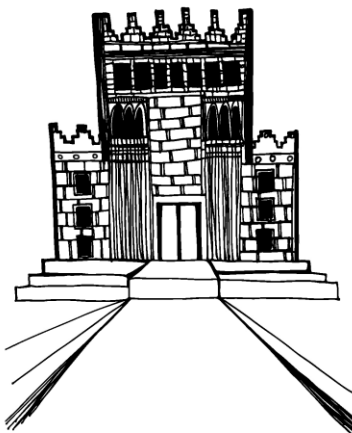


**GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
**OF SOUTH BURNABY, BC**  
**EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA**  
7283 Nelson Avenue, Burnaby, BC V5J 4C2  
Phone: 604-433-1515  
Website: [www.graceburnaby.com](http://www.graceburnaby.com)  
Email and e-transfers: [office@graceburnaby.com](mailto:office@graceburnaby.com)  
Pastor's email: [pastor@graceburnaby.com](mailto:pastor@graceburnaby.com)  
Follow us on Twitter! [@GraceLutBurnaby](https://twitter.com/GraceLutBurnaby)  
Facebook: [www.facebook.com/GraceLutBurnaby](http://www.facebook.com/GraceLutBurnaby)



**Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost**  
**October 1, 2023**  
**ELW Holy Communion, Setting Eight**

Jesus' parable about two sons who don't do what they say reveals surprises in the reign of God. In the reading from Ezekiel the people claim the ways of the Lord are unfair, while God offers repentance and new life. Paul urges us to look to Christ as a model of humility, putting the interests of others above our own. Nourished by the broken bread and shared cup, we offer our lives for the sake of our needy world.

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

Grace Lutheran worships, prays, and serves on the traditional and unceded lands and territories of the hən̓q̓əmiñəm̓ (Musqueam) and Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh (Squamish) peoples.

## GATHERING

### CALL TO WORSHIP

We gather to worship our Lord, to whom we put our trust in and in whom our souls are lifted. For our Lord puts us not to shame, but teaches us the ways and paths of truth, compassion, and everlasting love. And so we sing praises to our God, who remembers us not by our transgressions but through the lens of steadfast grace and goodness, that leads us toward justice and peace. **Amen. Thanks be to God.**

**GATHERING SONG:** God Is Here! (#526)

### GREETING

The surprising grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the everlasting love of God, and the communal fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

**CANTICLE OF PRAISE** (p. 185)

### PRAYER OF THE DAY

Holy God, our lives are yours and you seek to save the lost. Renew our hearts, refresh our spirits, and help us to walk in your holy way, that we might welcome the impartiality of your judgement and accept your all-embracing goodness, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## WORD

**FIRST READING: Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32**

A reading from Ezekiel.

*Ezekiel challenges those who think they cannot change because of what their parents were and did, or who think they cannot reverse their own previous behavior. God insistently invites people to turn and live.*

<sup>1</sup>The word of the LORD came to me: <sup>2</sup>What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, "The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge"? <sup>3</sup>As I live, says the Lord GOD, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel. <sup>4</sup>Know that all lives are mine; the life of the parent as well as the life of the child is mine: it is only the person who sins that shall die.

<sup>25</sup>Yet you say, "The way of the Lord is unfair." Hear now, O house of Israel: Is my way unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair? <sup>26</sup>When the righteous turn away from their righteousness and commit iniquity, they shall die for it; for the iniquity that they have committed they shall die. <sup>27</sup>Again, when the wicked turn away from the wickedness they have committed and do what is lawful and right, they shall save their life. <sup>28</sup>Because they considered and turned away from all the transgressions that they had committed, they shall surely live; they shall not die. <sup>29</sup>Yet the house of Israel says, "The way of the Lord is unfair." O house of Israel, are my ways unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair?

<sup>30</sup>Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, all of you according to your ways, says the Lord GOD. Repent and turn from all your transgressions; otherwise iniquity will be your ruin. <sup>31</sup>Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed against me, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel? <sup>32</sup>For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, says the Lord GOD. Turn, then, and live.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**PSALM: Psalm 25:1-9**

<sup>1</sup>To you, O LORD,  
I lift up my soul.

<sup>2</sup>**My God, I put my trust in you; let me not be put to shame,  
nor let my enemies triumph over me.**

<sup>3</sup>Let none who look to you be put to shame;  
rather let those be put to shame who are treacherous.

<sup>4</sup>**Show me your ways, O LORD,  
and teach me your paths.**

<sup>5</sup>Lead me in your truth and teach me,  
for you are the God of my salvation; in you have I trusted all the day long.

