



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

OF SOUTH BURNABY, BC

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA

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Tenth Sunday after Pentecost

August 6, 2023

ELW Holy Communion, Setting Ten

In today's first reading God invites all who are hungry or thirsty to receive food and drink without cost. Jesus feeds the hungry multitude and reveals the abundance of God. At the eucharistic table we remember all who are hungry or poor in our world today. As we share the bread of life, we are sent forth to give ourselves away as bread for the hungry.

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

GATHERING

CALL TO WORSHIP

We gather together in the name of our Lord, who is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. Our Lord is good to all and upholds and lifts us up even when we fall. And so our eyes wait upon the Lord who feeds us and nourishes us, whose hand is open wide and ready to satisfy our needs with righteousness and love, drawing us near in saving grace and redeeming faith. Let our mouths speak the praise of the Lord, and let us bless God's holy name forever and ever. **Amen. Thanks be to God.**

GATHERING HYMN: All Who Hunger, Gather Gladly (#461)

GREETING

The nourishing grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the satisfying love of God, and the enriching communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

CANTICLE OF PRAISE (p. 204)

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Generous God, the whole creation looks to you, and you give us all food in due season. Open your hand to us, and satisfy us with your redeeming and steadfast love and grace, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

WORD

FIRST READING: Isaiah 55:1-5

A reading from Isaiah.

God invites Israel to a great feast at which both food and drink are free. God also promises to make an everlasting covenant with all peoples, with promises that previously had been limited to Israel. As David was a witness to the nations, these nations shall now acknowledge the ways in which God has glorified Israel.

¹Ho, everyone who thirsts,
come to the waters;
and you that have no money,
come, buy and eat!
Come, buy wine and milk
without money and without price.

²Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread,
and your labor for that which does not satisfy?
Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good,
and delight yourselves in rich food.

³Incline your ear, and come to me;
listen, so that you may live.
I will make with you an everlasting covenant,
my steadfast, sure love for David.

⁴See, I made him a witness to the peoples,
a leader and commander for the peoples.

⁵See, you shall call nations that you do not know,

and nations that do not know you shall run to you,
because of the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel,
for he has glorified you.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 145:8-9, 14-21

⁸The LORD is gracious and full of compassion,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

⁹**LORD, you are good to all,
and your compassion is over all your works.**

¹⁴The Lord upholds all those who fall
and lifts up those who are bowed down.

¹⁵**The eyes of all wait upon you, O LORD,
and you give them their food in due season.**

¹⁶You open wide your hand
and satisfy the desire of every living thing.

¹⁷**You are righteous in all your ways
and loving in all your works.**

¹⁸You are near to all who call upon you,
to all who call upon you faithfully.

¹⁹**You fulfill the desire of those who fear you;
you hear their cry and save them.**

²⁰You watch over all those who love you,
but all the wicked you shall destroy.

²¹**My mouth shall speak the praise of the LORD;
let all flesh bless God's holy name forever and ever.**

SECOND READING: Romans 9:1-5

A reading from Romans.

This begins a new section in Paul's letter in which he will deal with the place of Israel in God's saving plan. He opens by highlighting how Israel's heritage and legacy include being God's children, having God's covenants, being given God's law, participating in worship of God, and receiving divine promises.

¹I am speaking the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience confirms it by the Holy Spirit—

²I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. ³For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my own people, my kindred according to the flesh. ⁴They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises; ⁵to them belong the patriarchs, and from them, according to the flesh, comes the Messiah, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (p. 205)

GOSPEL: Matthew 14:13-21

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

After John the Baptist is murdered, Jesus desires a time of solitude. Still, his compassion for others will not allow him to dismiss those who need him, and he is moved to perform one of his greatest miracles.

¹³Now when Jesus heard [about the beheading of John the Baptist], he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. ¹⁴When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. ¹⁵When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves." ¹⁶Jesus said to them, "They need not go away; you give them something to eat." ¹⁷They replied, "We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish." ¹⁸And he said, "Bring them here to me." ¹⁹Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. ²⁰And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. ²¹And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

God, may your providing Spirit feed us with your Word, that we might be filled and nourished by the bread of life, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

"When it rains, it pours." Any of us who have lived in the Vancouver area for pretty much any amount of time knows that this is this (almost too true). We're living in an urbanized rainforest after all, also known as the Lower Rainland. But even though lately the summers have been pretty warm (almost too warm), we continue to spend about half the year here in rainy days. That is just typical Vancouver (almost too Vancouver).

