



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

OF SOUTH BURNABY, BC

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA

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Sixth Sunday after Pentecost

July 20, 2025

ACS Holy Communion, Setting 12

Perhaps the church, at its best, is “all ears.” God urges the faithful, again and again, to “listen up!”—to heed the word that gives life. So it was with Abraham and Sarah, Mary and Martha, and the early church at Colossae. So it is today as we join the assembly to hear the word of God, the word 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 hənq̓əmin̓əŋ (Musqueam) and Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) peoples.

GATHERING

CALL TO WORSHIP

We gather in this tabernacle of our Lord, to worship and abide in God's holy name. For we are called to live life right and speak truth from our hearts; and refrain from slander, discredit, and evil. And we are empowered, gifted, and welcomed to live in community, to love our neighbour, and to trust in God's promises, generosity, and love, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

GATHERING SONG: O Savior, Precious Savior (#820)

GREETING

The saving grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the accepting love of God, and the welcoming communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

SONG OF PRAISE (ACS p. 31)

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Almighty God, you brought creation into being through Christ, and in Christ all things find their purpose. Open our eyes to see the gifts that you give, that they can be used as a witness to your gospel, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

WORD

FIRST READING: Genesis 18:1-10a

The LORD visits Abraham and Sarah to tell them that the long-awaited promise of the birth of a child will be fulfilled for them in their old age.

¹ The LORD appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day. ² He looked up and saw three men standing near him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent entrance to meet them and bowed down to the ground. ³ He said, "My lord, if I find favor with you, do not pass by your servant. ⁴ Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. ⁵ Let me bring a little bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on—since you have come to your servant." So they said, "Do as you have said." ⁶ And Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah and said, "Make ready quickly three measures of choice flour, knead it, and make cakes." ⁷ Abraham ran to the herd and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to the servant, who hastened to prepare it. ⁸ Then he took curds and milk and the calf that he had prepared and set it before them, and he stood by them under the tree while they ate.

⁹ They said to him, "Where is your wife Sarah?" And he said, "There, in the tent." ^{10a} Then one said, "I will surely return to you in due season, and your wife Sarah shall have a son."

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 15

¹ LORD, who may dwell in your tabernacle?

Who may abide upon your holy hill?

² **Those who lead a blameless life and do what is right,
who speak the truth from their heart;**

³ they do not slander with the tongue, they do no evil to their friends;

they do not cast discredit upon a neighbor.

⁴ **In their sight the wicked are rejected, but they honor those who fear the LORD.
They have sworn upon their health and do not take back their word.**

⁵ They do not give their money in hope of gain, nor do they take bribes against the innocent.
Those who do these things shall never be overthrown.

SECOND READING: Colossians 1:15-28

This letter offers a mystical teaching, that the great mystery of God is “Christ in you.” Because Christ is present in the church, Christians share in his life, suffering, and glory.

¹⁵ [Christ Jesus] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation,¹⁶ for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. ¹⁷ He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸ He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. ¹⁹ For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, ²⁰ and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

²¹ And you who were once estranged and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, ²² he has now reconciled in his fleshly body through death, so as to present you holy and blameless and irreproachable before him, ²³ provided that you continue securely established and steadfast in the faith, without shifting from the hope promised by the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven. I, Paul, became a minister of this gospel.

²⁴ I am now rejoicing in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am completing what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church. ²⁵ I became its minister according to God’s commission that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, ²⁶ the mystery that has been hidden throughout the ages and generations but has now been revealed to his saints. ²⁷ To them God chose to make known how great among the gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. ²⁸ It is he whom we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone in all wisdom, so that we may present everyone mature in Christ.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (ACS p. 33)

GOSPEL: Luke 10:38-42

The holy gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

During his visit to the home of Mary and Martha, Jesus reminds Martha that her concern for her many tasks distracts from the one thing that precedes all else: abiding in the presence of God.

³⁸ Now as [Jesus and his disciples] went on their way, he entered a certain village where a woman named Martha welcomed him. ³⁹ She had a sister named Mary, who sat at Jesus’s feet and listened to what he was saying. ⁴⁰ But Martha was distracted by her many tasks, so she came to him and asked, “Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her, then, to help me.” ⁴¹ But the Lord answered her, “Martha, Martha, you are

worried and distracted by many things,⁴² but few things are needed—indeed only one. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her.”

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

SERMON

Holy God, may our ears be opened for your Word, our eyes opened for your truth, and our hearts opened to receive your love and grace, through Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

The other day one of our sons and I were listening to a morning show on the radio, and the topic of their conversation turned to dating. Like romantic dating, not like carbon dating fossils which would have been pretty cool, but it is what it is. This dating talk was awkward enough to listen to with our teenaged son, but then the male DJ host goes and brings up the opinion that dating these days is much harder for men than it is for women.

