



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

OF SOUTH BURNABY, BC

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA

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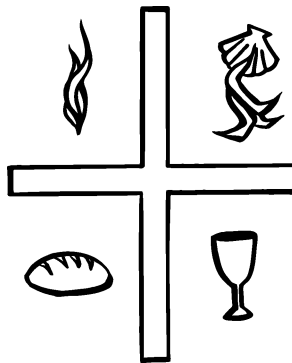
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Seventh Sunday of Easter

May 12, 2024

Now the Feast and Celebration

The gospel for Easter's seventh Sunday is always taken from the long prayer Jesus prays for his followers in John's gospel on the night before his death, and always includes Jesus' desire that his followers will be one as he and the Father are one. This oneness is not mere doctrinal agreement or institutional unity, but mutual abiding, interpenetrating life, mutual love, and joy. This oneness is the work of the Spirit whom we have received but also await. Come, Holy Spirit!

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 hə́nq̓əmiñə́m̓ (Musqueam) and Sḵw̓x̓wú7mesh (Squamish) speaking peoples.

GATHERING

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP

We are gathered in worship, turning away from the ways of the world to face the delight that we share in our Lord, that we might reflect on God's teachings and Word all the days of our lives. For God's presence among us roots us in love and community, prunes us from the shame of our sin, and sets us firm in the righteousness of God's grace and peace that rests on us in our worship, in our community, and throughout our lives, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**
Thanks be to God.

GATHERING HYMN: God Is Here! (#526)

GREETING

The unchanging grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the reassuring love of God, and the faithful communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

NOW THE FEAST (p. 4)

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Holy God, open our hearts to the possibility of your calling for our lives, to join with you and all the saints in your unchanging promises and steadfast love, that we might serve as your disciples in this world in need of a Saviour, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

FIRST READING: Acts 1:15-17, 21-26

A reading from Acts.

In the days between Jesus' ascension and Pentecost, Peter oversees the process whereby one of the members of the community of believers is chosen to be the twelfth apostle, in order to fill the vacancy created by Judas's treachery and death.

¹⁵In those days Peter stood up among the believers (together the crowd numbered about one hundred twenty persons) and said, ¹⁶"Friends, the scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit through David foretold concerning Judas, who became a guide for those who arrested Jesus—¹⁷for he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry." ²¹So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, ²²beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us— one of these must become a witness with us to his resurrection." ²³So they proposed two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also known as Justus, and Matthias. ²⁴Then they prayed and said, "Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which one of these two you have chosen ²⁵to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place." ²⁶And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias; and he was added to the eleven apostles.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 1

¹Happy are they who have not walked in the counsel of the wicked,
nor lingered in the way of sinners, nor sat in the seats of the scornful!

²**Their delight is in the law of the LORD,
and they meditate on God's teaching day and night.**

³They are like trees planted by streams of water, bearing fruit in due season, with leaves that do not wither;
everything they do shall prosper.

⁴**It is not so with the wicked;
they are like chaff which the wind blows away.**

⁵Therefore the wicked shall not stand upright when judgment comes,
nor the sinner in the council of the righteous.

⁶**For the LORD knows the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked shall be destroyed.**

SECOND READING: 1 John 5:9-13

A reading from 1 John.

God has borne witness to the gift of eternal life in Jesus Christ. Whoever believes in the Son of God believes in the witness of God and has the promise of eternal life.

⁹If we receive human testimony, the testimony of God is greater; for this is the testimony of God that he has testified to his Son. ¹⁰Those who believe in the Son of God have the testimony in their hearts. Those who do not believe in God have made him a liar by not believing in the testimony that God has given concerning his Son. ¹¹And this is the testimony: God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. ¹²Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

¹³I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (p. 8)

GOSPEL: John 17:6-19

The holy gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

In this reading the church hears Jesus' words on the night before his death—his prayer for his disciples and for all who would believe in him through their words.

