



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



Third Sunday after Epiphany

January 26, 2025

ELW Holy Communion, Setting Eight

God's glory is revealed in the reading of scripture. People stand at attention. People weep. People prostrate themselves in prayer. The unity of the church is another reflection of God's glory. Most gloriously, the promises of God are fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ. Gather round. Listen up. Glimpse the glory of God.

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 hə́nq̓əmiṅə́m̓ (Musqueam) and Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh (Squamish) speaking peoples.

GATHERING

CALL TO WORSHIP

We gather together to declare the glory of God with the heavens, to proclaim our master's handiwork, and to share the good news of God's redeeming love to all lands and to the ends of the world. Just as the sun rises and sets and gives forth its radiant light, so God's love touches all of the earth. For the Lord's teaching is perfect and revives our souls, grants us wisdom, rejoices our hearts, and brings light to our eyes. So we sing our worship and praise for God is gracious, gentle, and kind, and is our strength and our redeemer, through Jesus Christ. **Amen. Thanks be to God.**

GATHERING SONG: Praise the One Who Breaks the Darkness (#843)

GREETING

The ever true grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the unending love of God, and the good news in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

CANTICLE OF PRAISE (p. 185)

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Holy God, we give you thanks for the gift of your Word Jesus Christ, who lives out your very will, anointed to proclaim your good news, and blesses us with the declaration of your forgiveness. Strengthen us in our faith, that our very lives may reflect the good news of your eternal salvation, through Jesus Christ by the power of your Spirit. **Amen.**

WORD

FIRST READING: Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10

A reading from Nehemiah.

The exiles have returned and rebuilt Jerusalem. Now Ezra, the priest, reads the law of Moses to them in the public square. When they hear it, they weep for their sins and for the long years in exile, but Ezra reminds them that "the joy of the LORD is your strength."

¹ All the people [of Israel] gathered together into the square before the Water Gate. They told Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the LORD had given to Israel.

² Accordingly, Ezra the priest brought the law before the assembly, both men and women and all who could hear with understanding. This was on the first day of the seventh month. ³ He read from it facing the square before the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand, and the ears of all the people were attentive to the book of the law. ⁵ And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was standing above all the people, and when he opened it, all the people stood up. ⁶ Then Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God, and all the people answered, "Amen, Amen," lifting up their hands. Then they bowed their heads and worshiped the LORD with their faces to the ground. ⁸ So they read from the book, from the law of God, with interpretation. They gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading.

⁹ And Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, "This day is holy to the LORD your God; do not mourn or weep." For all the people wept when they heard the words of the law. ¹⁰ Then he said to them, "Go your way, eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions of them to those for whom

nothing is prepared, for this day is holy to our LORD, and do not be grieved, for the joy of the LORD is your strength.”

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 19

¹ The heavens declare the glory of God,
and the sky proclaims its maker’s handiwork.

² **One day tells its tale to another,
and one night imparts knowledge to another.**

³ Although they have no words or language,
and their voices are not heard,

⁴ **their sound has gone out into all lands, and their message to the ends of the world,
where God has pitched a tent for the sun.**

⁵ It comes forth like a bridegroom out of his chamber;
it rejoices like a champion to run its course.

⁶ **It goes forth from the uttermost edge of the heavens and runs about to the end of it
again;**

nothing is hidden from its burning heat.

⁷ The teaching of the LORD is perfect and revives the soul;
the testimony of the LORD is sure and gives wisdom to the simple.

⁸ **The statutes of the LORD are just and rejoice the heart;
the commandment of the LORD is clear and gives light to the eyes.**

⁹ The fear of the LORD is clean and endures forever;
the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.

¹⁰ **More to be desired are they than gold, more than much fine gold,
sweeter far than honey, than honey in the comb.**

¹¹ By them also is your servant enlightened,
and in keeping them there is great reward.

¹² **Who can detect one’s own offenses?
Cleanse me from my secret faults.**

¹³ Above all, keep your servant from presumptuous sins; let them not get dominion over me;
then shall I be whole and sound, and innocent of a great offense.

