



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

OF SOUTH BURNABY, BC

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA

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First Sunday in Lent March 9, 2025 ELW Holy Communion, Setting Three

These forty days called Lent are like no other. It is our opportune time to return to the God who rescues, to receive the gifts of God's grace, to believe with the heart and confess with the mouth the wonder of God's love in Jesus, and to resist temptation at every turn. This is no small pilgrimage on which we have just embarked. It is a struggle Jesus knew. It is a struggle Jesus shares. The nearness of the Lord, in bread and wine, water and word, will uphold and sustain us.

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 and INVITATION TO LENT

We gather in the shelter and shadow of the Most High, the Almighty, to worship our Lord, our refuge and stronghold in whom we put our trust. For it is by God's grace that evil and affliction are deflected by the angels that guard and watch over us. Their hands shall bear us up and catch us from falling, delivering us into the presence God's honour and salvation, this day and always.

And so I invite you all into the discipline of Lent. A season in which we are encouraged reflect, repent, and remember God's grace and forgiveness in our lives. May these forty days be a time growth and renewal as our hearts are opened to the leading and calling of the Spirit into new heights of faith and strength, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen. Thanks be to God.

GATHERING SONG: In the Cross of Christ I Glory (ELW #324)

GREETING

The resilient grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the calming love of God, and the supportive fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

KYRIE (ELW p. 138)

PRAYER OF THE DAY

God Most High, we give you thanks for the signs of your power and grace, shown to us even in the wilderness of life. Grant to us courage to stand firm in your Word, that through every trial and testing we might embark into your land of freedom and receive the salvation that you so generously give through Jesus Christ our brother and Lord. **Amen.**

WORD

FIRST READING: Deuteronomy 26:1-11

A reading from Deuteronomy.

The annual harvest festival, called the Feast of Weeks, provides the setting for this reading. This festival celebrates the first fruits of the produce of the land offered back to God in thanks. In this text, worshipers announce God's gracious acts on behalf of Israel.

¹ "When you have come into the land that the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance to possess and you possess it and settle in it, ² you shall take some of the first of all the fruit of the ground, which you harvest from the land that the LORD your God is giving you, and you shall put it in a basket and go to the place that the LORD your God will choose as a dwelling for his name.

³ You shall go to the priest who is in office at that time and say to him, 'Today I declare to the LORD your God that I have come into the land that the LORD swore to our ancestors to give us.'

⁴ When the priest takes the basket from your hand and sets it down before the altar of the LORD your God, ⁵ you shall make this response before the LORD your God: 'A wandering Aramean was my ancestor; he went down into Egypt and lived there as an alien, few in number, and there he became a great nation, mighty and populous. ⁶ When the Egyptians treated us harshly and afflicted us, by imposing hard labor on us, ⁷ we cried to the LORD, the God of our ancestors; the LORD heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression. ⁸ The LORD brought us

out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with a terrifying display of power, and with signs and wonders; ⁹ and he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. ¹⁰ So now I bring the first of the fruit of the ground that you, O LORD, have given me.' You shall set it down before the LORD your God and bow down before the LORD your God. ¹¹ Then you, together with the Levites and the aliens who reside among you, shall celebrate with all the bounty that the LORD your God has given to you and to your house."

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16

¹ You who dwell in the shelter of the Most High,
who abide in the shadow of the Almighty—

² **you will say to the LORD, "My refuge and my stronghold,
my God in whom I put my trust."**

⁹ Because you have made the LORD your refuge,
and the Most High your habitation,

¹⁰ **no evil will befall you,
nor shall affliction come near your dwelling.**

¹¹ For God will give the angels charge over you,
to guard you in all your ways.

¹² **Upon their hands they will bear you up,
lest you strike your foot against a stone.**

¹³ You will tread upon the lion cub and viper;
you will trample down the lion and the serpent.

¹⁴ **I will deliver those who cling to me;
I will uphold them, because they know my name.**

¹⁵ They will call me, and I will answer them;
I will be with them in trouble; I will rescue and honor them.

¹⁶ **With long life will I satisfy them,
and show them my salvation.**

SECOND READING: Romans 10:8b-13

A reading from Romans.

Paul reminds the Christians at Rome of the foundation of their creed, the confession of faith in the risen Christ as Lord.

^{8b} "The word is near you,
in your mouth and in your heart"

(that is, the word of faith that we proclaim), ⁹ because if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For one believes with the heart, leading to righteousness, and one confesses with the mouth, leading to salvation. ¹¹ The scripture says, "No one who believes in him will be put to shame."

¹² For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him. ¹³ For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (p. 142)

GOSPEL: Luke 4:1-13

The holy gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

After being filled with the Holy Spirit at his baptism, Jesus is led in the wilderness. Through his responses to the temptations of the devil, he defines what it means to be called “the Son of God.”

¹ Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, ² where for forty days he was tested by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over he was famished. ³ The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread.” ⁴ Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘One does not live by bread alone.’ ”

⁵ Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. ⁶ And the devil said to him, “To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please. ⁷ If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours.”