And as soon as he said the words, the reaction that came from the two other DJ hosts, that happen to be female, was exactly what I thought it would be. You might know what I mean or might be having the same reaction yourself. In that, they just didn't agree. Actually, “didn't agree” probably isn't a strong enough term. They vehemently did not agree. There was actual scorn in their voices and sparks were starting to fly. While they did let him say his piece, it wasn't without plenty of interruptions with differing opinions and arguing about how he's just plain wrong.

Now, I should say that I'm not agreeing with either side or saying what demographic actually does have it the worst in the dating world, because I don't really know and frankly, I'm not sure that's an argument that needs to be had. I'm not trying to be callous toward the plight of those in bad dating situations, but I'm just saying that I'm not sure if there's a blanket truth in this matter. I mean relationships are just hard in general, regardless of what gender they identify as. So really, what's the point? Why bother trying to get the other side to concede? What will change if one side is definitively proven right? What is accomplished by belittling the other side for having an opinion that is different from yours? What would the outcome be... other than maybe inadvertently displaying how your opponent is right with your difficult and competitive attitude?

Again, I'm not siding with anyone here, as much as you'd think I'd have a natural bias. I know dating is hard. Even in this day and age of technologically advanced conveniences that ironically make life busier, I get that meeting someone is difficult. I understand how other people, especially those who see the world differently from us, can be extremely annoying with their different habits and ways of doing things, and living and co-existing with them can be so hair-pullingly frustrating because they just don't ever seem to conform to what we want, what we think, what we are.

What happened that made relationships in general such competitions? Aren't they supposed to be about companionship? Why are we so distracted by being right in our opinions rather than being loving in how we relate to our partner or friend or, as it were, sibling?

And that brings us to today's very often dangerously mis-used and mis-interpreted story from our gospel lesson, where we hear about another pair of siblings from the bible that get into a

little friction. These sisters graciously welcome Jesus into their home, and as one of the co-hosts, Martha picks up the slack with preparing the preparations while the other co-host Mary slacks off and is just chillin' with Jesus. This infuriating and frustrating act of doing nothing, of course infuriates and frustrates Martha.

I mean who wouldn't be mad? Sure, Mary has always been portrayed as and presumed to be the youngest sister which of course automatically disposes her as the carefree and irresponsible one, but come on now, this is Jesus we're talking about. Fold a napkin or something. Go slaughter a calf, fatted or otherwise. Grab some choice flour and make some cakes or whatever. I don't know, just doing something would be better than nothing.

We don't know what their relationship is like normally and if they're the bickering type, but it does seem like Martha has been slighted by her sister like this before by how she reacts. She doesn't complain to the source of the issue, which is Mary, as though she already knows that it wouldn't get them anywhere. Instead, she triangulates Jesus, their guest, in hopes that he would be able to back her up in this competition of good host-ness.

It was like, "hey Jesus, I'm busting my hump here being a good host to you and your friends, the least you could do is tell Mary to help me out."

Martha isn't wrong here, but Jesus does what none of us who have ever been in Martha's position before would have expected, he sides with Mary.

Or at least, that's what it seemed like. "Martha," Jesus says, "relax. You're distracted. Don't be so worried about stuff that doesn't need to be worried about."

Uh, right. That'll work. Martha should calm right down now. Nice strategy, Jesus.

Unfortunately, we don't really know what happens after this, the story just kind of ends there. Martha *could* have calmed down and was like, "you're right, Jesus, let me continue doing everything while my sister does nothing" or she could have driven them all out of her home with a cleaver. We just don't know.

But is that really it? Is this story just about what Martha did and what Mary didn't? Or trying to figure out who is right and who is wrong? Or who has it the worst in this relationship? Well, I do think that it's about relationship dynamics, but not in a competitive sense. Like I think it's more about why we do what we do when we do. More about our love and service to God and to neighbour. I think this story is reminding us that relationship is not about competition, but it's about companionship.

Because notice that Jesus doesn't actually spell out what the "right thing" was that Mary chose. He doesn't commend her for sitting around doing nothing. He doesn't rebuke Martha for running around and doing everything. Rather, he just says that Martha is distracted. Distracted with worry, distracted with being the hostess with the mostest, distracted by comparing herself with her sister.

Imagine if Mary had the same attitude as Martha. Imagine if it was Mary who went to Jesus to complain. Imagine if Mary was like, "Jesus, what's the deal with my sister? You came all the

way here to hang out with us but she is spending our limited time together making more than enough food. Tell her to come and sit with us.”

