



**GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH**

**OF SOUTH BURNABY, BC**

**EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA**

7283 Nelson Avenue, Burnaby, BC V5J 4C2

Phone: 604-433-1515

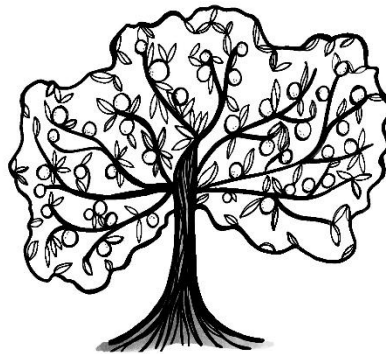
Website: [www.graceburnaby.com](http://www.graceburnaby.com)

Email and e-transfers: [office@graceburnaby.com](mailto:office@graceburnaby.com)

Pastor's email: [pastor@graceburnaby.com](mailto:pastor@graceburnaby.com)

Follow us on Twitter! @GraceLutBurnaby

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**Sixth Sunday after Epiphany**

**February 16, 2025**

**ELW Holy Communion, Setting Eight**

Blessings and curses abound on the sixth Sunday after Epiphany. We would do well to listen closely to whom the “blessed are” and the “woe to” are directed and to find our place in the crowd among those who desire to touch Jesus. The risen Christ stands among us in the mystery of the holy supper with an invitation to live in him, and offers power to heal us all.

*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 hə́nqəmíñəm (Musqueam) and Sḵw̓xw̓ú7mesh (Squamish) speaking peoples.

## GATHERING

### CALL TO WORSHIP

We are gathered this day to joyfully meditate on the law of the Lord. God's teachings revive us, lift us up, and grow in us like trees that spread their fruit throughout our lives and community. As we are strengthened by God's faithfulness and righteousness, let us worship and give to God all our honour and praise, through Jesus Christ. **Amen. Thanks be to God.**

**GATHERING SONG:** My Life Flows On in Endless Song (#763)

### GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that strengthens us, the love of God that feeds us, and the communion of the Holy Spirit that blesses us be with you all.

**And also with you.**

**CANTICLE OF PRAISE** (p. 185)

### PRAYER OF THE DAY

God of new life, in Christ you reveal the gift of resurrection. Raise us from death into life, that we be reformed to bear witness to your love and grace abundant in our lives, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

## WORD

### FIRST READING: Jeremiah 17:5-10

A reading from Jeremiah.

*These verses compose a poem that is part of a larger collection of wisdom sayings that contrast two ways of life. Life with God brings blessing; the power and vitality of God is active in our life. Life without God brings a curse, the power of death.*

<sup>5</sup> Thus says the LORD:

Cursed are those who trust in mere mortals  
and make mere flesh their strength,  
whose hearts turn away from the LORD.

<sup>6</sup> They shall be like a shrub in the desert  
and shall not see when relief comes.

They shall live in the parched places of the wilderness,  
in an uninhabited salt land.

<sup>7</sup> Blessed are those who trust in the LORD,  
whose trust is the LORD.

<sup>8</sup> They shall be like a tree planted by water,  
sending out its roots by the stream.

It shall not fear when heat comes,  
and its leaves shall stay green;  
in the year of drought it is not anxious,  
and it does not cease to bear fruit.

<sup>9</sup> The heart is devious above all else;  
it is perverse—

who can understand it?

<sup>10</sup> I the LORD test the mind

and search the heart,  
to give to all according to their ways,  
according to the fruit of their doings.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**PSALM: Psalm 1**

<sup>1</sup> Happy 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!

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

<sup>3</sup> They are like trees planted by streams of water, bearing fruit in due season, with leaves that  
do not wither;

everything they do shall prosper.

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

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

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

**SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 15:12-20**

A reading from 1 Corinthians.

*For Paul, the resurrection of Christ is the basis for Christian hope. Because Christ has been raised, those who are in Christ know that they too will be raised to a new life beyond death.*

<sup>12</sup> Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say there is no resurrection of the dead? <sup>13</sup> If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised, <sup>14</sup> and if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation is in vain and your faith is in vain. <sup>15</sup> We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified of God that he raised Christ—whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. <sup>16</sup> For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised. <sup>17</sup> If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile, and you are still in your sins. <sup>18</sup> Then those also who have died in Christ have perished.

