



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

Facebook: [GraceLutBurnaby](https://www.facebook.com/GraceLutBurnaby)

Youtube: [@graceburnaby](https://www.youtube.com/@graceburnaby)



Third Sunday after Pentecost

June 29, 2025

ACS Holy Communion, Setting 12

We have no good apart from God. That makes Jesus' call to follow him an invitation to freedom. This is freedom to revel in the Spirit's fruit: love, joy, peace, and patience. This is freedom to not be imprisoned by anything that would keep us from the fullness of the life God has given us. This is the path of life.

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 those who are here worshipping in-person and on-line with us today! Here at Grace Lutheran we believe God is active in your life. Even you being here now is testament of God's calling and leading in your heart, which you have faithfully heeded. So we welcome you, and pray that today you will be nurtured and that the gifts that God has graciously given you will be stirred for the sake of God's mission in the world.

Grace Lutheran worships, prays, and serves on the traditional and unceded lands and territories of the hənq̓əmin̓əḿ (Musqueam) and Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) peoples.

GATHERING

CALL TO WORSHIP

We gather this day to worship our God, our good above all other, in whom we take refuge. For our delight is in the Lord, who saves us from trouble, and upholds us in community and right relationship with one another. In this our rich inheritance, we together bless the Lord, we set God always before us, and we shall not be shaken. So let us be glad and rejoice, as we are filled with hope in knowing that God does not abandon us but continually welcomes us into God's presence and joy, through Jesus Christ. **Amen. Thanks be to God.**

GATHERING SONG: Will You Come and Follow Me (#798)

GREETING

The reassuring grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the fulfilling love of God, and the empowering fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

SONG OF PRAISE (ACS p. 31)

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Holy and gracious God, you call us to follow you and walk on your paths of righteousness and grace. Through your Word and by your Spirit, guide us in your strength and wisdom, that we might be able to discern and heed to your voice, today and always. **Amen.**

WORD

FIRST READING: 1 Kings 19:15-16, 19-21

A reading from 1 Kings.

In the story preceding today's reading, the prophet Elijah flees for his life to the security of God's mountain. There God reveals to Elijah that there are still other faithful people in Israel and commissions him to anoint new leaders, including his own successor, Elisha.

¹⁵ Then the LORD said to [Elijah], "Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus; when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael as king over Aram. ¹⁶ Also you shall anoint Jehu son of Nimshi as king over Israel, and you shall anoint Elisha son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah as prophet in your place.

¹⁹ So he set out from there and found Elisha son of Shaphat, who was plowing. There were twelve yoke of oxen ahead of him, and he was with the twelfth. Elijah passed by him and threw his mantle over him. ²⁰ He left the oxen, ran after Elijah, and said, "Let me kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow you." Then Elijah said to him, "Go back again, for what have I done to you?" ²¹ He returned from following him, took the yoke of oxen, and slaughtered them; using the equipment from the oxen, he boiled their flesh and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he set out and followed Elijah and became his servant.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 16

¹ Protect me, O God, for I take refuge in you;

I have said to the LORD, "You are my Lord, my good above all other."

² **All my delight is in the godly that are in the land,
upon those who are noble among the people.**

- ³ But those who run after other gods
shall have their troubles multiplied.
- ⁴ **I will not pour out drink offerings to such gods,
never take their names upon my lips.**
- ⁵ O LORD, you are my portion and my cup;
it is you who uphold my lot.
- ⁶ **My boundaries enclose a pleasant land;
indeed, I have a rich inheritance.**
- ⁷ I will bless the LORD who gives me counsel;
my heart teaches me night after night.
- ⁸ **I have set the LORD always before me;
because God is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.**
- ⁹ My heart, therefore, is glad, and my spirit rejoices;
my body also shall rest in hope.
- ¹⁰ **For you will not abandon me to the grave,
nor let your holy one see the pit.**
- ¹¹ You will show me the path of life;
in your presence there is fullness of joy, and in your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

SECOND READING: Galatians 5:1, 13-25

A reading from Galatians.

