



**GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH**

**OF SOUTH BURNABY, BC**

**EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA**

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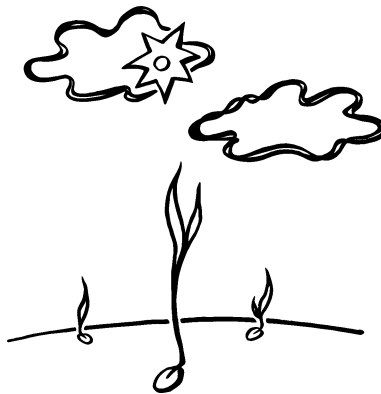
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**Fifth Sunday in Lent**

**March 17, 2024**

**ELW Holy Communion, Setting Three**

God promises Jeremiah that a “new covenant” will be made in the future: a covenant that will allow all the people to know God by heart. The church sees this promise fulfilled in Christ, who draws all people to himself when he is lifted up on the cross. Our baptismal covenant draws us to God’s heart through Christ and draws God’s love and truth into our hearts. We join together in worship, sharing in word, song, and meal, and leave strengthened to share God’s love with all the world.

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

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

## GATHERING

### CALL TO WORSHIP

We gather together in this place, to worship our God who is merciful to us, according to God's steadfast love and great compassion. Our sins are cleansed, our wickedness washed away, and our offenses are blotted out, for God has divinely decided that we are worthy to be forgiven, redeemed, and loved. We have been made purer than snow. So in our joy and gladness we rejoice at the sound of God's voice, at the sight of God's face, in knowing that our hearts are made clean and our spirits made anew. We are all welcomed into this space, into God's presence, and among this community joined by the Spirit, sustaining us, restoring us, and reminding us of God's wondrous and gracious salvation, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen. Thanks be to God.**

**GATHERING SONG:** Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross (#335)

### GREETING

The promised grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the steadfast love of God, and the eternal communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

**KYRIE** (p. 138)

### PRAYER OF THE DAY

Holy God, you lift the suffering world toward the hope and transformation of the cross, and you open the way for all to eternal salvation. As we move ever close to the passion of Christ, may your law of love be written on our hearts as we are all drawn to him through his ministry, his teachings, and his very life. **Amen.**

## WORD

### FIRST READING: Jeremiah 31:31-34

A reading from Jeremiah.

*The Judeans in Babylon blamed their exile on their ancestors, who had broken the covenant established at Sinai. Here the prophet looks to a day when God will make a new covenant with the people. There will be no need to teach the law, because God will write it on their hearts.*

<sup>31</sup>The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. <sup>32</sup>It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the LORD. <sup>33</sup>But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. <sup>34</sup>No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, "Know the LORD," for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **PSALM: Psalm 51:1-12**

- <sup>1</sup>Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love;  
in your great compassion blot out my offenses.
- <sup>2</sup>**Wash me through and through from my wickedness,  
and cleanse me from my sin.**
- <sup>3</sup>For I know my offenses,  
and my sin is ever before me.
- <sup>4</sup>**Against you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight;  
so you are justified when you speak and right in your judgment.**
- <sup>5</sup>Indeed, I was born steeped in wickedness,  
a sinner from my mother's womb.
- <sup>6</sup>**Indeed, you delight in truth deep within me,  
and would have me know wisdom deep within.**
- <sup>7</sup>Remove my sins with hyssop, and I shall be clean;  
wash me, and I shall be purer than snow.
- <sup>8</sup>**Let me hear joy and gladness;  
that the body you have broken may rejoice.**
- <sup>9</sup>Hide your face from my sins,  
and blot out all my wickedness.
- <sup>10</sup>**Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
and renew a right spirit within me.**
- <sup>11</sup>Cast me not away from your presence,  
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.
- <sup>12</sup>**Restore to me the joy of your salvation  
and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.**

## **SECOND READING: Hebrews 5:5-10**

A reading from Hebrews.

*Using priestly imagery and references to the Old Testament, the author explains how Christ lived in trusting obedience to God, and so God has made Christ the source of our eternal salvation.*

<sup>5</sup>Christ did not glorify himself in becoming a high priest, but was appointed by the one who said to him,

“You are my Son,  
today I have begotten you”;

<sup>6</sup>as he says also in another place,

“You are a priest forever,  
according to the order of Melchizedek.”

