



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

Facebook: www.facebook.com/GraceLutBurnaby



Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

February 2, 2025

ELW Holy Communion, Setting Eight

The glory of God is often revealed when and where it is least expected. God uses our lips to declare that glory, inexperienced and hesitant though they may be. God uses our love to demonstrate that glory and so urges us to exercise it. God uses Jesus of Nazareth, water and the word, bread and wine, to reveal God's glory where and when God chooses. Take heed, lest the glory of God slip through our midst unnoticed.

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

GATHERING

CALL TO WORSHIP

We gather in the name of our Lord, in whom we find refuge and with whom we are never put to shame. For by God's righteousness we are delivered, set free, and saved. So our hope lies in God who gives us the confidence to follow truth and proclaim the gospel of Christ, full of strength and grace, justice and mercy, power and especially love. Our praise shall always be of God. **Amen. Thanks be to God.**

GATHERING SONG: Dearest Jesus, at Your Word (#520)

GREETING

The unchanging grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the unaltering love of God, and the unwavering communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

CANTICLE OF PRAISE (p. 185)

PRAYER OF THE DAY

God of all that is, was, and is to come, we are grateful for the life that you give and its blessings. Increase our faith, hope, and especially love, that we may always see, hear, and believe in your Word and truth, that grants us all the grace and mercy of Jesus Christ, our saviour and Lord.

Amen

WORD

FIRST READING: Jeremiah 1:4-10

A reading from Jeremiah.

God calls Jeremiah to be a prophet and consecrates him in the womb. Jeremiah's task is to preach God's word amid the difficult political realities of his time, before the Babylonian exile. He is to make God known not only to Judah, but also to the nations.

⁴ Now the word of the LORD came to me saying,

⁵ "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,
and before you were born I consecrated you;
I appointed you a prophet to the nations."

⁶ Then I said, "Ah, Lord GOD! Truly I do not know how to speak, for I am only a boy." ⁷ But the LORD said to me,

"Do not say, 'I am only a boy,'
for you shall go to all to whom I send you,
and you shall speak whatever I command you.

⁸ Do not be afraid of them,
for I am with you to deliver you,
says the LORD."

⁹ Then the LORD put out his hand and touched my mouth, and the LORD said to me,
"Now I have put my words in your mouth.

¹⁰ See, today I appoint you over nations and over kingdoms,
to pluck up and to pull down,
to destroy and to overthrow,
to build and to plant."

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 71:1-6

¹ In you, O LORD, have I taken refuge;
let me never be put to shame.

² **In your righteousness, deliver me and set me free;
incline your ear to me and save me.**

³ Be my strong rock, a castle to keep me safe;
you are my crag and my stronghold.

⁴ **Deliver me, my God, from the hand of the wicked,
from the clutches of the evildoer and the oppressor.**

⁵ For you are my hope, O Lord God,
my confidence since I was young.

⁶ **I have been sustained by you ever since I was born; from my mother's womb you have
been my strength;
my praise shall be always of you.**

SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

A reading from 1 Corinthians.

Christians in Corinth prided themselves on their spiritual gifts. Paul reminds them that God gives us many gifts through the Holy Spirit, but the purpose behind all of them is love, the kind of love that God showed us in Jesus Christ.

¹ If I speak in the tongues of humans and of angels but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ² And if I have prophetic powers and understand all mysteries and all knowledge and if I have all faith so as to remove mountains but do not have love, I am nothing.

³ If I give away all my possessions and if I hand over my body so that I may boast but do not have love, I gain nothing.

⁴ Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant ⁵ or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable; it keeps no record of wrongs; ⁶ it does not rejoice in wrongdoing but rejoices in the truth. ⁷ It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

⁸ Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. ⁹ For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part, ¹⁰ but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. ¹¹ When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. ¹² For now we see only a reflection, as in a mirror, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. ¹³ And now faith, hope, and love remain, these three, and the greatest of these is love.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (p. 188)

GOSPEL: Luke 4:21-30

The holy gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

People in Jesus' hometown are initially pleased when he says that God will free the oppressed. Their pleasure turns to rage when he reminds them that God's prophetic mission typically pushes beyond human boundaries so that mercy and healing are extended to those regarded as outsiders.

²¹ Then [Jesus] began to say to [all in the synagogue in Nazareth,] “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” ²² All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They said, “Is this not Joseph’s son?” ²³ He said to them, “Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, ‘Doctor, cure yourself!’ And you will say, ‘Do here also in your hometown the things that we have heard you did at Capernaum.’ ” ²⁴ And he said, “Truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in his hometown. ²⁵ But the truth is, there were many widows in Israel in the time of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months and there was a severe famine over all the land, ²⁶ yet Elijah was sent to none of them except to a widow at Zarephath in Sidon. ²⁷ There were also many with a skin disease in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian.” ²⁸ When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with rage. ²⁹ They got up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they might hurl him off the cliff. ³⁰ But he passed through the midst of them and went on his way.

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

SERMON

God of life and love, open our hearts this day, that our eyes may see and our ears hear your very real and gracious presence with us, granting us peace and mercy, through Jesus Christ.
Amen.