For Paul, the freedom Christ gives is not permission to do whatever we want. It is the invitation to be what we could not be otherwise. The power and guidance of Christ's Holy Spirit produce a different kind of life, one marked by the fruit of this Holy Spirit.

¹ For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

¹³ For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters, only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become enslaved to one another. ¹⁴ For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

¹⁵ If, however, you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another.

¹⁶ Live by the Spirit, I say, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷ For what the flesh desires is opposed to the Spirit, and what the Spirit desires is opposed to the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you want. ¹⁸ But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not subject to the law. ¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity, debauchery, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, ²¹ envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these. I am warning you, as I warned you before: those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

²² By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things. ²⁴ And those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵ If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (ACS p. 33)

GOSPEL: Luke 9:51-62

The holy gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus is unwavering in his commitment to his mission in Jerusalem and will not be swayed by pettiness. In a series of striking cases in point, he calls his disciples to a similar single-mindedness.

⁵¹ When the days drew near for [Jesus] to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem. ⁵² And he sent messengers ahead of him. On their way they entered a village of the Samaritans to prepare for his arrival, ⁵³ but they did not receive him because his face was set toward Jerusalem. ⁵⁴ When his disciples James and John saw this, they said, "Lord, do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?" ⁵⁵ But he turned and rebuked them. ⁵⁶ Then they went on to another village.

⁵⁷ As they were going along the road, someone said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." ⁵⁸ And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." ⁵⁹ To another he said, "Follow me." But he said, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father." ⁶⁰ And Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God." ⁶¹ Another said, "I will follow you, Lord, but let me first say farewell to those at my home." ⁶² And Jesus said to him, "No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

May your Word, O God, always reveal to us your will for our lives, that we might lean on the power of your Spirit to heed, to follow, and to serve, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

"Lord, do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?"

Uh, what? Did we get that right? Did Jesus' disciples just ask him if they should destroy a whole city because they didn't feel welcomed? Did they really just suggest mass destruction because they were rejected? Can they even hear themselves right now?

Command fire from heaven to consume those they don't like... what in the power-tripping madness even is this? Just have destruction rain down on those they don't like? Obliterate those that don't agree with them? Just smite entire people groups willy nilly?

It just sounds like such a ridiculous thing to ask or say or even think. It's so absurd that it almost sounds like satire.

I don't remember the disciples ever getting such authority to command anything like this let alone death and destruction, but I would imagine that authority probably should be taken away from them. I mean it's like giving nuclear codes to a grade schooler. To use and abuse this kind of power to fit your own agenda is not just irresponsible, it is unethical, cowardly, and honestly it's just petty.

And at the same time... it's eerily relatable.

I mean come on, let's be honest. How many times do we fantasize about exacting revenge on those who hurt us? How often do we feel like we know how to better run relationships, communities, and even countries? Don't we ever assert our worldviews as the only "right" way of living that everyone else should get on board with? We might not have the power or authority to call rain down from heaven, but we sure know what it feels like to want to burn bridges. Or people.

When I was a kid, I was given this electronic toy that produced a variety of different war sound effects, which was a pretty advanced for toy from the 80s. This thing had like a whole four different sounds, like rapid gun fire, missiles being shot at their targets, and two different types of explosions. I assumed that this toy was to help up my game while I played with my GI Joes, but I later learned that you're actually supposed to mount this device in your car dashboard, so you can release the tension and stress of your road rage by pretending to blow the other person up.

Like, really?

I mean, I guess that's better than actually pulling out a high-powered assault rifle that was legally obtained in a country very close to us and committing an anger-fuelled homicide, but still. Why was this even a thing? Why did the inventor of this toy think that pretending to declare war on someone who cut us off without signalling is better than yelling out a few choice words and throwing up some all-too-familiar hand gestures? Are we that Neanderthal that we have to resort to violence to solve our problems? Is destruction and death the only way we can deal with our disagreements and anger? Is militaristic might and having the biggest gun the only measure we have of power in our society?