¹⁴ **Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight,
O LORD, my strength and my redeemer.**

SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a

A reading from 1 Corinthians.

The apostle and pastor Paul uses the metaphor of the human body to describe how intimately connected we are in the church. For this struggling congregation in Corinth, Paul delivers a vital message of unity that is a mark of the church today.

¹² For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³ For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

¹⁴ Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. ¹⁵ If the foot would say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁶ And if the ear would say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,”

that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? ¹⁸ But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. ¹⁹ If all were a single member, where would the body be? ²⁰ As it is, there are many members yet one body. ²¹ The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." ²² On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, ²³ and those members of the body that we think less honorable we clothe with greater honor, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect, ²⁴ whereas our more respectable members do not need this. But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior member, ²⁵ that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. ²⁶ If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it.

²⁷ Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. ²⁸ And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then deeds of power, then gifts of healing, forms of assistance, forms of leadership, various kinds of tongues. ²⁹ Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work powerful deeds? ³⁰ Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? ^{31a} But strive for the greater gifts.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (p. 188)

GOSPEL: Luke 4:14-21

The holy gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Near the beginning of Jesus' public ministry, he visits his hometown of Nazareth. In the words of Isaiah, he states and claims his identity, purpose, and mission.

¹⁴ Then Jesus, in the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding region. ¹⁵ He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone.

¹⁶ When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, ¹⁷ and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

¹⁸ "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,

because he has anointed me

to bring good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives

and recovery of sight to the blind,

to set free those who are oppressed,

¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour."

²⁰ And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. ²¹ Then he began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

God of all wisdom, may we hear your Word for us this day, that we be drawn to the Spirit by the Spirit, through the life and teachings of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

“Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

Amen. Alright, thanks for coming out everyone, I’ll see you all later...

What? If Jesus could get away a one-liner sermon, why can’t I? Well, I guess maybe me *not* being Jesus might have something to do with it? I mean, if I were to get up on a Sunday, preach only a single sentence, and then go and sit down, that would have to be some sentence, am I right? It’d have to be supremely deep and meaningful. It’d have to be clear, concise, and absolutely mic drop worthy and not plagiarizing at all, at least without giving proper credit, nor AI generated whatsoever.

So I probably wouldn’t be able to get away with just a one-liner sermon. But I guess if you think about it, Jesus *didn’t* really get away with this one line sermon either, as we’ll see in the people’s reaction to his sermon in next week’s readings. Spoiler alert: they try to throw him off a cliff. This week, however, we’ll be looking at the sermon itself.

We are familiar with this story, aren’t we? If not before today, we probably are now as we just heard it read to us. But in case you weren’t paying attention, basically Jesus was in his hometown attending worship at his home church where he was signed up to be the lector for that day. The scroll of Isaiah was given to him, which is no surprise as Isaiah was like the most popular of the Old Testament scriptures, which in those days, they just called it “scriptures.” I mean, no other book is quoted and used as much as Isaiah throughout the New Testament, which in those days, they just called it “now.”

And so Jesus scrolled through that scroll until he got to the part which we are unsure if he chose because he liked or was the assigned lectionary text for the day, but to that part of Isaiah that proclaims good news, release for the captives, recovery of sight for the blind, freedom for the oppressed, and the year of the Lord’s favour. All that sounds great, don’t it? A lot of good stuff in there that brings hope, joy, and peace to the troubled heart. There’s a lot of sermon fodder in that text that shouldn’t be too hard for any level of preacher to cobble something together from it.

But Jesus? He came up with that one line. And as I said, next week we’ll see how his short sermon almost got him killed. Why on earth were the people so riled up over it? I mean, I’ve preached bad sermons before, but no one ever wanted to kill me over them, that I know of at least. What was it in this one line that was so offensive to them?

