



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

OF SOUTH BURNABY, BC

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA

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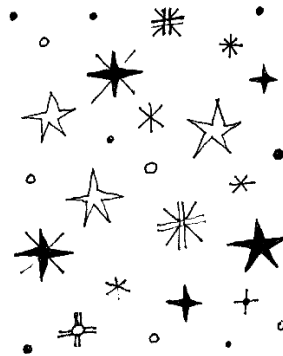
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Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

August 10, 2025

WOV Holy Communion, Setting 5: Bread of Life

Jesus says, "It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." It is God's promise from the beginning—to Abraham, to the early church, and to the "little flock" of which we are a part in today's assembly. Faith, God's baptismal gift, trusts the promises of God. Have no fear.

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 hən̓q̓əmin̓əm̓ (Musqueam) and Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh (Squamish) peoples.

GATHERING

CALL TO WORSHIP

We gather in joy to worship our God, who sees us from heaven and declares us as God's own children. Our deeds are observed and our hearts have been fashioned and empowered for service through the steadfast mercy of the Lord. For we are watched over, delivered, and saved. And so we rejoice and trust in God's holy name, our very source of love and hope, through Jesus Christ. **Amen. Thanks be to God.**

GATHERING HYMN: Guide Me Ever, Great Redeemer (ELW #618)

GREETING

The coming grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the very present love of God, and the redeeming fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

HYMN OF PRAISE (WOV p. 29)

PRAYER OF THE DAY

God of grace, we are unworthy of your care, but you surprise us with grace. Infuse us with the hope of your promises and teach us the joy in your ways, that our faith be increased and ever more grateful for Jesus Christ, through whom we pray. **Amen.**

WORD

FIRST READING: Genesis 15:1-6

God promises childless and aging Abram that a child of his own will be his heir and that his descendants will number as many as the stars. Abram trusts God's promise, and through this faith he is considered righteous.

¹ After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, "Do not be afraid, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great." ² But Abram said, "O Lord GOD, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" ³ And Abram said, "You have given me no offspring, so a slave born in my house is to be my heir." ⁴ But the word of the LORD came to him, "This man shall not be your heir; no one but your very own issue shall be your heir." ⁵ He brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your descendants be." ⁶ And he believed the LORD, and the LORD reckoned it to him as righteousness.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 33:12-22

¹² Happy is the nation whose God is the LORD!
Happy the people he has chosen to be his own!

¹³ **The LORD looks down from heaven,
and beholds all the people in the world.**

¹⁴ From where he sits enthroned he turns his gaze
on all who dwell on the earth.

¹⁵ **He fashions all the hearts of them
and understands all their works.**

¹⁶ There is no king that can be saved by a mighty army;

a strong man is not delivered by his great strength.

¹⁷ **The horse is a vain hope for deliverance;
for all its strength it cannot save.**

¹⁸ Behold, the eye of the LORD is upon those who fear him,
on those who wait upon his love,

¹⁹ **to pluck their lives from death,
and to feed them in time of famine.**

²⁰ Our soul waits for the LORD;
he is our help and our shield.

²¹ **Indeed, our heart rejoices in him,
for in his holy name we put our trust.**

²² Let your lovingkindness, O LORD, be upon us,
as we have put our trust in you.

SECOND READING: Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-16

Abraham and Sarah exemplify the vision of faith that people of God enact in every age. Their hope and trust in God's promise allowed them to face an unknown future and to receive the promise of God.

¹ Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. ² Indeed, by faith our ancestors received approval. ³ By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was made from things that are not visible.

⁸ By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to set out for a place that he was to receive as an inheritance, and he set out, not knowing where he was going. ⁹ By faith he stayed for a time in the land he had been promised, as in a foreign land, living in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. ¹⁰ For he looked forward to the city that has foundations, whose architect and builder is God. ¹¹ By faith, with Sarah's involvement, he received power of procreation, even though he was too old, because he considered him faithful who had promised. ¹² Therefore from one person, and this one as good as dead, descendants were born, "as many as the stars of heaven and as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore."