⁸ Jesus answered him, “It is written,

‘Worship the Lord your God,
and serve only him.’ ”

⁹ Then the devil led him to Jerusalem and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, ¹⁰ for it is written,

‘He will command his angels concerning you,
to protect you,’

¹¹ and

‘On their hands they will bear you up,
so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.’ ”

¹² Jesus answered him, “It is said, ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’ ” ¹³ When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time.

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

May your Word, O God, be near to us this day. May it rest on our lips, reside in our hearts, and fill our whole lives with your gracious Spirit, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Today, believe it or not, our second son turns 13 years old. Wow right? 13. The first thing I thought of when I realised that his birthday was coming up today was, “haha, enjoy your 23 hour long birthday, sucker”. And then my second thought was, “wow right? 13.”

I don’t know if you all remember turning 13, when you bridged that gap between adolescence and your teen years, when you fully realised how much things are changing and they aren’t going back, when your brain develops a bit more and you start questioning things and wonder where it is that you belong. I sure do. And it wasn’t easy.

Not that it wasn’t easy to remember way back when, I mean I’m not that old yet. But I very easily can recall how that time for me wasn’t easy. With all the growing up I was doing and changes happening to my physical and mental self, life was just difficult. Like my clothes fit

differently, my voice was unrecognisable over the phone, and I had to be more aware of my personal hygiene and grooming. I remembering being really concerned that my group of friends wouldn't be my group of friends anymore since we were splitting up and going to different schools and classes. I was worried that the girl I liked wouldn't like me anymore because I had to wear glasses and my unusually large growth spurt left me really awkward. I was worried about what everyone would think of me because my complexion wasn't the smooth baby's bottom that it always had been for those first 12 years of life.

And to top it off, as the youngest of 4, I always had to live up to certain expectations with my parents. Much of them were unspoken, except for the ones that were very spoken. Like I remember hearing a lot, "why can't you? Your sister can" or "you didn't? Your brother did" and stuff like that. It's almost like I was my mom and dad's last chance to not end up as a huge disappointment like those other 3 nerds.

And if it wasn't the expectations from my parents, it was those from our extended family and community. While my siblings and I don't really look alike, thank goodness, we still share the somewhat uncommon last name. So there were many times that I've been ID'ed as my sibling's little brother, even if I wanted to just stay anonymous. And so of course I would be compared to them and their accomplishments (which were very few, but still).

So yeah, that period of life was difficult for me. This beginning of the transition into adulthood was stressful. This growing need to carve out a name for myself out from under the shadow of my over-achieving family was consuming.

The truth is though, I just wanted to know who I am. I was growing into a personality and persona. I needed to have an identity and a place to belong.

This isn't just at age 13, mind you, but that is roughly when all these thoughts begin for many people. It is just at 13 when that natural transition seems to start. And to be honest, I don't know if these thoughts ever really end. We are constantly, to some degree at least, wanting to know ourselves, figuring out our identities, and searching for a place to belong.

And this brings me to today, this beginning of season of Lent, which is a transition in itself. While all the changing seasons is a transition per se, Lent in particular moves us from being lost to being found, from sin to forgiveness, from death into life.

And this season starts always, regardless of what Lectionary year, with this temptation story of Jesus. Or at least, that is what it has always traditionally been called. Now that our official translation, the New Revised Standard Version, has an updated edition aptly named the New Revised Standard Version *Updated Edition*, it doesn't say that Jesus is *tempted* in the wilderness... but he is *tested*.

Uh ok, we might think. That's basically the same thing, theologically speaking. While you wouldn't exactly be wrong, but there is a nuance between tempt and test that gives a new glimpse to this story, at least it does for me.

See, when we say Jesus is tempted, we might think of a little red devil on his left shoulder with paws rubbing together and eyebrows going up and down real fast, prodding Jesus to do something that is so obviously and blatantly wrong that anyone would know what the right

choice would be. And so when we talk about us being tempted, we might have a similar picture. Like, we know we are tempted to do certain things, but we also think that we wouldn't fall for them very much because again, they're the obvious ones to avoid.

But when the language is changed or update to *test*, it's a little different. Like when we take tests in school our knowledge is being proven. When we take our driving road test, our skills are being examined. When we take a blood test, our health and thus treatment is being determined.

See *tempt* is more of a "what if" situation, while *test* is more like "because of". *Tempt* is deciding on an outcome while *test* is determining what is already there. *Tempt* is more choosing what you can do while *test* is more proving who you already are.

The adversary in today's gospel story is testing Jesus, seeing if he believes himself that he is who they say he is. Because you're the promised Messiah, change this rock into bread. Because you are to save the world anyway, you might as well save it in the most efficient way possible. Because you are the glorious Son of God, prove it by exerting your power over both the physical and spiritual realms.

Essentially, Jesus is being tested on the claim that he just heard in his baptism, that he is God's Son, the beloved, with whom God is well pleased. Talk about living in the shadow of your family.

