



**GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH**

**OF SOUTH BURNABY, BC**

**EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA**

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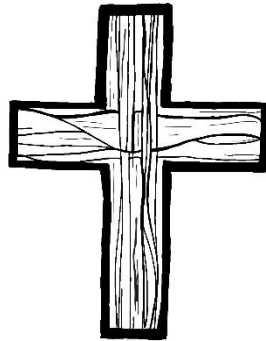
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**Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost**

**September 7, 2025**

**WOV Holy Communion, Setting Five: Bread of Life**

Called to contemplate the cost of discipleship, we might be helped by translating Paul's request to Philemon into our prayer of the day: Refresh my heart in Christ. Strengthened by the company and forgiveness of Christ in holy communion and recalling God's grace in remembrance of baptism, we can be strengthened in this hour to "choose life"—to choose life in God as our own.

*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

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### CALL TO WORSHIP

We gather this day in joy and delight as our Lord's Word and truth is our meditation day and night. For like trees planted by streams of water and bearing fruit in due season, is God's law to us, filling and nurturing us in our faith and discipleship. And so together we worship, we sing praises, and we honour our God who lovingly lifts us up out of wickedness and into the arms of salvation, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen. Thanks be to God.**

**GATHERING HYMN:** Take My Life, That I May Be (#583)

#### GREETING

The amazing grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the merciful love of God, and the freeing 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

Extravagant God, you pour out blessing upon us and leads us on the path of true life. Help us in our discernment and recognition of your presence in our lives, that we might reflect your love and grace onto all that we meet, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

#### FIRST READING: Deuteronomy 30:15-20

A reading from Deuteronomy.

*Moses speaks to the Israelites, who are about to enter the land promised to their ancestors. In this passage, he lays out the stark choice before them: choose life by loving and obeying the LORD; or choose death by following other gods.*

<sup>15</sup> "See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and adversity. <sup>16</sup> If you obey the commandments of the LORD your God that I am commanding you today, by loving the LORD your God, walking in his ways, and observing his commandments, decrees, and ordinances, then you shall live and become numerous, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to possess. <sup>17</sup> But if your heart turns away and you do not hear but are led astray to bow down to other gods and serve them, <sup>18</sup> I declare to you today that you shall certainly perish; you shall not live long in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess. <sup>19</sup> I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live, <sup>20</sup> loving the LORD your God, obeying him, and holding fast to him, for that means life to you and length of days, so that you may live in the land that the LORD swore to give to your ancestors, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob."

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

#### PSALM: Psalm 1

<sup>1</sup> Happy are they who have not walked in the counsel of the wicked,  
nor lingered in the way of sinners, nor sat in the seats of the scornful!

<sup>2</sup> **Their delight is in the law of the LORD,**

**and they meditate on his law day and night.**

<sup>3</sup> They are like trees planted by streams of water, bearing fruit in due season, with leaves that do not wither;  
everything they do shall prosper.

<sup>4</sup> **It is not so with the wicked;  
they are like chaff which the wind blows away.**

<sup>5</sup> Therefore the wicked shall not stand upright when judgment comes,  
nor the sinner in the council of the righteous.

<sup>6</sup> **For the LORD knows the way of the righteous,  
but the way of the wicked is doomed.**

## **SECOND READING: Philemon 1-21**

A reading from Philemon.

*Onesimus, a new Christian and a man enslaved by Philemon, has helped Paul, who is in prison. Paul writes this letter to his friend Philemon to encourage him to receive Onesimus, upon his return, as a sibling in Christ.*

<sup>1</sup> Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother,  
To our beloved coworker Philemon, <sup>2</sup> to our sister Apphia, to our fellow soldier Archippus,  
and to the church in your house:

<sup>3</sup> Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

<sup>4</sup> I thank my God always when I mention you in my prayers, <sup>5</sup> because I hear of your love for all the saints and your faith toward the Lord Jesus. <sup>6</sup> I pray that the partnership of your faith may become effective as you comprehend all the good that we share in Christ. <sup>7</sup> I have indeed received much joy and encouragement from your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you, my brother.

