



**GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH**

**OF SOUTH BURNABY, BC**

**EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA**

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## **Fifth Sunday after Epiphany**

**February 9, 2025**

### **ELW Holy Communion, Setting Eight**

The fifth Sunday after Epiphany continues to highlight unlikely instruments and circumstances appointed to reveal God's glory. "Who will go for us?" God asks. A person of unclean lips, a former persecutor of the church of God, and three fishermen who couldn't catch a thing. More surprising still, perhaps, is that we are also called.

*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 hən̓q̓əmi̓nəm̓ (Musqueam) and Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) speaking peoples.

## GATHERING

### CALL TO WORSHIP

We gather this day in worship, giving thanks to our Lord and singing praises with our whole hearts. For God's love and faithfulness are steadfast and God's name and word are above all things. By God's grace and mercy, we have been lifted up, redeemed, and brought into the ranks of God's people in the world, full of blessing, meaning, and purpose. God's hand is at work in the world, in our communities, and in our hearts, through Jesus our Lord. **Amen. Thanks be to God.**

**GATHERING SONG:** We All Are One in Mission (#576)

### GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that blesses us, the love of God that strengthens us, and the community of the Spirit that reminds us of our value and worth, be with you all. **And also with you.**

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

### PRAYER OF THE DAY

Holy God, the heavens and earth reverberate with your glory, and we sing your praises. Open our minds to your breathtaking work in the world, even as you call us to spread the good news of Jesus our Saviour, in whose name we pray. **Amen.**

## WORD

### FIRST READING: Isaiah 6:1-8

A reading from Isaiah.

*Through a vision in the temple, the eighth-century prophet Isaiah is called by God to announce judgment against Israel. Aware of his sinfulness and shortcomings, Isaiah is initially hesitant. But when God calls, Isaiah responds, "Here am I; send me!"*

<sup>1</sup> In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lofty, and the hem of his robe filled the temple. <sup>2</sup> Seraphs were in attendance above him; each had six wings: with two they covered their faces, and with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. <sup>3</sup> And one called to another and said,

"Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts;  
the whole earth is full of his glory."

<sup>4</sup> The pivots on the thresholds shook at the voices of those who called, and the house filled with smoke. <sup>5</sup> And I said, "Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, yet my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!"

<sup>6</sup> Then one of the seraphs flew to me, holding a live coal that had been taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. <sup>7</sup> The seraph touched my mouth with it and said, "Now that this has touched your lips, your guilt has departed and your sin is blotted out." <sup>8</sup> Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I; send me!"

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **PSALM: Psalm 138**

<sup>1</sup> I will give thanks to you, O LORD, with my whole heart;  
before the gods I will sing your praise.

<sup>2</sup> **I will bow down toward your holy temple and praise your name, because of your steadfast love and faithfulness;  
for you have glorified your name and your word above all things.**

<sup>3</sup> When I called, you answered me;  
you increased my strength within me.

<sup>4</sup> **All the rulers of the earth will praise you, O LORD,  
when they have heard the words of your mouth.**

<sup>5</sup> They will sing of the ways of the LORD,  
that great is the glory of the LORD.

<sup>6</sup> **The LORD is high, yet cares for the lowly,  
perceiving the haughty from afar.**

<sup>7</sup> Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you keep me safe;  
you stretch forth your hand against the fury of my enemies; your right hand shall save me.

<sup>8</sup> **You will make good your purpose for me;  
O LORD, your steadfast love endures forever; do not abandon the works of your hands.**

## **SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 15:1-11**

A reading from 1 Corinthians.

*Paul delivers in a nutshell the story of the gospel that was given to him. In the lineage of the Christian faith, we have received the good news of God's love from generations of believers before us, and we continue to tell this story to the world.*

<sup>1</sup> Now I want you to understand, brothers and sisters, the good news that I proclaimed to you, which you in turn received, in which also you stand, <sup>2</sup> through which also you are being saved, if you hold firmly to the message that I proclaimed to you—unless you have come to believe in vain.