So earlier this week I found myself not unusually predisposed in the washroom taking care of some, uh, business, when a knock came to the door. Now this isn’t unusual either in our house as the boundaries around our “private time” aren’t always set or even respected if they were, but hey, at least the door didn’t swing open. Anyway, I have to admit that I was a bit perturbed with the interruption, because you know, that business isn’t going to take care of itself. But before I could say anything, I heard our daughter call from the other side of the door, “Yo, when you’re done, can we hang?” Her exact words.

How can I stay annoyed at that?

I’m at a stage in my parenting life where our kids are wanting less and less to hang out with their parents, talk to their parents, or even be seen in the same vicinity as their parents, so this was a nice surprise. I mean for our little girl knock on one of the most sacred doors in our home to so politely request to spend time together? I almost felt bad for being annoyed that my “me time” was yet again interrupted. So needless to say I finished up my business lickety split (not literally), and went to find her to see what she had in mind for our “hang sesh”.

Well, I found her in the kitchen and I asked if she still wanted to hang. She said yes, and I asked where.

She looked at me and laughed and I was thinking, that’s not really a joke. But she led me to where I keep some of my exercise stuff and just stood there. The heck? Then it hit me, I realised what was going on and a second or so later, so did she. Turns out that she didn’t want to “hang” as in “hang out,” but she wanted to “hang” as literally hang off my chin up bar. And since she isn’t tall enough to set it up or even reach, she needed my help.

I chuckled a bit as I realised how my mishearing her led to such a wild misunderstanding. I mean I was a bit disappointed of course, but it was still funny how I thought I heard what I

thought I heard and how I reacted to that assumption. I mean, I hurried to finish what I was doing, I put aside my plans to get some work done at my desk, and I looked forward to spending some time with the youngest of our offspring and the last one who would actively ask to hang out, even when that wasn't what she was doing.

Of course, this has happened to many if not all of us in the past, right? We have misheard others, we have been misheard by others, and we've all landed in some sort of misunderstanding because of it. It's a part of life. But sometimes it can be a problem when the misunderstanding goes too far. Like I mean past just the embarrassment of such a simple mistake, I've known people to get downright angry at the other like the misunderstanding was their fault. I don't know, maybe they felt like they were being led on, intentionally deceived, or somehow manipulated. Maybe they still don't see the misunderstanding or mistake and want to just prove their point. Or maybe the sting of just the thought of maybe being wrong set them off enough to not let it go.

And so I wonder if it's this sting of disagreement, discouragement, and perhaps disappointment that the people of Nazareth were feeling when they were trying to hurl Jesus off a cliff. Like we talked about last week, Jesus was in his home town attending church, where he read a beautiful, comforting, and probably familiar text out of Isaiah that proclaimed good news, freedom, and the year of the Lord's favour.

Imagine hearing that kid you watched grow up saying this to you, reaffirming everything that you were taught and were already thinking. Imagine watching one of your hometown boys show such maturity, faith, and ability to read. Imagine the pride that you'd feel in seeing someone who you maybe babysat at one point, reassure you of God's promises, God's favour, God's love... toward you.

And then imagine that same kid suddenly saying what he really meant. Imagine that little homie shattering your dreams of being exclusive, favoured, and set apart. Imagine Jesus telling you that God didn't want to just hang with you, but those you don't particularly like or deserve that blessing.

That's basically what Jesus did. He reminded them how Elijah wasn't just for the people of Israel but for those outside of their borders as well. He recalled how Elisha didn't help only those behind their exclusive walls of exclusion but opened the doors for all. He revealed to them how God is a God of great love, grace, *and mercy*.

And this offended them enough that they wanted him dead. Really dead. So dead that it wasn't enough to throw rocks at him like how they'd traditionally deal with heretics, but they wanted to throw him at the rocks by tossing him off a cliff.

So angry were they at their misunderstanding that they wanted him dead. So hurt were they at their misguided assumption that they retaliated with violence. So offended were they at a message of grace and mercy that they completely closed their ears and couldn't comprehend or even fathom how wrong they actually were.

But I get it, it isn't easy. Taking responsibility in a gross assumption gone wrong like this takes humility. Seeing the role that we play in a misunderstanding takes strength and respect for the

other. Admitting wrong, believe it or not, takes love. Love for the other. Love for ourselves. And love for God and God's wisdom and teaching.

See when Jesus explained how Elijah and Elisha helped those outside of Israel's borders, Jesus didn't say that those within the borders were excluded. When they heard Jesus saying that the other is welcomed into the favour of God, he didn't say that they were no longer welcome. When Jesus revealed how big God's love and mercy is, he didn't say that it was only for a select few and not anyone else. Rather, Jesus said it was for everyone. All people. Of all time.

So they were offended at God's generosity. They wanted to kill this message of inclusivity. They rejected the notion that they weren't the most righteous, the most faithful, and the most deserving of God's blessing.

