



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA

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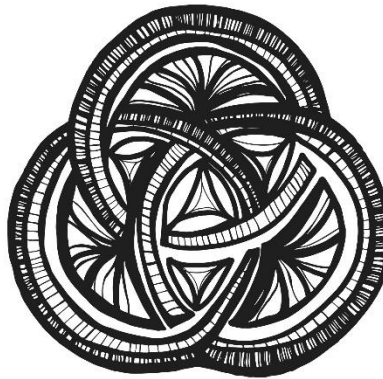
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Holy Trinity Sunday

June 4, 2023

ELW Holy Communion, Setting Ten

Though the word *trinity* is not found in the scriptures, today's second reading includes the apostolic greeting that begins the liturgy: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. In the gospel Jesus sends his disciples forth to baptize in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. More than a doctrine, the Trinity expresses the heart of our faith: we have experienced the God of creation made known in Jesus Christ and with us always through the Holy Spirit. We celebrate the mystery of the Holy Trinity in word and sacrament, as we profess the creed, and as we are sent into the world to bear witness to our faith.

A warm welcome to those who are here worshipping in-person and on-line with us today! Here at Grace Luthera 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 majestic name of the Lord our Lord, to chant God's glory and sing God's praise. For God's love for us, mere mortal humans, is great as we are declared God's own people, given glory and honour, and made to be citizens of God's kingdom. May our time of worship be inspiring to us and pleasing to God, as God's majestic name fills all the earth. **Amen. Thanks be to God.**

GATHERING HYMN: Come, Join the Dance of Trinity (#412)

GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that gathers us, the love of God that joins us, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit that shows us how to live in community be with you all. **And also with you.**

CANTICLE OF PRAISE (p. 204)

PRAYER OF THE DAY

O God our Shepherd, Saviour, and Spirit, you are revealed to us as a mighty, creative, life-generating God that invites us your whole creation to join you in community. Captivate us in your love, and lead us into your world where you reside, that we might together sing to your holy name, live by your holy Word, and commune through your Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

WORD

FIRST READING: Genesis 1:1-2:4a

A reading from Genesis.

At the beginning of time, God the Creator, God the powerful Word, and God the life-giving Spirit form the earth and all its inhabitants. God sees that all this created work is good and then rests on the seventh day.

¹In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, ²the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. ³Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. ⁴And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

⁶And God said, "Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." ⁷So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. ⁸God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

⁹And God said, "Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. ¹⁰God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. ¹¹Then God said, "Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it." And it was so. ¹²The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good. ¹³And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

¹⁴And God said, "Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the

night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, ¹⁵and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth.” And it was so. ¹⁶God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars.

¹⁷God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, ¹⁸to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good.

¹⁹And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

²⁰And God said, “Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky.” ²¹So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was good. ²²God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.” ²³And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

²⁴And God said, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind.” And it was so. ²⁵God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good.

²⁶Then God said, “Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.”

²⁷So God created humankind in his image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.

²⁸God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.” ²⁹God said, “See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. ³⁰And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so. ³¹God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

^{2:1}Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. ²And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. ³So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation.

^{4a}These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 8

¹O LORD our Lord,

how majestic is your name in all the earth!—

²**you whose glory is chanted above the heavens out of the mouths of infants and children;
you have set up a fortress against your enemies, to silence the foe and avenger.**

³When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars you have set in their courses,

⁴**what are mere mortals that you should be mindful of them,
human beings that you should care for them?**

⁵Yet you have made them little less than divine;
with glory and honor you crown them.
⁶**You have made them rule over the works of your hands;
you have put all things under their feet:**
⁷all flocks and cattle,
even the wild beasts of the field,
⁸**the birds of the air, the fish of the sea,
and whatever passes along the paths of the sea.**
⁹O LORD our Lord,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!

SECOND READING: 2 Corinthians 13:11-13

A reading from 2 Corinthians.

Paul closes a challenging letter to the Corinthians with an appeal to Christian fellowship grounded in the triune harmony of Christ's grace, God's love, and the Spirit's partnership.

[Paul writes:] ¹¹Finally, brothers and sisters, farewell. Put things in order, listen to my appeal, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you. ¹²Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the saints greet you.

¹³The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (p. 205)

GOSPEL: Matthew 28:16-20

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

After his resurrection, Jesus summons his remaining disciples and commissions them to baptize and teach all nations in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

¹⁶Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them.

¹⁷When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. ¹⁸And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

O God may your Spirit sing your holy Word of life into our ears, that we may hear who we are and whose we are, granting us a life of gratitude for all that you have done, through Jesus our Lord. Amen.