<sup>19</sup> If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.

<sup>20</sup> But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (p. 188)**

**GOSPEL: Luke 6:17-26**

The holy gospel according to Luke.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

*After choosing his twelve apostles, Jesus teaches a crowd of followers about the nature and demands of discipleship. He begins his great sermon with surprising statements about who is truly blessed in the eyes of God.*

<sup>17</sup> [Jesus] came down with [the twelve] and stood on a level place with a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea, Jerusalem, and the coast of Tyre and Sidon. <sup>18</sup> They had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases, and those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured. <sup>19</sup> And everyone in the crowd was trying to touch him, for power came out from him and healed all of them.

<sup>20</sup> Then he looked up at his disciples and said:

“Blessed are you who are poor,  
for yours is the kingdom of God.

<sup>21</sup> “Blessed are you who are hungry now,  
for you will be filled.

“Blessed are you who weep now,  
for you will laugh.

<sup>22</sup> “Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you, revile you, and defame you on account of the Son of Man. <sup>23</sup> Rejoice on that day and leap for joy, for surely your reward is great in heaven, for that is how their ancestors treated the prophets.

<sup>24</sup> “But woe to you who are rich,  
for you have received your consolation.

<sup>25</sup> “Woe to you who are full now,  
for you will be hungry.

“Woe to you who are laughing now,  
for you will mourn and weep.

<sup>26</sup> “Woe to you when all speak well of you, for that is how their ancestors treated the false prophets.”

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## **SERMON**

God of all creation, by the power of your Spirit, may your Word be heard in this place, that we might be reminded of your promises and blessing, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

So with the very dramatic and mostly disheartening political landscape currently in North America, I thought we should talk about some other really important issues... like you know, Marvel movies. I admit, it's been a long time since I've talked about the MCU specifically, and I'm sure all of you have been longing for more comic book news, but honestly the main Marvel movie genre, i.e. Disney's stuff not Sony's, didn't really release anything lately that was worth talking about.

Until... it's been a long time coming as it was in the works since like 2021. But with delay after delay after pandemic after strike, the fourth Captain America movie was finally released this past Friday. And again, being the super nerd fan that I am, I made sure to watch it on Thursday.

How could I not? Like I said this particular installment was in the works for like 4 years almost, and not to mention that it's been like a year and a half since any really official MCU movie came out, and maybe like 3 years since an *actually good* official MCU movie came out (if you know, you know), so I HAD to watch this movie as soon as I could. I mean the trailers looked pretty good to me, and it was the first kind of “down to earth relatable” movie from Marvel in a while.

So what did I think? Well, from 1 to 10... I'd give it a solid "meh".

Honestly, I was a bit disappointed. And as the super fan that I am, that is hard to admit. I should have known though, as the early reviews were already not that great, I found myself not always agreeing with them in the past. It's just that... this time I do. While it was a big budget movie, it didn't feel like it. To me, this was the movie that was supposed to bring back the MCU of old before they spread themselves out too thin with those less than stellar movies and series that I was talking about, but it totally wasn't. I was left still wanting more.

It wasn't enough. It didn't do what it was supposed to. It was just... not good.

Now, I realise that while I and many of the reviewers out there might have this sentiment toward the movie, not everyone will share it. Some would say that it was actually worse, but then there will also be a certain group of people that will go to great lengths to talk about how great this movie is, how no other movie was better, how people are saying that the movie was the greatest and how anyone who says different is just a fake news anti-marvel hater... and so forth.

Well, I'll have them know that I've been a fan of the MCU since like maybe it's 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> movie and I've been watching like 90% of their movies on opening day or before since almost around then, so really you can't find a much bigger fan than me... if you don't look that hard past maybe these church walls, that is. Any way, the point is that I think I know what I'm talking about. And that's what makes it so hard to say.