<sup>7</sup>In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. <sup>8</sup>Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; <sup>9</sup>and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him, <sup>10</sup>having been designated by God a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (p. 142)**

## **GOSPEL: John 12:20-33**

The holy gospel according to John.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

*Jesus entered Jerusalem for the last time to celebrate the Passover festival. Here Jesus' words about seeds planted in the ground turn the disaster of his death into the promise of a harvest in which everyone will be gathered.*

<sup>20</sup>Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. <sup>21</sup>They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." <sup>22</sup>Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. <sup>23</sup>Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. <sup>24</sup>Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. <sup>25</sup>Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. <sup>26</sup>Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor.

<sup>27</sup>"Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say—'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. <sup>28</sup>Father, glorify your name." Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again." <sup>29</sup>The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, "An angel has spoken to him." <sup>30</sup>Jesus answered, "This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. <sup>31</sup>Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. <sup>32</sup>And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." <sup>33</sup>He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die.

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## **SERMON**

May your living Word, O God, continue to change our lives and recreate us as your people in the world. Fill us this day with your Spirit, that we may treasure your promises and truth with our whole hearts, through Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

So I've been having somewhat of a rough week, I think it started with that darn daylight saving spring forward nonsense that happened last Sunday, and that threw my whole clock off. Mind you, my clock isn't that great to begin with, as I don't get much sleep on a normal basis, but I noticed that my nightly average dropped by a whole hour this week, meaning I'm short roughly 7 hours the whole week... and for me that's like a night and a half's worth of sleep.

I know, this sounds like a total first world problem, like "boo hoo, you didn't get your beauty rest for like a week," and I should probably grow up and get some real problems. But if I'm being honest, there were some other things that happened this past week as well that contributed to this rough week being rough. Like some of you know that my uncle isn't well and in hospital and we learned this past week that he could really go at any time now. While this was kind of expected for a while, the fact that there was some other unrelated family drama that actually makes dealing with this a bit more difficult. And to top it off I noticed that the coolant leak that I noticed like a year ago in my car has only gotten worse. I guess the engine's self-repair mode is on the fritz.

And then, in spite of the fatigue, the stress, and the worry about what fluids are leading out of my car, I still have to perform my day to day duties, I still have to show up and clock in, and I still have to give this darn sermon.

Still, all that might not seem so bad to you. But for me, it was just another one of those weeks when things just seem more down, more difficult, more depressing than usual.

And we've all had those kinds of weeks, haven't we? Maybe when things just don't go your way no matter how hard you try. Or maybe you faced actual problems that put you in actual distress, not just these frivolous first world kind. Or maybe you faced death as well, threatening you or a loved one, and you found it hard to deal with.

Or maybe it wasn't just a week. Maybe it was a month, or several months, or maybe even a few years much like the last few that we've had together through the pandemic and other things in the world. Maybe it's been even longer for you.

When life gets difficult like this, sometimes we know what to do or where to go or who to talk to. But often times, for me at least in this past week, we don't. So we're just treading water trying to stay afloat, we meander on praying that things would just get better on their own, we look around us aimlessly perhaps just trying to catch a glimpse of *hope*.

Hope.

Hope comes in different forms. Maybe in a memory of better times. Maybe in an understanding ear from a friend. Or maybe in the support of a community. And our faith tells us that our hope comes, of course, from Jesus.

That's why we're here, isn't it? That's why we participate in these Christian activities and practices such as this season of Lent? That's why we even have faith?

We want to see Jesus, is pretty much the consensus. Or we want what Jesus is offering in healing, in redemption, in peace. And truth be told, it sometimes seems like Jesus can be pretty elusive, in that we don't always know where to look, how to look, or even what we're looking for.

But we know that we just want to see Jesus. Maybe he'll give us the words to say. Maybe he'll give us the strength and energy to keep going. Maybe he'll inspire our lives that we could do better, regulate better, just *be* better. Isn't that what those Greeks in today's gospel reading were asking Philip for? "Sir, we wish to see Jesus."

I mean, the Greeks at the time were known to be intellectuals. They were known for their philosophical chops. They were known across the lands to be the smartest, the most educated, most forward-thinking people. For the super gentile heathens that they are, at least.

So Jesus' reputation precedes him. If not for his miraculous works or whatever, then for his teachings of compassion and grace, or his actions of welcome and community, or maybe he was just seen as the crazy guy who overturned the tables at the temple that just happened earlier in this story. He's that table turner guy.

