



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA

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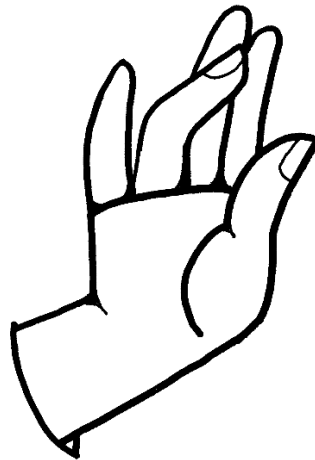
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Second Sunday after Pentecost

June 11, 2023

ELW Holy Communion, Setting Ten

Though Jesus was a devout Jew who practiced his faith, he was criticized for eating with tax collectors and sinners—the religiously nonobservant. Jesus criticizes the self-righteous and reminds us that mercy is to be at the heart of our religious practices. God continues to be made known in those on the margins of society, like Matthew the tax collector and the hemorrhaging woman. As we gather each Lord's day we receive the healing that makes us well and sends us forth to be signs of God's mercy for the world.

A warm welcome to those who are here worshipping in-person and on-line with us today! Here at Grace Lutheran we believe God is active in your life. Even you being here now is testament of God's calling and leading in your heart, which you have faithfully heeded. So we welcome you, and pray that today you will be nurtured and that the gifts that God has graciously given you will be stirred for the sake of God's mission in the world.

Grace Lutheran worships, prays, and serves on the traditional and unceded lands and territories of the hən̓q̓əmiñəm̓ (Musqueam) and Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) speaking peoples.

GATHERING

CALL TO WORSHIP

We gather in the name of our God, who speaks to us words mercy and grace and provides for all our needs. And so we lift our voices in thanksgiving and make good our vows to the Most High, for we are heard in our hardship and are delivered from trouble. Let us honour the Lord with our worship. **Amen. Thanks be to God.**

GATHERING HYMN: There's a Wideness in God's Mercy (#588)

GREETING

The healing grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the fulfilling love of God, and the supportive fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

CANTICLE OF PRAISE (p. 204)

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Holy God, creator of the universe, author of faith itself, you are just and pure, and you infuse us as your people with a trust to see the healing you give, the leading and calling from the Spirit, and the life given to us through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

WORD

FIRST READING: Hosea 5:15-6:6

A reading from Hosea.

Because the people have trusted in military powers and not God, God decides to withdraw from the scene until Israel acknowledges its guilt and seeks God's face. The response of the people does not acknowledge this guilt and is as fickle as fog or dew burned away quickly by the sun. God desires loyalty rather than words or meaningless deeds.

¹⁵I will return again to my place
until they acknowledge their guilt and seek my face.

In their distress they will beg my favor:

^{6:1}"Come, let us return to the LORD;
for it is he who has torn, and he will heal us;
he has struck down, and he will bind us up.

²After two days he will revive us;
on the third day he will raise us up,
that we may live before him.

³Let us know, let us press on to know the LORD;
his appearing is as sure as the dawn;
he will come to us like the showers,
like the spring rains that water the earth."

⁴What shall I do with you, O Ephraim?
What shall I do with you, O Judah?

Your love is like a morning cloud,
like the dew that goes away early.

⁵Therefore I have hewn them by the prophets,

I have killed them by the words of my mouth,
and my judgment goes forth as the light.

⁶For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice,
the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 50:7-15

⁷“Listen, my people, and I will speak: Israel, I will bear witness against you;
for I am God, your God.

⁸**I do not accuse you because of your sacrifices;
your burnt offerings are always before me.**

⁹I will not accept a calf from your stalls,
nor goats from your pens;

¹⁰**for all the wild animals of the forest are mine,
the cattle on a thousand hills.**

¹¹I know every bird of the mountains,
and the creatures of the fields are mine.

¹²**If I were hungry, I would not tell you,
for the whole world is mine and all that is in it.**

¹³Do you think I eat the flesh of bulls,
or drink the blood of goats?

¹⁴**Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving
and make good your vows to the Most High.**

¹⁵Call upon me in the day of trouble;
I will deliver you, and you shall honor me.

SECOND READING: Romans 4:13-25

A reading from Romans.

Paul presents Abraham as a living model of right relationships. For Abraham and for us, a right relationship with God involves trusting that God’s promises will be fulfilled because God makes the dead alive and calls into existence what otherwise does not exist.