To be honest, it really seems like it, doesn't it? It's not just personal, but it's systemic. Like the nations of the world like to talk about peace, but when push comes to shove it's the threat of war and throwing your nuclear weight around that really gives you a seat at the table. It's like might makes right. And we can shake our heads at these world leaders and tyrant war mongers all we want, but I'm not sure how different we are from them. Again, we don't have the power or authority to start wars or rain fire down from heaven, but like that 80s toy proves, road rage is a real thing. Cancel culture like we talked about last week is also real and something that we've fostered and adopted as normal. We so easily fall into harming, hurting, and even hating others.

This is our reality. Not just now but at least since the beginning of time as we read in our scriptures how the people wanted to violently rid the other cultures, the other powers, the other religions. And so it seems safe to assume that this is what we always will be...

...unless.

Unless we are taught a new way. Unless we are shown how to differently see our disagreements, each other, and the world. Unless we are given... I don't know... a spirit of some kind that will lead us, guide us, and change us to get off the violent and destructive paths of the world and learn to walk in the ways of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

I mean look at how Jesus reacts to the absurd request from his disciples. He doesn't even consider it. He doesn't have staff meetings and in-depth discussions weighing the pros and cons. He doesn't go on some angry tirade on social media or craft a PR campaign to justify a holy firebombing.

No, he rebukes them. Puts them in their place. He stops them in their tracks and reminds them that we aren't called to that life. We don't follow a Messiah of militaristic might. We don't serve a God that is about retribution... but we have a God that cares about redemption, reconciliation, and restoration.

But then those justifications might come pouring in. That city they wanted to destroy still rejected Jesus, didn't they? There needs to be consequences for such insolence. They need to be taught a lesson in manners. So really, they deserve what's coming to them. Or so we might say.

Because I don't think they rejected as much as they just didn't understand. See the text is clear that Jesus' eyes were set on Jerusalem. He was moving toward humility, toward sacrifice, toward death. Death that will lead to healing and peace, but still death. That kind of thing would be hard for these foreigners to get. Heck it was hard for the disciples to get. And honestly, it isn't that easy for us either.

It isn't easy for us to put down our thirst for vengeance. It isn't easy for us to let go of our instinct to retaliate. It isn't easy for us to stop justifying our anger with spiritual language. And it's even harder for us to instead choose mercy, grace, and forgiveness. Mercy not because we're weak, but because we're strong enough to let go. Grace not because we condone wrongdoing but because we believe that none are beyond God's love. Forgiveness not because they deserve it, but because we've been forgiven first.

Still, it isn't easy. It seems like we continually fall back to the ways that we've always lived, how the world around us has taught us. It's like we can't ever get it right. The disciples certainly didn't. And all those that Jesus calls to follow him in the last part of our gospel reading don't either.

I mean yeah, their requests to say goodbye and attend funerals are legit, and Jesus isn't telling anyone to not care about those who mean a lot to us. But what Jesus is saying is that there will always be something that will pull us away from following, there will always be distractions that take our eyes off him, there will always be reasons to stay angry and in control of our own destinies, rendering us unfit and unworthy of the kingdom of God.

But Jesus calls us anyway.

In spite of our violent tendencies, our inability to get it, our innate separation from God, he calls us. He loves us. And Jesus gifts us with the Spirit that empowers us to love back and convicts us to live in community.

Again, this doesn't mean that we'll get it perfect all the time, because we will likely fail more often than not. It doesn't mean that we'll always get it and can live in the way that God intends for us, because you know something triggering will happen and we'll fall back to the old ways. It doesn't mean that we won't ever want to rain fire from heaven on those who just annoy the

heck out of us, because we often need to pretend that our rage is righteous and justify our weaponizing of our faith against those we don't like.

But it does mean that even in our shortcomings, our identity as God's people won't change. Even in our failures and misunderstandings, God will continue to love us and welcome us into community. Even in our tendency to anger quickly, be distracted easily, and focus on the totally wrong thing, God will call us to follow.

