



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA

7283 Nelson Avenue, Burnaby, BC V5J 4C2

Phone / fax: 604-433-1515

Website: www.graceburnaby.com

Email: office@graceburnaby.com

pastor@graceburnaby.com

Follow us on Twitter! @GraceLutBurnaby



Seventh Sunday of Easter

May 21, 2023

Now the Feast and Celebration

Hymnal Supplement (1991)

In these days between Ascension and Pentecost, we gather with the disciples in the upper room, waiting for the Spirit to transform the church around the world. In today's gospel Jesus prays for his followers and for their mission in his name. Amid religious, social, and economic divisions, we seek the unity that Jesus had with his Father. Made one in baptism, we go forth to live our faith in the world, eager for the unity that God intends for the whole human family.

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 hən̓d̓əmíŋəm̓ (Musqueam) and Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) speaking peoples.

GATHERING

CALL TO WORSHIP

We are gathered in this place to sing praises to God's name, to exalt the one who rides the clouds, and to rejoice before our God as God has allowed us to be merry and joyful in God's holy habitation. The earth quakes at the presence of God, and yet we find our home in God's goodness and providence and love. So we sing praises with the kingdoms of the earth, to the Lord in the heavens, for all the power and majesty shown to us in the strength and grace of Christ, living with God and the Holy Spirit in all the holy places among us all, now and forever. **Amen. Thanks be to God.**

GATHERING HYMN: When Peace like a River (#785)

REETING

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

The unifying grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the welcoming love of God, and the inclusive community of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

NOW THE FEAST (HS p. 4)

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Redeeming God, you call us to be one with you as you are one with Christ, who shows us a perfect love that casts out fear, welcomes us in community, and unites us by your Spirit of peace with you and all the saints, now and always. **Amen.**

WORD

FIRST READING: Acts 1:6-14

A reading from Acts.

Today's reading is part of the introduction to the narrative of the outpouring of the Spirit on Pentecost. These verses tell of the risen Lord's conversation with his disciples on the eve of his ascension, in which he promises that they will receive the power of the Holy Spirit.

⁶When [the apostles] had come together, they asked [Jesus], "Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷He replied, "It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." ⁹When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. ¹¹They said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

¹²Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a sabbath day's journey away. ¹³When they had entered the city, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying, Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of

James. ¹⁴All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 68:1-10, 32-35

¹Let God arise, and let God's enemies be scattered;
let those who hate God flee.

²**As smoke is driven away, so you should drive them away;
as the wax melts before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God.**

³But let the righteous be glad and rejoice before God;
let them also be merry and joyful.

⁴**Sing to God, sing praises to God's name; exalt the one who rides the clouds;
I AM is that name, rejoice before God!**

⁵In your holy habitation, O God,
you are a father to orphans, defender of widows;

⁶**you give the solitary a home and bring forth prisoners into freedom;
but the rebels shall live in desert places.**

⁷O God, when you went forth before your people,
when you marched through the wilderness,

⁸**the earth quaked, and the skies poured down rain, at the presence of God, the God of Sinai,
at the presence of God, the God of Israel.**

⁹You sent a bountiful rain, O God;
you restored your inheritance when it languished.

¹⁰**Your people found their home in it;
in your goodness, O God, you have made provision for the poor.**

³²Sing to God, O kingdoms of the earth;
sing praises to the Lord.

³³**You ride in the heavens, O God, in the ancient heavens;
you send forth your voice, your mighty voice.**

³⁴Ascribe power to God,
whose majesty is over Israel; whose strength is in the skies.

³⁵**How wonderful you are in your holy places, O God of Israel,
giving strength and power to your people! Blessed be God!**

SECOND READING: 1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11

A reading from 1 Peter.

Our faith in Christ does not make us immune from the scorn of others. Nevertheless, we are to resist the designs of evil when we experience disparagement from others because we trust God's grace will strengthen and guide us.

¹²Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³But rejoice insofar as you are sharing Christ's sufferings, so that you may also be glad and shout for joy when his glory is revealed. ¹⁴If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit of glory, which is the Spirit of God, is resting on you.

^{5:6}Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time. ⁷Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you. ⁸Discipline yourselves, keep alert. Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour. ⁹Resist him, steadfast in your faith, for you know that your brothers and sisters in all the world are undergoing the same kinds of suffering. ¹⁰And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, support, strengthen, and establish you. ¹¹To him be the power forever and ever. Amen.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (HS p. 8)

GOSPEL: John 17:1-11

The holy gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

On the night before his crucifixion, Jesus prays to his heavenly Father, asking that those who continue his work in this world will live in unity.

¹After Jesus had spoken these words [to his disciples], he looked up to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, ²since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. ³And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. ⁴I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. ⁵So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed.

⁶"I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. ⁷Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; ⁸for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. ⁹I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. ¹⁰All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. ¹¹And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one."

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

Spirit of glory and joy, may we be blessed with a word of life this day, that we be restored, feel your support, and be strengthened by your unifying love that welcomes us all, through Jesus our Lord. Amen.