To be fair, I’m not so sure if it was the length of Jesus’ sermon that bothered them so much as the content of it. It was likely more about what he said rather than how long it took him to say it. It wasn’t the quantity of words that was so offensive to them, but how those particular words hit where they were. You’d think that these 9 words wouldn’t be all that offensive, right? “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” That doesn’t sound offensive to us at all, it actually sounds more like good news. Good news in that the wait is over. Good news in that the time is now. Good news in that *today*, we’ll see God at work in and around our lives.

But maybe that was the thing. Good news can be offensive.

Now, don’t get me wrong, I’m not saying we should intentionally offend people when sharing the good news. Nor am I saying that whenever we’re offended by something that it’s actually good news and we’re just overreacting. I’m not even saying that if we ain’t offended then it ain’t good news, either.

Rather, I'm saying that sometimes we are offended even when we hear good news because for various reasons, it doesn't sound like good news to us. Sometimes that good news can be triggering or bring up past trauma or pain. Sometimes that good news actually sounds like bad news.

You know what I mean, don't you? Like maybe you're a firm believer of the saying, "if it's too good to be true, then it probably isn't." Or maybe you brush off every vendor at every store who promises you an instant discount on your purchase if you sign up for their store card. Or maybe, like I once did, you almost threw away a \$50 gift card because you've become so skeptical of all these "junk ads" that kept coming in the mail.

Or perhaps you or someone you know wonder about being saved and how we could probably just take care of ourselves instead. Or maybe you or someone you know scoffs at the thought of being loved, because the "love" that had been received from past broken relationships might be something that is best avoided. Or maybe you or someone you know takes offense at being promised to be set free, because children of Abraham have never been slaves to anyone, so that freedom isn't needed.

See we might find these things offensive because in being given them, that could mean that we need them. Because we're offered it, that could mean that we weren't able to obtain or gain it on our own merit. If we accept it, then we are admitting to our own failures and faults and weaknesses. And in this day and age, that kind of vulnerability is just not something that we want to put out there to be exploited and taken advantage of.

Don't believe me? How often, when we're asked how we're doing, we just say "ok" when we're really not ok? How often do we not accept help because we think that we can do it ourselves, take care of ourselves, and handle whatever situation by ourselves? How often are we reluctant to admit that we're wrong or in need or lost?

If you're anything like me, then the answer to all that would be like, daily. *Daily* I pretend that I'm stronger than I am. *Daily* I hide behind these walls that I've put up to protect me from the hurt and pain and traumas of the past. *Daily* I tell myself that I'm good enough, I'm smart enough, and gosh darn it, people like me.

Daily, I subconsciously tell myself that I don't need anyone but me.

And in all of that, Jesus comes in and says, "uh, actually..."

Jesus, this relatively unknown character at this point who blends into the background. Jesus, this kid from the bricks that we might have watched grow up. Jesus, this under-qualified, under-educated, under-ordinary dude is telling us that he's here to give us good news and that he's anointed to save us? The nerve of this guy. No wonder they wanted him dead.

But you know what? Jesus isn't wrong. Today *is* the day that we receive good news. Today *is* the day that God is revealed to be with us and shows us grace and mercy. Today *is* the day that we are redeemed, freed, saved, and brought into our Lord's everlasting and unending favour.

But we don't receive this good news because we need it or because we're lacking or because we're weak. While all that could very well be true, that isn't why it is offered to us. Instead, we are given all of this because God so very dearly and wholly loves us. Just as a parent might love their child in spite of the defiance and attempts to break free to be independent. Just as a child might love their parent in spite of the constant nagging, bad timing, and expectation to do something when the lack of wine threatens to ruin the wedding celebration. Just we all share love among our companions, comrades, and community, so God loves us and even more than that, more than we could ever ask for or imagine. And out of that love for us, God brings us good news of release and recovery. God provides for us forgiveness and salvation. God frees us from the sin that holds us down, the selfishness that keeps us

from right relationship, and the stubbornness that makes us think that we don't need anyone else but ourselves. And even then God welcomes us all into God's favour, and tells us that we belong.

God shows us, fills us, and lifts us up with this love. God holds us, unites us, and blesses us with this love. God, very simply put, *is this love*.

