



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

OF SOUTH BURNABY, BC

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA

7283 Nelson Avenue, Burnaby, BC V5J 4C2

Phone: 604-433-1515

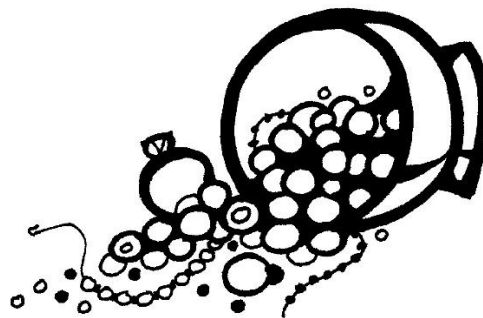
Website: www.graceburnaby.com

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)



Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

August 3, 2025

ACS Holy Communion, Setting 12

Today's texts offer instruction and encouragement for all who are occasionally overwhelmed by the "unhappy business" of life. Jesus urges us to take care and be on guard against all kinds of greed. We who have died with Christ in holy baptism have also been raised with him and are encouraged to elevate our thinking, seeking the "things that are above." To that end we seek the sustenance of the Lord's supper and the encouragement of God's word.

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 hən̓q̓əmiñəm̓ (Musqueam) and Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) peoples.

GATHERING

CALL TO WORSHIP

We gather to worship our God, who teaches us and leads us with wisdom and understanding. That even in the face of the evil and wickedness that surrounds us, we have nothing to fear for God's redeeming grace is enough to save us and welcome us into God's eternity. So as we have been honoured by God's invitation into mercy, let us honour God with our songs, with our praise, and with our very lives, through Jesus Christ. **Amen. Thanks be to God.**

GATHERING SONG: Build a Longer Table (ACS #1062)

GREETING

The welcoming grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the unending love of God, and the inclusive fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

SONG OF PRAISE (ACS p. 31)

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Holy God, your mercy is rich and loving and offers us peace through your wisdom and justice. Bathe us in the light of Christ, illumine us with your Spirit, and empower us to live for you in relationship and community, through Jesus our Lord. **Amen.**

WORD

FIRST READING: Ecclesiastes 1:2, 12-14; 2:18-23

A reading from Ecclesiastes.

The teacher of wisdom who wrote Ecclesiastes sees that working for mere accumulation of wealth turns life into an empty game, a "vanity of vanities." Nevertheless, he asserts in the next verse, it is good to find enjoyment in one's work because such enjoyment is a gift from God.

² Vanity of vanities, says the Teacher,
vanity of vanities! All is vanity.

¹² I, the Teacher, was king over Israel in Jerusalem. ¹³ I applied my mind to seek and to search out by wisdom all that is done under heaven; it is an unhappy business that God has given to humans to be busy with. ¹⁴ I saw all the deeds that are done under the sun, and see, all is vanity and a chasing after wind.

^{2:18} I hated all my toil in which I had toiled under the sun, seeing that I must leave it to my successor, ¹⁹ and who knows whether he will be wise or foolish? Yet he will be master of all for which I toiled and used my wisdom under the sun. This also is vanity. ²⁰ So I turned and gave my heart up to despair concerning all the toil of my labors under the sun, ²¹ because sometimes one who has toiled with wisdom and knowledge and skill must leave all to be enjoyed by another who did not toil for it. This also is vanity and a great evil. ²² What do mortals get from all the toil and strain with which they toil under the sun? ²³ For all their days are full of pain, and their work is a vexation; even at night their minds do not rest. This also is vanity.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 49:1-12

