



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

OF SOUTH BURNABY, BC

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA

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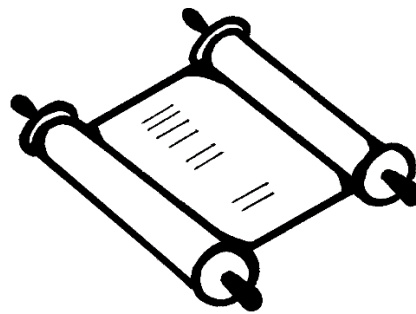
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Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost

September 28, 2025

WOV Holy Communion, Setting Five: Bread of Life

Consideration of and care for those in need (especially those “at our gate,” visible to us, of whom we are aware) is an essential component of good stewardship. It is in the sharing of wealth that we avoid the snare of wealth. It is the one whom death could not hold—who comes to us risen from the dead—who can free us from the death grip of greed.

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 hənq̓əmiñəm (Musqueam) and Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) peoples.

GATHERING

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP

We gather in praise and to sing hallelujah to our God. Our trust is in the Lord who is eternal and everlasting, immortal and immutable. With our eyes opened and lifted up, may we see God's love and care for us all, sustaining us by a hand of graciousness and mercy, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen. Thanks be to God.**

GATHERING HYMN: God of Grace and God of Glory (ELW #705)

GREETING

The immovable grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the solid love of God, and the consistent fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

HYMN OF PRAISE: Glory to God (WOV p. 29)

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Loving God, you are the giver of all good things and you have created us to live together in love and community. Through Christ you reveal to us the true riches of our faith and you move us to have hearts of generosity and service. Strengthen us in our pursuit of righteousness and love for all neighbours, that we might take hold of the life that truly is life, in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

FIRST READING: Amos 6:1a, 4-7

A reading from Amos.

The prophet Amos announces that Israel's great wealth is a cause not for rejoicing but rather sorrow, because God's people have forgotten how to share their wealth with the poor. The wealthy will be the first to go into exile when judgment comes.

- ^{1a} Woe to those who are at ease in Zion
and for those who feel secure on Mount Samaria.
- ⁴ Woe to those who lie on beds of ivory
and lounge on their couches
and eat lambs from the flock
and calves from the stall,
- ⁵ who sing idle songs to the sound of the harp
and like David improvise on instruments of music,
- ⁶ who drink wine from bowls
and anoint themselves with the finest oils
but are not grieved over the ruin of Joseph!
- ⁷ Therefore they shall now be the first to go into exile,
and the revelry of the loungers shall pass away.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 146

¹ Hallelujah! Praise the LORD, O my soul!

I will praise the LORD as long as I live; I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.

² **Put not your trust in rulers, nor in any child of earth,
for there is no help in them.**

³ When they breathe their last, they return to earth,
and in that day their thoughts perish.

⁴ **Happy are they who have the God of Jacob for their help,
whose hope is in the LORD their God;**

⁵ who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that is in them;
who keeps his promise forever;

⁶ **who gives justice to those who are oppressed,
and food to those who hunger.**

⁷ The LORD sets the prisoners free; the LORD opens the eyes of the blind;
the LORD lifts up those who are bowed down;

⁸ **the LORD loves the righteous; the LORD cares for the stranger;
he sustains the orphan and widow, but frustrates the way of the wicked.**

⁹ The LORD shall reign forever,
your God, O Zion, throughout all generations. Hallelujah!

SECOND READING: 1 Timothy 6:6-19

A reading from 1 Timothy.

Timothy is reminded of the confession he made at his baptism and of its implications for daily life. His priorities will be different from those of people who merely want to be rich.

⁶ Of course, there is great gain in godliness combined with contentment, ⁷ for we brought nothing into the world, so that we can take nothing out of it, ⁸ but if we have food and clothing, we will be content with these. ⁹ But those who want to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction.

¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and in their eagerness to be rich some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pains.