And in those rainy days, it seems like it's more pouring than not. That once that seal of cloud opens up and lets rain through, it really lets rain through. And it'll rain, and rain, and rain, and rain. And when that's done, it might rain some more. Then maybe a quick break for the summer. And then back to the rain. So yeah, the phrase "when it rains, it pours" really holds a lot of water in these here parts. Rain water, that is.

But that saying, although literally true for us, wasn't meant to be literal. "When it rains, it pours" is a metaphorical saying, meant to say that life can be so tough with its problems all coming in bunches. Any of us who have lived life for almost any amount of time knows how true this is. It's like life never lets up. If it's not this thing, then it's that.... and that... and also that other thing. And it seems like the older we get, the more true this all becomes. When it rains, it pours.

Take my past week for example, this is the last week I had before I leave for the Canadian Lutheran and Anglican Youth Gathering, at which I'll be one of the main speakers. I'm not saying this to toot my own horn and talk about the honour of being asked to speak, but I'm saying this to tell you how nervous and stressed out I feel. I mean, some of you know that it's been my dream to speak at one of these Youth Gatherings for a while, but when I started having literal nightmares about it, I just was like, that's not what I meant about it being my dream.

Don't get me wrong, I'm still excited to go and do this, in spite of all the work it took to prepare, the stress around the travelling, and just the fear of being in front of so many people. Don't let this calm and cool demeanor fool you, I get anxious. I think my palms are getting sweaty just thinking about it.

And wouldn't you know it? During this very stressful week I had a bunch of other things that I needed to take care of, some because we'll be out of town for a while, some because we need to get ready to go out of town, some because of completely unrelated things. So I didn't have just the Youth Gathering to worry about and have on my mind, but a laundry list of other things that needed my time, attention, and energy.

When it rains, it pours.

So in a way, I kind of empathize with what Jesus is going through in the gospel lesson that we get for today. He just caught wind that John the baptizer, his cousin and some say his mentor, died a gruesome death at the hands of a corrupt king. I mean, death alone is enough to take the wind out of anyone's sails, but death of a loved one? And an very unjust and easily avoidable death to boot? It totally was raining on Jesus' day in this story.

And so he did what probably any of us would do when in a situation like this, he retreated. He wanted to just get away. He wanted some time to recoup, regroup, and recover and get ready for whatever life will throw at him next. Who wouldn't? This would have been quite a blow. I can't blame anyone, let alone the Messiah, the Saviour of the world, to want a bit of rest after something like this.

But didn't even get that, did he. I mean he made it as far as a boat and maybe spent a bit of time on the water, but he sure hit that shore running. The people learned that he was in the area and they went and followed him, maybe hoping for some of that goodness and grace that they heard that he might be able to give.

I don't know about the rest of you, but I would have been super annoyed if this happened to me. I mean, it never actually would happen to me because I don't have a prophet/baptizer for a cousin that is at risk of being murdered, nor do I have a great following of people who can't wait to hear me talk, nor do I even have a boat for that matter. But if it did, believe me I'd be annoyed. So if there was ever a reason for Jesus to smite people, I feel like this would be it. Or at least up in the top 5.

Of course, he doesn't. He doesn't seem angry or even annoyed. In fact, he doesn't really do anything according to the text, but feel compassion. Compassion for the pouring storms in their lives. Compassion for their brokenness and pain. Compassion for their need for community and connection. Even though it was well within his rights to tell these people to get

lost, he reveals to them that they are valued and welcomed as he heals and cures them and brings them back into wholeness. In his own fatigue and mourning for his cousin, he reminds the people of who they are and whose they are. And even has he had his own needs to be met, he goes and nourishes them with a love that only God can give.

We know the story. The time passes, it gets late, and the disciples urge Jesus to do what he should have done hours ago and tell the people to vamoose. And not for selfish reasons either, the disciples had the people's best interests in mind as they need to go and find food... that's what they said, at least. The disciples knew that a group this size would need a lot, a lot more than they could ever provide, to even get close to meeting their needs.

See Jesus had good reason to tell those people to leave him alone. No one would have blamed him if he did and then went back out on the water for another hour or two. He had the power to turn even the rocks into bread and satisfy his need for nourishment, rest, and peace, but he chose to be with the people instead. He chose to heal. He chose the truth and promise of community and fellowship, and allowed his compassion to fill him and nourish him in order to serve others.

So basically, he lived into his identity. He answered the calling for his life. He found fulfillment and satisfaction not in things that don't last, but rather in being who he is, not denying his gifts, and showing the people the love of God, welcoming them into the community, and feeding them with bread yes, but also with compassion.