<sup>3</sup> For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures <sup>4</sup> and that he was buried and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures <sup>5</sup> and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. <sup>6</sup> Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. <sup>7</sup> Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. <sup>8</sup> Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. <sup>9</sup> For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. <sup>10</sup> But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me has not been in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I but the grace of God that is with me.

<sup>11</sup> Whether then it was I or they, so we proclaim and so you believed.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (p. 188)**

### **GOSPEL: Luke 5:1-11**

The holy gospel according to Luke.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

*Jesus' teaching of God's word has begun to draw great crowds. For Simon, James, and John, Jesus' teaching inspires hospitality, then obedience, and then risk. After Jesus' creative power is revealed, fear and amazement leads these three fishermen to leave everything behind to become apostles.*

<sup>1</sup> Once while Jesus was standing beside the Lake of Gennesaret and the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, <sup>2</sup> he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake; the fishermen had gotten out of them and were washing their nets. <sup>3</sup> He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little way from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. <sup>4</sup> When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch." <sup>5</sup> Simon answered, "Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets." <sup>6</sup> When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to burst. <sup>7</sup> So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink. <sup>8</sup> But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus's knees, saying, "Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!" <sup>9</sup> For he and all who were with him were astounded at the catch of fish that they had taken, <sup>10</sup> and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. Then Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people." <sup>11</sup> When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him.

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

### **SERMON**

God of steadfast love and faithfulness, may your name be exalted and your Word be proclaimed, that our minds be opened and our hearts softened to hear and accept your leading and presence in our lives, through Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

So anyone here doing what they can to "buy Canadian"?

In case you don't know what I'm talking about, there has been a movement going on around our country in response to the tariffs and stuff that is happening over the Canadian and US border. The call to "buy Canadian" is basically exactly as it sounds, for Canadian consumers to buy only products made in Canada over the ones imported from the States, in an effort to sort of boycott them over the tariffs and other points of friction that have emerged over the past 20 some odd days.

Now, don't get me wrong, the idea of supporting one's own country isn't a bad one and I'm all for it, that's not really what is on my mind about this situation. What has gotten me a bit concerned over all this *divide* between our nations is that looks like there is a developing disregard for the relationships that have been forged between us over the years. To me it seems like the actions of a particular government is now equated with an entire country, its whole persona, and all its citizens. It feels like Canadians are beginning to see all Americans as "Am-murr-cans" solely because that is what their passport says, and write them off as such, like they were all the same.

Like many of you, I've had and continue to have great friends and colleagues who were born and raised in the States, or who are from there but live here now, or who are from here and moved there for various reasons. Many people, in fact, intersect our lives that have a lot more going for them than their current address, nationality, or place of origin. But now it is starting to feel like we're supposed to cut them out of our lives simply because they have a different connection to a particular government than we do.

Mind you, I'm not saying that we should ignore what is happening or shouldn't buy Canadian, I'm just worried about how the chasm *however started* between our nations, our relationships, and our people, is just going to get deeper. I'm worried about that friction turning into pure hatred for an entire nation and all its people. I'm worried about how our actions and retaliation might turn into *othering* and labelling and then pigeon-holing and shoe-horning anyone who might resemble that label into a narrow interpretation of them. Like because they're American in some shape or form, then in our minds they must be exactly how the stereotype says they are.

I realise that this labelling others and assuming things about them didn't just start with the "buy Canadian" movement, rather this mentality has been perpetuated for basically ever. And not just between Canadians and Americans or whatever other nationalities of course, but between anyone that might be different from us. Things like our different philosophical, religious, or political beliefs that we might hold. Or what part of town we're from, what school we went to, or what our parents do for a living. Or what star and planet alignment we were born under, what our last name is, or how many generations of our family has been on this particular land. Or even more trivial things like whether we prefer domestic or imported cars, who we hope to win the Superbowl this afternoon, and even what phone manufacturer and ecosystem we use.