God is love for us, through us, and in spite of us. God is love always and forever, for all of eternity. God is love... *today*.

So in this season after the Epiphany and beyond, may we continue to see God's love for us all through the life and teachings of Jesus Christ by the power of the Spirit. Thanks be to God. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY: Now Thank We All Our God (#840)

CREED

With the whole body of Christ, 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 share in God's love and salvation, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. Each petition will end with "Lord, in your redeeming mercy," and you all may respond with **hear our prayer**. Lord, in your redeeming mercy, **hear our prayer**.

God, we declare your glory and proclaim your handiwork. You invite us all into your community and you welcome us as the one body of Christ. Fill us with the confidence of your love, and move us in our service to you and neighbour. Lord, in your redeeming mercy, **hear our prayer**.

God, we gain wisdom from your Word that you give to us throughout history, and we proclaim its message of grace to the ends of the earth. May our proclamation always be faithful that the ears that hear be receptive to your good news. We remember 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 Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church in Langley and their pastor Kristen Steele who is still on sick leave, and also for their interim pastor Peter Hanson; and for St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Vancouver and their pastor Ingrid Cramer-Doershel. We also offer a special prayer for the discernment of the ELCIC as we select a new National Bishop this summer. Lord, in your redeeming mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God, you have made the skies, the heavens, and all the ends of the world, and you house the sun in your glory. Give us an appreciation for the beauty of your creation, and may our care for it be pleasing to you. Lord, in your redeeming mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God, your teachings are perfect and revive our souls as they are clear and give light to our eyes. May your teachings reach all world leaders and politicians, that the nations be governed with wisdom, justice, and equity. We pray for the continued support of those that we've sponsored to come into our country: Abraham Barhane; Solyana Amanuel; and Filimon Abraha; as well as for those who have not yet arrived: Maekele Kiflu, Selam Haile, and their children. Lord, in your redeeming mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God, you enlighten us with your truth and love and you bring us into wholeness with you and each other. Be with those among us who are sick, mourn, or feel lonely, that we all might see how your love cleanses us and refines us. Especially we pray for Bryan and Chona; Ron, Tess, and Mineko; Debbie; Beulah; Bev and family; John and Betty; Sukhwant; Laura; Kandie; Thomas; Will; Chris; Larry; Walter; Piet; Hwee Yang; Ephraim; Georgina; and all those we name aloud or quietly in our hearts at this time...
Lord, in your redeeming mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God, you invite and welcome us into your kingdom and recreate us as acceptable in your sight, even joining us together to be the body of Christ. May we always remember our connection to you and all the saints, informing us of our faith and life as your children for eternity. Lord, in your redeeming mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in the strength and gifts of the Spirit, bestowed on us through the work and ministry of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

PEACE

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 Savior Jesus Christ;
who has been anointed to bring good news to us all,
as we are joined with the choirs of angels,
the church on earth, and the hosts of heaven,
in praising your name with this unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (p. 190)

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Holy God, you are mighty and compassionate, holy and loving, powerful and full of grace. You send to us your Word Jesus Christ, who is called to proclaim your freedom in the world, releasing us from the bonds of our sin and restoring us as your people through your forgiveness and welcome.

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 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."

It is in this food given to us that we can see how we are joined together in love and community, as we together declare this mystery of faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

For all this and more, may all honour and glory be to you, O God, through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the gospel 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 the proclamation of the good news of Christ.
Thanks be to God.

COMMUNION

COMMUNION HYMNS: Lamb of God (p. 191)
Beautiful Saviour (#838)
I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light (#815)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Holy God, we give you thanks for once again feeding us with your Word, nourishing us with your truth, and leading us with your teaching and statutes. Continue to strengthen us as bearers of your good news, proclaiming your gospel of love and forgiveness to all the world, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

SENDING

BLESSING

May God the Creator hold us and keep us,
God the Christ bless us with joy and peace,
God the Comforter join us together in the good news of salvation, now and forever.
Amen

SENDING SONG: Let Us Ever Walk with Jesus (#802)

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, live the good news.
Thanks be to God.