



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

Email and e-transfers: office@graceburnaby.com

Pastor's email: pastor@graceburnaby.com

Follow us on Twitter! [@GraceLutBurnaby](https://twitter.com/GraceLutBurnaby)

Facebook: www.facebook.com/GraceLutBurnaby



Fourth Sunday of Easter

April 21, 2024

Now the Feast and Celebration

The image of the good shepherd shows us how the risen Christ brings us to life. It is the relationship between the shepherd and the sheep, one of mutual knowledge and love, that gives the shepherd authority. The shepherd's willingness to lay down his life for the sheep shows his love. First John illustrates what it means to lay down our lives for one another by the example of sharing our wealth with any sibling in need.

We at Grace Lutheran Church strive to reflect and proclaim the love of God shown to us by Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit by providing an inclusive and supportive environment through loving care and community service.

A warm welcome to all who are worshipping with us in person or online! We appreciate your contribution to the community today: with your voice, your presence, and just the blessing that you are. May you be nurtured by God's Word, empowered by the love of Christ, and stirred by the wisdom of the Holy Spirit in this service this day, for the sake of God's mission in the world.

Grace Lutheran Church worships, prays, and serves on the traditional and unceded lands and territories of the hən̓q̓əmiñəm̓ (Musqueam) and Sḵw̓x̓wú7mesh (Squamish) speaking peoples.

GATHERING

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP

We gather in the name of the Lord our Shepherd, in whom we are not in want but are led to green pastures and still waters, where our souls are restored along the right pathways of faith. Even when we walk through the shadow of death, we have no fear for God remains with us, watching over us and protecting us from evil. So we worship our God for goodness and mercy follow us as we are invited, welcomed, and dwell in the Lord's house forever. **Amen. Thanks be to God.**

GATHERING HYMN: My Shepherd, You Supply My Need (#782)

GREETING

The shepherding grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the protecting love of God, and the welcoming communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

NOW THE FEAST (p. 4)

PRAYER OF THE DAY

O God we are your people, the sheep of your pasture, the flock that you have gathered. Continue to lead us beside still waters and teach us the way of righteousness and feed us with your love and truth, through Jesus Christ, the Saviour of us all.

Amen.

FIRST READING: Acts 4:5-12

A reading from Acts.

Peter and John had been arrested the previous day because they were proclaiming the news of the resurrection to the people. In today's reading, Peter is filled with the Holy Spirit so that he can proclaim salvation in Jesus' name to the religious authorities.

⁵The next day [the] rulers, elders, and scribes assembled in Jerusalem, ⁶with Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly family. ⁷When they had made the prisoners stand in their midst, they inquired, "By what power or by what name did you do this?" ⁸Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders, ⁹if we are questioned today because of a good deed done to someone who was sick and are asked how this man has been healed, ¹⁰let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that this man is standing before you in good health by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead. ¹¹This Jesus is

'the stone that was rejected by you, the builders;
it has become the cornerstone.'

¹²There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved."

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 23

¹The LORD is my shepherd;
I shall not be in want.

²**The LORD makes me lie down in green pastures
and leads me beside still waters.**

³You restore my soul, O LORD,
and guide me along right pathways for your name's sake.

⁴**Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil;
for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.**

⁵You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil, and my cup is running over.

⁶**Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.**

SECOND READING: 1 John 3:16-24

A reading from 1 John.

Jesus' death on our behalf is the clearest demonstration of divine love. This is the very love we share with others, not just through our words but especially through our deeds. In sharing such love we fulfill God's commandments.

¹⁶We know love by this, that [Jesus Christ] laid down his life for us—and we ought to lay down our lives for one another. ¹⁷How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help?

¹⁸Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action. ¹⁹And by this we will know that we are from the truth and will reassure our hearts before him ²⁰whenever our hearts condemn us; for God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. ²¹Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have boldness before God; ²²and we receive from him whatever we ask, because we obey his commandments and do what pleases him.