But thing is, we can all have our opinions, but that doesn't mean that they're going to objectively right. Right to us, of course, but not universally. Sometimes movies are really good. Sometimes they're not. And sometimes really good movies have their bad points that could have been different to make that movie even better. And vice versa, a really bad movie can have some good moments. And sometimes really good movie producers like Marvel and Disney can have a history of making good or even great movies, but then they miss the mark a couple times and a couple more times and then well, nothing is all that good anymore. But that doesn't mean they're bad. It just means that their best might be behind them.

Now you might be wondering, what does this enthralling conversation about the MCU have to do with today, the 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday after the Epiphany, Year C? Well, believe it or not, this is actually my sixth 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday after the Epiphany, Year C at Grace Lutheran Church, so you'd think I'd know this text really well. But this time around, something new kind of popped out at me. I heard a sermon by a Rev. Marquis Hunt of Little Rock, Arkansas, on these very texts for this very day. His sermon focussed on the seasons as mentioned in the Psalm. I know, we never talk about the Psalm and we really aren't going to now, but there is a quick "blink and you'll miss it" line that says God's teachings "are like trees planted by streams of water, bearing fruit in due season."

*Due season.*

And so I was thinking, with Pastor Marquis' help, how the different seasons of the world affect our lives. Like right now for instance, we're in the thick of winter, just passed our annual snowfall, and many of us might spend a bit more time worrying about proper footwear and when it would be a good time to wash the road salt off our cars. And like that, the different

seasons of our lives are also worth noting as well. Like the seasons of adolescence to early adulthood to full blown adulthood and everything in between.

And just like the seasons that might come for tv series or movie franchises, sometimes good comes, sometimes bad. Sometimes life is great, sometimes it's difficult. Sometimes we are blessed, and sometimes we are given woes.

But none of us are ever 100% always on the polar ends. None of us, ever, will always be right about or the best at everything. None of us will always be blessed or always be not. None of us.

This is what Jesus was talking about in our gospel reading for today. In Luke's Sermon on the Plain as it's called, he doesn't just rehash the Beatitudes we find in Matthew's Sermon on the Mount, but he adds this list of "woes" after it, to serve as sort of a warning that things aren't always going to go your way, even when they are going your way.

Rather, we have seasons. Times of good and then bad. Stages in which we produce good fruit and others in which we wait. And through all this up and down, God is there with us as the stable rock and foundation to which we can cling and trust.

See the first and second readings for today talk about that trust, and warn us that when we trust in the things that are fleeting and ever changing, then we will inevitably be left disappointed. When we give too much clout to the promises of the world, we'll eventually find ourselves wanting. When we look to ourselves and our own vices for strength and redemption, then we'll lose sight of who we really are as God's people, who are, by God's grace, forgiven and saved into the righteousness and community of the Spirit.

But I get it, sometimes the world gives us the promise of a better life. Sometimes we're told that following a certain path or making a certain decision will take away all our problems. Sometimes we believe in something or someone or a whole movie franchise so much that we fail to recognise how even they could have any faults whatsoever.

In those times, Jesus says woe. Woe to you who trust in the world. Woe to you who put God aside for your own desires. Woe to you who would equate God's gospel of love and mercy with anything but God's divine, merciful, and eternally true Word.

But blessed are you who trust in God even when times are tough. Blessed are you who recognise that God won't leave you when things are difficult. Blessed are you when not a single thing is going your way, but you see God present with you regardless. God with you, holding your hand, and leading you to peace.

This isn't to say that our problems will go away and stay away forever. This doesn't mean that we will never feel hungry or sad or alone again. I'm not even saying that Marvel won't put out another bad movie as much as I hope that isn't the case.

But I'm saying that in our problems, God is with us and promises us that we'll eventually make our way out of them. In our hunger, sorrow, and loneliness God doesn't leave us but reveals to us God's ways of faith and justice. Throughout our lives, God remains trustworthy and true, promising us peace and blessing, and shows us a steadfast love that knows no end.

In this season after the Epiphany, may we continually see and recognise God in our lives, warning us when we're too comfortable and blessing us when we're not, that we might always trust in God's truth of forgiveness, God's promise of salvation, and God's character of love. Thanks be to God. Amen.

