



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

OF SOUTH BURNABY, BC

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA

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Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

July 27, 2025

ACS Holy Communion, Setting 12

Persistence in prayer is encouraged by Jesus and wins the attention of God when Abraham intercedes for Sodom. The life of the baptized—to be rooted and built up in Christ Jesus—is to be nurtured with prayer. God hears and answers prayer and so strengthens God's own. "When I called, you answered me; you increased my strength within me."

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 hən̓q̓əmi̓n̓əm̓ (Musqueam) and Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) peoples.

GATHERING

CALL TO WORSHIP

We gather in worship, to give thanks to our Lord with our whole heart, to bow down and sing praises to God's holy name, for God's Word is faithful and steadfast. Our cries for mercy are answered, our strength is increased within us, and we are led down the ways of God's wisdom and glory, where we are looked after and cared for. So it is our purpose to live for this merciful God, who does not abandon us, but whose love endures and remains unchanging forever.

Amen. Thanks be to God.

GATHERING SONG: O Christ, Your Heart, Compassionate (#722)

GREETING

The unending grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the steadfast love of God, and the unchanging welcome of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

SONG OF PRAISE (ACS p. 31)

PRAYER OF THE DAY

God, through your Son Jesus you teach us how to live with you and each other as we receive your hospitality, your providence, and your love. Increase our strength that we might likewise be hospitable and love, as we receive the gift of your Spirit and reflect it out through our witness and community, through Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

WORD

FIRST READING: Genesis 18:20-32

A reading from Genesis.

In today's reading, Abraham undertakes the role of a mediator between God and sinful humanity. Appealing to God's justice, Abraham boldly asks for mercy for the city of Sodom for the sake of the few righteous people there, including Abraham's nephew, Lot.

²⁰ Then the LORD said, "How great is the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah and how very grave their sin! ²¹ I must go down and see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to me, and if not, I will know."

²² So the men turned from there and went toward Sodom, while Abraham remained standing before the LORD. ²³ Then Abraham came near and said, "Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? ²⁴ Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city; will you then sweep away the place and not forgive it for the fifty righteous who are in it? ²⁵ Far be it from you to do such a thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from you! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?" ²⁶ And the LORD said, "If I find at Sodom fifty righteous in the city, I will forgive the whole place for their sake." ²⁷ Abraham answered, "Let me take it upon myself to speak to my lord, I who am but dust and ashes. ²⁸ Suppose five of the fifty righteous are lacking? Will you destroy the whole city for lack of five?" And he said, "I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there." ²⁹ Again he spoke to him, "Suppose forty are found there." He answered, "For the sake of forty I will not do it."

³⁰ Then he said, "Oh, do not let my lord be angry if I speak. Suppose thirty are found there." He answered, "I will not do it, if I find thirty there." ³¹ He said, "Let me take it upon myself to speak to my lord. Suppose twenty are found there." He answered, "For the sake of twenty I will not destroy it." ³² Then he said, "Oh, do not let my lord be angry if I speak just once more. Suppose ten are found there." He answered, "For the sake of ten I will not destroy it."

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 138

- ¹ I will give thanks to you, O LORD, with my whole heart;
before the gods I will sing your praise.
- ² **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.**
- ³ When I called, you answered me;
you increased my strength within me.
- ⁴ **All the rulers of the earth will praise you, O LORD,
when they have heard the words of your mouth.**
- ⁵ They will sing of the ways of the LORD,
that great is the glory of the LORD.
- ⁶ **The LORD is high, yet cares for the lowly,
perceiving the haughty from afar.**
- ⁷ 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.
- ⁸ **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: Colossians 2:6-15

A reading from Colossians.

The writer of this letter warns the congregation in Colossae about “the empty lure” of philosophies and traditions that compromise faith. Through the gift of faith, the church is mystically connected with Christ in his death and resurrection which is enacted in baptism.