¹³ All of these died in faith without having received the promises, but from a distance they saw and greeted them. They confessed that they were strangers and foreigners on the earth, ¹⁴ for people who speak in this way make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. ¹⁵ If they had been thinking of the land that they had left behind, they would have had opportunity to return. ¹⁶ But as it is, they desire a better homeland, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; indeed, he has prepared a city for them.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (WOV p. 31)

GOSPEL: Luke 12:32-40

The holy gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus encourages disciples to invest their hearts and live fully into God's reign. Instead of facing life with fear, those who know God's generosity are always ready to receive from God and to give to others.

[Jesus said:] ³² “Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom. ³³ Sell your possessions and give alms. Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. ³⁴ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

³⁵ “Be dressed for action and have your lamps lit; ³⁶ be like those who are waiting for their master to return from the wedding banquet, so that they may open the door for him as soon as he comes and knocks. ³⁷ Blessed are those slaves whom the master finds alert when he comes; truly I tell you, he will fasten his belt and have them sit down to eat, and he will come and serve them. ³⁸ If he comes during the middle of the night or near dawn and finds them so, blessed are those slaves.

³⁹ “But know this: if the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁰ You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”

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

SERMON

Holy God, by the power of your Spirit may our souls be enlightened, our hearts illumined, and our faith inspired, through Jesus Christ, in whom we live. **Amen.**

This story we get from the first reading today always makes me think of this time when I was in Saskatoon for seminary. It was in my first year, when I was still getting used to not being in BC, not being around all my friends and family, and just not being in my comfort zone in general. As many of you know, I was born and raised in Vancouver and lived in and around the city until I left for seminary when I was in my mid-20s. Before then, I had never even been outside of Lower Mainland for more than 2 weeks at a time, and maybe less than 2 months total. So being this very much a BC kid living in this new and different kind of landscape was a real trip for me. I was excited to learn, sure, but if I were being honest, I was more scared than anything else. I was afraid of being so far out of what I was raised in and so used to, afraid of how I’d adapt or not adapt, afraid of what this future of change held for me.

So at this point in my seminary experience, I still very much felt like an outsider, not just in the school community, but in the city itself as well. I looked different, talked different, and certainly acted different. It wasn’t an easy time for me.

Anyway, the specific instance that I’m reminded of by today’s first reading happened at our student retreat that year. We had rented out this indigenous cultural centre that was just outside of the city limits, about a 30-40 minute drive away. That doesn’t sound too bad for us, but for Saskatoon folk, that was like a whole different time zone. This is just to give you an idea of how far out and secluded we were at this place.

I remember that first night we were there, I wanted to get away from the madness of my not really belonging in the group and I went for a walk. Now, this was near the end of November in Saskatoon, so it was like -20 or something with the windchill, and because we were so far out of the city, it was DARK. I had look down as I walked so I wouldn’t trip over any rocks, mounds of snow, or dead Tauntauns or anything. But after a while of trudging in the snow, I stopped. And I looked up.

Now I don’t know how many of you have experienced nighttime in the prairies before, but Saskatchewan is known as the land of the living skies. It’s on their license plates and everything. And to be honest, I thought that a dumb name until I actually saw it. The skies weren’t bad during the day, but at night? It was *amazing*. Horizon to horizon full of stars. Not bothered by the light pollution that we

get here in the city. Not obstructed by the abundance of mountains, trees, and skyscrapers. Not easily overlooked and glossed over because it was just so *there*... and it was beautiful.

I mean, I've seen stars before, we have them here too of course. But I've never seen stars like this. It was like the more I stared, the more my eyes adjusted, and the more stars kept popping out. It was awe-inspiring. It was breathtaking. It was absolutely glorious.

And so I imagine Abram, later known as Abraham, looked up at the desert sky and had a similar experience. Sure, he was probably used to it and it was just normal to him, but there is just something about seeing the wall to wall sky and all the stars in their twinkling glory. Just being in awe of the grandeur of creation. Just feeling the amazing presence of God and getting that reassurance that hey, everything is going to be alright.

See, at this point of Abram's story, he is childless. He and his wife Sarai, later known as Sarah, are somewhere in their mid 60s or 70s, and beyond the childbearing years. And his being childless would have been a problem for him. It would have been a problem for anyone at the time, as for them, having a child was basically the only reason for living. Beyond what you do and contribute to the world, if you don't have someone to carry on your name, then everything else would be close to meaningless. This is the headspace that Abram is in when God gives him this vision.

