ in the world.

This is the righteousness that Jesus talks about that is to exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees. Just saying those kinds of words in that climate would have been super daunting and overwhelming. But this righteousness isn't one of discipline, good works, and pious obedience as we might think. Rather, this is God's righteousness of grace, forgiveness, and welcome into God's kingdom for all people. It is a recognition of who we are and whose we are. It is the knowledge and acknowledgement of God's work of redemption and salvation in the world. It is the acceptance of God's love for us all, bringing us together, full of value and worth, and given the identity of the blessed salt of the world, vessels of God's light beaming into the darkness, revealing to all the fullness and wisdom of God's justice, peace, and love. Not necessarily through our accomplishments or skills and talents, but by our very being God's people, not perfect but forgiven, not alone but welcomed, not insignificant but made to be integral parts of this great mosaic of history.

See, by ourselves maybe we might not seem like much, but together... *together* is when we shine, how we make a difference, where we are truly something beautiful, layered throughout the world, built on each other and building each other up, adding meaning, flavour, and God's righteousness in community, relationship, and throughout all of the life that truly is life... that is



a life full of joy, peace, and hope, living with God and each other in the love and communion of the Holy Spirit.

In this season after the Epiphany, may we see the significance in ourselves and in each other, that we might accept and believe the declaration of who we are as the salt of the earth, shining the light of God's righteousness in all the world. Thanks be to God. Amen.

**HYMN OF THE DAY:** Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service (#712)

**CREED** (p. 104)

With all those declared as the salt of the earth, 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 make a difference in the community of Christ, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. Each petition will end with "by your righteous mercy, O God," and you all may respond with **hear our prayer**. By your righteous mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, we take delight in your commandments and the righteousness that they point to, bringing us meaning and purpose in our ministry and communities. May our work for the good of the world be a pleasing aroma to you and leave a lasting impression on the generations to come. We remember in prayer all faith and worshipping communities that are near to us both physically and spiritually; for our partner Anglican Church of Canada, their bishops, pastors, and leaders; for our own bishops: Kathy, Larry, Sid, Jason, Michael, and Susan, as well as all the assistants to the bishops across our church; and for our companion congregations of the BC Synod and entire ELCIC. In particular we pray for St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Maple Ridge and their pastor Roland Ziprick; and for Matsqui Lutheran Church in Matsqui and their interim pastor Art McCaughan. By your righteous mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, you have created these lands and have entrusted them to our ancestors, to us, and to our descendants, and you have blessed us with its wonder and beauty. May our care for this planet be faithful that it may serve as our home forever. We pray for those living in areas of harsh weather and that are prone to natural disasters, that all might be safe and respectful of the power of all that you have made. By your righteous mercy, O God, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, your light shines throughout the darkness of the world, bringing your compassion and justice. Give all world leaders and politicians a sense of your peace that they might lead and govern with wisdom and grace. We pray especially for the parts of the world that face war, violence, and political turmoil, that their inhabitants find safety in the midst of strife. We also pray for those that we've sponsored to come to our country: Solyana Amanuel; and Maekele Kiflu, Selam Haile, and their children; that their journey might be able to begin soon. By your righteous mercy, O God, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, our strength is in you and by your love we shall never be shaken. Be with all among us who are sick, who mourn, or who feel lonely, that we all continue to lean on your providence and love. Especially we pray for Ron, Tess, and Mineko; Bryan and Chona; Bev and family; Suhkwant; Winn; John; 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 righteous mercy, O God, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, you keep all the saints that we've loved and lost in our everlasting remembrance, and the inspiration of their lived righteousness will stand forever. Continue strengthening us in our lives of faith, that on that day when we join the ranks of the saints, we might be equally inspiring to those that will come after us, as we are always joined together by your love in your kingdom. By your righteous mercy, O God, **hear our prayer.**

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in the calling to be your people in the world, empowered by 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 places give thanks and praise to you, O God, through our Saviour Jesus Christ, who reminds us of who we are by your

grace and love, reminding us of our connection with all the choirs of angels, the hosts of heaven, and the whole church on earth, together 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, all good things come from you and you have given us all we need for life and for love. You call us as your people in the world, giving us meaning and purpose as you lead and guide us with the wisdom and teachings of Jesus. For he is your messenger of hope and peace and in him we see the full breadth and width of your grace.

Because on the night that he was betrayed, your messenger Jesus sat with his friends for their last meal together, where he took some bread and with nothing but thanksgiving in his heart, 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, Jesus took the common cup that they shared, gave thanks for it and gave 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 are reminded of how we are connected, living together in community, and called to be God's hands and feet in the world, even as we ponder this mystery of faith:

**Christ has died.**

**Christ is risen.**

**Christ will come again.**

So it is to you, O God, that all honour and glory belong, for you have raised us up out of our sin and brought us together to live with you and all the saints in your kingdom, where our lives are graciously fulfilled with your love and grace, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

**LORD'S PRAYER** (p. 112)

Now as we're joined together by the light of Christ, let us pray as he 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, the righteousness of God given to us all.

**Thanks be to God.**

**COMMUNION**

**COMMUNION HYMNS:** Lamb of God (ACS booklet)

Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us with Your Love (#708)

We Are an Offering (#692)

## 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

God of all blessing and joy, you have again fed and nourished us with your Word and your wisdom, filling us with your compassion and joy. Be with us as we go from here, led by your grace and calling to join in on your righteousness throughout the world, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## SENDING

### BLESSING

May the blessing of God be upon you and keep you,  
the light of God shine on you and be gracious onto you,  
and the righteousness of God look upon you with favour, and give you peace.  
**Amen.**

**SENDING SONG:** Lord of Light (#688)

### DISMISSAL

Go in peace, let your light shine before others.  
**Thanks be to God.**