<sup>6</sup>**Remember, O LORD, your compassion and love,  
for they are from everlasting.**

<sup>7</sup>Remember not the sins of my youth and my transgressions;  
remember me according to your steadfast love and for the sake of your goodness, O LORD.

<sup>8</sup>**You are gracious and up right, O LORD;  
therefore you teach sinners in your way.**

<sup>9</sup>You lead the lowly in justice  
and teach the lowly your way.

**SECOND READING: Philippians 2:1-13**

A reading from Philippians.

*As part of a call for harmony rather than self-seeking, Paul uses a very early Christian hymn that extols the selflessness of Christ in his obedient death on the cross. Christ's selfless perspective is to be the essential perspective we share as the foundation for Christian accord.*

<sup>1</sup>If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, <sup>2</sup>make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. <sup>3</sup>Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. <sup>4</sup>Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. <sup>5</sup>Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,

<sup>6</sup>who, though he was in the form of God,  
did not regard equality with God  
as something to be exploited,

<sup>7</sup>but emptied himself,  
taking the form of a slave,  
being born in human likeness.

And being found in human form,

<sup>8</sup>he humbled himself  
and became obedient to the point of death—  
even death on a cross.

<sup>9</sup>Therefore God also highly exalted him  
and gave him the name  
that is above every name,

<sup>10</sup>so that at the name of Jesus  
every knee should bend,  
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

<sup>11</sup>and every tongue should confess

that Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father.

<sup>12</sup>Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; <sup>13</sup>for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION** (p. 188)

**GOSPEL: Matthew 21:23-32**

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

*After driving the moneychangers out of the temple (21:12), Jesus begins teaching there. His authority is questioned by the religious leaders, who are supposed to be in charge of the temple.*

<sup>23</sup>When [Jesus] entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching, and said, "By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?" <sup>24</sup>Jesus said to them, "I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. <sup>25</sup>Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?" And they argued with one another, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say to us, 'Why then did you not believe him?' <sup>26</sup>But if we say, 'Of human origin,' we are afraid of the crowd; for all regard John as a prophet." <sup>27</sup>So they answered Jesus, "We do not know." And he said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

<sup>28</sup>"What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today.' <sup>29</sup>He answered, 'I will not'; but later he changed his mind and went.

<sup>30</sup>The father went to the second and said the same; and he answered, 'I go, sir'; but he did not go. <sup>31</sup>Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. <sup>32</sup>For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him."

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

**SERMON**

O Lord by the power of your Spirit may your Word give us life, give us understanding, and give us faith through Jesus our Lord. **Amen.**

"Who do you think you are?" Ever have someone ask you that before? If you have, it doesn't feel very good, does it. But if you haven't, what on earth, how??

As you might have gathered, I've been asked that a lot. Sometimes by colleagues, sometimes by family members, sometimes even by significant others, but probably the majority of the time I get asked who do I think I am is by complete strangers. Usually it happens when I've done

something out of line, something that was completely inappropriate, maybe I've done something while driving that I probably shouldn't have done.

It's in these misdeeds that I rubbed someone the wrong way, angered them somehow, or just irritated them to point that they exclaim, "who do you think you are?" So sometimes, it's warranted. Sometimes I need to stop and check myself. Sometimes they really want to know who I think I am that would give me the nerve to act in the way that has bothered them enough to be so annoyed with me. But there are other times, I've noticed, that this question is asked from a place that might not be exactly my fault.

In the past, I've been asked who I think I am when I did something that was perhaps unexpected, unconventional, or not conforming to what would be considered as the norm. So not exactly something wrong per se, but perhaps I was being a bit too innovative or something. And I'd get a "Who do you think you are?" Or maybe I was offering assistance to someone who didn't want my help. "Who do you think you are?" Or there was even one time when I was still working at Shoppers and I was just doing my job unloading a delivery truck in the back alley, which unfortunately was blocking someone who was hoping to use the alley as a shortcut. "Who do you think you are?" I was asked out of exasperation.

So when we're asked this, it sometimes comes from a place of privilege, where the person asking isn't angry because of something wrong that you did, but you did something that didn't go with their own expectations of how life should be, you did something that inconvenienced them in some way, or you did something that maybe took away or threatened their power and control.

"Who do you think you are" is just another way, then, to say "how dare you cross me?" or "don't you know your place beneath me?" or "where do you get the nerve to disrespect me like this?" or even "by what authority do you do these things?"

