



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

OF SOUTH BURNABY, BC

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA

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**First Sunday in Lent
February 18, 2024
ELW Holy Communion, Setting Three**

On Ash Wednesday the church began its journey toward baptismal immersion in the death and resurrection of Christ. This year, the Sundays in Lent lead us to focus on five covenants God makes in the Hebrew Scriptures and to use them as lenses through which to view baptism. First Peter connects the way God saved Noah's family in the flood with the way God saves us through the water of baptism. The baptismal covenant is made with us individually, but the new life we are given in baptism is for the sake of the whole 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 hən̓q̓əmin̓əŋ (Musqueam) and Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) speaking peoples.

GATHERING

CALL TO WORSHIP and INVITATION TO LENT

Today with the whole church we gather for worship and enter into the time of remembering Jesus' Passover from death to life, as our life in Christ is renewed. We embark into this season by acknowledging our need for repentance and for God's mercy. We enter into this season by recognizing the joy we are given in communion with God, in community with each other and all of creation, and in being identified as a forgiven sinner saved by grace. We encounter this season as a means to reveal to us truth of our rebellion and redemption, which leads us into repentance.

And so as disciples of Christ, we lift our souls up to the Lord, where we put our trust for our God puts us not to shame but shows us the paths of truth and teaches us the way of salvation. And in God's everlasting compassion and love, our sins and transgressions are forgiven and we are invited to enter into the covenant that God has made with us all, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen. Thanks be to God.**

GATHERING SONG: When We Are Tested (ACS 922)

GREETING

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

KYRIE (ELW p. 203)

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Gracious God, in the rushing waters and dry wildernesses, in every season and every circumstance, you give to us your sustaining Word. By the power of your Spirit, may the good news of your love and welcome be proclaimed in this community and through our lives, that all might see how the time is fulfilled and your kingdom has come near, through Jesus Christ our Saviour and brother. **Amen.**

WORD

FIRST READING: Genesis 9:8-17

A reading from Genesis.

Today's reading is the conclusion to the flood story. Because of human sin, God destroys the earth by flood, saving only Noah, his family, and the animals on the ark. Yet divine destruction gives way to divine commitment. As in the first creation, God blesses humanity and establishes a covenant with all creatures.

⁸God said to Noah and to his sons with him, ⁹"As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, ¹⁰and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark.

¹¹I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth." ¹²God said, "This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: ¹³I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. ¹⁴When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the

clouds, ¹⁵I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. ¹⁶When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.” ¹⁷God said to Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth.”

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 25:1-10

¹To you, O LORD,
I lift up my soul.

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

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

⁴**Show me your ways, O LORD,
and teach me your paths.**

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

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

⁷Remember 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.

⁸**You are gracious and upright, O LORD;
therefore you teach sinners in your way.**

⁹You lead the lowly in justice
and teach the lowly your way.

¹⁰**All your paths, O LORD, are steadfast love and faithfulness
to those who keep your covenant and your testimonies.**

SECOND READING: 1 Peter 3:18-22

A reading from 1 Peter.

As God acted through Christ's suffering and death to bring us to God, so God acts through baptism to save us from a sinful existence. This spiritual cleansing marks our new life in Christ.

¹⁸Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, ¹⁹in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison, ²⁰who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water. ²¹And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you—not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, ²²who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (ELW p. 142)

GOSPEL: Mark 1:9-15

The holy gospel according to Mark.

Glory to you, O Lord.

The Spirit that comes upon Jesus at his baptism sustains him when he is tested by Satan so that he might proclaim the good news of God's reign.

⁹In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan.

¹⁰And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. ¹¹And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

¹²And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. ¹³He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.

¹⁴Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, ¹⁵and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news."

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

Gracious God, in every season and circumstance, we need your sustaining Word. Grant to us now, by the power of your Spirit, the breath of life that we might hear the good news of your love and kingdom come near, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

So anyone watch the Superbowl last week? I most certainly did not for various reasons. The first being that I don't have cable so I couldn't have watched it if I wanted to, and the second being that I didn't want to. Either case, that didn't stop me from hearing what happened anyway. I'm not talking about hearing about what the score ended up to be, or which celebrities showed up to the game, or even if there were any wardrobe malfunctions during the halftime show. But what I did hear about, of all things, were the ads that were run during the game.

Now, this isn't a bad thing for me as some of those commercials that make the Superbowl line up can be pretty epic. I'm sure I've talked about some of them in the past, and I'm sure I'll talk about them again in the future. But there is one in particular that aired this year that I want to bring up, you might know where I'm going with this. It's actually a Christian campaign that has been going around for about a year now, but I've only just heard about it, because again, we don't have cable. It turns out that this Christian organisation came up with a new ad and they were able to pony up the multimillion price tag to have it aired with some of the most illustrious ads on television.