¹³The promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. ¹⁴If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. ¹⁵For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation.

¹⁶For this reason it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (for he is the father of all of us, ¹⁷as it is written, “I have made you the father of many nations”)—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. ¹⁸Hoping against hope, he believed that he would become “the father of many nations,” according to what was said, “So numerous shall your descendants be.” ¹⁹He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was already as good as dead (for he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah’s womb. ²⁰No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, ²¹being fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. ²²Therefore his faith “was reckoned to him as

righteousness.”²³ Now the words, “it was reckoned to him,” were written not for his sake alone,²⁴ but for ours also. It will be reckoned to us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead,²⁵ who was handed over to death for our trespasses and was raised for our justification.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (p. 205)

GOSPEL: Matthew 9:9-13, 18-26

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus demonstrates God’s mercy and power, accepting the unacceptable and curing the incurable. Even the dead receive new life.

⁹As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth; and he said to him, “Follow me.” And he got up and followed him.

¹⁰And as he sat at dinner in the house, many tax collectors and sinners came and were sitting with him and his disciples. ¹¹When the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?” ¹²But when he heard this, he said, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. ¹³Go and learn what this means, ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’ For I have come to call not the righteous but sinners.”

¹⁸While he was saying these things to them, suddenly a leader of the synagogue came in and knelt before him, saying, “My daughter has just died; but come and lay your hand on her, and she will live.” ¹⁹And Jesus got up and followed him, with his disciples. ²⁰Then suddenly a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years came up behind him and touched the fringe of his cloak, ²¹for she said to herself, “If I only touch his cloak, I will be made well.”

²²Jesus turned, and seeing her he said, “Take heart, daughter; your faith has made you well.” And instantly the woman was made well. ²³When Jesus came to the leader’s house and saw the flute players and the crowd making a commotion, ²⁴he said, “Go away; for the girl is not dead but sleeping.” And they laughed at him. ²⁵But when the crowd had been put outside, he went in and took her by the hand, and the girl got up. ²⁶And the report of this spread throughout that district.

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

May your Word enter into our hearts, O God, and fill us with the hope in your promises of life, healing, and faith, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

So, I’ll admit that I haven’t seen my doctor in a looong time. Of course the pandemic didn’t help at all, as with many doctors, mine would only see certain patients and did most of the stuff over the phone. But from even before pandemic, I still didn’t see him very often. Basically something would have to be very wrong or I needed a very specific note for something (like skipping an exam) for me to see my doctor at any time in my life.

And really, things have been fine for me, health-wise. Like, I haven't died yet so I guess I'm doing pretty good? But thankfully I don't have any major problems going on (that I know of, at least). Sure, I have your regular ache and pain here and there, and a bit of eczema that I've mentioned before, oh and I have this issue with swallowing sometimes when I eat too fast, but hey, all in all I'm still pretty robust and virile even at my aging age.

So I guess I've gotten into the habit of just not seeing my doctor. Anything that happens to me, I usually get over in a matter of hours, or a day or two at the most. I've never broken a bone, needed stitches, or needed to be hospitalized for any reason whatsoever. I'm not bragging at all (well maybe a little), but I'm just saying that I've been pretty lucky in terms of injuries or serious ailments.

I suppose this is a good and a bad thing. Good because I never had to feel that pain that these kinds of injuries and ailments bring, but bad because... well, I feel like I don't ever need a doctor. I'm too strong for one. It's like I have a mutant superpower of being healthier and healing faster than your average non-mutant superpowered person. Ok, now I'm totally bragging. But now, when something happens and someone suggests that I should see a doctor, I'm just like "nah, I'm good" because I just can't be bothered. I'm healthy enough to know that I just don't need a doctor.

And this isn't just me either, I know a lot of people that don't see their doctor for pretty much this same reason. They're probably not as healthy as I am or share my same superpower, but they still share this same mentality. And it isn't just with medical doctors either, I mean how many of us would go seek professional help for our mental health? Or seek a nutritionist for our dietary needs? Or even consult a local for directions somewhere?

It seems like many folk, especially those that could be a bit higher on the testosterone scale, just don't like to ask for or even admit that they need help. We don't like to have to rely on others. We don't want to seem... I don't know... weaker than the rest.

And so we front. We pretend. We put on a mask of strength and confidence and push on like all we ever need is ourselves. We see this all around us, throughout much of history, and certainly in Jesus' time, when people were still segregated very starkly, between classes, level of education, and especially among Jewish circles, ritualistic cleanliness.

At least, that's how it was with those Pharisees, lifting themselves up, patting themselves on the back, and looking down on anyone who couldn't live up to their standard of perfect discipline and understanding. Which, quite frankly, was everyone, including themselves. Not that they would ever admit that though, of course. The goal was pretty straight forward, be righteous and honouring to God and follow very commandment down to the last letter. And the Pharisees appeared to be able to do this quite well.

"Appeared to" being the operative phrase.

And so when they saw Jesus calling Matthew, that tax collecting traitor, and then sitting and eating with what they'd consider as sinners, they would have been baffled that a man professing to have the same status as they do as a religious official, the same education as them as a Rabbi, and their same goal of ritual cleanliness, would throw away his righteousness in such an easily avoidable way like that. It wouldn't make sense. It would have been mind

boggling. It would be so unheard of that there would be no way that they could just stand idly by and watch but instead they would question, doubt, and deny having any affiliation with this man whatsoever. The last thing they would have taken it for would be a learning opportunity.

Jesus responds, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick." Well, yeah, obviously. We just were talking about how I have no need of a doctor because I'm like in tip top shape. The Pharisees probably understood this in terms of their spiritual discipline and religious knowledge. They don't need to be taught anything by this dude who eats with sinners.

But that idea doesn't stop Jesus at all. He's like, "Go and learn what this means" and he ends off with, "For I have come to call not the righteous but sinners."

Here we'd think that the Pharisees should have been shut up, because they can see that they're not part of this flock that Jesus is here for. They're not the ones that Jesus has come for to help and to call into community. They're not the sinners, but they're the righteous that he's talking about.

Then the story takes this weird disjointed turn where Jesus goes and heals a girl and a hemorrhaging woman that we know better from Mark's gospel.

But this is an interesting way of describing the story on this 2nd Sunday after Pentecost. We have the calling of the disciple Matthew who doesn't openly renounce his profession as a tax collector, so it's possible that he still does that as a side hustle. We have the Pharisees being schooled about health and illness. Then we have two people healed from their ailments immediately after.

Healed... not because of anything Jesus really did. But healed through the trust, reliance, and faith in who Jesus is. Pair that with Matthew just following Jesus also out of faith, and we get a better idea of what Jesus is all about.

And what he's about isn't around rules, rituals, and disciplines. You know... sacrifice. Rather we see him teaching about compassion, community, and care for our neighbours regardless of where they land on the social hierarchy. You know... mercy. That is what he literally is recorded saying. "I desire mercy, not sacrifice."

And this is Jesus' M.O. This is Jesus' whole ministry. This is what Jesus calls us to. All of us. The sinners, the righteous, the sick, the healthy, even the tax collector and the Pharisees.

See, while I might not go to the doctor as much as I should, that isn't a reflection on my overall health and strength. It isn't indicative of what doctors offer and how they can help. It isn't a problem with them. It's a problem with me.

And that's the same thing with the Pharisees. They can't see past their assumptions around their own health and strength. And with us, we can't always see our need for God's grace and the community of Christ. But that isn't indicative of God's presence, Christ's love, or the Spirit's drawing us together, but it is us not always seeing just how forgiven, how saved, how healed we are.

The little girl was declared sleeping before Jesus even saw her. The woman was healed before it was made known that she was there. Matthew was called before he made any decisions to follow or not. And so we are healed from our sin before we ask for it, called to serve before we commit to it, and saved by grace before we even knew we needed it. Saved solely by God's expansive and steadfast love and grace, spreading through community and relationship, joining us all together as the one inclusive body of Christ.

Often we are too worried about what others are doing. We are too concerned with how welcoming or not they are or how far we think they've drifted from their faith. We are too concerned with who they vote for, what ideals they hold, and even what washroom they feel comfortable using. The thing is we aren't called to bring those that we disagree with to light, but we are called to treat each other with understanding that they are just as fallen and in need of forgiveness as we are. We are called to see each other as siblings in Christ, anointed as God's children, and brought into God's kingdom just as we are. We are called to treat each other with mercy, in that we needn't point our fingers in detest and anger, but accept others in love and see how they are in their own right and in ways that they might not even recognise or want to admit, are in desperate need of a saviour, just as we are.