- ⁶ As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to walk in him, ⁷ rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.
- ⁸ Watch out that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental principles of the world, and not according to Christ. ⁹ For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, ¹⁰ and you have come to fullness in him, who is the head of every ruler and authority. ¹¹ In him also you were circumcised with a spiritual circumcision, by the removal of the body of the flesh in the circumcision of Christ; ¹² when you were buried with him in baptism, you were also raised with him through faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead. ¹³ And when you were dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive together with him, when he forgave us all our trespasses, ¹⁴ erasing the record that stood against us with its legal demands. He set this aside, nailing it to the cross. ¹⁵ He disarmed the rulers and authorities and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in it.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (ACS p. 33)

GOSPEL: Luke 11:1-13

The holy gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

In teaching his disciples this prayer, Jesus also reminds them to focus on God's coming reign, God's mercy, and the strengthening of the community. Jesus encourages his disciples to childlike trust and persistence in prayer.

¹ [Jesus] was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples."² So he said to them, "When you pray, say:

Father, may your name be revered as holy.

May your kingdom come.

³ Give us each day our daily bread.

⁴ And forgive us our sins,

for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us.

And do not bring us to the time of trial."

⁵ And he said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread,' ⁶ for a friend of mine has arrived, and I have nothing to set before him.' ⁷ And he answers from within, 'Do not bother me; the door has already been locked, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything.' ⁸ I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything out of friendship, at least because of his persistence he will get up and give him whatever he needs.

⁹ "So I say to you, Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. ¹⁰ For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. ¹¹ Is there anyone among you who, if your child asked for a fish, would give a snake instead of a fish? ¹² Or if the child asked for an egg, would give a scorpion? ¹³ If you, then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

Holy God, we are grateful for the gift of your Word, that feeds us, leads us, and gives us hope in your grace and mercy, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

So I know what you're thinking, "Hey, didn't the new Fantastic Four movie come out this past week? This no life loser probably already saw it and is going to tell us all about it in this sermon."

Well, let me tell you something... I just happen to have a life. Sure, it consists mostly of working, parenting my kids, and watching comic book movies... so I guess you're not entirely wrong. In that, I did see this movie and I do want to talk about it. But not about the movie's thrilling plot, it's stellar acting, or mind-blowing plot twists, rather, I want to talk about the sentiment around what this movie represents and how it fits into the Marvel Cinematic Universe and its legacy on the whole.

I know, even after all this time I realise that some of you might not know what I'm talking about when I say the Marvel Cinematic Universe. Or you might not know the difference between an MCU movie, a Sony movie, or even a DC movie. You might not even know what the heck a Fantastic Four is. But all

that really isn't the point. The point is that this movie that I just saw was one that needed to be made to prove that this whole franchise isn't dead, because let me tell you, as big of a fan as I am, the last 5 or so years was iffy at best. So this particular movie was one that people have been looking forward to since the rights were paid for to even be legally allowed to make it (long story). This Fantastic Four movie was one that the fans have been asking for, demanding, and even deserve.

So this movie was made under a lot of pressure on its producers, it had a lot of expectation on how well it was done and how it could turn the entire franchise around, and they probably knew that it would be under a *lot* of fanboy scrutiny.

And you know what? *They delivered.*

I mean it was a thoroughly enjoyable watch, a very entertaining movie, and they finally listened to the fans. Or at least, that's what the loudest fans would like you to believe. That their incessant and unending cries and pleas for a quality superhero movie finally got the Marvel powers that be to actually up their game. So they'd say that we have them, the fans, to thank for this quality movie.

Yeah right.

While all those involved with putting this movie together might have heard what the fans were saying, I'm pretty sure that their efforts were what they were regardless. Sure, they may have missed the mark over the past 5 years or so, but that's according to a certain perspective. A widely shared perspective, sure, but still there are people out there who actually enjoyed them, some more than others. So these movie producers were doing their best in spite of what people thought, what people said, and how their efforts were received. They do their best not because the fans asked them to, but because it's their job. And while people might say it's part of their job to please the masses, I don't think it is ever in their job description to *cater only* to the masses. They do what they're trained to do, whether the fans like it or not. It's just lucky for us that we sometimes *do* like it.

