



**GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH**

**OF SOUTH BURNABY, BC**

**EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA**

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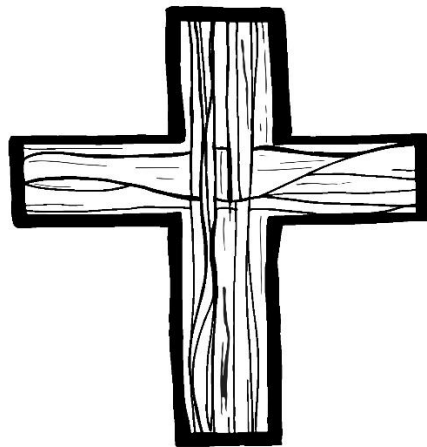
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**Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost**

**September 15, 2024**

**ELW Holy Communion, Setting 10**

Three weeks ago we heard Peter's confession of faith as told in John's gospel. This week we hear Mark's version, when Peter says, "You are the Messiah." In John, the stumbling block is Jesus' invitation to eat his flesh, given for the life of the world. In Mark too the scandal has to do with Jesus' words about his own coming death, and here Peter himself stumbles over Jesus' words. But Jesus is anointed (the meaning of *messiah*) in Mark only on the way to the cross (14:3); so we are anointed in baptism with the sign of the cross.

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 hən̓q̓əmiñəm (Musqueam) and Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) peoples.

## GATHERING

### CALL TO WORSHIP

We gather in the name of our Lord, who hears our voice, listens to our supplications, and gives ear to us when we call. For the Lord is gracious and righteous, full of compassion and saves us when we are entangled in the anguish of grief and sorrow and rescues us from fear and stumbling. So let us together worship this God who walks with us, is present among us, and continues to lead us into faith and hope, through Jesus Christ. **Amen. Thanks be to God.**

**GATHERING HYMN:** Oh, Praise the Gracious Power (#651) verses 1, 2, 3, 7

### GREETING

The humbling grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the divine love of God, and the unifying fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**And also with you.**

**CANTICLE OF PRAISE** (p. 204)

### PRAYER OF THE DAY

God of all mercy and grace, you lead us through this journey of life and call us into community and righteousness. Continue to strengthen us in our faith, forgive us in our shortcomings, and lift us up out of our shame, that we might always be aware of your ever-near presence, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## WORD

### FIRST READING: Isaiah 50:4-9a

A reading from Isaiah.

*The image of the servant of the Lord is one of the notable motifs in the book of Isaiah. Today's reading describes the mission of the servant, whom early Christians associated with Jesus. Like Jesus, the servant does not strike back at his detractors but trusts in God's steadfast love.*

<sup>4</sup>The Lord GOD has given me  
the tongue of a teacher,  
that I may know how to sustain  
the weary with a word.  
Morning by morning he wakens—  
wakens my ear  
to listen as those who are taught.

<sup>5</sup>The Lord GOD has opened my ear,  
and I was not rebellious,  
I did not turn backward.

<sup>6</sup>I gave my back to those who struck me,  
and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard;  
I did not hide my face  
from insult and spitting.

<sup>7</sup>The Lord GOD helps me;  
therefore I have not been disgraced;  
therefore I have set my face like flint,

and I know that I shall not be put to shame;  
<sup>8</sup>he who vindicates me is near.  
Who will contend with me?  
Let us stand up together.  
Who are my adversaries?  
Let them confront me.  
<sup>9a</sup>It is the Lord GOD who helps me;  
who will declare me guilty?

The word of the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**

**PSALM: Psalm 116:1-9**

<sup>1</sup>I love the LORD, who has heard my voice,  
and listened to my supplication,  
<sup>2</sup>**for the LORD has given ear to me  
whenever I called.**  
<sup>3</sup>The cords of death entangled me; the anguish of the grave came upon me;  
I came to grief and sorrow.  
<sup>4</sup>**Then I called upon the name of the LORD:  
“O LORD, I pray you, save my life.”**  
<sup>5</sup>Gracious is the LORD and righteous;  
our God is full of compassion.  
<sup>6</sup>**The LORD watches over the innocent;  
I was brought low, and God saved me.**  
<sup>7</sup>Turn again to your rest, O my soul.  
for the LORD has dealt well with you.  
<sup>8</sup>**For you have rescued my life from death,  
my eyes from tears, and my feet from stumbling;**  
<sup>9</sup>I will walk in the presence of the LORD  
in the land of the living.