So I'm going to be real with you, I care about how I look. Like, a lot. I spend a bit too much time trying to figure out my fit for the day, and just my overall presentation. Heck, I was still plucking my white hairs up until a couple months ago when I was finally outnumbered and had to concede. But I held out for as long as I could...

And so when our daughter asked if her brother would grow up to look like me since people say he looks like me now, I admit I was a little proud. I don't know, there was just something about passing these rugged good looks down for another whole generation to enjoy. And really, I'm not the only one, am I? I don't mean I'm not the only one who wants another generation to enjoy my face, but I mean I'm not the only one that is so concerned with how we look, how we are presented, this image that we hold.

I mean, we have a whole economy of aesthetic that drives us. Celebrities hire people whose entire job is just making them look better. Our modern day phones now are designed around how well it can take pictures of ourselves. One of the greatest honours has always been to have our likeness immortalized in a portrait or a statue or something.

If that isn't enough, try talking to any Asian grandparent of a relatively new baby, and ask them who the baby looks more like. It could be the same in any culture, but in my experience among us Asians, it's always some kind of competition to have the baby look more like your side of the family, like it's some controllable accomplishment or something, without any regard to how genes and DNA work.

I know, it might sound really shallow that so many of us care so much about looks and image, but there is actually a science to it all. I remember reading at one point that we are more attracted to and sympathetic toward others that look like us. The article that I read posed a theory that this is the case for parents who care for their young that resemble them and don't feel as much responsibility over those who don't. And perhaps this is part of the reason why interracial relationships are still more the exception than the rule as we are just more attracted to those that look like we do. And at the risk of sounding even more racist, ask any other Asian elder of who'd they'd vote for or go to for their banking needs or just trust in general, and more often than not it won't be the one who is most qualified or experienced but it'd be the one with an Asian face or name, as though they are just inherently better because of that. Again, this might be the case in other cultures as well, but I'm just speaking from my own experience in Asian circles.

So no matter how much we'd want to deny the importance of image and outward appearance, science seems to tell us that it's just ingrained in us and it's hard for us to escape it. It is just how we're wired, how we're programmed, who we are as humans.

Humans... created in the image of God.

What does that even mean? I've heard some different theories ranging from God looking human to Jesus always being human and we're copies of him, but I think the most perhaps far fetched one that I've heard is that God was talking about the three parts of the Godhead, like how God is three in one and one in three, and so are we three parts but one person, with the three parts being mind, body, and spirit.

While I really really don't agree with this and think it's a bit of a stretch, I think it's an interesting angle to go at it, in that it isn't about physical attributes that creates this image, but more just the nature of God. I mean, I think we get so caught up in what God "looks like" physically that it detracts from who God is and what God is about.

But it does bring this question of "what image of God is it that we hold" into a different light, and one that I think is actually proven through scripture and our own history.

And I don't think it's a physical image. It isn't a "likeness in attributes" thing. And I really don't think it's about the Trinity, even though that is what we highlight, recognise, and honour today on Holy Trinity Sunday. If we look at the other texts we have for today, and really much of scripture, we are told a lot about this image of God. We get an image of a father, mother, saviour, messiah, advocate, counsellor, friend, lord, rabbi, master, teacher, and the list goes on.

But through it all, through all the different attributes and descriptions, the different facets and qualities, the different roles and characteristics, this image of God is always centered around three things: love, grace, and community.

See it is this image, this image of love, grace, and community, that I believe we are created in and called to live up to. It is this image that we are charged to take on and display. It is this image that we are led to see in each other to be drawn to and have community with.

Just as a parent is drawn to their own child that might resemble them, just as we might be attracted to others that share similar ethnic or cultural traits or backgrounds with us, just as we might have more compassion and sympathy toward those who are like us, so we are drawn to each other and all of God's people because we are all created in this image of God. This image of love, grace, and community.

Our gospel lesson for today gives us the Great Commission, Jesus' final call and instruction for his disciples before he ascends to heaven. This is often taken as our call to mission into the world as God's church, and is seen many times in different mission statements and congregational constitutions. But what particularly caught my eye this time around in the Great Commission is how Jesus promises his disciples and us that he'll be present with them and us until the end of the age.

We know this promise. We're reminded of it often. But many times in life, at least in my life, it seems really hard to believe this promise or trust that it is true. Because it often feels like Jesus isn't with us, that we have been abandoned, that we are doing this whole life thing alone. But in light of what we've been talking about today with us being created in God's image, I think what Jesus means in the whole commission is that we are to go into the world, not just to make disciples but to recognise by the power of the Spirit, the image of God that we all share, again this image of love, grace, and compassion, and see Jesus in us all.

Remember? The Jesus in me greets the Jesus in you?