And that's indicative of society today, isn't it, not just with movies and comic books? I mean like everyone thinks that they know best and that gives them the right to tell others what to do. Or at very least, they will complain about how things aren't how they should be, you know, how they want them to be. And if things actually work out? Then the "I told you so's" come out of the woodwork and perhaps attempt to take credit for it: credit for other people's work, credit for ideas that aren't theirs, credit even for what God is doing in the world.

That brings us to today's readings. I mean it's not hard to see what I'm getting at here. Our first reading has Abraham seemingly changing God's mind about the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah. In very meek and humble way, Abraham pleads with God to spare the twin cities for the sake of a handful of righteous people, likely his nephew Lot and his family. So, thanks for looking out, Abraham, because he succeeds. Well, succeeds at least in changing God's mind on when to spare the cities, buuut they were destroyed anyway.

And the gospel lesson is of course about prayer, about asking God for stuff, and even being persistent in our asking even when the answer has already been definitively given. I mean Jesus gives that example of the guy asking his neighbour for bread in the middle of the night. The neighbour says no, of course, but Jesus says to just keep asking. Be loud and obnoxious. And then out of exasperation they'll give you what you want.

So these scriptures seem to reinforce what the world tells us about the squeaky wheel getting the grease, you miss 100% of the shots you don't take, and you don't get what you don't ask for. I mean that is almost literally what we're told today, "seek and you'll find, ask and you'll receive, knock and the door will be opened."

Then that settles it, I guess? Everything you good you get is on you, it's because you looked for it, you asked for it, you didn't take no for an answer. Which also means that everything you *don't* get is on you as well, that you didn't look hard enough, you didn't ask hard enough, or maybe your faith wasn't strong enough.

I mean, isn't that what they tell us? Isn't that what we learn in the bible? Isn't that what Jesus is saying in this exact passage?

It really seems like it, doesn't it? But deep down, it just doesn't feel right. In our heart of hearts, we know that we can't control God with our whims as much as we want to or subconsciously believe. I think Jesus' actual lesson here is that God doesn't give us good because *we're* good.

Rather, God gives us good, because *God* is good.

And in there lies our hope. That our being welcomed, included, and redeemed has really nothing to do with how we act, how we think things should be run, or even how we pray. Rather it is by God's grace that we are loved, forgiven, and saved.

So then if that's the case, what is the point of prayer? If God is going to do what God is going to do, why do we even need to bother praying at all? What does Jesus even mean here about being persistent if it isn't asking over and over for what we want?

Well, I think that prayer isn't so much for God's mind to change to give us what we want, but it's more for our mind to change and learn to accept what God gives and to see the good in it. This isn't to say that there is good in everything we get, but rather it is to help us in our mindset, our paradigms, our views of God's work in the world. While I don't think we should attribute everything to God, good or bad, I do think we can learn to see how God is present in every situation. We can better trust and recognise how God is with us through thick and thin. Our faith can be increased to believe that God does work all things together for the good and we can learn to be on board with how God is moving, what God is doing, and who God is redeeming through Jesus Christ. And it is through and by prayer that we can be strengthened for this in us and in our communities.

I know life can be full of ups and downs, full of good and bad, full of things we like and don't like. But I firmly believe that God continues to be with us whether we see it or not. God continues to love us and forgive us whether we feel or acknowledge it or not. God continues to give us good things whether we agree they are good or not. And prayer is our way of discerning all of that. Prayer is a gift that allows and strengthens us to name the character of God acting and working in our lives. Prayer empowers us to better know God, see God, and feel God's love in and through us and those around us, joining us all together as the one body of Christ: welcomed, forgiven, and saved.