[Jesus prayed:] ⁶"I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. ⁷Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; ⁸for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. ⁹I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. ¹⁰All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. ¹¹And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one. ¹²While I was with them, I protected them in your name that you have given me. I guarded them, and not one of them was lost

except the one destined to be lost, so that the scripture might be fulfilled. ¹³But now I am coming to you, and I speak these things in the world so that they may have my joy made complete in themselves. ¹⁴I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. ¹⁵I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one. ¹⁶They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. ¹⁷Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. ¹⁸As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. ¹⁹And for their sakes I sanctify myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth.”

The gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

May your Word and truth, O God, sanctify us in your unchanging love and bring us perfect joy, through Jesus our Lord. **Amen.**

The lawn saga continues... I know, you might be getting tired of hearing about my gardening woes, but some of you might not be all caught up with the going on's at the Fong Lawn, which is what I'm going to be calling it now. Some of you might remember from a couple weeks ago how I dug up my lawn with hopes of reseeding and starting over. Well last week I had ordered a good 3 inches of topsoil to cover the gross stuff that was already there and fill up the space a bit, and I spread it out over the yard with the help of our kids and my brother. And I got a bunch of grass seed and spread it nicely over the area, just in time for that torrential rain that we got last Sunday.

My wife, the mother of my children (both the same person, by the way), has recently gotten into gardening, and I thought a fresh new lawn would be a great Mother's Day gift. So I had big hopes that the grass would at least start budding or whatever you call it, in time for today.

Well, of course, things are never that easy, are they. The rain didn't actually help as much as it did a number on the dirt, I guess in my relocating it all, I didn't level it or pack it down well enough as now there are holes and hills all over and it's all pretty wonky. I was politely asked by a member of my family to maybe perhaps think about releveling it all, to which I agreed, I mean it made sense to do so. It's just a lot more work than I was expecting, and I was also worried about the seed that I had already spread will probably end up being too deep in the dirt and thus unable to grow properly if at all.

But it's ok, I'll keep my hopes up. It's not like the seeds that I used were all that expensive anyway, so I was ok with just picking up some more, which I did. But the grass expert at the grass place where I was picking up the grass seed was telling me more stuff that a newb like me didn't know, and how we got so little snow in our mountains this past winter that the water ban was already in effect. Basically they were telling me that I'll be having a really hard time growing a new lawn this season.

Really?

The first thing that came to my mind was “gosh darn it to heck”. Perhaps a little less PG than that, but you get the idea. My heart just kind of sunk. I mean it's not like I can just abandon the project, it looks like a barren wasteland in the back right now, and I'd feel bad for all the hours of work that our kids and my brother put in. A nice new fresh lawn was just there within my grasp and I felt it slipping through my fingers. I had such high hopes but it feels like it, much like a lot of other areas in my life, will just end up in disappointment.

Disappointed. Deflated. Discouraged. All those “D” words running rampant through my mind and heart. But the emotion that stood out most that unfortunately doesn't start with a D but I was still

feeling anyway, was *regret*. Regret for biting off more than I could chew. Regret for jumping in headfirst without doing the proper research on how to do this first before breaking up the ground. Regret for ever even having any sort of hope in the success in, what is considered by many but just apparently not me, this simple undertaking.

Now, I share this experience with you not to have you shake your head at my inaptitude, roll your eyes at my foolishness, or even chuckle at my misfortune. Well, maybe a bit of that last one as I actually do think it's kind of a funny story. But mostly I want to point out this feeling of regret. A feeling that I'm relatively certain that all of us have felt at some point in our lives, and if not, we likely will in the future. It's hard not to feel regret over a number of different reasons. Perhaps it was, like me, a project that went wrong. Maybe it was a word or two that we shouldn't have been said but we did anyway. Or maybe it was a hope put into something or someone that completely let us down and left us disappointed, deflated, and discouraged. Maybe it was a parent, a teacher, or someone who we thought was going to save us all.