And we know the story, God promises Abram numerous descendants that will outnumber the stars in the sky. In fact, God says to Abram that he should go ahead and count the stars, because that is what his descendants will be like. And you can imagine, if you ever saw a sky full of stars like I did or what I imagine Abram to be looking at, counting the stars would be just impossible. It's not like counting the fingers on your hands or the coins in your pocket or the years before you're eligible for retirement, but counting the stars wouldn't very tangible or realistic. Not because we can't count that high, but because we can't hold the stars, we can't easily keep track of which stars we've already counted, we wouldn't even know where we could start when we're looking at the vast night sky that stretches from horizon to horizon to horizon. There are just too many, and those darn things won't stop moving. The blend in too much with each other. Each star is indistinguishable from the next. They can't be told apart enough for them to be counted.

But each star, God says, if Abram can count them, will be like his descendants. And while God probably meant in number, I also think God could have meant in *nature*. In that each star is lost in the multitude of stars, blend into the back ground, and unable to be singled out and counted. But at the same time, each star is beautiful in its own right. Each star holds a uniqueness that makes them intrinsically them. And each star when put together with all the other stars, paints for us this grand picture of God's creation, God's face shining on us, God's love that is extended to us all.

As it is with Abram's descendants. As it is with all of God's people. As it is with us. As difficult as life can be, we are all and individually and wonderfully made and brought together to be this mosaic of diversity, facets of God's beauty, and reflections of God's love. This is a gift that we don't earn, but one that we are created and born into and learn to realise and accept.

This is what Jesus means in our gospel reading for today when he tells his disciples and us to not be afraid because it is God's pleasure to give us good things. These good things are belonging, meaning, and purpose. That while we might blend in with everyone else, we all have our value and worth as individuals, in our community, and in the larger picture of the world and history.

Today we will be celebrating a baptism. And with that, we remember our own baptisms and what it means for us. That regardless of when it happens, as a baby, a teen, or a fully grown person, through baptism God very intimately says to us, "hey, I see you, and I got you" and shows us how we have always been held close by the arms that created the universe. This is where we can find the confidence

and boldness to be who we are in the world. That no matter what life brings or doesn't bring, we can rest assured that we are valued and loved and identified as God's people, full of worth, and called and welcomed into God's kingdom forever.

I know, it won't always feel this way. The world will tell us different and give us reasons to be afraid, to feel unwelcome, and make it seem like we don't belong. But in God's unchanging love for us all, know that it isn't up to us or how much we want or don't want this identity, God will wait for us, be there with us, and hold us in our fears. Not because we've earned it, but it's God's good pleasure to give this to us. And in that promise, we have nothing to fear.

In this season after Pentecost, may we see the beauty of God in and around our lives, that we may be inspired to live as God's people in the world, reflecting the love that we have received onto all people. Thanks be to God. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY: The Church's One Foundation (ELW #654)

PRESENTATION (ELW p. 227)

Our God is rich in mercy and love, and gives us a new birth into a living hope through the gift of baptism. By water and Word, we are graciously delivered from sin and death and are raised into new life with Jesus and all the saints. We are then united with all of God's people as the one body of Christ, anointed with the gift of the Spirit, and joined together in God's mission for the life of the world.

PROFESSION OF FAITH (ELW p. 229)

I ask you to profess your faith in Christ Jesus, reject sin, and confess the faith of the church.

Do you believe in God the Father?

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?

**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.**

Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?

**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.**

THANKSGIVING AT THE FONT (ELW p. 230)

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Holy God, holy and merciful, holy and mighty, you are the river of life, you are the everlasting wellspring, you are the fire of rebirth.

Glory to you for oceans and lakes, for rivers and streams. Honor to you for cloud and rain, for dew and snow. Your waters are below us, around us, above us: our life is born in you. You are the fountain of resurrection.

And at this font, holy God, we pray: Praise to you for the waters of baptism and for your Word that saves us in this water. Breathe your Spirit into all who are gathered here and into all creation. Illumine our days. Enliven our bones. Dry our tears. Wash away the sin within us, and drown the evil around us.

Satisfy all our thirst with your living water, Jesus Christ, our Savior, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

BAPTISM (ELW p. 230)

You belong to Christ,

in whom you have been baptized.