Yes, the Pharisees and religious leaders were basically asking Jesus this very thing in today's gospel story. See by most accounts this episode happens right after Jesus enters Jerusalem, makes his way to the temple, and overturns all the tables of the merchants and money changers trying to make an honest buck. And honest buck that is super dishonest by the way, but at least it was legal. So Jesus gave all these people making an honest dishonest buck a really bad day and of course that would get under the skin of those in charge.

So the Pharisees and religious leaders and those who stood to lose the most from Jesus' unbridled but justified rampage through the marketplace, stepped up to Jesus to clap back in the only way they knew how to clap back, they pushed their weight on him and asked him who the H-E-double hockey sticks did he actually think he is to cause all this disruption, all this ruckus, all this inconvenience to their established and privileged way of life? Because they know what he's about, they have his number. They've had people challenge their power before and all of them were put in their place because the Pharisees and religious leaders? They were doing God's work. And they would smite anyone who would dare to say otherwise.

Well, Jesus said otherwise. And they didn't like it. So they were ready to use their high education and above average intelligence to trap Jesus in admitting that he's a quack and a fraud. "By what authority" is a loaded question because there should be no way to get out of this one unscathed. If he says by God's authority, he'd be labelled a heretic because it was the

Pharisees that interpreted for the people God's intentions and they assigned to whom God's authority lands and they sure as heck didn't assign it to Jesus, this torn in their sides.

And if Jesus said from man's authority, then he'd be labelled a liar. Because it was the Pharisees who had that kind of authority and they most certainly wouldn't have authorised someone to be a thorn in their sides. So this was a lose/lose situation for Jesus.

But as we know, Jesus wasn't having it. In one fell swoop, he turned the tables on the Pharisees just like how he turned the tables on those money changers in the temple. He trapped them in their own trap, brought to light the fallacy in their logic, showed them how their constructed powers and systems were only constructed by them to benefit them and those they choose to include. Basically, by asking them what seemed to be the same exact question, Jesus put *them* in *their* place, exposed their corruption, and revealed to all how equal and worthy of God's grace we actually are, regardless of where we fall in the world's hierarchy of made up power, regardless of what labels have been put on us by the people who think they know better, regardless of who the world considers us to be and what place the world considers us to be in, God raises us up as God's own children, bestowing upon us all grace and love, showing us that we are worthy simply because we are declared by God to be, and we belong.

We belong in our churches, communities, and families. We belong in this world, as part of this human race, as people worthy of life that truly is life. We belong in God's arms of blessing, welcome, and favour. We belong.

And just as we belong we can recognise the belonging of the other. This was the subtle difference in Jesus' retort in answering the Pharisees' question with a question. While they asked Jesus who he thinks he is, Jesus asks them not who they think they are, but who they think John the baptizer is, the one who is loved and revered by many, the one also considered a quack by the religious leaders, the one who baptized Jesus and physically anointed him to do his work. It's like Jesus is saying, "You're wondering where I get my authority from? Well, I get my authority from the same place that John got his authority from. Where do you think that is?"

See, Jesus' authority wasn't from any person, but it transcends human hierarchies and constructs. John's authority wasn't from any created systems, but it came from the eternal and everlasting Divine. And so our authority, our authority to proclaim, to relate, to participate in the changing of the world, comes from not our accomplishments, accolades, and acclamations, but from our Creator, the one who made the mountains and oceans, the heavens and earth, the name above all names to which every knee should bend and every tongue confess is the Lord of all in glory.

This Creator made us equal. Made us worthy. Made us deserving of love, respect, and welcome into community. But it's in our greed and privilege that distorts this image and ideal, and gives us unwarranted and fabricated power and authority to mistreat others without justice or compassion, to view others as less than us, to strip away from others their dignity and humanity. It's this misunderstanding of who we are that allows us to think that we have the right to ask others who they think they are. It's this *sin*, that is, separation from God and God's ways of truth and righteousness, that leads us to believe that we are somehow better, more deserving, and more loved than our neighbour.

My friends, today is Truth and Reconciliation Sunday, a day that we remember some of the atrocities of the past so we might move forward into the future. There were crimes against humanity, an imbalance of power and privilege, and this desire to put the other in their place. And the point of remembering these things as painful as it might be to do so, is so we can acknowledge the human capacity for wrong, for greed, for sin. And in that sin we can truly see how we are equal not in that we must be evil, but in that even in our capacity for evil we are equally forgiven, redeemed, and shown a gracious love that brings us all together as one race, one community, one body of Christ in the world.