²³And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. ²⁴All who obey his commandments abide in him, and he abides in them. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit that he has given us.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (p. 8)

GOSPEL: John 10:11-18

The holy gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

In language that recalls the twenty-third psalm, Jesus describes himself as the shepherd who cares for his sheep. He is willing to die for them, and he is able to overcome death for them.

[Jesus said:] ¹¹"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

¹²The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away—and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. ¹³The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. ¹⁴I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, ¹⁵just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. ¹⁶I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one

shepherd. ¹⁷For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. ¹⁸No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father.”
The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

Lord God, by the leading of your Spirit may we be able to hear your voice and follow in your paths all the days of our lives, through Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd. Amen.

So it's no secret that I am a Transformers fan. Just take a look at my office and my desk and you'll see that I never really grew out of that part of my life. Knowing this about me, you could imagine my excitement when they released the trailer for a new animated Transformers movie that is set to be released this September. I've been waiting for this movie since they announced it about a year and a half ago, as it's the first animated Transformers movie since the original Transformers: the Movie from 1986, and it was rumoured to be based on that original cartoon series that captured my heart all those years ago.

So when the trailer dropped this past Thursday I made sure to watch it without any distractions so I could soak it all in and see if this movie would be worth the wait. And... well... it doesn't look like it would be. Different animation and voices aside, I can already tell that they've botched the characters, the story, the whole mythology around the Transformers. So much so that I just might not even bother watching this movie in the theatres.

This has been my problem with a lot of these movies that try to retell a story that has already been told. When they take these artistic licenses to add more flare or excitement or just their own take on it, to me it feels like the movie is ruined. It makes me think of the live action Transformers movies and how much I hated them. Everything about the Transformers was changed so much that I wondered why they just didn't give the movie a different and original name and create their own universe, instead of hijacking one that is already so loved and butchering it beyond recognition.

And this isn't just with the Transformers franchise, but many of the movies that are based on some kind of pre-existing thing, whether it be books, comics, or even other movies, always seem to go too far in changing things away from how they're supposed to be. It's like they don't care about the source material anymore but just want to ride on its popularity rather than being faithful in their reproduction of something that is already so great.

Anyway, I can go on and on about these atrocities, but many of my friends would just shake their heads, roll their eyes, and call me a fanatic. I don't know if I'd go that far, I mean I'd call myself a fan for sure, but a fanatic would be more like someone who reads up on all this stuff, knows more about it than what would be considered normal, and maybe complains a bit too loudly when things don't go their way.

Oh wait, maybe I am a fanatic.

But this kind of fanaticism isn't exactly new though, is it. Since the advent of opinions, people have been guarding their own and protecting their ideas of what is their way and what is just apparently wrong. And there seems to be almost a competition between the different

preferences, tastes, and viewpoints as the fanatics size each other up and try to out-crazy those who just don't seem to belong in their particular camp.

And it's not just with movies either, but we see this in many areas of life. From sports, fashion, and technology. In our families, ethnicities, and traditions. In the different science disciplines, politics, and unfortunately, even in religion.

Don't believe me? How many times have we judged or been judged by the size of our congregation? Or what denomination we grew up in? Or even what doctrines we might hold to? How many of us have been called "not real" in terms of our faith because we didn't see eye-to-eye with whoever it was that was calling us that? Even if we don't have experience with these exact things, we can't deny that there doesn't seem to be any shortage of lines we can draw in the sand to define us as "us" and them as so very much "them". This is just a symptom of this fanaticism.

We see this throughout our bible stories too, don't we? I mean in this ancient Middle Eastern time, there was no hiding from the racism and patriotic piety, thinking that only certain bloodlines can ever be honoured, welcomed, and loved by God and those that "belong" to God. This kind of segregation has been justified, rationalized, and even Christianized over the years and quite honestly has translated into our modern times very subtly but no less sinisterly.