**HYMN OF THE DAY:** Light Dawns On a Weary World (#726)

### **CREED**

With all of God's blessed, 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 into a life of abundant resurrection, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. Each petition will end with, "God, by your blessed mercy," and you all may respond with **hear our prayer** God, by your blessed mercy, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, your wisdom gladdens our hearts as we strive to follow you and remember your promises. Continue to give us the hope in resurrection, that our lives together be full of healing and joy. God, by your blessed mercy, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, we delight in your law and meditate on your teaching, and we are moved to live lives pleasing to you. Bless our ministries and service, both in this congregation and beyond, that the world might come to know you and the promise of resurrection. 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 the congregation and ministers of Ascension Lutheran Church in Nelson; and of Mount Zion Lutheran Church in New Westminster. We also offer a special prayer for the discernment of our national church as we select a new National Bishop later this year. God, by your blessed mercy, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, your creation reminds us of how you provide for our needs as we flourish with life. Strengthen our stewardship of this planet and reveal your presence within it. God, by your blessed mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, you alone judge the wicked, but you give us wisdom and discernment in our interactions and communities. May all the nations of the world learn to peaceably live with each other, within their borders and otherwise, and may your justice lead and guide us all. Especially we pray for the continued support of those that we've sponsored to come to our country: Abraham Barhane; Solyana Amanuel; and Filimon Abraha; as well as for those who have not yet arrived: Mikele Kiflu, Selam Hailie, and their children; and Mery Gabramikael. God, by your blessed mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, you strip away our iniquities and like chaff, they are blown away by the wind of your grace. Be with all among us who are sick, who mourn, or who feel lonely, and bring to all the hope of resurrection. Especially we pray for Bryan and Chona; Ron, Tess, and Mineko; Debbie; Beulah; Sybil; Bev and family; John and Betty; Sukhwant; Pastor Kristen; 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...  
God, by your blessed mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, you provide the way into righteousness and you welcome us all into eternity with you and all the saints. Remind us of our connection to you and your community, that we might see the blessing you give us for our lives to flourish in faith and love. God, by your blessed mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in the promise of resurrection, seen in 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 Saviour Jesus Christ;  
who teaches us the wisdom of your love and welcome for all,  
that we might be 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**

O Lord you are holy and mighty, and you have taught us and led us with your wisdom. You have shown us the delight in your laws and the righteousness of your ways, that your truth might spring up within us like trees planted by streams of water, with roots flowing with nourishment, and bearing fruit in due season. And you send to us your Son, Jesus, to embody your wisdom and love as our example.

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 it, shared it, and said, "Take and eat, this is my body broken for you, do this for the remembrance of me."

And then after they ate it, 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 bread and cup that we see your righteous judgement of grace and welcome, moving us to declare the basis of our faith:

**Christ has died.**

**Christ is risen.**

**Christ will come again.**

It is you, O God, who knows the way of righteousness and faith, and you reveal it to us through your acts of mercy and grace. We praise you for blessing us with this heavenly food that feed and nourishes us to be your people, your children, your very hands and feet in the world, through Jesus Christ who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, as one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

### **LORD'S PRAYER**

Blessed and united 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 God's blessing of love and welcome.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **COMMUNION**

**COMMUNION HYMNS:** Lamb of God (p. 191)  
When the Poor Ones (#725)  
We Come to the Hungry Feast (#479)

## **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Holy God, we again give you thanks for all that you do in feeding us, blessing us, and loving us. Be with us as we go from here, and allow us to see your hand at work in us, leading us, and joining us together as one, through Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

## **SENDING**

### **BLESSING**

May the blessing of God, Shepherd, Saviour, and Spirit,  
nourish and sustain us,  
surprise and reorder us,  
and strengthen us in faith and hope, now and forever.  
**Amen.**

**SENDING SONG:** We Know That Christ Is Raised (#449)

### **DISMISSAL**

Go in peace, live as abundantly blessed and redeemed into joy.  
**Thanks be to God.**

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