<sup>8</sup> For this reason, though I am more than bold enough in Christ to command you to do the right thing, <sup>9</sup> yet I would rather appeal to you on the basis of love—and I, Paul, do this as an old man and now also as a prisoner of Christ Jesus. <sup>10</sup> I am appealing to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I have become during my imprisonment. <sup>11</sup> Formerly he was useless to you, but now he is indeed useful to you and to me. <sup>12</sup> I am sending him, that is, my own heart, back to you. <sup>13</sup> I wanted to keep him with me so that he might minister to me in your place during my imprisonment for the gospel, <sup>14</sup> but I preferred to do nothing without your consent in order that your good deed might be voluntary and not something forced. <sup>15</sup> Perhaps this is the reason he was separated from you for a while, so that you might have him back for the long term, <sup>16</sup> no longer as a slave but more than a slave, a beloved brother—especially to me but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.

<sup>17</sup> So if you consider me your partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. <sup>18</sup> If he has wronged you in any way or owes you anything, charge that to me. <sup>19</sup> I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand: I will repay it. I say nothing about your owing me even your own self. <sup>20</sup> Yes, brother, let me have this benefit from you in the Lord! Refresh my heart in Christ. <sup>21</sup> Confident of your obedience, I am writing to you, knowing that you will do even more than I ask.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (WOV p. 31)**

## **GOSPEL: Luke 14:25-33**

The holy gospel according to Luke.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

*Jesus speaks frankly about the costs of discipleship. Those who follow him should know from the outset that completing the course of discipleship will finally mean renouncing all other allegiances.*

<sup>25</sup> Now large crowds were traveling with [Jesus], and he turned and said to them, <sup>26</sup> “Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple. <sup>27</sup> Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. <sup>28</sup> For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and estimate the cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it? <sup>29</sup> Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it will begin to ridicule him, <sup>30</sup> saying, ‘This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.’ <sup>31</sup> Or what king, going out to wage war against another king, will not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to oppose the one who comes against him with twenty thousand? <sup>32</sup> If he cannot, then while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for the terms of peace. <sup>33</sup> So therefore, none of you can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions.”

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## **SERMON**

God of wisdom, through your Spirit, speak to us a Word of life, that the power of your righteous love be planted in us to lead us, guide us, and show us the way, through Jesus our Saviour and brother. Amen.

So again, I want to welcome myself back from holidays. While it was a busy time filled with a lot of cleaning, fixing, and cleaning up after the fixing, I was able to find time to somewhat unplug and have some rest. We as a family were even able to get a few days up at Whistler which is something that we weren't able to do for a couple of years.

Ok, now that we're all caught up, I want to tell you about something that happened the other day. I guess my algorithm learned that not only were we in Whistler like I mentioned, but that we did a few of hikes while we were there. Because over the past couple weeks I have been getting a lot of hiking videos. I'm not complaining, mind you, as some of these videos were pretty cool. It was just this one in particular that I couldn't stop watching. It was from somewhere in Alberta according to the description, and it showed this super steep side of a mountain that kind of resembled the wall of the Hoover Dam, like when James Bond or whoever it was ran down it. Like, it was one of those rock faces where only those gravity defying mountain goats could prance around on it.

But instead, what the video had was some guy just casually walking out on the edge of this mountain. You can hear his partner who is recording say, "I'm recording this in case you die" and he responds, "ok, tell the kids I love them". And I kid you not, it looked like he could have had his hands in his pockets as he just strolled along that what looked like and almost completely vertical rock face. Like, I'm sure it was a lot safer than it looked, but still I had a real visceral reaction just watching this random person walking on this random mountain trail in this random video.

I mean my hands started to get sweaty. My knees felt weak and maybe my arms got heavy. There was no vomit or anything though, but my goodness was I ever nervous for this guy. And again, I'm sure it was totally safe by how casually he was walking, but that didn't stop me from reacting. Like, I kind of

froze up and expected the worst. I don't even know this guy or where he was, but somehow I was locked in on this video.

And who knows? It could have been AI generated for all I know and there was no actual guy or mountain, but still you might know the reaction that I'm talking about. Sometimes just looking at a roller coaster or out the window of a tall building or down those glass floors that are so popular now, we could get a little dizzy, feel a bit off balance, and maybe forget about logic and reason. I mean, we're safe where we are. We're in zero danger of falling from our vantage point. We have nothing to worry about. But we worry anyway. We gather up what we know, like how heights can be scary, and internalise it and react to it, because that is our truth, that is how we operate, it's just who we are.