So on this Truth and Reconciliation Sunday, may we recognise and acknowledge our capacity for sin, that when we think of who we are or who the other is, the answer will always be: a beloved child of God, and that every child matters. Thanks be to God. Amen.

**HYMN OF THE DAY:** You Are Holy (#525)

### **CREED**

Together with all of God's fallen and forgiven people, 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**

Led into discerning wonder and faith, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. Each petition will end with "Lord, in your saving mercy," and you are invited to respond with **hear our prayer**. Lord, in your saving mercy, **hear our prayer**.

O God, you lift our souls and in you we trust. You teach us your ways of faith and righteousness and you strengthen us in community and relationship. May our ministry and service to others reflect your steadfast love, that your presence among us might be seen and known. We remember in prayer our neighbouring faith communities; those that use our building for worship, work, and play; our partners Anglican Church of Canada and Moravian Church in Canada; and our bishops, pastors, and congregations of the ELCIC. In particular we pray out of our own BC Synod: Spirit of Life Lutheran Church in Vancouver and their pastor Aneeta Saroop;

and North Thompson Ecumenical Shared Ministry in Barriere and Clearwater and their Anglican priest Bruce Chalmers. Lord, in your saving mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O God, you provide for us and you protect us, and you have created for us a home in this planet. May our stewardship of all that you have entrusted to us be pleasing to you, that your love for us might be seen in how we treat all living things, this planet, and all that you have made. Lord, in your saving mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O God, you lead us in your truth and you teach us of your grace and justice. Grant to us a humility when dealing with others, that we might always turn to you and your wisdom as our guide in our relationships in our communities and countries throughout the world. We pray for all areas that face violence, war, and political turmoil, that true peace might one day reign in all our hearts. 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. Lord, in your saving mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O God, your compassion and love are everlasting and you raise us up in your goodness and healing. Be among all among us who are sick, who mourn, or who feel lonely, that we might all be blessed by your graciousness. Especially we pray for Bryan and Chona; Beulah; Ron, Tess, and Mineko; Bev and family; Sukhwant; John; Cari; Laura; Kandie; Thomas; William; Chris; Larry; Walter; Piet; Allen; Matt; Lucas; Bob and family; and all those we name aloud or quietly in our hearts at this time...  
Lord, in your saving mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O God, by your up right judgement, you teach us of your saving grace and you lead us into all eternity with you and all the saints. May the lives of those that we've loved and lost always inspire us in our faith, that the heart of your everlasting community be with us forever. Lord, in your saving mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Into your hand, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your wisdom and grace, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## **PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

## **MEAL**

## **DIALOGUE**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

## **PREFACE**

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,  
that we should at all times and in all places  
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,



through our Savior Jesus Christ;  
who reveals to us your wisdom in grace and mercy, humbling us to join  
with the choirs of angels, hosts of heaven, and church on earth  
in praising your name with this unending hymn:

**HOLY, HOLY, HOLY** (p. 190)

### **THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE**

Holy and merciful God, we praise you for your glory. For you lead us and guide us in your wisdom and truth, and you forgive us when we go astray and welcome us back into your arms of grace. And when the time was right, you send to us your son Jesus to be our example of community and right relationship.

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."

It is in this bread and cup that we see our connection to you and each other, we learn of your grace and mercy, and are led to be your people in the world, together proclaiming this basis of our faith:

**Christ has died.**

**Christ is risen.**

**Christ will come again.**

All honour and glory are yours, O God, for your grace and mercy for us all, and revealing to us the ways of your truth and justice through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, as one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

### **LORD'S PRAYER**

Gathered into community 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**

Take and eat, God's gracious salvation for us all.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **COMMUNION**

**COMMUNION HYMNS:** Lamb of God (p. 191)

One Bread, One Body (#496)

What Feast of Love (#487)

## **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Holy God, we give you thanks for leading us and guiding us in your truth and wisdom. Humble our hearts that we might be aware of what you are doing in the world, that we might move with you in community and service and love, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## **SENDING**

### **BLESSING**

May the God of our lifted souls bless you in all that you do and wherever you go, the God that brings us into salvation shine on you with everlasting love and grace, and the God who unites us in spirit look upon you all with favour, and grant you unsurpassing peace, now and forever.

**Amen.**

**SENDING SONG:** To Be Your Presence (#546)

### **DISMISSAL**

Go in peace, be of the same humble mind as Christ.

**Thanks be to God.**