Follow the truth, follow peace, follow and live in this divine love that is extended to us all.

So in this season after Pentecost, may we see and recognise how we are strengthened by the Spirit to follow Christ: not as destroyers, but as disciples; not as judges, but as servants; not as agents of wrath, but as children of a merciful God. Thanks be to God. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY: Be Thou My Vision (#793)

CREED

With all those called by name by the Spirit, 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 by the Spirit into service and community, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. Each petition will end with "by your empowering mercy, O God," and you are all invited to respond with **hear our prayer**. By your empowering mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, we put our trust in you and you fill us with love. Continue to grow in us humble and servant hearts, that the world might know of your love through our ministry and community. By your empowering mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, we put our trust in you and you guide us with joyful hearts. May we as the church continue serving you and neighbour, that all might know this joy that comes from you. 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 leaders, congregations, and ministries of the ELCIC. In particular, we pray for Benediction Lutheran Church in Delta and the pastors and leaders that serve them; as well as for King of Life Lutheran Church in Coquitlam and their pastor Dorothy Chu. By your empowering mercy, O God, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, we put our trust in you and you strengthen us in all that we do. May we be better stewards of the creation that you've entrusted to us, that we be mindful of our usage of the resources of this planet. Restore our relationship with the Earth, that it might continue to house life for the future generations. By your empowering mercy, O God, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, we put our trust in you and you have instilled in us the peace that surpasses all understanding. May the nations yearn for this peace, that all might work together to put away weapons and plans for power and rule, and learn to live united in spite of diversity. 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 Meri Gabramikael. By your empowering mercy, O God, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, we put our trust in you and you gift us with faith in your promises. Remind us of your healing power that we might all lean on you on our times of need. We remember in prayer all those who are sick, who feel lonely, or who mourn, that we all be strengthened in our community and service. We pray especially for Bryan and Chona; Ron, Tess, and Mineko; Beulah; Joe; Bev and family; John and Betty; Sukhwant; Pastor Kristen; Laura; Kandie; Thomas; Will; Chris; Larry; Walter; Piet; Hwee Yang; Ephraim; Kelly; Mardi; and all those we name aloud or quietly in our hearts at this time...

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

O Lord, we put our trust in you and you remind us to be patient. For your eternity is everlasting and we await your coming in glory with all the saints of light. As we continue our pilgrimage and community, may we be full of the fruit of the Spirit, acting as your hands and feet in the world. By your empowering mercy, O God, **hear our prayer.**

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your call for us to be your children, 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 is joined as one with you and the Holy Spirit, reminding us that we too are one 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 (ACS p. 36)

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

O God, you are our Lord, our good above all other, and you protect us as we take refuge in you.
We delight in your wisdom and promises, our portion and our cup, and we worship you for
teaching us and guiding us through the work of your Son Jesus, whom you have sent to counsel
the afflicted and to set the strong in your ways.

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 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 gave it to 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."

Our hearts, therefore, are glad, and our spirits rejoice with this bread and cup, even as we
proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

We know you are with us and will not abandon us. We trust that you continually guide us on
the path of life. We have hope in your presence that brings us to the fullness of your joy,
through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now
and forever. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER (ACS p. 39)

Gathered into community by the 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 that God is with us.

Thanks be to God.

COMMUNION

COMMUNION HYMNS: Lamb of God (ACS p. 40)

Day by Day (#790)

My Shepherd, You Supply My Need (#782)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Gracious God, you have given us more than we could ask or imagine. You remind us of your providence and love through the blessing of this bread and cup. You call us into community and service by your Spirit, and you equip us for life with you both here and in the world through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

SENDING

BLESSING

May God bless you and keep you,
may God gift you with good things and equip you for service,
and may God look upon you with unending love and grace, and lead you to peace.
Amen.

SENDING SONG: Lord of All Hopefulness (#765)

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, be empowered with the fruit of the Spirit.

Thanks be to God.

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