- ¹ Hear this, all you peoples;
give ear, all you who dwell in the world,
² **you of high degree and low,
rich and poor together.**
³ My mouth shall speak of wisdom,
and my heart shall meditate on understanding.
⁴ **I will incline my ear to a proverb
and set forth my riddle upon the harp.**
⁵ Why should I be afraid in evil days,
when the wickedness of those at my heels surrounds me,
⁶ **the wickedness of those who put their trust in their own prowess,
and boast of their great riches?**
⁷ One can never redeem another,
or give to God the ransom for another's life;
⁸ **for the ransom of a life is so great
that there would never be enough to pay it,**
⁹ in order to live forever and ever
and never see the grave.
¹⁰ **For we see that the wise die also; like the dull and stupid they perish
and leave their wealth to those who come after them.**
¹¹ Their graves shall be their homes forever, their dwelling places from generation to
generation,
though they had named lands after themselves.
¹² **Even though honored, they cannot live forever;
they are like the beasts that perish.**

SECOND READING: Colossians 3:1-11

A reading from Colossians.

Life in Christ includes a radical reorientation of our values. Just as the newly baptized shed their old clothes and put on new garments, so Christians are called to let go of greed and take hold of a life shaped by God's love in Christ.

¹ So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on the things that are above, not on the things that are on earth, ³ for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory.

⁵ Put to death, therefore, whatever in you is earthly: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed (which is idolatry). ⁶ On account of these the wrath of God is coming on those who are disobedient. ⁷ These are the ways you also once followed, when you were living that life. ⁸ But now you must get rid of all such things: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive language from your mouth. ⁹ Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have stripped off the old self with its practices ¹⁰ and have clothed yourselves with the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator. ¹¹ In that renewal there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, enslaved and free, but Christ is all and in all!

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (ACS p. 33)

GOSPEL: Luke 12:13-21

The holy gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

In God's reign, the "rich will be sent away empty." Jesus uses a parable to warn against identifying the worth of one's life with the value of one's possessions rather than one's relationship with God.

¹³Someone in the crowd said to [Jesus,] "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me." ¹⁴But he said to him, "Friend, who set me to be a judge or arbitrator over you?" ¹⁵And he said to them, "Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions." ¹⁶Then he told them a parable: "The land of a rich man produced abundantly. ¹⁷And he thought to himself, 'What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?' ¹⁸Then he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. ¹⁹And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.' ²⁰But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' ²¹So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich toward God."

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

Holy God, by the power of your Spirit reveal to us the wisdom of your Word, your truth, and your love, through Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

"Do you really need it?"

That's what a buddy of mine asked me as we were on the way to pick up some aftermarket parts for my relatively new car at the time. This was quite a while ago when I was just starting my obsession with cars. I was looking to modify my car to make it cooler than it already was, in hopes of enhancing its driving experience and performance. And I guess my buddy thought I was wasting time and money, and so he asked me if I really needed what I was planning on getting.

To be honest, it struck me as odd that he'd ask me this. Not because it was just as condescending as it sounded, not because the part I was thinking about getting really does nothing to the car's overall driveability, and certainly not because I could barely afford the car itself let alone all the mods I wanted to do to it, but the question really stood out as strange because honestly this guy had way more stuff than I ever had. He comes from a pretty wealthy family so ever since I met him in high school he was never really without. He was used to getting anything he wanted, going anywhere he wanted, and pretty much doing anything he wanted (within the confines of the law, of course).

So for him to ask me this question just seemed to be out of character. It was like of all people to put me in my money-spending place, I didn't think it'd be the one who had a lot more money to spend than the rest of us. I just thought that it was kind of weird that he'd have this perspective on this stuff that I wanted to buy, especially since he had much more than I did.

While he didn't actually straight out tell me what I should or shouldn't do, just him posing the question made me feel a little judged. It made me feel like I was being irresponsible, wasteful, and a little dumb.

But as much as I hate to admit it, he wasn't wrong. Like I said, I could barely afford this car with the money I was making at the time, so I really shouldn't be thinking about buying extra stuff for it that didn't really make it better in the long run.

That was a hard pill to swallow. I mean yeah, I wasn't making a lot of money back then, but I was still making money. I had just moved out and I was finally able to support myself out from under my parents. I was "adulting" and learning to enter into my own independence and identity. So I bought a car.