But of course, we'll always consider ourselves, followers of Jesus, as on the right side of the history of faith. We'll always think that the past is the past and we are the ones who will help to usher in a new future. We'll always think that we and perhaps we alone are the ones who are right and everyone else who doesn't agree with us is wrong.

This isn't necessarily a bad thing as I do feel like we need to have a certain level of boldness and confidence in our beliefs, but I think the problem comes when we begin to exclude others because they don't believe in what we believe, they don't express themselves the way we express ourselves, or they aren't faith fanatics in the same way we are faith fanatics. I think the purpose of our faith is defeated when we use these wall-tearing ideals to build new walls. I think the point is missed when we use religion to hate rather than to love.

And perhaps this is why we need Jesus so much. He was all about welcoming, showing compassion, and reminding the marginalized and oppressed that they are actually loved, included, and saved. And no matter how much of a fan you are, or how "in" you can be, or much you feel like you belong, we all are marginalized somewhere. Whether it be because of our faith, our ethnicity, our gender, our age, or how much we enjoy the toys and media of the 80s, we have felt the exclusion that effectively kicks us out onto the curb, leaving us to feel isolated, alone, and very much abandoned.

But that is where Jesus comes in. Jesus looks past all that separates us and promises us welcome. I mean the gospel text that we have for today is out of the "Good Shepherd Discourse" also known as John chapter 10, where Jesus really hits this home for his disciples using a metaphor of a flock of sheep that is defined by a fence, accessible through a gate, and watched over by this Shepherd.

At first glance we might think, "see, Jesus kept his flock close and behind a locked gate, he had walls between us and them as well." And this is that dangerous justification, rationalization,

and Christianizing that I was talking about. But what really redefines this is Jesus' line in verse 16 where he reveals that he has "other sheep that don't belong to this fold" to care for.

Other sheep. That don't belong. They actually do belong.

Isn't that amazing? Jesus knew there will be lines that we'd instinctively draw. Jesus anticipated our need to segregate in the name of protection and preservation. Jesus was aware of our natural tendency toward fanaticism that would build walls between us and whoever we don't think belongs with us, and he tears those walls down. He removes the segregation of our opinions, narrow viewpoints, and reasons to hate. Jesus not just erases the lines that we draw, but he obliterates the need to even draw them.

Because in spite of that, Jesus says welcome. Jesus opens the doors wide and throws out all prejudice and preclusion and shows us all that we belong. Jesus tears down those walls and reveals to us all invitation and inclusion. Jesus removes the lines over which we justify hate, and breathes in us all a Spirit of love.

This is why he is known as the Good Shepherd, leading us to green pastures and still waters, reminding us of the peace that is found in the Spirit, where all people needn't worry about their own belonging, but only how to show that belonging to others in this fold. Where we can have the confidence of community, knowing that regardless of who we are or what our pasts look like, we are welcomed. Where we can, after seeing the grace that we have received in spite of our subtle fanaticisms, we can extend this grace to all, welcoming everyone into this church, this one body of Christ where we all have a place as one flock under God, for all time.

As we continue in this season of Easter, may we be reminded constantly of the life-giving resurrection that empowers us, encourages us, and leads us into the belonging that we share in this fold of God's people loved and cared for by the Good Shepherd. Thanks be to God. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY: The Lord's My Shepherd (#778)

CREED (p. 9)

With all of those welcomed and included in God's flock, 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 beside green pastures and still waters, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. Each petition will end with “by your guiding mercy, O God,” and you are all invited to respond with **and hear our prayer**. By your guiding mercy, O God, **and hear our prayer**.

Gracious God, we give thanks for the church, in which we can find peace and community as we gather as your people. Strengthen us to follow the leading and guiding of Christ, that we be faithful to our calling as your children in the world. We remember in prayer our neighbouring faith communities; those who use this building for worship, work, and play; our full-communion 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 Oakridge Lutheran Church in Vancouver and the pastors and leaders that serve them; and for Redeemer Lutheran Church also in Vancouver and their pastor Katrina Vigen. By your guiding mercy, O God, **and hear our prayer**.