This labelling will colour how we see each other. They will inform us of our assumptions. They will be what we see, well before we see the person that we've affixed them to.

In our readings for today, we see this sort of labelling going on as well. An aspect of God's glory is described in each of the readings, from the actual visible glory scaring the hey-you out of Isaiah, to the Messiahship of Jesus humbling the arrogance of Paul, to the miraculous catching of fish driving Peter and his crew of seasoned catchers of fish to transition to be catchers of people. Their realisation of who they were face to face with, the living God, led them to fear.

Because in their experience of power came authority, rule, and might. And while these aren't inaccurate descriptions of God, they understood it as something to be afraid of. Instead of seeing God's glory as something that is full of grace and love, they saw it as something that was intimidating and even dangerous. Instead of welcoming God's presence in their lives, they wanted to reject it because compared to God's glory and divine power before them, they couldn't help but to feel a little small and insignificant.

We do that too though, don't we? I mean it isn't hard to feel small when compared to such greatness. It isn't hard to think ourselves as unworthy, unclean, and unfit when looking up at God's glory. It isn't hard to want to turn away from God and God's calling for us because we just don't think we're what God is looking for.

And so, it would seem, we, like these and many other main players in our bible stories, put labels on ourselves.

Just as we might judge others by where they're from and what political party they vote for, so I find us judging ourselves by our limits and shortcomings. Just as we might label others by their accolades and lack thereof, so do we label ourselves for what we think we can or can't do, what we assume we have or don't have to offer, and how we feel we can or can't serve God and neighbour. Just as we might size the other up by how different they are from what we think they should be, so might we look at ourselves sized up against what we think God wants us to be.

And against God's glory and high standard, that doesn't leave much confidence in ourselves.

So we might label ourselves as incapable or incompetent. We might feel compelled to turn away, reject God's promises and call for our lives, and run in the other direction. We might highlight all the reasons why we aren't worthy: how we are unclean and from an unclean people, how we are unfit and untalented for God's work, how we are a sinner and undeserving of even being in the presence of God.

The thing is though, it has been revealed to us who we are: God's chosen, redeemed, and saved people, graciously given value and worth. We are God's beloved children, lifted up, strengthened, and blessed to be bearers of the truth and good news of God's love and mercy. We are God's hands and feet in the world, called into mission, and equipped to be one with the saints of light.

Not because of what we can or can't do. Not because of what we've earned or not. Not even because of whatever label we think should be affixed to us. But we are created, loved, and called by God's own heart, God's own will, God's own design for us to be not perfect but forgiven, not afraid but confident, not labelled but identified as God's community, kingdom, and church.

Now, I know that today is our AGM, and we just happen to be looking for nominations for our congregational council, but that isn't all that this is about. Well, maybe just 20% of it is... ok maybe 25%. But in all of life, we are called. Called to be children of God. Called to proclaim the good news of Christ. Called to live in the community of the Spirit, saved by grace, strengthened by the Word, and joined together by love.

I know this isn't always easy. I know we often feel like God wouldn't choose us. I know we might shy away because of the intimidation we might feel against God's glory. But believe me when I say that the judgements we place on ourselves and others because of our collective weaknesses might feel right and true, but they don't matter to God and we are strengthened in them. The assumptions that we make of ourselves and others might come from a place of knowing and experience, but that doesn't change God's regard for us and we are welcomed anyway. The labels that we might place on ourselves or others might help us feel safe from the harm and dangers of the world, but let's not forget that it is God who saves us. It is God who calls us. It is God who loves us, has loved us, and will always love us no matter what the future might bring.

So in this season after the Epiphany, may we continue to hear and heed and bear witness to God's call for us all, that we might serve and be served, bless and be blessed, love and be loved, in the name of Christ. Thanks be to God. Amen.