This is the emotional context that the disciples would have been in as they heard Jesus' passion predictions, when he told them how he'll be betrayed, arrested, and killed by the hands of their enemies. As we know, they had high hopes for this Messiah character and the promises that were supposed to come with him. They were looking forward to political independence, religious freedom, and making Israel great again. But in response to these hopes and expectations, Jesus basically just tells them that he won't be doing any of those things after all, and that they should keep on keepin' on in their community, service, and charity.

Uh, what.

So no overthrowing the government? No revolution? No war to hurt those that hurt us? What kind of salvation is this?

So yeah, disappointment was had. They were likely feeling deflated when Jesus even suggested that he was on his way to a cross instead of a throne. It would have been discouraging to learn that their hopes of a new world as they understood it was only a pipe dream. And above all, perhaps regret was going through their minds that they ever dropped their nets, followed this guy, and even believed in him.

But to all of that, as we see in today's gospel reading, a portion of the "Farewell Discourse," Jesus prays for them. Jesus prays for strength in all that they do, understanding of their position in community and God's kingdom, and of course, belief and acceptance that in spite of all the disappointment and regret, that they continue to be saved and loved.

Because isn't that the first thing that we forget when we're feeling those disappointment feelings? Doesn't loneliness come and smack us upside the head when we're regretting our actions, thoughts, and dreams? Don't we often think that we're perhaps a little less loved by God and those around us when things aren't going our way?

That's what happens to me, at least. In failure I feel alone. In disappointment I feel isolated. In regret I find myself needing to be more and more reminded that I am still loved.

And Jesus does exactly that. Before we ever get to that point of desperation and loneliness, Jesus reminds us that we are loved. Before we are filled with that disappointment and regret, Jesus shows us that we are loved. Before we even need it, Jesus reassures us by walking to an undeserved death and defeating death to lift us up into community, joy, and new life, that we are dearly and wholly loved.

The fact of the matter is, we will never be free from disappointment and regret. We will always at some point feel isolated and lonely. We will face unrealized dreams and hopelessness. But in those times, we

can remember that God's love remains steadfast. Our hope in God's promises remains true. Jesus continues to pray that our joy be made complete. This kind of reassurance doesn't eliminate the regret we feel from time to time, but it does help us in remembering who we are, whose we are, and our position in God's eternal kingdom and community.

So it's ok that our yard might look awful for this Mother's Day. It's ok that my hopes and dreams for this and other things haven't been realised. It's ok that we sometimes feel disappointed and alone. Because none of that defines us or names us. Our salvation isn't dependant on how successful we are in our endeavours or not. God's love for us doesn't change just because sometimes our love for ourself does. Instead, God remains always present with us, among us, abiding with us, lifting us up in love and community and constantly reminding us of our welcome, inclusion, and unchanging identity as God's people in the world.

Let us always remember this love in our lives, that while we might make mistakes, be disappointed, and have regret, we know that not failures nor self-hate nor any negative emotions we might carry, would or could ever snatch us out of God's hands. Hands that bring us in, lift us up, and lead us into peace and joy.

As we reach the end of the Easter season, may our hope in the promise of resurrection remain true, that our realisation of God's love for us and all people continue to inform us and strengthen us in our journey through this world, through relationship, and through life. Thanks be to God. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY: Guide Me Ever, Great Redeemer (#618)

CREED (p. 9)

Together with all those joyfully welcomed into the kingdom of God, let us confess the Christian faith with the Apostle's Creed:

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.*
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Called into complete joy with our unchanging God, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. Each petition will end with, "by your endless mercy, O God," and you are all invited to respond with **hear our prayer**. By your endless mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

Holy God, we give you thanks for all that you have done, filling our lives with your goodness and grace, and bringing us together in your name. Bless us as a congregation, a community, and family, that we might continue in your work in the world. We also pray for 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 Greg and national bishop Susan, and our sister churches of the BC Synod. In particular we pray for Grace Lutheran Church in Victoria and the pastors and leaders that serve there; as well as for Mount Olive Lutheran Church in Surrey and their pastor Lori-Anne Boutin-Crawford. By your endless mercy, O God, **hear our prayer.**