Either case, whatever the reason the Greeks had to want to see Jesus, poor Philip doesn't know what to do with the request. So he did what anyone of us would probably do, he delegated it to someone else. In this case, it was Andrew, and the two Bethsaidaian homeboys went to talk to Jesus about it. But Jesus doesn't react like how we might have thought, like with an "oh ok" and he goes out to sign autographs for the Greeks or something. But instead he goes on a very John-like-style theological rhetoric about what he's even there for and what will happen and I guess what needs to happen. Jesus talks about how death isn't the last word but the beginning of new life. Jesus answers the request of his presence by revealing what his presence even means.

His presence, aside from giving hope, is about strengthening faith and community, and to show love.

So you want to see Jesus? There he is. In all of that. This is actually the theme of Lent in this Lectionary Year B. There is a focus on covenants. It starts with God's promise to Noah that the world will not again be destroyed by flood. Then there was God's promise to Abraham that he'll be the father of a great nation. Then God makes promises through the 10 Commandments. And last week God promises healing and wholeness through unusual means.

And this week? This week we are promised that this healing will come through the new temple which is the body of Christ. This week we learn how all the covenants God made in the past weren't ever about obedience or morals or ethics, but God's covenants, God's promises, God's *pledge* to us all was always about relationship, community, and love. God has been, throughout history, teaching us how to live with one another through discipline, honour, and compassion. And when all those didn't work, then the ultimate example of Christ was brought into our midst.

In our midst as one of us, showing us how this covenantal living actually works, how it's done, and why it is beneficial for us all.

Because this community is so strong that it lasts forever. The relationships that we foster with God and each other can be so uplifting that we are moved to share with all that we meet. The love and grace that is given to each and every one of us is so steadfast, so faithful, so eternal that no amount of sin; no type of bad days, weeks, or even years; *not even death* can take it away from us or us out of it.

My friends, this is where we see Jesus. Among us, around us, in this community. This is how we experience Jesus. Through relationship, forgiveness, and reconciliation. This is how we know Jesus. Through compassion, humility, and service. This is Jesus.

And as we move out of the season of Lent and into the holiest of weeks, we see how our fallen humanity continues to break the covenant made by God through our own sinfulness, angry, and retaliation. But that still doesn't stop God's love for us, but instead shows us that even in the brokenness there is healing, even in the pain and hardship there is forgiveness and redemption, even in the suffering and death there is resurrection and new life.

This is the place where Lent leads us to see, that God's promises and covenant are written within our hearts. It reveals to us all how God's love is bigger than whatever we or anything in all of creation could throw at it. It shows us that while death hurts, while sin kills, while

hardship is... hard, we can know there is grace in it, there is life still to be had, there is God revealed in the community, in the relationship, in our very identities as a forgiven and saved people.

So as we wrap up this season of Lent, this season of covenants and promises, may we look forward to the coming Holy Week and Easter with confidence in knowing that our relationship, our position, our identity in God's love is not bound by sin, or death, or any amount of bad days or weeks, but remains steadfast and eternal through the life and teachings of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. Thanks be to God.

**HYMN OF THE DAY:** Lamb of God: Your Only Son (#336)

**CREED** (p. 105)

Together with all of God's welcomed and redeemed 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.**

#### **INSTALLATION OF NEW COUNCIL MEMBERS**

The following people have accepted the call to serve in official positions of leadership within our congregation. We give thanks for their gifts, their willingness, and their contribution to the life of Grace Lutheran and to the wider church. While we all are welcomed into the body of Christ and sent to share in the mission of God, we rejoice now in these whom we recognize as our leaders:

*Those present are named*

A reading from First Corinthians: There are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. (1 Corinthians 12:4-7)

You have answered the call to serve in positions of leadership and trust in this congregation.

You are to see that our ministry here at Grace Lutheran reflects the love, truth, and promises of God, who calls and gathers us together with the whole church.

You are to assist this congregation to move toward unity in worship, learning, witness, service, and support, so that the mission of Christ can be carried out among us, in the wider church, in our neighbourhood, and in the whole world.

You are to be faithful in your specific area of serving, that the Spirit who empowers you may be glorified.

You are to be examples of faith active in love, fostering peace, harmony, and mutual understanding in this congregation.

On behalf of your sisters and brothers in Christ, I ask you:  
Will you accept and faithfully carry out the duties of the offices  
to which you have been elected?  
*I will, and I ask God to help me.*

People of God, I ask you:  
Will you support these, your selected leaders,  
and will you share in the mutual ministry  
that Christ has given to us all?  
*We will, and we ask God to help us.*

I now declare you installed as officers and council members of this congregation.  
Almighty God bless you, and direct your days and your deeds in peace,  
that you may be faithful servants of Christ.  
Amen.