So while my car didn't really need these mods, but I needed to be able to express this new independence and identity. I needed to be able to spend my money the way I wanted to without being told otherwise. I needed to figure out this thing called life for myself.

So I guess I was confusing need with want. I was trying to fill this part of me with something that actually wouldn't be filling it. I was trying to be something but I was reaching for the wrong things, hoping for the wrong things, and needing the wrong things.

Vanity, vanity, it's all vanity. That's what the author of Ecclesiastes, known as the Teacher, says in today's first lesson. He says that we do what we do throughout life, working hard and toiling under the sun, but it is actually vanity because we'll be dead before we could enjoy the fruits of our labours. All our work won't mean anything because it will soon be forgotten. Who we are and what we've done will fade into history. It's like there isn't any point in hard work because it won't amount to anything lasting anyway.

Then in the gospel lesson Jesus seems to call the rich man in his parable a fool for saving like several barn's full worth of stuff when his life is being demanded of him almost the very second he decides that he has enough to retire. So not only is hard work pointless, but so is saving and planning for a future that we don't even know we'll have. It sounds like this rich guy in the parable also wasted his whole life in working hard, gathering, and amassing all he has.

It's like these two stories answered my friend's question from all those years ago. We don't need all this stuff. We don't need to work and save so hard. We don't need to accomplish what we're accomplishing.

Really, it seems like we're taught to not bother, doesn't it? It seems like these texts are telling us to be more carefree and worry less about our future. It seems like we are given permission and even encouraged to eat lavishly, drink irresponsibly, and be merry at any cost, for tomorrow we might find ourselves dead.

Live each day as it's your last, right?

So go ahead, buy that car part. Splurge on that Lego set. Eat all the food set before you and then some. Don't be offend by someone asking you if you really need all of that, because who knows? Tomorrow we might be dead and then all that money that we have saved will go to waste. And since our identity and who we are is tied to what we have, we might as do whatever makes us happy because it's all fleeting and meaningless. That's what we should do, right? That what the bible says?

Except, it doesn't.

See, the Teacher's existential crisis is resolved later on in his book. He realises that these things are vanity only when they are done selfishly and without God and the community in mind. He learns that the meaninglessness comes when we confuse our worth with our wealth, replace our relationships with our riches, believe that our salvation is dependant on our stuff. He sees that life isn't life when it is

defined by fleeting things that may not matter. Rather, he finds life and purpose when he is defined by things that do matter, things like community, service, and love, and that is when life is truly life.

And Jesus' parable alludes to this. See the rich man here isn't actually called a fool because he is rich. He isn't made an example because he was prudent and saved for the future. Jesus doesn't warn us of the dangers of his saving and frugal attitude. Rather, what the rich man in this parable does wrong is that he does what he does only for himself. He acts out of selfishness and perhaps pride. He finds his identity in things that cannot last.

Look at the story again. When he realises that he has more than he can carry, he has no one to look to for advice. When he wonders what his next steps will be he considers only his own comfort and wellbeing. Even when he eventually figures it out, he is congratulated only by himself, even referring to himself in the third person. And that's just weird. And sad. And lonely.

So this isn't to say that we shouldn't save and plan for the future. It doesn't mean that we should base all our decisions on the what other people think. It doesn't even mean that we shouldn't work hard or aren't allowed to be rich. But it does mean that there isn't a point in being rich when we aren't rich in generosity, compassion, and love. It does mean that it's ok that our money is used to help others as much as it used for ourselves. It does mean that life is really only life when our identity is rooted in the everlasting promises of God. Promises of grace, mercy, and welcome.

Now, I want to qualify all this by saying that I'm not asking anyone here to dig a little deeper into their pocketbooks to pad that offering plate to help us balance our budget. I'm not guilting anyone for keeping healthy bank accounts and portfolios. I'm not even asking for a raise. But I am saying that life is about more than just what we have. The value of community and relationship is greater and more meaningful than our fiscal worth. Our salvation is not qualified by how much we have and saved up for ourselves in the end, but by how we are moved to see the world differently, to recognise the intrinsic value and worth in ourselves and each other, and to learn how to love all of God's people, joined together in this one body of Christ as equals, companions, siblings in this family of all God's people, where we find meaning, purpose, and identity.