**SECOND READING: James 3:1-12**

A reading from James.

*This text uses various images to illustrate how damaging and hurtful the way we speak to and about others can be. Not only are we to control our speech, but what we say and how we say it are to reflect our faith.*

<sup>1</sup>Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers and sisters, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. <sup>2</sup>For all of us make many mistakes. Anyone who makes no mistakes in speaking is perfect, able to keep the whole body in check with a bridle. <sup>3</sup>If we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we guide their whole bodies. <sup>4</sup>Or look at ships: though they are so large that it takes strong winds to drive them, yet they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. <sup>5</sup>So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great exploits.

How great a forest is set ablaze by a small fire! <sup>6</sup>And the tongue is a fire. The tongue is placed among our members as a world of iniquity; it stains the whole body, sets on fire the cycle of nature, and is itself set on fire by hell. <sup>7</sup>For every species of beast and bird, of reptile and sea

creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by the human species,<sup>8</sup> but no one can tame the tongue—a restless evil, full of deadly poison.<sup>9</sup> With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse those who are made in the likeness of God.<sup>10</sup> From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this ought not to be so.<sup>11</sup> Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and brackish water?<sup>12</sup> Can a fig tree, my brothers and sisters, yield olives, or a grapevine figs? No more can salt water yield fresh.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

### **GOSPEL ACCLAMATION** (p. 205)

#### **GOSPEL: Mark 8:27-38**

The holy gospel according to Mark.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

*This story provides the turning point in Mark's gospel. Peter is the first human being in the narrative to acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah, but he cannot accept that as the Messiah Jesus will have to suffer. Moreover, Jesus issues a strong challenge to all by connecting discipleship and the cross.*

<sup>27</sup>Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" <sup>28</sup>And they answered him, "John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets." <sup>29</sup>He asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Messiah." <sup>30</sup>And he sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about him.

<sup>31</sup>Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. <sup>32</sup>He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. <sup>33</sup>But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."

<sup>34</sup>He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. <sup>35</sup>For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. <sup>36</sup>For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? <sup>37</sup>Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? <sup>38</sup>Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

### **SERMON**

Speak your wisdom to us, O Lord, and let your Spirit open our ears to hear and our eyes to see your truth, your grace, and your will, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

So anyone watch the US Presidential debate this past Tuesday? I didn't get to watch it live, but through the magic of YouTube I was able to catch at least the highlights of said debate well after the fact, much like how many of you are using that YouTube magic to hear these words...

Anyway, in case you haven't been keeping up with world events, there is an election coming up for our neighbours to the south, and it looks like it'll be a doozy. But I guess if you think about it, their last few elections have been doozies. And in a way I was hoping that this debate would be civil, in that the candidates only talk about their policies and plans for what they'd do if they were elected. But if you saw it, you'll know that isn't exactly what happened. There was a lot of accusations and finger pointing on both sides, but at least the name calling was at a minimum.

Either case, in spite of my hopes of a civil debate, I tried to go in with an as open mind as possible. And to me, from what I saw there was a clear winner of the debate. So while my hopes of a civil debate were dashed, it turned into a hope that everyone would see what I saw, which might bring out a more unified and harmonious country, even if it isn't the one where I currently reside.

Was I ever wrong. Not about where I live, but about the debate bringing more unity. Everywhere I went online showed me that the American people were more divided than ever. Whichever way they were already leaning, it seemed to me that they doubled down and started leaning in that direction with more fervor and tenacity than at least I've ever seen before.

The event did nothing to sway them, regardless of how I thought their candidate did or didn't do. This debate did nothing to really change the minds of the masses. This display of such opposing people in both policy and politeness really only solidified in people what they had already determined they would think. And that is that their candidate is the best and their opposition is the worst, regardless of what evidence comes up to prove it otherwise.

And so we enter dangerous ground here, not just in politics but in all areas of life. Because when everything can be so predetermined in our minds, then there is almost no point in having any kind of discussion or opportunities for learning or growth. We already think what we think and already believe what we believe. It's hard for us to see anything new when we're already certain that we know what we know.