¹¹ But as for you, man of God, shun all this; pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, gentleness. ¹² Fight the good fight of the faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and for which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. ¹³ In the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you ¹⁴ to keep the commandment without spot or blame until the manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁵ which he will bring about at the right time—he who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords. ¹⁶ It is he alone who has immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see; to him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen.

¹⁷ As for those who in the present age are rich, command them not to be haughty or to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches but rather on God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. ¹⁸ They are to do good, to be rich in good works, generous, and ready to share, ¹⁹ thus storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of the life that really is life.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (WOV p. 31)

GOSPEL: Luke 16:19-31

The holy gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus tells a parable in which the poor one is “lifted up” and the rich one is “sent away empty.” Jesus makes it clear that this ethic of merciful reversal is not new but is as old as Moses and the prophets.

[Jesus said:] ¹⁹ “There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. ²⁰ And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, ²¹ who longed to satisfy his hunger with what fell from the rich man’s table; even the dogs would come and lick his sores. ²² The poor man died and was carried away by the angels to be with Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried. ²³ In Hades, where he was being tormented, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far away with Lazarus by his side. ²⁴ He called out, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in agony in these flames.’ ²⁵ But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that during your lifetime you received your good things and Lazarus in like manner evil things, but now he is comforted here, and you are in agony. ²⁶ Besides all this, between you and us a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who might want to pass from here to you cannot do so, and no one can cross from there to us.’ ²⁷ He said, ‘Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father’s house ²⁸ for I have five brothers—that he may warn them, so that they will not also come into this place of torment.’ ²⁹ Abraham replied, ‘They have Moses and the prophets; they should listen to them.’ ³⁰ He said, ‘No, father Abraham, but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.’ ³¹ He said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.’ ”

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

God of love, send your Spirit to us this day, that we might see you, hear you, and feel you present in our lives and hearts, through your Word made flesh, Jesus Christ. Amen.

A couple months ago there was this trend going around social media that you might have seen or heard about, but had two parents sitting with their toddler child, each behind their own individual plate that was covered with something so you can’t see its contents. One of the parents would first uncover their plate to reveal whatever surprise was hidden underneath, usually a treat that the kid liked, like a cookie or piece of candy or whatever. Just no rice cakes, cough medicine, or copies of my sermons anything. Then it would be the kid’s turn to uncover their plate, and lo and behold they would have two of that same treat that the first parent got. And then the last parent would go and discover that their plate was very empty. Wah wah waaah.

Of course, all of it was a set up. The point was to see how the toddler would react to the unfair treat distribution. Most of the videos I saw had the kid instantly giving their extra treat to the parent that was without, often happily, sometimes reluctantly, and a few times with tears of injustice. But as you might imagine, there were some who were just like, “oof, sucks to be you”

while munching on their newfound wealth, and there was even this one kid who took the treat away from the first parent and gave to the other. Truth be told, it wasn't too difficult to get caught up in the hilarity of it all. I guess that's why the idea for parents to even try this went viral, even at the risk of being disappointed in their own parenting.

Because throughout those two weeks or so that this trend was trending, the "right" answer was always clear: the kid is supposed to share out of their abundance, especially with their own parents. That's what the viewer hopes they would do at least, it's just the obvious good and ethical thing that anyone should do.

And so while not every parent I know recorded and posted this trend or even tried it, and again maybe for the best for some, I do think that they all at least talked to their kids about generosity and being helpful and gracious because of it. I mean, it's not a bad lesson. It's one that many if not all of us have learned at one point as well, whether intentionally by our parents and/or guardians, or just from life experience. It's just what good people do, right? It's just what we are called to do as humans, right? It's of course what we'd do if ever presented with that situation, right?

Right?

If we're honest, any of us who saw or are now hearing about for the first time these videos and shorts and their slightly varied outcomes, we probably would have related more to the generous kids. We might see our own morals of generosity and grace in them and think that they chose wisely, just as we would. We may have even had our faith in humanity slightly renewed, maybe proud that our legacy of decency actually is being passed down and will continue, because I tell ya I sometimes wonder about this upcoming generation...