So in this season after Pentecost, may we continue looking for God's hand at work, hearing God's voice calling and leading us, and centering our lives in prayer. Thanks be to God. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY: Canticle of the Turning (#723)

CREED

With all those residing in the presence of God, 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 God's unchanging and eternal love, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. Each petition will end with "in your steadfast mercy, O God," and you are all invited to respond with **hear our prayer**. In your steadfast mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, your name is holy, here throughout the Earth and in the heavens. We give you thanks with our whole hearts and sing your praise before all the earth, for your works are marvelous and you provide for our salvation. May we learn to accept your gracious hospitality and benevolence, and in turn reflect it to all the world. In your steadfast mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, your name is holy, and your presence dwells among us. We bow down and praise your name for your love and faithfulness, as you strengthen us for your service and ministry to all people. We lift in prayer our neighbouring faith communities; those who use this building for worship, work, and play; our partners Anglican Church of Canada and Moravian Church in Canada; and our bishops, rostered ministers, congregations, and ministries of the ELCIC. In particular, we pray for Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church and their pastor Kristen Steele who continues on extended sick leave, and their interim pastor Peter Hansen; and we also pray for St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Vancouver, and their relatively new pastor Ulrich Hassbach. In your steadfast mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, your name is holy, and we see your handiwork and providence in all of creation. You answer us when we call, and you strengthen us in our work and ministry and even in our stewardship of this planet. May the works of your hands will go not to waste but continue to flourish and provide for all life. In your steadfast mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, your name is holy, and you forgive us that we might be able to forgive others. May the rulers, leaders, and politicians of the earth praise you when they hear of your wisdom and truth, and lead all people into peace and justice. We also pray especially 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. In your steadfast mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, your name is holy, and you save and deliver us from trial, and you care for us and grant us peace in the midst of trouble. Be with all who are sick, who mourn, or who feel lonely, that your love can reign in all our hearts. 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...
In your steadfast mercy, O God, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, your name is holy, and your steadfast love endures in your kingdom and power forever, giving us purpose and meaning for all time. May those that we've loved and lost remain in our hearts always, that their memories be honoured through our relationships and community. In your steadfast mercy, O God, **hear our prayer.**

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your steadfast love and faithfulness, shown to us by Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

MEAL

DIALOGUE

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty, and our joy, that we should at all times and places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Saviour Jesus Christ, who teaches us of and leads us on your paths of generosity and grace, and joins 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 God, most holy and mighty, we give you thanks with our whole hearts and we sing praises to your name before all the earth, your love and faithfulness are steadfast and eternal and you have glorified your name and your word above all things. You have answered us when we call, and you have increased our strength with the truth and promises found in your Son Jesus, your living Word, whom you've sent to reveal your majestic glory and gracious forgiveness in all the earth.

For on the night that he was betrayed, your Son Jesus sat with his friends for a final 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 shared that 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 how God's hand is stretched out to us to care for us and keep us safe, even as we proclaim the mystery of our faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

O God you make good your purpose for us, and your steadfast love endures forever through the works of your hands and feet and we your people on earth, empowered by the faith of Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER (ACS p. 39)

Gathered together as God's beloved in 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 God's steadfast love and faithfulness.

Thanks be to God.

COMMUNION

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

When the Poor Ones (#725)

Lord, Be Glorified (#744)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Holy God, we give you thanks for your providence in again feeding and nourishing us with your Word, your truth, and your grace through this bread and cup. Be with us as we go from here, reflecting your love and faithfulness to all the world, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

SENDING

BLESSING

May the unchanging God preserve, protect, and keep you,
the God of steadfast love bless you and shine favour upon you,
the faithful and eternal God welcome you into community, send you forth into mission, and
grant you all peace.

Amen.

SENDING SONG: On Eagle's Wings (#787)

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, praise God in all that you do.

Thanks be to God.

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