Loving God, we give you thanks for this planet and all of creation, that we may bask in its wonder and beauty. Keep us faithful to our call as stewards of all that you have entrusted to us, that the earth may continue to house life for the generations to come. By your guiding mercy, O God, **and hear our prayer**.

Emboldening God, we give you thanks for the diversity in this world, creating this mosaic of a human race which we are a part of. Empower us in our respect for one another across borders, that we might learn to see the world in new ways through different cultures and customs. We pray for the continued support of those that we’ve sponsored to come into this country: Abraham Barhane; and Solyana Amanuel; as well as for those who have yet to come: Maekele Kiflu, Selam Haile, and their children; and Filimon Abraha. By your guiding mercy, O God, **and hear our prayer**.

Healing God, we give you thanks for the care that we find in community, and for the opportunity to care for others. Help us to minister to all who are sick, who mourn, or who feel lonely, that your love and peace always shine in and around all your children. We pray especially for Bryan and Chona; Beulah; Bev and family; Ron, Tess and Mineko; Kathy and Raj; Phil; Sukhwant; John and Betty; Laura; Kandie; Thomas; Will; Chris; Larry; Walter; Piet; the family and friends of Jeanette; Pat and Patty; Hwee Yang; Ephraim; and all those we name aloud or quietly at this time...
By your guiding mercy, O God, **and hear our prayer**.

Uniting God, we give you thanks for the lives of all the saints of the past and present, and how you join us together with them as the one body of Christ. May their lives of faith inform us and encourage us in our own lives, that we may continue to grow in your name. By your guiding mercy, O God, **and hear our prayer**.

Into your hands O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting that you lead and welcome us into the peace that surpasses understanding, through your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**.

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

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, holy and almighty God, through our Saviour Jesus Christ, who resides with and is present among us through the Spirit, uniting us together with choirs of angels, the hosts of heaven, and the whole church on earth in praising your name with this unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (p. 11)

GREAT THANKSGIVING

Blessed are you, O God, for you give us gifts beyond measure: the gift of life, the gift of love, and the gift of your Son Jesus Christ, who taught us by example your ways of community and peace. He cared for the sick, he fed the hungry, he sat with the lonely. And when the time was right, he was raised from the dead to reveal to all the strength of your love and grace.

For on the night that he was betrayed to death, he sat with his friends, his betrayers that he ultimately forgave, and he took the bread and after giving thanks for it he broke and shared it and said, "Take and eat, this is my body broken for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

Then after they ate it, he took the common cup, gave thanks, and passed it 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 bread and cup that we are joined together and welcomed in love, community, and peace, even as we declare this mystery of our faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

Blessed are you, O God, for being faithful to your promises. Blessed are you for breathing onto us your Spirit of peace. Blessed are you for this bread and cup, showing us again how you recreate us as a community, joined together as the one body of Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER (p. 13)

Gathered into one 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 our welcome into peace and love.

Thanks be to God.

COMMUNION

COMMUNION HYMNS: Lamb of God (p. 14)

Have No Fear, Little Flock (#764)

Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying (#752)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Gracious God, we give you thanks for again feeding and nourishing us with your Word and truth, welcoming us into your love and joining us together as your people. May we be strengthened as we go from here, knowing that we are blessed in this community and guided by your wisdom and peace, through Jesus Christ our risen Lord. **Amen.**

BLESSING

May the Creator who welcomes us bless you and keep you,
the Christ who shepherds us lead you to goodness and mercy,
the Counsellor who loves us guide you into righteousness and peace, now and forever.
Amen.

SENDING SONG: Build a Longer Table (ACS #1062)

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, guided by the Good Shepherd.

Thanks be to God.