Thankfully though, just because that is what they were thinking, that doesn't make them right. Just because they assumed that Jesus meant something that Jesus didn't mean, it doesn't mean that Jesus was wrong. Just because they were so offended by the expansive and unending love of Jesus that they tried to kill him, that doesn't mean that the message would end, that God's love would cease, that the darkness would overcome the light.

See Jesus walking through their midst and leaving them wondering if they were successful in driving him out or not tells us that Jesus remains untouched by their anger, unchanged by their self-righteous indignation, and un-displaced by their mis-placed offense. Jesus not staying dead three days after being crucified shows us how God's love for all of God's people is bigger than any kind of bullying, name-calling, and mean tweeting. This message of grace and mercy still lasting to this day reveals to all people how short-sighted, narrow-minded, and downright wrong people can be regardless of where they're from, what colour their skin is, or the amount of worldly power they might have.

The point is that God's love is patient and kind. It is not boastful or arrogant or rude. It keeps no record of wrongs, but flows out from the heart of God upon all of us, full of grace and mercy, and shows us how we, along with all of God's people, are welcome, can find belonging, and are saved.

The world can be a difficult place to navigate these days. We are faced with decisions, allegiances, and wild misunderstandings. It is important that through it all, we not forget that we are God's people not because we climbed that spiritual ladder, but because God has decided to include us, bless us, and love us. And we mustn't forget that this is God's eternal message that cannot be discarded, destroyed, or distorted by us, the world, or anyone in all of history as God continues to be God whether or not we admit to it, acknowledge it, or accept it in our hearts. God will continue to love and be love with us, through us, and in spite of us.

So in this season after the Epiphany, may we continually be humbled by the unending, unchanging, and everlasting message of God's grace and mercy, that we might learn to love just as we have first been loved, through Jesus Christ. Thanks be to God. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY: Love Divine, All Loves Excelling (#631)

CREED

Along with all those welcomed into God's love, 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 to know God's love in our lives, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. Each petition will end with, "in your unending mercy, O God," and you all may respond with **hear our prayer**. In your unending mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, in you we find refuge and you do not shame us. Instead, remind us always of the grace you show and the love you call us into, that our faith and hope be strengthened. In your unending mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, in your righteousness we are delivered and saved and freed to proclaim your good news in the world. May the message we share be receptive, that the world might be changed to be more loving and caring and open to hear your message of grace and mercy. We pray especially for 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 St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Maple Ridge and their interim pastor Nicolas Alexandre; Matsqui Lutheran Church in Matsqui and all the pastors and leaders that serve them; and the discernment of the whole ELCIC as we elect a new National Bishop in just a few months. In your unending mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, your creation has been for us a stronghold, where we live and find life and love. May our care for this planet be effective and pleasing to you, that our faith might be reflected in our stewardship. In your unending mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, you deliver us from wickedness and you save the oppressed from evil. May all people of all nations continue to look out for each other and be concerned more for the wellbeing of the human race rather than borders and the pursuit of power. We pray especially for the

continued support of those that we've sponsored to come into our country: Abraham Barhane; Solyana Amanuel; and Filimon Abraha; and as well as for those who have not yet arrived: Maekele Kiflu, Selam Hailie, and their children. In your unending mercy, O God, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, you are our hope and we find confidence in your promises. Be especially with those among us who are sick, who mourn, or who feel lonely, that your love might continue to be apparent to us all. Especially we pray for Bryan and Chona; Ron, Tess, and Mineko; Debbie; Beulah; 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...
In your unending mercy, O God, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, you sustain us with your love throughout this life and the next, as you remind us of our eternal connection with you and all the saints. May the faith of those we've loved and lost remain in our hearts, that we be strengthened to praise you always. In your unending mercy, O God, **hear our prayer.**

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your unending truth and grace, shown to us by 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 reveals to us all truth, knowledge, and wisdom in your Word, that we might join
with all the choirs of angels,
with 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

In you, O Lord, we find refuge and freedom from shame. Your righteousness delivers and redeems us into your salvation, where we can lean on you as our strong rock and safe castle,

away from the wickedness and evil of sin. You give us hope, O God, in the life and teachings of your Son Jesus, who fills us with the confidence of your love and truth.

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, and shared it with them 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 with this bread and cup that we are sustained and given strength, even as we declare the mystery of faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

You, O God, are holy, mighty, and merciful, and your praise shall always be on our lips, through the grace and mercy of Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, as one God, now and forever.

Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one truth and love, 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 the truth and love of God.

Thanks be to God.

COMMUNION

COMMUNION HYMNS: Lamb of God (p. 191)

Blessed Assurance (#638)

Although I Speak with Angel's Tongue (#644)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Holy God, again you have fed us with this holy food, giving us strength to love and serve you and neighbour. Be with us as we go from here, that we might live in your truth of grace and mercy, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

SENDING

BLESSING

May the mercy of God inspire you to bear all things,
the grace of Christ enable you to believe all things,
and the unity of the Holy Spirit help you to abide in hope, faith, and especially love, this day and always.

Amen.

SENDING SONG: Rise, Shine, You People! (#665)

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, be empowered by God's love.

Thanks be to God.

From sundaysandseasons.com. Copyright © 2025 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved.