



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

OF SOUTH BURNABY, BC

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA

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Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost

October 19, 2025

ELW Holy Communion, Setting Eight

Pray always. Do not lose heart. This is Christ's encouragement in the gospel today. Wrestle with the word. Remember your baptism again and again. Come regularly to Christ's table. Persistence in our every encounter with the divine will be blessed.

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 all who are worshipping with us in person or online! We appreciate your contribution to the community today: with your voice, your presence, and just the blessing that you are. May you be nurtured by God's Word, empowered by the love of Christ, and stirred by the wisdom of the Holy Spirit in this service this day, for the sake of God's mission in the world.

Grace Lutheran Church worships, prays, and serves on the traditional and unceded lands and territories of the hə́n̓qə́mih̓ə́m̓ (Musqueam) and Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh (Squamish) speaking peoples.

GATHERING

CALL TO WORSHIP

We gather in worship with our eyes lifted to the hills, knowing that our help comes from God, maker of heaven and earth. For we trust that God watches over us, stands fast with us against turmoil, and tirelessly preserves us, keeps us, and holds us in arms of love. And so we worship and praise this God who watches our going out and coming in, in whom we put our faith this time forth and forevermore. **Amen. Thanks be to God.**

GATHERING SONG: Lord of All Hopefulness (#765)

GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads us to pray, the love of God that strengthens us to persist, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit that brings us into community be with you all.
And also with you.

CANTICLE OF PRAISE (p. 185)

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Eternal God, you are our constant throughout the journey of life, and you are patient with us in our faults and shortcomings. Bring us into your wisdom and justice, that we be blessed by your truth and healed by your love, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

WORD

FIRST READING: Genesis 32:22-31

A reading from Genesis.

Returning to the home he had fled many years before after stealing his brother's birthright and his father's blessing, Jacob wrestles all night long with a divine adversary who ultimately blesses him and changes his name to "Israel," a name that means "he wrestles with God."

²² The same night [Jacob] got up and took his two wives, his two maids, and his eleven children and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. ²³ He took them and sent them across the stream, and likewise everything that he had. ²⁴ Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him until daybreak. ²⁵ When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he struck him on the hip socket, and Jacob's hip was put out of joint as he wrestled with him. ²⁶ Then he said, "Let me go, for the day is breaking." But Jacob said, "I will not let you go, unless you bless me." ²⁷ So he said to him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob." ²⁸ Then the man said, "You shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with humans and have prevailed." ²⁹ Then Jacob asked him, "Please tell me your name." But he said, "Why is it that you ask my name?" And there he blessed him. ³⁰ So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, "For I have seen God face to face, yet my life is preserved." ³¹ The sun rose upon him as he passed Peniel, limping because of his hip.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 121

¹ I lift up my eyes to the hills;
from where is my help to come?

² **My help comes from the LORD,**

the maker of heaven and earth.

³ The LORD will not let your foot be moved
nor will the one who watches over you fall asleep.

⁴ **Behold, the keeper of Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep;**

⁵ the LORD watches over you;
the LORD is your shade at your right hand;

⁶ **the sun will not strike you by day,
nor the moon by night.**

⁷ The LORD will preserve you from all evil
and will keep your life.

⁸ **The LORD will watch over your going out and your coming in,
from this time forth forevermore.**

SECOND READING: 2 Timothy 3:14-4:5

A reading from 2 Timothy.

The writer of this letter continues his instruction of Timothy, his younger colleague in ministry, by emphasizing the importance of faithful teaching despite opposition.

¹⁴ But as for you, continue in what you have learned and firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it ¹⁵ and how from childhood you have known sacred writings that are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶ All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ so that the person of God may be proficient, equipped for every good work.

^{4:1} In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I solemnly urge you: ² proclaim the message; be persistent whether the time is favorable or unfavorable; convince, rebuke, and encourage with the utmost patience in teaching. ³ For the time is coming when people will not put up with sound teaching, but, having their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own desires ⁴ and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander away to myths. ⁵ As for you, be sober in everything, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, carry out your ministry fully.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (p. 188)

GOSPEL: Luke 18:1-8

The holy gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus tells a parable of an unjust judge who is worn down by a widow's pleas. Jesus is calling God's people to cry out for justice and deliverance. For if an unethical judge will ultimately grant the plea of a persistent widow, how much more will God respond to those who call.

¹ Then Jesus told them a parable about their need to pray always and not to lose heart. ² He said, "In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor had respect for people. ³ In that city there was a widow who kept coming to him and saying, 'Grant me justice against my

accuser.’⁴ For a while he refused, but later he said to himself, ‘Though I have no fear of God and no respect for anyone,’⁵ yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will grant her justice, so that she may not wear me out by continually coming.’ ”⁶ And the Lord said, “Listen to what the unjust judge says.⁷ And will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long in helping them?”⁸ I tell you, he will quickly grant justice to them. And yet, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?”

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

Lord, may your Word speak to us, your Spirit change us, as your love welcomes and saves us, through Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Have I ever told you how much I dislike my name?