And then imagine how Jesus would react to Mary’s hypothetical triangulation. He’s probably say, “Mary, Mary, why you buggin? You’re worried and distracted about many things, but you only need to be worried about one thing. And your sister Martha chose correctly.”

See it isn’t so much what the sisters are doing or aren’t doing around the house as hosts. It isn’t so much that they should be on the same page about things and be exactly the same. It isn’t even about what is appropriate behaviour when you have company. But it’s about living and being out of grace. It’s about serving God and neighbour out of love. It’s about recognising the distractions that are taking our focus away from our relationships, because that is where God can be mostly clearly seen, heard, and felt.

So if you feel called to serve, then have at it, you are blessed for having that gift of humility and helpfulness. If you’re called to sit and listen, you go and do you, you are blessed for having the gift of attentiveness and care. But all of us are called to live in community, with all its diversity and multitude of opinions and ways of doing things, focussed on relationship and love. We don’t have to worry about what our neighbour is doing and/or how they’re different from us, but rather focus on how we can be of loving service to them.

And I think that’s the point. It’s not about the competition but about companionship. We are all distracted by many things, but we are called to just one thing, and that is our relationship with God that is reflected in our relationships with each other. This relationship that is full of grace, mercy, and love, is what strengthens us to welcome, include, and serve. And then perhaps we won’t be so worried about the other and the differences that separate us, but we can be reminded of how we are joined together in Christ, united by the Spirit, and empowered by God to reflect God’s gracious love first shown to us, in our action and words, through the hospitality that we give and receive, and living together in right relationship and community.

So in this season after Pentecost, may we see God present in our relationships, communities, and throughout the world, that we might remain focussed on the love and grace that has been first given to us, that we be able to faithfully reflect it onto all whom we encounter. Thanks be to God. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY: Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing (#807)

CREED

With all of God’s forgiven people, 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

Called to live in reconciliation and peace, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. Each petition will end with “Lord, in your mercy,” and you are all invited to respond with **hear our prayer.** Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the reconciliation of those living in disagreement and grudges. May we all find the grace and mercy that you give and have the strength to express it in love. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the church throughout the world, that it may continue following you as we together proclaim your gospel through word and deed. We remember especially 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 Faith Lutheran Church in Kelowna and their pastor Brian Krushel; and for Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in North Vancouver and their pastor Vida Jaugelis. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the earth, that we may wisely and sparingly use its resources in mutual respect and care. We offer a prayer for those who are affected by or are living in areas of harsh weather, natural disasters, and famine, and may we continue to trust in your providence through the goodness of creation. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the nations of the world, that all may live without fear of oppression, poverty, or war. We pray for the leaders of the nations that they may honour justice, protect the weak, and serve the common good. We pray for our communities and neighbourhoods, that all may dwell in harmony. And 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; and as well for those who have not yet arrived: Maekele Kiflu, Selam Haile, and their children; and Meri Gabramikael. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for all in need of healing and peace, that it might be found in your love through our ministry and community. We pray especially for Bryan and Chona; Ron, Tess, and Mineko; Beulah; Joe; Olaf; 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...
Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray with all the saints, living in our memories and in our hearts, that we might all continue to live together as the one eternal body of Christ. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your great mercy found in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

MEAL

DIALOGUE

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty, and our joy, that we should at all times and places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Saviour Jesus Christ, who reconciles us to you and each other, joining us with the choirs of angels, the hosts of heaven, and the whole church on earth, in praising your name with this unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (ACS p. 36)

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

O Lord, you welcome us to dwell in your tabernacle and abide on your holy hill, and you join us together to live in community and reconciliation. For while we were living in sin, you showed us the expanse of your love by sending to us your Son Jesus, who teaches us your ways of righteousness and peace.

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."

And 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 through this bread and cup that we are made to be blameless in your sight, even as we declare this mystery of faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

In you we shall not be overthrown, for you have given us your Word and your grace, joining as one with you and each other, 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 as one 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 reconciling us all together.

Thanks be to God.

COMMUNION

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

Children of the Heavenly Father (#781)

Give Me Jesus (#770)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Holy God, we give you thanks for again feeding us with this bread and cup of life, that brings us together and reconciles us to you and each other. Be with us as we go from here, serving you and neighbour, strengthened by faith, and always listening for your Word and leading in our lives, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

SENDING

BLESSING

The God of reconciliation bless you, the grace of Jesus keep you, and the power of the Spirit strengthen you, this day and forevermore.

Amen.

SENDING SONG: Have No Fear, Little Flock (#764)

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, listen to Christ.

Thanks be to God.