We do see this in politics, of course, whether it be American, Canadian, or otherwise. But we also see this in our interactions and relationships whenever there is any kind of disagreement or friction. We see this even between churches when we talk about different doctrine and sometimes traditions.

And we see this in today's gospel reading. In this somewhat familiar passage, we see Jesus gauging what people know about him. And after the disciples tell him what they've heard, Jesus goes and asks them the dreaded question... "Who do you say that I am?"

I say that this is a dreaded question because how it's answered would reveal what levels of observation and perception have been employed, and frankly how much the disciples have been paying attention. The question is almost a trap because whatever answer is given would put you in a certain camp or side of the political spectrum. The text isn't clear if there was an awkward silence or not, but I like to imagine that there was as the disciples carefully worked out in their heads what an appropriate response would be. But then of course, it was Peter who blurts out an answer.

“You are the Messiah” which, in typical gospel of Mark fashion, is simply to the point and with no added fluff whatsoever. In Matthew’s gospel account however, Peter also says that Jesus is the “Son of the living God”. So at first glance, it would seem like Peter actually does know his stuff. We nod our heads in agreement to his statement, as that is who we too, would probably say that Jesus is. We might even hit the “like” or maybe even “love” button if Peter posted this up on his socials.

But as soon as Peter gets to puff his chest out with his accurate statement, he is knocked down a few notches. Right after he calls Jesus the Messiah, Peter gets called Satan. Peter, while being totally right with what he said, is somehow still totally wrong.

And so maybe we’re worried that perhaps we have it wrong as well. Maybe we second guess who we might say that Jesus is. Perhaps we want to go back to that status post and discreetly “unlike” it, in hopes that no one saw or will notice.

But again, Peter isn’t wrong in what he said. He isn’t wrong in saying that Jesus is the Messiah and in Matthew, the Son of the Living God. Peter isn’t wrong in who he says Jesus is.

But what he is wrong about is what all of that means.

See the title “Son of God” isn’t a unique one for just Jesus or the Messiah. In fact, the title “Messiah” isn’t really unique either. These were all terms that were known and used in those times, usually for royalty, strong political leaders, and social influencers. That is, of the culturally fundamental kind, not of the dancing TikTok kind.

And so Peter calling Jesus the Son of God, which again he isn’t wrong about, would have been tied to ideas of authority, power, and might. Peter, and the other Israelites, would have imagined a revolution, a rising up of the people, a reforming of what is into something that it should be, which usually would mean advantage and privilege for the eye of the beholder.

What it wouldn’t mean though to the culture of that time, is rejection, suffering, and death. Which incidentally is exactly what Jesus said will happen to him.

So what Jesus says about being the Messiah doesn’t fit into Peter’s preset worldview. It doesn’t fit in what the people of the time probably thought would have been the best for them. Quite truthfully it doesn’t even really fit with what we would want for a teacher, a leader, or even a messiah.

And to that discrepancy, Jesus calls it satan. As in the adversary; what stands in the way of what is just and righteous; a focus on human things. Human things such as authority, power, and might being the goal of all things good and faithful. Instead, Jesus points to the divine things such as service to others, grace, and humility. Service in seeing the needs of others. Grace in accepting those who are different. And humility in picking up the cross, the ancient symbol of rejection, shame, and suffering that is transformed into the ultimate symbol for community, inclusion, and God’s love seen in the world. These are the lessons that Jesus taught. These are the traits that he calls us to have. These are the virtues that he himself displayed with every ounce of his life.

And to be honest, I don't see much of that in the world today. Not in Tuesday's debate, not in the political elections and agendas in general, not in the reactions of the people that vocally state their political stance. All those are clearly focussed on human things.

But I do see it in the hearts of those that genuinely want to make the world a better place. Not just for themselves or those who hail the same colours as them, but those that see the world as worthy to be united, worthy to be loved, worthy to be saved. I see it in the actions that are done without worry about ratings, popularity scores, or attendance numbers. I see it in our passion to spread God's love to all people, friend, stranger, and even foe, alike. These are divine things.

I'm not saying that we get it perfect. I'm not saying that we are exactly where Jesus wants us to be. I'm not saying that we've made it, reached our goals, and can hang up our crosses because we won't be needing those things anymore. But what I'm saying is that there is hope in this fallen and broken world. There is still light in the overwhelming darkness. There is the presence of God's Spirit seen and felt throughout our communities and right relationships, revealing to us grace, mercy, and welcome.