Holy God, we give you thanks for all that you have made, giving us a place to live and call home. May we properly care for what you have entrusted to us, and may we respect the awesome power of nature. Be with all who live in areas of harsh weather or are affected by natural disasters, that they may find safety and peace. By your endless mercy, O God, **hear our prayer.**

Holy God, we give you thanks for all that you have given us, creating us united as a people yet unique as individuals. Bless us in our diverse cultures and traditions, but also teach us to respect and honour each other in the midst of difference. Bring peace to areas of war, and bring justice to areas of oppression. We pray for the continued support of those that we've sponsored to come into our country: Abraham Barhane; and Solyana Amanuel; and for those that have not yet arrived: Maekele Kiflu, Selam Haile, and their children; and Filimon Abraha. By your endless mercy, O God, **hear our prayer.**

Holy God, we give you thanks for all that you have blessed us with, teaching us true community and relationship. Be with those among us who are sick, who mourn, or who feel lonely, that all may still know of and rely on your love and peace through our community and proclamation. We pray especially for Ron, Tess, and Mineko; Beulah; Bryan and Chona; Kathy and Raj; Bev and family; Phil; John and Betty; Kristen; Sukhwant; Kristina; Laura; Kandie; Thomas Will; Chris; Larry; Walter; Piet; Pat and Patty; Hwee Yang; Ephraim; and all those we name aloud or quietly in our hearts at this time...
By your endless mercy, O God, **hear our prayer.**

Holy God, we give you thanks for all that you reveal to us, showing us how we are all connected to you and your saints in the eternal body of Christ. Keep us in community together, that as we look for strength and encouragement, we might readily find it among your people in your kingdom. By your endless mercy, O God, **hear our prayer.**

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in the joy given to us by 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, O God, through our Saviour Jesus Christ, whose life was given in order for us to see your great love and joy, that we might, together with the choirs of angels, hosts of heaven, and church on earth, praise your name with this unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (p. 11)

GREAT THANKSGIVING

Blessed are you, O God, creator of all things. By your power and love you continue to deliver us from bondage, thwart the designs of evil, lead and guide us through the wilderness, turn hardship into righteousness, and reveal your presence among us by upholding us in justice and community.

Blessed are you, O Christ, servant of the universe. You came among us to feed and heal and teach, and above all, give hope to all who long for peace.

For on the night of your betrayal, you took the bread, gave thanks for it, and shared with all saying, "Take and eat, this is my body broken for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

And then after the meal, you took the cup, gave thanks, and shared it with all saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me."

In remembrance of all that you have done and continue to do in your self-giving love, we proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

Blessed are you, Holy Spirit, giver of life. You give us words when we have none; you fill us with vision when we are in the most despair; you give us voice to proclaim our faith in every hour. Be our wisdom and hope, today and always.

Breathe life onto this meal, O Creator God, Christ our Saviour, Spirit of love, that we might revel in the promise of resurrection and new life and be joined to each other in community in service to all. For all blessing and honour are yours, as you fill us and feed us, now and forever.

Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER (p. 13)

Gathered into joy and peace 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 your joy made complete.
Thanks be to God.

COMMUNION

COMMUNION HYMNS: Lamb of God (p. 14)
I Know That My Redeemer Lives! (#619)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

O Lord, you lift us up by feeding us with this heavenly food, filling our spirits with your love and compassion. May we be empowered by your promises of joy made complete and your unchanging presence among us as we go into the world, proclaiming your gospel of salvation to all people, through the faith of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

BLESSING

May the Spirit of community bless you with love and peace,
the God who created the heavens and earth grant you grace and mercy,
and Jesus the Christ fill you with unending and unchanging joy, both now and forever.
Amen.

SENDING SONG: Son of God, Eternal Savior (#655)

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, be filled with the joy of God's love.
Thanks be to God.