And thanks be to God, we all get one. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY: I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say (#611)

CREED (p. 104)

Together with the whole church called by God, 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 into healing and life together, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. Each petition will end with "by your inspiring mercy, O Lord," and you are all invited to respond with **hear our prayer**. By your inspiring mercy, O Lord, **hear our prayer**.

O God, you speak to us and we listen and bear witness to your majesty and love. Strengthen us in our faith, that our lives might reflect all that you do and all that you are. We lift up in prayer our neighbouring faith communities; our partner Anglican Church of Canada; our own national church of the ELCIC, all our bishops, pastors, and members; and especially for our companion congregations of the BC Synod. In particular, we pray for Chetwynd Shared Ministry in Chetwynd and the pastors and leaders that serve there; and for Christ Lutheran Church in Chilliwack and their pastor Dean Andersen. By your inspiring mercy, O Lord, **hear our prayer.**

O God, you have crafted every wild animal of the forest and sea, every bird of the mountains, and every creature of the fields, and you have entrusted them to us to care for and watch over. May our stewardship of your creation be pleasing to you, that it may continue to serve as our home for the generations to come. We remember in prayer all those who live in areas prone to harsh weather and natural disasters, that all might find safety from the elements. By your inspiring mercy, O Lord, **hear our prayer.**

O God, the whole world is yours and all that is in it, and we do what we can to live peaceably with one another. Be with all world leaders, politicians, and people of influence that the nations might learn from your wisdom and find a way to live together free from oppression, war, and violence. We also pray for those that we've sponsored to come into our country: Solyana Amanuel; Maekele Kiflu, Selam Haile, and their children; and Filimon Abraha. By your inspiring mercy, O Lord, **hear our prayer.**

O God, we offer to you our thanksgiving for being with us through the ups and downs of life, and helping us in our times of trouble. Make your love especially known to those among us who are sick, who mourn, or who feel lonely, and may we all find support in the community that you bless us with. Especially we pray for Bryan and Chona; Bev and family; Ron, Tess, and Mineko; Beulah; Sukhwant; John; Laura; Kandie; Thomas; Chris; William; Larry; Walter; Piet; Maureen; and all those we name aloud or quietly in our hearts at this time...
By your inspiring mercy, O Lord, **hear our prayer.**

O God, we honour you for delivering us out of sin and shame, and calling us into your welcome and grace with you and all the saints. May we live our lives in a way that is pleasing to you, that while your love for us will not change, we might be able to more accurately reflect your love onto all the world. By your inspiring mercy, O Lord, **hear our prayer.**

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in the faith that you give us to follow you, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

PEACE (p. 106)

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 calls us into your fold and empowers us to serve, and joins us with the choirs of angels, the hosts of heaven, and the whole church on earth in praising your name with this unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (p. 207)

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Lord God Almighty, we give you thanks for creating us, raising us, and strengthening us to be your people in the world. Not to show others how we are better, but to display the depths of your grace and reflect the breadth of your love. And you reveal to us your plan of salvation through Jesus, your Son, whom you sent to us to be one of us and to show us the ways of your eternal and steadfast mercy.

For on the night that he was betrayed, your Son Jesus sat with his friends for a meal, where he took the bread, gave thanks, broke and shared it and said, "Take and eat, this is my body broken for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

And then after they ate, Jesus took the common cup that sat in the middle of the table, gave thanks for it, and gave it to his disciples to drink from saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me."

It is in this bread and cup that we can see and be reminded of your calling to be your people regardless of who we are or where we're from, strengthening our proclamation of this, the basis of our 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 your grace and mercy that never ends, for you invite us and welcome us into your kingdom as your own, through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen**

LORD'S PRAYER (p. 112)

Called to be one by the power of 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 joining us together in love.
Thanks be to God.

COMMUNION

COMMUNION HYMNS: Lamb of God (p. 208)
Healer of Our Every Ill (#612)
There Is a Balm in Gilead (#614)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Holy God, again we thank you, again we praise you, for again you have fed and nourished us with your Word and truth, empowering us to be your people in the world. Be with us as we go from here, that we might lean on your wisdom, mercy, and healing, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

SENDING

BLESSING

May the one who gives life to the dead,
hope to the desperate,
and healing to the brokenhearted,
call you to rest and rejoice in the power of God
our Shepherd, Saviour, and Spirit.
Amen.

SENDING HYMN: O Christ, Your Heart, Compassionate (#722)

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, walk in faith.
Thanks be to God.