But with each test, Jesus finds his identity in scripture. Not by cherry picking and using random verses out of context to justify his actions, like how some politicians and entire political parties like to do these days, but by seeing how his place is solidified in God's will, in God's family, in God's name. He reminds the adversary, us, and maybe even himself that even though these kinds of self-doubting thoughts and wonderings might creep up in our heads, that God continues to love us, God still fills us with God's Spirit, and God will never leave us alone or abandoned without a name or identity.

Essentially, we will always be identified as God's people, brought into community and worthy of God's love and salvation.

We probably won't ever have to face the same situation that Jesus did, as much as we might want to change rocks into bread considering where grocery prices are at now. But we are likely tested like this, where we might question how we fit in to God's great plan for the world. We might wonder about our identity in God's family. We might even doubt God's calling for us to live in God's community and righteousness.

But in those temptations, in those tests, in those times of trial, we mustn't forget that it isn't our future actions that determine who we are. It isn't our good or bad decisions that decide how we belong. It isn't even how well we might be able to quote bible verses or not that declares our identity.

Rather, it is solely by God's gracious design of life, community, and relationship that remind us that through it all, through the thick and thin, through the ups and downs, through the transitions and tests, that we are and always will be God's beloved people, welcomed into

God's eternal kingdom, and saved from our sin to live with each other and all the saints as the one body of Christ.

Truth is, we might always have questions. We might always have doubts. We might always wonder what is actually true or not as we transition from one stage of life to another. But we mustn't forget that God will always remain God: unchanging, eternally forgiving, and forever loving each and every one of us and giving us divine value and worth.

This is God's promise to us, that we will not be left alone but will always be invited and welcomed into God's kingdom and find identity and belonging in God's family. This is who we are created to be and this truth will survive any test.

So in this season of Lent, as we examine and reflect on ourselves and our identity, may we find confidence in our faith that God is, was, and always will be our living truth. Thanks be to God. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY: When We Are Tested (ACS #922)

CREED

Joined together in Lent, 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 the truth of God's Word, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. Each petition will end with, "by your sovereign mercy, O God," and you all may respond with **hear our prayer**. By your sovereign mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord we dwell in your shelter for you are our refuge and our stronghold. May the security in your name and the truth in your Word strengthen us to battle the forces of evil with confidence and faith. By your sovereign mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord you protect us from evil and guard us from affliction, and we operate in your grace in our service and ministry. Increase our faith in our communities and congregations, that the world might learn to see your face more clearly. 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 Faith Lutheran Church in Powell River; and for Our Saviour's Lutheran Church in Prince George. By your sovereign mercy, O God, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord you bear us up by your hands and you reveal to us your glory through the beauty of creation. May our care for all that you have entrusted to us be pleasing to you, and may this world continue to safely house life for the generations to come. By your sovereign mercy, O God, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord you deliver us who cling to your promises and uphold us who call upon your name. We pray for all areas of the world that are facing political turmoil and strife, that the evil of the world be crushed under your love and grace. We especially 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; and Mery Gabramikael. By your sovereign mercy, O God, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord you answer us when we call and you are with us in times of trouble. Make this apparent among those of us who are sick, who mourn, or who feel lonely, that your love can continue being our source of peace and strength. Especially we pray for Bryan and Chona; Ron, Tess, and Mineko; 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...

By your sovereign mercy, O God, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord you satisfy us with the gift of salvation in your name, and you join us together with the saints of all times and places to live with you as the one body of Christ. Remind us always of their lives of faith, that we might be informed in our own lives of your truth and promises. By your sovereign mercy, O God, **hear our prayer.**

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your leading and guidance found in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

MEAL

DIALOGUE (ELW p. 144)

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 on this day revealed who we are as your children, that we might,
with all the choirs of angels,
with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,
praise your name with this unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (p. 144)

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Most High and Almighty God, we dwell in your shelter and abide in your presence, as you are our refuge and stronghold and in you we put our trust. You send your angels to protect us from harm and affliction, and you deliver us from evil through the work of your Son Jesus, who walks with us through the wilderness of our lives, bringing to us your love, hope, and the life-giving identity as your children.

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 bread and cup that we are satisfied with the gifts of salvation, even as we declare the mystery of faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

You answer us when we call, O God, you rescue us from our times of trouble, you honour us with your love and presence.

All glory and praise be to you, O God, through your Son our brother Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit as one God, now and forever.

Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into strength and faith 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 present with us all.
Thanks be to God.

COMMUNION

COMMUNION HYMNS

Lamb of God (ELW p. 146)
Restore In Us O God (ELW #328)
One Bread, One Body (ELW #496)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Compassionate God, you have fed us with the bread of heaven. Sustain us in our Lenten pilgrimage: may our fasting be hunger for justice; our alms, a making of peace; and our prayer, the song of grateful hearts, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.
Amen.

BLESSING

May God our Shepherd lead us into freedom,
God the Saviour of the world show us the way of justice and peace,
God the Spirit residing in our hearts bind us to God's love and will, now and always.
Amen.

SENDING SONG: I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say (ELW #611)

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, be filled with faith and confidence and hope.
Thanks be to God.