**HYMN OF THE DAY:** Here I Am, Lord (#574)

**CREED**

With all of God's blessed and called people, let's 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 faithfully serve and love, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. Each petition will end with "in your steadfast mercy, O Lord," and you all may respond with **hear our prayer**. In your steadfast mercy, O Lord, **hear our prayer**.

God of new beginnings, we give you thanks and sing your praises with our whole hearts, and we strive to do your will in the world. Increase our faith, that we might confidently serve you and neighbour, strengthened by your love. In your steadfast mercy, O Lord, **hear our prayer**.

God of new ventures, your name is glorified above all things, and you have declared us as worthy to be your people and your church. Strengthen our ministry in our communities and beyond, that our service might be effective and pleasing to you. We pray especially for 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 Hope Lutheran in Nanaimo and their pastor Terry Richardson; Luther Court and other institutions that care for our senior citizens; and for the ministry of hospital chaplains everywhere. In your steadfast mercy, O Lord, **hear our prayer**.

God of new life, your truth and word are embodied in all of your creation, and your providence fills us with joy and moves us to praise you. You call us to care for this planet with love and compassion, and you equip us for this ministry. Continue to be with us and guide us in our stewardship. In your steadfast mercy, O Lord, **hear our prayer**.

God of new relationships, your name is great and your glory fills the earth. May the rulers of this earth hear the words of your mouth, that they be inspired to move forward with grace and dignity for all. We pray for unity among all peoples, that peace may reign throughout the nations. We also 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 Hailie, and their children; and Mery Gabramikael. In your steadfast mercy, O Lord, **hear our prayer.**

God of new birth, you care for us, your servants, and you keep us safe in the midst of trouble. Be with us who are sick, who mourn, or who feel lonely, and bring to all your healing and wholeness. 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...  
In your steadfast mercy, O Lord, **hear our prayer.**

God of new purpose, your love for us endures forever, and you don't abandon us but bring us together with you and all the saints. May your calling for us to serve always be apparent, and may we be strengthened to heed that call and go wherever it may lead. In your steadfast mercy, O Lord, **hear our prayer.**

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your ever present love and grace, through 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 lifts us up out of our shame and blesses us with meaning and purpose,  
while joining us with all 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**

We give you thanks, O Lord, with our whole hearts and we sing our praises. We humbly bow toward your holy temple and praise your name, for you are steadfast in your love and faithfulness, and the glory of your name and word are above all things. For when we call upon you, you answer us, you increase our strength, and you send to us your Son, Jesus, to teach us your ways and strengthen us with your love and blessing.

For on the night that he was betrayed, Jesus sat with his friends for a meal, where he took the bread, gave thanks, broke 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 in this bread and cup that we see the Lord on high, caring for us the lowly, even as we declare this mystery of faith:

**Christ has died.**

**Christ is risen.**

**Christ will come again.**

You keep us safe, O Lord, as we walk in the midst of trouble. You stretch forth your hand against the fury of our enemies. You save us and make good your purpose for us. Your steadfast love endures forever, O Lord, and you do not abandon the works of your hands, through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

## **LORD'S PRAYER**

Called to be one church 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 welcome into steadfast love.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **COMMUNION**

**COMMUNION HYMNS:** Lamb of God (p. 191)  
What Feast of Love (#487)  
Holy God, We Praise Your Name (#414)

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Holy God, we give you thanks for your generosity that feeds us and calls us to your blessing and service. Be with us as we go from here and strengthen us from within, that we might faithfully be your people and proclaim your good news to the world, through Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

**SENDING**

**BLESSING**

May the God who created all that is, was, and is to come, fill you with awe,  
Christ our teacher and Shepherd amaze you with grace and bless you with mercy,  
and the Spirit of community and peace strengthen you in faith and service, now and forever.  
**Amen.**

**SENDING SONG:** God Of Tempest, God of Whirlwind (#400)

**DISMISSAL**

Go in peace, be not afraid.

**Thanks be to God.**

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