### **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Drawn to the light and life of Christ, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. Each petition will end with “Lord, by your blessing mercy,” and you are invited to respond with **hear our prayer**. Lord, by your blessing mercy, **hear our prayer**.

O God, in your great compassion you blot out our offenses and you raise us up into new life, where we are washed from our sin and our guilt is taken away. We give you thanks for our newly installed council, and we pray for them and their continued support and leadership in our congregation. We also lift in prayer our neighbouring faith communities; those who use this 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 St. Paul’s Lutheran Church in Prince Rupert and their pastor Diana Edis; and for Our Saviour Lutheran Church in Richmond and their pastor Christoph Reiners. Lord, by your blessing mercy, **hear our prayer**.

O God, we have not been faithful in our care for this planet, and we deserve to be rightly judged. But you continue to be merciful and provide for us what we need for life, that we might be able to repent and return to proper relationship with you and all of creation. Lord, by your blessing mercy, **hear our prayer**.



O God, you delight in the truth and wisdom that you have instilled in us, and you guide us in your ways of grace and forgiveness. May all politicians and world leaders look to this truth and wisdom in their leading and governing, that all people be treated fairly and with justice. We offer special prayers 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. Lord, by your blessing mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O God, you recreate us in your purity in spite of our sin, and you renew our spirits in joy and healing. Be with those among us who are sick, who mourn, or who feel lonely, that this healing and wholeness be apparent to all. We pray especially for Bryan and Chona; Kathy and Raj; Beulah; Ron, Tess, and Mineko; Bev and family; Sukhwant; John and Betty; Laura; Kandie; Thomas; Will; Chris; Larry; Walter; Allen; Matt; Lucas; Julie and family; Piet; Hwee Yang; Jeanette; and all those we name aloud or quietly in our hearts at this time... Lord, by your blessing mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O God, you do not cast us away from your presence, but you restore us to the joy of your salvation and welcome us to live in your kingdom forever with all the saints. May we look to the lives of faith of the past, that we can together move into the future with hope in your promises and truth. Lord, by your blessing mercy, **hear our prayer.**

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

**Amen.**

**PEACE** (p. 143)

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

## MEAL

**DIALOGUE** (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 Savior Jesus Christ;  
through whom we are lifted up and brought into community  
with all the choirs of angels,  
the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,  
where we can praise your name with this unending hymn:

## **HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (p. 144)**

### **THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE**

O God, your mercy and love are steadfast and your compassion is great. You blot out our offenses, wash us of our wickedness, and cleanse us from our sin. By your grace, you make us whiter than snow, surrounding us with joy and gladness as we are lifted up in rejoicing. You have created in us clean hearts with renewed spirits, and you welcome us into your presence through the life and ministry of Jesus, your Son, whom you have sent to us to show us the way to your salvation.

For on the night that he was betrayed, your Son Jesus sat with his friends for a meal where he took the bread, gave thanks, broke and shared it 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 cup, gave thanks, and passed that around the table for them to drink from and said, "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 food we share that we are restored into the joy of God's salvation, even as we declare this mystery of faith:

**Christ has died.**

**Christ is risen.**

**Christ will come again.**

O God, we are sustained by your steadfast love, graciously shown to us through your Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. **Amen.**

## **LORD'S PRAYER (p. 145)**

Drawn to the love 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, that God's welcome extends to us all.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **COMMUNION**

**COMMUNION HYMNS:** Lamb of God (p. 146)  
As the Grains of Wheat (#465)

### **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

God of all mercy and forgiveness, we give you thanks for again feeding us and nourishing us with your love and truth, that we might be empowered to be your hands and feet in the world. May your truth be reflected through our lives and community, that all might be drawn to the grace and mercy that brings us to life, through Jesus Christ our brother and Saviour.  
**Amen.**

## **SENDING**

### **BLESSING**

May the God who wrote the law of love upon our hearts, fill you with peace and blessing, the God who raised Jesus to be the Saviour of us all, be gracious onto you hold you in kindness, the God who lifts us all, grant you the favour of the Spirit and bring you into the joy of resurrection, now and forever.  
**Amen.**

**SENDING SONG:** Dawn to the Light (#593)

### **DISMISSAL**

Go in peace, be filled with the new life of Christ.  
**Thanks be to God.**