And that is what we truly need.

In this season after Pentecost, may we see ourselves and all people as God sees us and all people: not by the world's standards of wealth, but by the redemption found in God's grace, love, and unending welcome. Thanks be to God. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY: Crown Him with Many Crowns (#855)

CREED

With all those abundantly blessed by 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

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

Holy God, in you there is no Jew or Greek, rich or poor, as you show no partiality and you welcome all into your love and community. May your promise of mercy strengthen us to confidently live in your abundant blessing. God, in your providing mercy, **hear our prayer**.

Holy God, you call us as your church to speak your wisdom and meditate on your understanding. Fill us with your Spirit that we may faithfully proclaim the gospel of your love. 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 ministers, congregations, and ministries of the ELCIC. In particular, we pray for St. Paul’s Lutheran Church in Maple Ridge and their interim pastor Nic Alexandre; and for Matsqui Lutheran Church in Matsqui and all the pastors and leaders that minister there. God, in your providing mercy, **hear our prayer**.

Holy God, you bless us with the abundance in your creation, and it reminds us of your great power and providence. Help us in our stewardship of all that you’ve entrusted to us, that all people might live without fear of hunger or danger. God, in your providing mercy, **hear our prayer**.

Holy God, you have given us so much value and worth that there could be no ransom equal to a single life. Help us to see this value and worth in all people, that we might treat all those living in this world with respect and honour in spite of cultural, ethnic, and religious differences. We pray especially 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. God, in your providing mercy, **hear our prayer**.

Holy God, in your abundance you provide for us the gift of relationship and community, in which we can find comfort and peace. Be with all of us who are sick, who mourn, or who feel lonely, and may our ministry to each other serve to be a reminder of your love. We pray especially 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...

God, in your providing mercy, **hear our prayer**.

Holy God, we know that our time on earth is limited and all our wealth and possessions do not increase it. Remind us of the legacy of faith left behind by the saints, that we might see how we are included in this everlasting story. May the contributions of the past inspire our contributions, now and into the future. God, in your providing mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in the abundant blessing you give through our Saviour Jesus Christ. **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, O God, through our Saviour Jesus Christ, who reveals to us all how abundantly blessed we are as we are joined 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, we your people hear your wisdom and understanding, and we incline our ears to your proverbs. In you we have nothing to fear, for we know that our value and worth come not from our riches and possessions, but by your grace and abundant blessing. For it is through love that you have sent to us your Son Jesus, to reveal to all your truth and promises.

For on the night that he was betrayed, your Son Jesus sat with his friends for a meal, where he took the bread, gave thanks, broke, and shared it saying, "Take and eat, this is my body broken for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

Then after they ate, Jesus 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 great love redeeming us and welcoming us into your eternal community, even as we proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

You, O God, are our home forever, we shall dwell in your name of the generations. Your grace and mercy and blessing are abundant and unending, allowing and strengthening us to live as your people, in your kingdom, save by your love through 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 in abundant blessing, 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

Tast and see that God's blessing is enough for us all.

Thanks be to God.

COMMUNION

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

Now Thank We All Our God (#840)

Beautiful Saviour (#838)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

We again give you thanks, O God, for all that we have comes from you. Life, love, abundant grace and mercy, and you fill us and nourish us with your Word and truth. Increase our generosity and compassion, that as we go into the world, we might be faithful reflections of your love to all people, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

SENDING

BLESSING

May the God who gives us every good and perfect gift bless you and keep you,
the God who appears among us through the Christ shine on you and be gracious to you,
the God who sustains us through the Spirit look upon you with favour and give you peace.
Amen.

SENDING SONG: I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light (#815)

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, live lives full of blessing and community.

Thanks be to God.

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