I think we might have had this sort of reaction to today's gospel reading. Which, by the way, is a great text to come back from holidays to. I mean it just doesn't sound nice, does it? Imagine this is your first time hearing it. Imagine you're new and wanting to learn more about the bible and this is the first thing you learn. Imagine you're curious about Jesus and what following him is all about, and this is what you get. You'd react, right?

I mean, this text is all about sacrifice, hating our families, and even death. It sounds like Jesus is asking for too much just to be a disciple. It's more than most regular people would want to pay. He isn't exactly selling this whole thing very well.

And maybe that's why churches aren't so popular anymore. Maybe that's why we have an increasing number of people leaving the faith, claiming "no church affiliation", or consider themselves not religious (but maybe still spiritual). Because on the surface, at least the surface of Jesus' words here, following him isn't attractive, it isn't enticing, it certainly doesn't seem worth it.

Again, he's asking us to hate our families, which granted, might not seem like a big deal today with dysfunctional families being more normal than not. But in those days families were everything. They were the source of your livelihood, how you found your place and contribution in the world, where your identity lay. To hate that would be ludicrous.

And then Jesus asks us to carry the cross, which again might not seem bad now as many of us at least own some cross-shaped jewelry even if we don't wear them on a daily basis. But in those days the cross was a symbol of shame, a means of humiliation, an instrument of suffering and a brutal death. That wouldn't be something that you'd want to be associated with.

Then to make matters worse, Jesus tells us to sell everything. Everything? While these days we promote a minimalist lifestyle and downsizing and reducing are trendy practices, willingly getting rid of everything is still pretty extreme.

And so of course when we hear this, especially for the first time, we will react. We might shrink away. We might even freeze up in disbelief, wondering how Jesus could ever ask us to give up so much.

But that's the thing, I don't know if Jesus is asking us to give up what we think he's asking us to give up. I'm not sure if Jesus is wanting more from us than what we are willing to let go of. Sure, the text says that to be disciples we need to give up our stuff, our families, and our very lives, but I think Jesus is asking us to see how those things are actually holding us back from seeing him, his truth, and who we are as God's people.

So rather than just hating life, losing life, and not having anything that life has to offer, I think Jesus is encouraging us to look at what we hold on to, what we might put too much trust in, and what we might be mistakenly using to define us. That could be our familial relationships, but it could also be our material wealth, our fiscal worth, or what toys we have in our arsenal. It could be our traditions, our

practices, and our customs. It could be how we are told to see the world, each other, and even ourselves.

And Jesus is asking us to let all of that go.

Not to the point of meaninglessness or that our opinions, needs, and preferences don't matter. But to see how we aren't defined by the things of this world, that our opinions and preferences don't make us better or worse than those who are different from us, and that we aren't any more or less loved by God because of them.

I mean, it seems like our world is inundated by this now, doesn't it? How we so quickly define each other, categorize people by these artificial labels, and pigeon-hole entire groups with our assumptions and preconceived notions of them. And honestly, it's tearing us apart.

So I hear Jesus telling us today to let go. Ease our grip. Relax a little in how tightly we hold onto our opinions, our interpretations, our need to always be right. And then maybe have our eyes opened to see the value and worth of the other. To see the gift of diversity. To see how each and every person, no matter how much we like or don't like them, can be a beloved child of God just as much as we are.

Don't get me wrong, this isn't easy. It takes a lot of eye-opening and humility. It takes a lot of letting go and unlearning. It takes a lot of sacrifice and discipline. But I think that is actually the cross that Jesus is asking us carry. That our closed and narrow-mindedness can be burned and taken away to make room for forgiveness, grace, and community, both for others and ourselves.

And then maybe, just maybe, we can more clearly see God in the world, leading us, guiding us, and joining us together to serve, support, and love.

So as we continue through his season after Pentecost, may we be humbled by the glory of God that welcomes us into community where we can be loved, forgiven, and carry the cross of our salvation. Thanks be to God. Amen.