At the same time, I'm not sure if any of us would openly admit that we'd relate more to the few kids who decided not to share, those that hoarded what was given to them seemingly by random, or even that one kid who took from the parent who had a treat to give to the other who didn't. Ok, maybe the last one as a joke, because honestly it was pretty hilarious.

But you know what I mean, don't you? We more often than not will see ourselves as right, more moral, and maybe even the example of what is good and bad. It's just in our nature to see ourselves mostly as the protagonist of our stories. We're on the winning team against what is wrong and evil in the world, we're the generous kid who happily gives over the not as generous kid who keeps and hoards, we're the humble and faithful Lazarus who will be found at the bosom of Abraham and for sure not the greedy and heartless rich man who will spend eternity getting what was coming to him.

But... is it actually that cut and dry? Really black and white? Could it be so clear cut and placed neatly in such a defined box?

While this parable has been used many times to serve as a roadmap for the afterlife, I wonder if its lesson is a bit more nuanced than that. I wonder if it goes deeper than just rich = bad and poor = good. I wonder if the point isn't for us to relate to one or the other, but see how we embody both personalities, both positions, both paradigms of the world that is sometimes separated with the deep chasm of our stubbornness, our closed-mindedness, our inability to see, recognise, and admit that we could... maybe... possibly... perhaps be... wrong?

Maybe not wrong about giving a cookie to one of our parents, but could we be wrong about how our wealth should be distributed, about who “deserves” or doesn’t, about how God is telling us to act, what God is telling us to do, and even who God is telling us to love... or not love?

Well, this got pretty dark pretty fast.

The thing is, I see the world divided by this deep chasm of our own manufacturing. I see sides more defined than ever behind our gates, borders, and political or religious allegiances. I see our differing opinions becoming more divisive and destructive as they have been internally moralized and justified within these echo chambers that have been curated with AI-driven algorithmic precision. It’s become so hard for us to get over ourselves and see the other.

I mean, even with the rich man, in his torment and “finding out” stage, he cannot stop feeling superior to Lazarus as he tells him indirectly through Abraham how things should be, how he wants them to be, and what he deserves. Even after learning how the first is last and the last is first, the rich man continues to strive to be first.

And don’t we do that too? Don’t we work hard to be first in our morals, first in our faith, first in calling out those who need to shape up to be more like us? Whatever side we might think we’re on, that side has been more defined as just “not them.” So we’ve dug these chasms between the sides that puts them squarely over there and away from us, so far that we could never see them as the equals God created them to be.

Yes, equals. Equally human. Equally sinner but forgiven. Equally loved and saved by our God.

See, God takes this false hierarchy of our self-importance and self-righteousness and nails it to the cross. God enters into the deep chasm of our “othering” of others and builds a bridge to join us together. God sees our moralized opinions, polarized paradigms, and diverse divisiveness and abolishes them with forgiveness, mercy, and love. This is the promise given to us. This is the good news that we proclaim. This is who we are as sinners saved by an unending and steadfast grace.

In a couple of days we will be observing Truth and Reconciliation Day here in Canada. This day wasn’t intended for us to point fingers at who did what, who should be held liable and accountable, and who we can blame for this broken and messed up world. But this is a day that teaches us the truth of our human condition and the universal capacity for selfishness, greed, and internalizing the lies that we are told about ourselves and each other. This is a day that helps us to reconcile that with all people, within our own complexities, and with God, that we might be able to put down our weapons, our harsh accusations and insults, and our inability to admit our wrong, in order to be humbled to see how we are all welcomed, all cherished, and all carried across the chasm that separates and segregates us all.

My friends, we are more than just this or that, good or bad, equated to Lazarus or the rich man. Rather, we are a mixed bag of feelings, opinions, and worldviews. And there is joy in that diversity. There is hope in knowing that our differences can fill in our weaknesses and shortcomings. There is peace in the promise that we are restored, made whole, and saved by the power of the Resurrection.