I was thinking about showing you the ad, but I wasn't sure about copyright and stuff and honestly I didn't really want to give them the free clicks. But basically the 30 second spot featured a slide show of these pictures, that looked like they were AI generated but were reported to be not AI generated but I'm pretty sure were AI generated, that displayed pairs of people that were from seemingly opposite walks of life, like a two folk who you'd think wouldn't ever get along. Like there was a teenager and what looks to be his grandfather, a

planned parenting protestor and a planned parenting client, a what I assume to be an illegal immigrant and someone who I assume wasn't, and a black man and a police officer. And in each of the pictures, one of those two very different people washing the feet of the other.

After the non-AI generated but actually AI-generated photos finishes scrolling through, the ad ends with the words, "Jesus didn't teach hate. He washed feet. He gets us. All of us. Jesus."

I had a lot of mixed feelings about this ad, and what it was trying to say and who it even was for. I mean, I get that this was an evangelism strategy to display these hoped to be powerful images of inclusion, welcome, and understanding. It was supposed to raise questions about our own feelings toward those who are different from us, and if we can "get them" like how Jesus does.

Not a bad idea, I guess, except that... foot washing? Really? I mean if Jesus really gets me, he'd know I wouldn't like someone washing my feet, touching my feet, or even really looking at my feet. Growing up in an Asian house we never wore shoes or socks in the house, and I'd always be self conscious when people came over and were able to see my bare feet. It's just... weird for me. And honestly I'm pretty sure I'm not the only one who feels this way, as I've been to many events that involved foot washing, and they weren't ever that popular.

Sure, I know that some people are ok with it, and that's fine. But foot washing isn't really a thing these days anyway. It's not a sign of servanthood anymore. It no longer is about emptying oneself and being humble. It doesn't mean today what it meant back then. Today, it's just kind of creepy.

So while I would agree that Jesus gets us, I have a hard time believing that these advertisers get us at all.

And that brings us to today's readings, specifically the gospel lesson that alludes to the reason we do this 40 days of Lent thing. Jesus' 40 days in the wilderness, of course. We're familiar with the story, how Jesus was driven out in to the wilderness by the Spirit right after he was baptized, encounters the devil who presents him with three temptations that Jesus deflects with his wisdom and intimate knowledge of scripture. But Mark's account of the story that we get today isn't really all that detailed. In fact, I would even say that it's brief. In typical Mark fashion, only the main points are highlighted and any of the finer details are just about ignored.

We don't have the dialogue between Jesus and John, we don't hear about how Jesus bested the adversary, we barely even hear how he starts his ministry. But we do hear that he was baptized. We do hear that he capable of facing trials and troubles. We do hear that he is God's beloved son with whom God is well pleased.

And maybe, that is enough. Sure, it's cool to learn about and know the nuances of the stories in order to give us a fuller picture of the person and personality of Jesus, but Mark gives us enough. If Mark were the only gospel account that we had, it would be enough. It wouldn't be much, but it'd be enough. Because we'd see that Jesus is this person who was deeply rooted in his culture and customs. He is devout, faithful, and dutiful. He is strong, disciplined, and wise. He is caring, compassionate, and kind. And he loves. He loves a whole lot.

So in light of this, of what Mark had decided was important enough to tell us about Jesus, I not only question if the “Jesus gets us” advertisers get us, but also if they get Jesus as well.

If they did, I’m not sure if they would have highlighted the feet washing thing. I mean, there is like one instance in Jesus’ life story that we hear about him washing feet, and it wasn’t at all the crux of his ministry. It was significant at the time and symbolic for those who understood it, but it has very little to do with us now. There are many, many more examples where Jesus sat with people particularly the marginalized, healed people from their ailments and what held them back, and cared for people and showed them that they were valued, welcomed, and loved.

Sure, it’s catchy to say Jesus gets us, and again I don’t disagree, but I think it’s important to see why Jesus gets us. And the truth is, Jesus gets us because as Mark describes in his very brief account, Jesus is one of us. Jesus was baptized like many of us were. Jesus faced trials and questioned himself, his role, and his identity as many of us may have done as well. Jesus is declared God’s beloved child, just like all of us most definitely are also. Jesus is one of us.

See to me, this “Jesus gets us” campaign is AI generating a picture of Jesus as this far off entity that was able to stoop down to our level to get us. But what I read in scripture is that Jesus is among us as one of us from the start, at our level, but is able to help us to look up from here. Jesus as one of us can take us by the hand and accompany us through life’s trials and troubles. Jesus as one of us can remind us that in spite of how we’re treated by everyone else and how we might be looked down upon by those with more power than us, we continue to have value and worth and will always be dearly loved.