**HYMN OF THE DAY:** Drawn to the Light (#593)

**CREED** (WOV p. 18)

With all of God's disciples, let us confess the Christian faith with the words of 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 to be faithful disciples, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. Each petition will end with “Lord of all mercy,” and you are all invited to respond with **hear our prayer**. Lord of all mercy, **hear our prayer**.

O God, we are happy to walk in your ways and in your counsel as you lead and guide us on the paths of righteousness. Strengthen us in our discipleship and allow our ministry to be pleasing to you. Lord of all mercy, **hear our prayer**.

O God, we delight in your laws and meditate on your teaching, and you reveal to us who we are through your love and grace. Be with all who profess your name and serve to help others see your love in the world, and may we all share in the joy of following you. Especially we pray 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, assistants to the bishops, rostered ministers, congregations, and ministries of the ELCIC. In particular we pray for Faith Lutheran Church in Powell River, and for Our Saviour’s Lutheran Church in Prince George, and all the pastors and leaders that faithfully serve those two communities of your disciples. Lord of all mercy, **hear our prayer**.

O God, you plant our faith like trees by the streams of water of your creation, and you flourish it as you do with all things you have made. May we connect our faith with your presence in and around this planet, that we might be diligent in our stewardship of it. Lord of all mercy, **hear our prayer**.

O God, the wickedness of the world should be like the chaff that is blown away in the wind, but often it remains insidious and seeps into our daily living. Bring your justice to the world and strengthen all its leaders, that all countries and borders might learn to live in peace without the threat of violence or harm. We offer a special prayer for the continued support of those that we’ve sponsored to come into this country: Abraham Barhane; Solyana Amanuel; and Filimon Abraha; and also for those who have not yet arrived: Maekele Kiflu, Selam Haile, and their children; and Meri Gabramikael. Lord of all mercy, **hear our prayer**.

O God, you bring to us your merciful judgement and gracious council and you reveal to us all the healing in your name. Allow those among us who are sick, who mourn, or who feel lonely to feel and see your presence among us all always. Especially we pray for Bryan and Chona; Ron, Tess, and Mineko; Beulah; Bev and family; John and Betty; Sukhwant; Pastor Kristen; Laura; Kandie; Thomas; Will; Chris; Larry; Walter; Piet; Hwee Yang; Kelly; Mardi; Betty; the Wong family; and all those we name aloud or quietly in our hearts at this time... Lord of all mercy, **hear our prayer**.

O God, you know all that is righteous and wicked, and in your forgiveness you welcome us all into your eternity with all the saints. May we always lean on this promise of salvation, that we might in turn be gracious with all those whom we meet. Lord of all mercy, **hear our prayer**.

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your wisdom and guidance shown to us through 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 shows us the value in following you as a disciple, and joins us with the choirs of angels, the hosts of heaven, and the whole church on earth in praising you with this unending hymn:

**HOLY, HOLY, HOLY** (WOV p. 36)

**GREAT THANKSGIVING**

Yes Lord you are indeed holy, and your glory fills this room, this city, this entire planet as you bless us with your love and presence. And even beyond that, you prove your love to us by sending to us your Son, Jesus, to lead and guide us in your ways of right relationship and forgiveness.

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

And after they ate it, he took the cup, gave thanks, and shared it 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 we are connected together by grace, allowing us to see the value and worth in each other as siblings, as we together proclaim this mystery of faith:

**Christ has died.**

**Christ is risen.**

**Christ will come again.**

All honour and glory are yours, O God, for your righteousness stands 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)**

Joined together as disciples of Christ, 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, God's love and welcome for us all.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **COMMUNION**

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

My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less (#596)

Beautiful Saviour (#638)

## **POST-COMMUNION PRAYER**

Righteous and just God, you have given us the bread and cup of life that fills us with truth and grace. As you always lift us up as your people in the world, may your presence in and around our lives lead us to see your graciousness and steadfast love, that we be moved to share it with all, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## **BLESSING**

May God our Shepherd bless you and keep you in love,  
God our Saviour challenge our faith and strengthen us to serve,  
God the Spirit sustain you with grace and lead you in discipleship and community, now and always.

**Amen.**

**SENDING HYMN:** Lift High the Cross (#660)

## **DISMISSAL**

Go in peace, lift high your crosses to follow Christ.

**Thanks be to God.**