So may we stop stepping over the people or parts of us at our gates that we don't want to see or acknowledge. May we put down our raised backs of aggression disguised as defense. May recognise and dismiss the lies that we're told about ourselves, others, and God. And may we be humbled by God's grace, lifted up by God's love, and healed by God's truth and made whole by God's reconciliation. All thanks and praise be to God. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY: Lord of Glory, You Have Bought Us (ELW #707)

CREED (WOV p. 18)

With all of God's beloved, 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, his only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended into hell.*
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again 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 into humble service to God and each other, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. Each petition will end with "by your abundant mercy, O God," and you are invited to respond with **hear our prayer**. By your abundant mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, we praise you with all of our soul and being, and in you we find joy and security. Lift us up to see the needs of the world, that we may perhaps meet them with compassion and empathy when we can. By your abundant mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, we put our trust in you as you have been our help and hope. May the ministry of the church in the world reflect this truth that it shine on all in need. We especially 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 Spirit of Life Lutheran Church in Vancouver and their pastor Aneeta Saroop; and for North Thompson Ecumenical Shared Ministry in Barriere and Clearwater. By your abundant mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, you made the heavens and the earth, the seas and all that is in them, and your promises are made clear in your creation. Help us in our stewardship and care of this planet,

that its beauty might proclaim your truth and grace always. By your abundant mercy, O God, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, you give justice to those who are oppressed and you give food to those who are in need. Instill in all people the desire to serve with equity and impartiality, and allow us all to see the value in every person of every tribe and nation. Especially we pray for the continued support of those that we've sponsored to come into our country: Abraham Barhane; Solyana Amanuel; Filimon Abraha; as well as those who have not yet arrived: Maekele Kiflu, Selam Haile, and their family; and Meri Gabramikael. By your abundant mercy, O God, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, you care for the needy and lift up the lowly, and you sustain us all with your healing hand. Continue revealing your love to all people that our trust and faith in you be increased. Especially we pray for Bryan and Chona; Ron, Tess, and Mineko; Beulah; Bev and family; John and Betty; Sukhwant; Pastor Kristen; Laura; Kandie; Will; Chris; Larry; Walter; Piet; Hwee Yang; Kelly; Betty; and all those we name aloud or quietly in our hearts at this time...
By your abundant mercy, O God, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, your reign shall last forever, throughout all the generations to which we belong and beyond. Remind us of the lives of the faithful, that they may continue to serve as inspiration for us in our community with you and each other for all time. By your abundant mercy, O God, **hear our prayer.**

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

PEACE (WOV p. 20)

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

And also with you.

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 places give thanks and praise to you, O God, through our Saviour Jesus Christ, who has shown us the way of grace and mercy in our community and your kingdom, joining us with the choirs of angels, the hosts of heaven, and the church on earth, in praising your name with this unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (WOV p. 36)

GREAT THANKSGIVING

Yes Lord, you are holy and mighty, and in you we see true love and grace, for you have joined us together with you and all the saints to be your people in the world, revealing to all the abundance of your great mercy.

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 with them and said, "Take and eat, this is my body broken for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

And after they ate, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them to drink from saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me."

It is in this bread and cup that we see our togetherness in your name, spanning across all barriers and chasms, even as we declare this mystery of our faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

To you, O God, be all honour and glory forever, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER (WOV p. 25)

Gathered into one love 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 our unity in Christ.

Thanks be to God.

COMMUNION

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

Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service (ELW #712)

O Christ, Your Heart, Compassionate (ELW #722)

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

Holy God, you have again fed us with your Word and shown us the depths of your love.
Continue to fill us with your Spirit that we be moved to love you and neighbour in word and deed, through Jesus Christ. **Amen**

BLESSING

May the sovereign God bless you,
the Saviour God keep you in mercy,
and the Spirit of God sustain you in this life and the next, and give you peace.
Amen.

SENDING HYMN: Canticle of the Turning (ELW #723)

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, take hold of the life to which you have been called.
Thanks be to God.

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