So as we continue to live in this world surrounded by people of different backgrounds, different opinions, and different political leaning, may we continue to focus on the divine things of service, grace, and humility, that we might be able to pick up our crosses to follow Jesus the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of the Living God. Thanks be to God. Amen.

**HYMN OF THE DAY:** Lift High the Cross (#660)

**CREED** (p. 104)

Together with the whole church, 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 to set our minds on divine things, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. Each petition will end with “in your compassionate grace, O God” and you may respond with **hear our prayer**. In your compassionate grace, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, you hear our voices and you give us ear as we pray. Keep our minds set on divine things, that our ministry might reflect your grace and that all we encounter might be encouraged by your love. We remember in prayer our neighbouring faith communities; those that 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. In your compassionate grace, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, we call upon your name and you provide for our lives. You have created this planet and entrusted it to us to be our home. Strengthen us in our stewardship, that our care for all that you have made be pleasing to you. In your compassionate grace, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, you watch over the innocent and we turn to you. Enlighten all world leaders and politicians with your wisdom, that their leadership might reflect your humility and grace. We pray for the upcoming election in our province and all candidates and voters as we move into the future. We also pray for the continued support of those that we’ve sponsored to come into this country: Abraham Barhane; and Solyana Amanuel; and for those who have not yet arrived: Maekele Kiflu, Selam Haile, and their children; and Filimon Abraha. In your compassionate grace, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, we are entangled by the cords of illness, death, and grief, but you come and save us from harm. Be with all who call upon your name, and shine your divine mercy on us all. Especially we pray for Ron, Tess, and Mineko; Beulah; Bev and family; Bryan and Chona; Ellwood; John and Betty; Sukhwant; Bishop Kathy; Pastor Kristen; Pastor Vida; Laura; Kandie; Thomas; Will; Chris; Larry; Walter; Piet; Hwee Yang; Ephraim; Georgina; Teddy and family; and all those we name aloud or quietly in our hearts at this time...  
In your compassionate grace, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, you have rescued our lives from death, our eyes from tears, and our feet from stumbling. You join us with all the saints and allow us to walk in your presence forever. May this promise inform our living, setting our minds on divine and eternal things through the power of your Spirit. In your compassionate grace, O God, **hear our prayer**.

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your merciful love, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

**PEACE** (p. 106)

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**



## MEAL

### DIALOGUE

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

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

### PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,  
that we should at all times and in all places  
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,  
through our Saviour Jesus Christ;  
who saves us through humble grace and joins us together  
with the choirs of angels,  
the hosts of heaven and the whole church on earth,  
to praise your name with this unending hymn:

**HOLY, HOLY, HOLY** (p. 207)

### THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

O Lord, your love for us is reflected in how you hear and listen to our supplication and answer us when we call. Even as we come to you in our grief and sorrow, entangled in death and anguish, you save us with your grace and righteous compassion. You watch over us and lift us up into life, wiping the tears from our eyes and keeping our paths straight. And you further welcome us into your presence by sending to us your Son Jesus, to live among us as one of us to set an example of your gracious love in the world.

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

And after they had eaten it, Jesus 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."

For it is in this food that we see the humility in your saving grace, present with us as we declare this mystery of faith:

**Christ has died.**

**Christ is risen.**

**Christ will come again.**

My our minds be always set on you and your truth, made possible by your Word, given to us through your promises in Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

## **LORD'S PRAYER** (p. 112)

Gathered into God's saving grace and joined 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 that God is with us.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **COMMUNION**

**COMMUNION HYMNS:** Lamb of God (p. 208)

Take Up Your Cross, the Saviour Said (#667)

## **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Holy God, we give you thanks for again feeding us and filling us with this bread from heaven that nourishes us with your truth and grace. May we be empowered by your love and blessed by your strength, that we might always see you working in and around us and our community, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## **SENDING**

### **BLESSING**

May the blessing of God, Shepherd, Saviour, and Spirit, abide with you, keep you strong and humble, and keep you focused on the divine peace that surpasses all understanding, now and forever.

**Amen.**

**SENDING HYMN:** Will You Come and Follow Me (#798)

### **DISMISSAL**

Go in peace, take your cross and follow Christ.

**Thanks be to God.**