Alleluia.

WELCOME (ELW p. 231)

Let us welcome the newly baptized.

We welcome you into the body of Christ and into the mission we share:

join us in giving thanks and praise to God

and bearing God's creative and redeeming word to all the world.

SPECIAL HYMN: *Borning Cry* (ELW #732)

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Called to live in faith and hope, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.

Each petition will end with, "in your lovingkindness, O Lord," and you are all invited to respond with **hear our prayer**. In your lovingkindness, O Lord, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, you have reformed us as your people, and we are happy to be your nation. We give thanks for Amber, the newly baptized, and we pray for her learning and growth in the faith. Fill her and all of us with confidence to proclaim your word and witness to your love, that all might know of your grace and mercy. In your lovingkindness, O Lord, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, you look at us from heaven and you see us as we are. You call us into churches and congregations, and you strengthen us to serve you and others as you bless us more and more each day. We remember 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 Hope Lutheran Church in Nanaimo and their soon-to-retire pastor Terry Richardson; for Luther Court in Victoria and all the other institutions in our church

that care for our seniors; and for the ministry of hospital chaplains across this nation. In your lovingkindness, O Lord, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, you rule over the lands and watch all who dwell on earth. You know our needs and provide for them. Help us in our stewardship of your creation and all its resources, that we may not take or use more than we need, and that the earth can be restored to its natural beauty and health. In your lovingkindness, O Lord, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, you fashion our hearts and you know our deeds. Be with all the world leaders and politicians as they create laws and policies for the greater good. Free us from corruption and prejudice and teach us to live in peace. We pray in particular for the continued support of those that we've sponsored to come into this 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 lovingkindness, O Lord, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, our innermost being waits for you, for you are our helper and our shield. Make your presence known among all of us, especially those who are sick, who mourn, or who feel lonely. In particular we pray for Bryan and Chona; Ron, Tess, and Mineko; Beulah; Olaf; Bev and family; John and Betty; Sukhwant; Pastor Kristen; Laura; Kandie; Thomas; Will; Chris; Larry; Walter; Piet; Hwee Yang; Ephraim; Kelly; Mardi; Henry; and all those we name aloud or quietly in our hearts at this time...
In your lovingkindness, O Lord, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, by your steadfast love you save us from death and keep us alive in your heart and in our communities as the part body of Christ. Remind us of all your saints and the lives they led of faith and hope, that we might follow their example and inspire those around us. In your lovingkindness, O Lord, **hear our prayer.**

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

PEACE (WOV p. 20)

The peace of Christ be with you always.
And also with you.

MEAL

DIALOGUE (WOV p. 36)

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, O God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who overcame death and the grave, and thus opened for us the way of truth and everlasting life. And so, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (WOV p. 36)

GREAT THANKSGIVING

O God you are our Lord and we, as people of your nation, are filled with the joy of your grace and mercy, shown to us. For you, O God are our helper and shield, and you save us from death and scarcity through the faith of Jesus Christ our Lord, who came to us as one of us, showing us the ways of your love and forgiveness.

For on the night that he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus sat with his friends for a meal, where he took the bread, gave thanks, broke and shared it and said, "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 your steadfast love as our helper and shield, even as we proclaim the mystery of our faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

Our hearts rejoice in you, O Lord, for in your holy name we put our trust. Let your lovingkindness be upon us, even as we place our hope in you, through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER (WOV p. 25)

Gathered into oneness with Christ by the Spirit, let us pray as he 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, the goodness of our God.

Thanks be to God.

COMMUNION

COMMUNION HYMNS: Lamb of God (WOV p. 39)

Great is Thy Faithfulness (ELW #733)

Have No Fear, Little Flock (ELW #764)

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

Holy God, you pour out your blessing upon us and you cover us with gifts of love, as you have fed us with this bread and cup. Be with us as we go from this place, that we might proclaim your mercy and embody your grace, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

SENDING

BLESSING

May God our Shepherd bless you and keep you,
God our Saviour bring you joy and hoe,
God the Spirit remind you of your baptism and bring you peace.
Amen.

SENDING HYMN: Let Us Ever Walk with Jesus (ELW #802)

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, be not afraid.

Thanks be to God.

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