When I was in my late teens/early 20s, I used to visit different churches and youth groups, and I remember this one church that was really popular among those in my friend group at the time. This church had a very active campus ministry and they were always trying new and different and innovative ways of being welcoming and open to new people. But even after all their

efforts, I never felt like I was really part of this church no matter how many times I'd show my face, I just always felt like I was on the outside. Granted, I wasn't your typical youth group hopper back then, as while a lot of these kids were actively searching for the meaning of life, I was mostly there hoping to meet girls.

Anyway, this one day that we were visiting, which was probably my 10th or 20th time there, one of the regulars came up to me and introduced himself. After telling him that we've met like half a dozen times already, he said something to me that I'll never forget. He said, "oh, ok, well the Jesus in me greets the Jesus in you."

The Jesus in him greets the Jesus in me? What, are these two different Jesuses high fiving behind our backs or something?

When I heard it, I was thinking what in the culty cult crazy cult did I find myself in? I didn't even care if there were girls there I honestly just wanted to get the heck out and go home. To me, at the time, it sounded like they were equating themselves with Jesus, and in the same breath, equating me to him too. And I wasn't very comfortable with that.

The Jesus in me greets the Jesus in you. What is that even supposed to mean? How is that supposed to make someone like me, who felt displaced pretty much his whole life, feel like he belongs? How is that supposed to make someone like me, an outsider by ethnicity, a minority by physiology, and a supposed newcomer into their church feel welcome? How is that supposed to help someone who is possibly looking for the meaning of life to feel loved?

And hit me, mind you it was after a few years of not forgetting this incident and a couple theology degrees later, but I kind of understand now what they mean. I sure as heck wouldn't use the words they used or say it in the way they said it, but I get what they were trying to do.

They were trying to be welcoming by pointing out the similarities that we share, by highlighting our common ground, by recognising how we are all God's people joined through the grace of Christ by the power of the Spirit. And maybe now that just seems obvious, but it was such a weird way of doing it that I just didn't get it at the time.

See in those days, while I still considered myself Lutheran, I was pretty by the book. Not saying that Lutherans don't care about the book, but I do think Lutheran theology allows for the grace to have different expressions and slightly different understandings. But for me, my eyes were fixed on what I thought was right and what is wrong. My mind was set on what I believed was the proper way of doing things. My life was based on this narrow-minded faith that told me exactly how the world... and God... works.

Maybe you know what I mean. Maybe you've felt like this at some point in your life. Maybe you feel like this now. But I think it's this kind of attitude that Jesus was facing during his physical ministry here on Earth, even up to the point of the Ascension.

I know, today is the 7th Sunday of Easter, not the Ascension. But our tradition states that the Ascension is observed on the Thursday before the 7th Sunday of Easter, and let's be honest, who is coming to church on a Thursday? So today, on the Sunday after the Ascension, we get part of that Ascension text. A text that starts with the disciples asking Jesus, "Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?"

Ugh, face palm.

Like, were you guys not paying attention for the last 3 years? After all this time you're still thinking that Israel is the place, the only place, to be? You spent the last chunk of your lives with Jesus, the Son of God, and you still don't get what this way of life is all about?

But without really giving an actual coherent response, Jesus is raised up toward heaven and disappears.

And I can just see the dumbfounded look on the disciples' faces as they watched Jesus leave, and once he was out of sight they'd be like, "uh so is that a yes?" And what I like about this story out of Acts is that the two men in white robes, who we'd imagine would have been angels, weren't doing the angel thing and floating above their heads with their little wings and riding on little clouds. But they were standing there with the disciples, among them. And what they say to them kind of snaps them back to reality.

"What are you looking at?"

I mean, the answer is obvious they just saw a physical human just supermaning himself in the sky up up and away, so of course they'd be looking at that. But I think the question from these men in white sheds some insight on Jesus' whole ministry. They ask (as translated in this version into English): "Why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

As in, why are you looking up? What are you hoping to see? Don't you know that Jesus had already promised you an Advocate that will be among you and abide with you forever? See the whole "he'll be back in the same way you saw him go" thing to me doesn't mean that Jesus will come back swooping down from the sky, but that he, like that Advocate, will be with us, among us, and in our midst. See, those men in white were telling the disciples to quit looking up for Jesus, because they can see Jesus all around them, in the remnants of his teaching, in the effects of his ministry, in the results of his saving love.

So then this is the Jesus in us that greets the Jesus in us. I mean, not in such a goofy sounding way, but it's Jesus residing in our hearts, occupying our minds, and guiding our faith that joins us together. It's Jesus filling our lives with love that shows us true community in his name. It's Jesus, who prays this Priestly Prayer that we get in today's gospel lesson, that brings us together to be his body in the world.

"God, glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you" Jesus prays. "Glorify" here means "to make known". So Jesus is asking God to make him known to the people, so that he in turn can make God known through his teachings, actions, and very life. And then Jesus prays for us, that we, God's people, can make both of them known, to glorify them. And Jesus goes on about what his is God's and what is God's is his, but he ends off today with "protect them in your name that you have given me, that they may be one, as we are one."