It's in this abundance of blessing and compassion that we too, can find shelter from the storms of life. It's where we can find nourishment in the scarcity that often comes with our problems and hardships. It's where we can be reminded of our identity, who we are and whose we are, and have our cups filled with the love and community of God. This isn't to say that we don't need to rest or that we should never think about ourselves, but rather it's to say that even when we ignore the calling in our lives, when we deny our identities, we don't live into the gifts and talents that we've been given to faithfully be God's people in the world, we continue to be abundantly filled with compassion and care and invited and welcomed into community to be fed and nourished, where we can in turn extend hospitality and love.

See, it's true that when it rains it pours in terms of our problems and actual literal rain in Vancouver, but it's also true for the compassion showered down by God's grace, the truth of God's promises, and the mercy found in God's love. It is in this abundance of blessing in which we find rest, healing, and nourishment for our souls.

In this season after Pentecost and for the rest of this summer, may we always be reminded of our identity in God's love, that we can act with compassion and grace as God's people in the world. Thanks be to God. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY: By Your Hand You Feed Your People (#469)

CREED (p. 104)

Together with those nourished by the love of 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 to follow Christ in compassion and love, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. Each petition will end with "Lord, in your abundant mercy," and you are all invited to respond with **hear our prayer**. Lord, in your abundant mercy, **hear our prayer**.

You are gracious and full of compassion, O God, and all of our faith is in you. Continue to lead and guide us with your steadfast love, and may our ministry as a congregation be pleasing to you. We lift up in prayer all those that use our building for worship, work, and play; our neighbouring faith and worshipping communities; our partners Anglican Church of Canada and Moravian Church in Canada; and our ELCIC with all its bishops, pastors, and congregations. Especially this week we pray for St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Maple Ridge and the pastors and leaders that serve there; and for Matsqui Lutheran Church in Matsqui and their interim pastor Art McCaughan. Lord, in your abundant mercy, **hear our prayer**.

You are good to all, O God, and your compassion is over all that you have made. May our stewardship of this planet reflect your goodness and compassion, that all might see the beauty of your face and presence in the world. Lord, in your abundant mercy, **hear our prayer**.

You uphold us all who fall, O God, and you lift up those who are bowed down. Be with all areas of the world that face war, violence, and political turmoil, that your justice and grace be seen and felt by all people. We pray especially for those that we've sponsored to come into our country and away from the oppression and danger they face: Solyana Amanuel; Maekele Kiflu, Selam Haile, and their children; and Filimon Abraha. Lord, in your abundant mercy, **hear our prayer**.

You watch over us, O God, and you bring us into healing and wholeness. Be with all those among us who are sick, who mourn, or who feel lonely, that your love shine in and through us all and our community. Especially we pray for Debbie, Bryan and Chona; Ron, Tess, and Mineko; Beulah; Bev and family; Sukhwant; John; Cari; Laura; Kandie; Thomas; William; Chris; Larry; Walter; Piet; Allen; Matt; Lucas; and all those we name aloud or quietly in our hearts at this time...

Lord, in your abundant mercy, **hear our prayer**.

Our mouths speak the praise of your name, O God, and we bless your holy name forever and ever, in which you invite us to reside with you and the saints forever. May the lives that we've loved and lost inspire us in our lives of faith, that we might set an example for all people until we can serve as an inspiration for those that come after us. Lord, in your abundant mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in the feeding of your steadfast love and compassion, shown to us 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 reveals to all of us the abundance of your grace and the steadfastness of your love, that we might be joined with all the choirs of angels, the hosts of heaven, and the church on earth, to praise your name with this unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (p. 207)

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

God you are mighty and holy, and your steadfast love and grace inspire our compassion and community, drawing us together into recognition and appreciation of all that you have done. And when the time was right, you send to us Jesus, your Son, who continues to feed us with your Word of mercy and justice.

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 after they ate, he took the common cup, gave thanks, and passed it around the table for 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 are fed by the abundant love of God, reminding us of God's steadfast grace and mercy, leading us in confidence to believe in this 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 all that you do for our congregation, community, and church, 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)

Gathered into the steadfast love of God 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's abundant love for us all.

Thanks be to God.

COMMUNION

COMMUNION HYMNS: Lamb of God (p. 208)

Bread of Life from Heaven (#474)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Holy God, you continually feed and nourish us with your Word, symbolized by this bread and cup of heaven. Be with us as we go from here, that we might be continually strengthened and empowered by your steadfast love and grace, through Jesus our Lord. **Amen.**

SENDING

BLESSING

May the God of compassion bless you and keep you,
the God of all mercy shine on you and be gracious unto you,
the God of steadfast love look upon you with favour, and give you peace.
Amen.

SENDING HYMN: Go, My Children, with My Blessing (#543)

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, live in God's abundant blessing and steadfast love.

Thanks be to God.

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