The Superbowl ad said that Jesus didn’t teach hate, which is true, but instead of highlighting that he washed feet, which in my opinion is odd, perhaps we could instead be reminded that Jesus demonstrated love through compassion, companionship, and yes, service. These are the ways that Jesus truly gets us and ways that we might perhaps be able to get him. In that while we go through the ups and downs of life, while we have disagreements with others and just can’t seem to see eye to eye, while we try to be loving and good and moral the best we can and still utterly and spectacularly fail, Jesus continues to be with us, Jesus continues to be one of us, and Jesus continues to love us by lifting us up out of our shame and guilt and showing us what a forgiven and redeemed life could look like.

In this season of Lent, may we continue to reflect on our relationship with God through Jesus, that we might better grasp the depth and importance of God’s grace granting us a forgiveness that reminds us of who we are as God’s beloved children. Thanks be to God. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY: Cast Out, O Christ (ACS 1016)

CREED (p. 105)

Together with all of God’s people beloved and repentant, 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 by the Spirit into our identity and belonging, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. Each petition will end with, "O God, by your life-giving mercy," and you are all invited to respond with **hear our prayer**. O God, by your life-giving mercy, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, we lift our souls to you and in you we put our trust. You show us your ways and teach us your paths, and we learn to minister to others and proclaim your good news. Strengthen us in our service, that your love be seen and reflected in all that we do. We pray especially for our neighbouring faith communities; those who use our building for worship, work, and play; our partners Anglican Church of Canada and Moravian Church in Canada; and our bishops, rostered ministers, congregations, and ministries of the ELCIC. In particular, we pray for Ascension Lutheran Church in Nelson and all the pastors and leaders that serve there; and Mount Zion Lutheran Church in New Westminster and their interim pastor Bishop Greg Mohr. O God, by your life-giving mercy, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, your compassion and love are from everlasting, and it is seen in the covenant you made with us marked with a rainbow. May we learn from that truth and properly care for what you've entrusted to us: this planet and all that is in it, that it might flourish and be restored to its natural beauty. O God, by your life-giving mercy, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, you judge us not by our sin and transgressions, but by your steadfast love and gracious goodness. Teach the governments and leaders of the world this grace, that their judgements be wise and fair and lead to the good for all people. We pray for the continued support of those that we've sponsored to come into our country: Abraham Barhane; and Solyana Amanuel; as well as for those who have not yet arrived: Maekele Kiflu, Selam Haile, and their children; and Filimon Abraha. O God, by your life-giving mercy, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, you are gracious and upright, and you heal us of our brokenness and bring us back into wholeness. Be especially with those among us who are sick, who mourn, or who feel lonely, that your love shine in and through us all. We pray in particular for Beulah; Ron, Tess and Mineko; Bryan and Chona; Bev and family; Sukhwant; John and Betty; Laura; Kandie; Thomas; William; Chris; Walter; Larry; Allan; Piet; Matt; Lucas; Julie and family; and all those we name aloud or quietly in our hearts at this time...
O God, by your life-giving mercy, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, your love and faithfulness are steadfast and eternal, and you welcome us to live with you and all the saints forever. Remind us of how we are all connected throughout time and space by your love, that our actions be informed and motivated by your unending grace. O God, by your life-giving mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your forgiving grace, shown to us by Jesus Christ our Lord.

PEACE (p. 143)

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

MEAL

DIALOGUE (ELW p. 144)

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 Saviour Jesus Christ;
who overcame death and the grave
and leads us into life in community,
empowering us to join
with all the choirs of angels,
with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,
in praising your name with this unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (p. 144)

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

O Lord, our souls are lifted up to you and in you we trust, for you show us your ways and teach us your paths and welcome us into your truth and salvation. Your compassion and grace are unmatched and you regard us with steadfast love and goodness. Then when the time was right, you send to us your Son Jesus, to live among us as one of us to remind us and display for us your faithful covenant with us all.

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

Then after they ate, he took the 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."

With this bread and cup we remember our Lord's passover from death to life as we proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

Your paths, O Lord, are steadfast love and faithfulness to us, your beloved children, who you redeem and save by your grace, through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER (p. 145)

Gathered as a body of Christ, let us pray as he 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 steadfast love and faithfulness.

Thanks be to God.

COMMUNION

COMMUNION HYMNS: Lamb of God (p. 146)

I Want Jesus to Walk with Me (ELW #325)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Compassionate God, we again give you thanks for feeding us and nourishing us with this heavenly food. May we be strengthened to do your will and walk in your ways, that your love can be seen and felt in and through us, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

SENDING

BLESSING

May the God of covenant faithfulness hold you and remind you who you are, the beloved Son encourage you with strength and faith, and the Holy Spirit descend upon you with blessing, grace, and peace, this day and forever.

Amen.

SENDING SONG: Bless Now, O God, the Journey (ELW #326)

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, named as children of the Most High.

Thanks be to God.

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