This is beautiful. Jesus, who had every right to despise people for being so oblivious to his teachings and example, reveals to his disciples and us just how much he cares for us and wants us to know grace and forgiveness. Jesus, who welcomed the sinner and the outcast, invites us

all in to be part of God's kingdom and community. Jesus, who suffered under the hands of those he came to save, prays for us to be one as he and God are one.

That we may be one as they are one.

May we be one in God's name. May we be one by the power of the Spirit. May we be one by the love and grace of Christ in each of us and in all the world.

So as we approach the end of this Easter season, may we remember the lessons taught and the community and relationships that were built, that we might see the value and worth in each of us, given to us by God through Christ by the power of the Spirit, that we may be one as they are one. Thanks be to God. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY: Give Me Jesus (#770)

CREED (HS p. 11)

United together by the love of Christ, 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 united in community, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. Each petition will end with, "Lord, in your unifying mercy," and you are all invited to respond with **hear our prayer**. Lord, in your unifying mercy, **hear our prayer**.

O God, you rise up in our community and the world, and we joyfully rejoice before your holy name. You are the reason we worship, have relationship, and serve and you strengthen us in our ministry. We lift up in prayer other worshipping communities and churches; our partner Anglican Church of Canada and all their bishops, pastors, and congregations; and our church the ELCIC, our bishops Kathy, Larry, Sid, Jason, Michael, and Susan, and all our pastors and congregations across the Synods. In particular, we pray for out of our own BC Synod Grace Lutheran Church in Dawson Creek and their partner congregation South Peace United Church,

and their United pastor Marilyn Carroll; and for Deo Lutheran Church in Salmon Arm and their pastor Erik Bjorgan. Lord, in your unifying mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O God, out of your holy habitation you have created a wondrous world for us to live in and call home, where we can see your power and might and providence. Increase our stewardship of all that you've entrusted to us, and may our respect for nature inspire our decisions and actions. We pray for those living in areas that are prone to natural disasters and harsh weather, that all might find safety and security and live in harmony with all that you have made. Lord, in your unifying mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O God, you are good and you provide for your people wisdom and justice. May the leaders of the world, the governments, and politicians lead and serve their constituencies with this wisdom and justice, that we all might one day live in peace. We remember in prayer all the areas of the world that face war, violence, and political turmoil, and we pray especially for those that we've sponsored to come into our country: Solyana Amanuel; and Maekele Kiflu, Selam Haile, and their children. Lord, in your unifying mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O God, your mighty voice rings through the heavens and earth, and it brings power to the powerless, strength to the weak, and healing to all who need it. We pray for those among us who call out to you for that healing, that your hand of love be apparent and felt by all. Especially we remember Bryan and Chona; Ron, Tess, and Mineko; Bev and family; Sukhwant; John; Laura; Kandie; Thomas; Chris; William; Walter; Larry; Piet; and all those we name aloud or quietly in our hearts at this time...
Lord, in your unifying mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O God, you are wonderful in your holy places and you welcome us all to live with you and all the saints for all eternity. May the lives of faith from the past always inspire us in our own lives of faith and move us to love, serve, and live in community always. Lord, in your unifying mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in the connection to you and each other, shown to us 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, to at all times and places give thanks and praise to you, O God, through our Saviour Jesus Christ, who joins us together in your name and sets an

example of community and grace, moving us to join with the choirs of angels, the hosts of heaven, and the church on earth to praise your name with this unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (HS p. 15)

GREAT THANKSGIVING

O Lord, you are holy and mighty, and in you we find love, security, and welcome into your kingdom. You lift us up out of our isolation and show us a community full of your grace, where we can serve and have relationship with all your people. And in the fullness of time you send to us your Son Jesus, to show us the fullness of your mercy that brings us together as your people in the world.

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 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."

For it is in this bread and cup that we see our connection you, O God, and to each other by your grace, moving us to deepen our faith that is based on this truth:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

So it is to you, O God, that all honour and glory belong for all that you have done and continue to do for our sake, showing us our value and worth by your grace, and forgiving us even in our sin, through Jesus Christ our risen Saviour and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER (HS p. 18)

Gathered into community and love by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.

**Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.**

**Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Taste and see God joining us together in love and grace.

Thanks be to God.

COMMUNION

COMMUNION HYMNS: Lamb of God (HS p. 18)

Lord of All Hopefulness (#765)

In My Life, Lord, Be Glorified (#744)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

God of all wonders and blessing, we give you thanks for again feeding us and nourishing us with your love and truth, and showing us the purpose of our faith. Strengthen us as we go out into the world, that we all might reflect your nature and grace to all whom we meet, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

SENDING

BLESSING

Now may the abundance of God bless you, the strength of Christ keep you, and the Spirit of all grace and community shine upon you forever.

Amen.

SENDING SONG: What a Friend We Have in Jesus (#742)

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, remain steadfast in the love and community of Christ.

Thanks be to God.