Again, not in such a corny way, but we are led to see this image in the world, recognise it as the image of God, and live in community in love and grace with each other as we are drawn to one another as well as to God. For this image is in us, in all of us, the very image of God, and it

allows us to see each other in a whole different light, a whole different compassion, a whole different love.

See while we often focus on the outward appearance, we sometimes forget how similar we actually are. It doesn't matter what level of melanin we have in our skin, or what physical attributes we received or didn't receive when we were born, or even how similar or different we look from each other. What matters is that we are all created in the image of God and so we all share a capacity for love, grace, and community, and we can see, recognise, and acknowledge this image in each other regardless of how different we might be. And so by the power of the Spirit, we might then be led out into the world, learning to love each other and being examples of God's teachings of grace and community, seeing how Christ remains present with us, within us, and as us, until the end of the age.

So on this Holy Trinity Sunday, may we see the image of God in ourselves and in each other, that we might be drawn into community with each other, inspired to treat each other with grace, and empowered to love each other as God had first loved us. Thanks be to God. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY: Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty! (#413)

CREED (p. 104)

Together with all those joined by God's grace, 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

Made to live with God and each other in community, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. Each petition will end with "Lord, in your majestic mercy," and you are all invited to respond with **hear our prayer**. Lord, in your majestic mercy, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, our Lord, your name is indeed majestic in all the earth, and we sing praises to your glory in the heavens. Strengthen us in our ministry and service, that we might live up to your image of grace, love, and peace. We remember in prayer our neighbouring faith communities; our

partner Anglican Church of Canada; and our own ELCIC with its synods, bishops, pastors, and congregations. In particular, we pray for out of our BC Synod: Mount Zion Lutheran Church in Smithers and the pastors and leaders that help there; and for our own Grace Lutheran Church here in Burnaby and our pastor Nathan Fong. Lord, in your majestic mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, our Lord, we are in awe at the works of your fingers in creating the heavens and earth and setting the moon and stars on their courses. May we show our appreciation for all that you've entrusted to us in our care for this planet, that its beauty and wonder be restored and maintained. We also remember in prayer those living in areas prone to harsh weather and natural disasters, that all might find safety from the elements. Lord, in your majestic mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, our Lord, you are mindful of us and care for us as your own children, and you watch over us with justice and peace. Bring to all world leaders, politicians, and people of influence your sense of justice, that they might lead the nations into true peace. We also pray for the areas of the world that face war, violence, and political turmoil, as well as those that we've sponsored to come into our country: Solyana Amanuel; Maেকে Kiflu, Selam Haile, and their children; and Filimon Abraha. Lord, in your majestic mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, our Lord, you have made us your people and you crown us with glory and honour, and in our times of need to hear us cry out to you. Be with those among us who are sick, who mourn, or who feel lonely, that your shining light of love be upon us all. Especially we pray for 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 majestic mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, our Lord, your name is majestic in all the earth and you bring us up to live with you and all the saints in your kingdom. Remind us of the lives of faith of the past, that we might draw inspiration from them as we together move into the future. Lord, in your majestic mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in the faith and community that you lead us to, 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 out into the world to make disciples, and joins us 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 (p. 207)

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

O Lord, we give you thanks and praise for all that you have done: in creating us in your image of love and relationship; in saving us through your holy Word of grace; and in bringing us together as your people in your holy church of all time. In this fullness of your character, we see the great story of life through creation, salvation, and community, brought to light through Jesus Christ whom you sent by your Spirit to be an example of all that is good and true.

For on the night that he was betrayed, 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."

Then after they ate, he took the common cup from the center of the table, gave thanks for it, 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 this bread and cup that we see how we are joined together as one just as God is one, and it draws us deeper in our proclamation of faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

So it is to you, O God, Creator, Christ, and Counsellor, that we give all thanks and praise to for your work in the world, your work in our lives, and your work in this community and church of your people, now and forever. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER (p. 112)

Gathered into one church under God 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's image of love and grace living in and among us.

Thanks be to God.

COMMUNION

COMMUNION HYMNS: Lamb of God (p. 208)

I Come with Joy (#482)

United at the Table (#498)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Holy God, we give you thanks for feeding us with your Word and nourishing us with your truth and joining us together as one as you are one. Be with us as we go from this place, revealing your love to all people, as you are with us until the end of the age. **Amen.**

SENDING

BLESSING

May the Creator who loves us, bless us and keep us,
may the Christ with whom we are joined, shine on us and be gracious onto us,
and may the Counsellor that brings to us all new life, look upon you with favour and give you
peace,

Amen.

SENDING HYMN: Go to the World (ACS #991)

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, sent by the Shepherd, saved by the Saviour, and strengthened by the Spirit.

Thanks be to God.

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