Nothing against my parents who gave me the name, and I understand their reasoning behind it, it’s just that “Nathan” isn’t the most suitable name for this Asian kid with an Asian face living in what was a very non-Asian society. For starters, my name is difficult to actually write out on paper. Have you ever tried to stylise a capital N before? My signature sucks and is ugly as heck. And then there’s the spelling of it. Like what is even supposed to be between the “T-H” and the “N”? I’ve literally seen every possible vowel in there, even a U somehow. And don’t get me started on how hard it is to pronounce, especially for folk who share my Chinese heritage but not my English as a first language upbringing. I couldn’t tell you how many people were told that my name is “lay-FUN”.

But all those aside, the main reason why I don’t like my name is because... well... people barely ever get it right the first time they hear it. I’ll be like, “Hi, I’m Nathan” and the response will be more often than not,

“Jason?” No.

“Mason?” No.

“David?” No.

“Lay-fun?” meh close enough.

Just the other day I was ordering pizza and the person on the phone asked me my name. I cringed because I have a feeling what is likely to happen next. And sure enough, after I told them they were like “Grayson?” I said no and spelled it out for them. But I still didn’t think they got it right so I repeated it again like 3 or 4 more times but they got a bit frustrated and said it’s fine because they have my number anyway. Ok, information that would have more useful 5 minutes ago, but whatever, as long as I get my correct order.

Well, when we got to the pizza place, it turned out they didn’t need my name or number after all as mine was the only order being picked up at all. After we left my wife noticed the name on the the receipt. It said “Tharsan”. No offense to any Tharsan’s out there, but that’s like a whole extra letter than I even gave them. Out of all the times people got my name wrong, I’m going to have to say that this one was the most wrong. So yeah... I’m not a big fan of my name.

But I can’t escape it. It’s the one that’s been given to me. No matter how much I try to change it up with different nicknames I gave myself as a kid, like Nate, Nature Boy, Nat Man, Nathugimus Prime, Naturedamus, Nathanos, or Pastor, I will always just be me. You know, Tharsan. I mean Nathan.

So when I read the story that we get in our first lesson today, how Jacob got his name changed without even really trying, I’ll admit that I get just a little jealous. Sure, he had to wrestle a random stranger for several hours and walked away with a likely permanent limp, but at least he won’t be called the heel-

catcher anymore. That's what the name Jacob means, if you remember. He is the younger of twin brothers, and when the older brother Esau, whose name means "hairy" by the way, when he was born, it is said that Jacob wasn't far behind, holding on Esau's heel, and so he was named just that. And thus started their life-long feud and Jacob always living in the shadow of his brother, who is just seconds older but bigger, stronger, and apparently hairier.

And I thought my name was bad.

We don't put that much weight on name-meanings these days so "Jacob" is a perfectly fine name. In fact, it's super popular as there are like 5 in my son's class alone. But in these bible times? The meaning of your name was everything. It was who you are, your whole identity, the brand that you just can't escape. So Jacob's name would have been a constant reminder of how he's inferior to his brother. Every time someone would call him, greet him, or take down his pizza order, it'd be drilled into his head how he's just second place. Every time some even says it, Jacob is driven deeper into this label.

But it isn't wrong. I mean Jacob was conniving and manipulative. He ended up essentially being everything that his name said he'd be. For the first part of his life up to this point in his story, he was living up to the heel-grabber moniker, the label, the identity that was given to him.

But then God changed it.

That name, that label, that identity, no longer the heel-grabber, but now, the god-wrestler. Saying it out loud, I'll admit that it doesn't sound much better, but at least it's different. Jacob is now Israel, who goes eye to eye, toe to toe, mano a mano... with *God*. I mean, it's doubtful that he'll ever come out on top, I mean this is God we're talking about. But such a name would seem to evoke fear, respect, and intimidation. And Israel does just that. Maybe even to this day.

But what strikes me about this story is that how changing the name changes the person. Rebranding that label and suddenly the identity shifts. Call someone something for long enough, and they just might believe it to be true.

And that brings us to our gospel lesson for today. Another parable of Jesus, but this time about the unjust judge who doesn't fear God nor have respect for people. Clearly this man isn't supposed to be seen as a nice person just by this description alone. But for some reason, the widow goes to him anyway, not to change his name, but perhaps his label.

I mean even when the judge has given all the reason not to, this persistent widow, this thorn in his side, this believer that he isn't just a sum of his past, went to him for the very thing that he's known not to give. But she didn't give up. She wouldn't let it go. She persistently wrestled with his nature and teased out the good. She was able to remind him of who he can be and what he can do in spite of the reputation that was given to him. She got him to rethink what he's about, his place in the world, and his very being and identity.

I know, that sounds like a lot of reading into just a few lines of a story, but I can't buy the whole "pray persistently to get what you want from God" lesson that we often get for this passage. To me, that sounds too much like "health and wealth" preaching, and I just don't think that is something God would want us to learn. But a lesson like "pray persistently to change the world" does. Pray persistently to change the outlook that we have on others and ourselves. Pray persistently to reshape the labels that have dictated who we are and kept us from living in community, mercy, and love.

See in just a few lines of parable, Jesus shows us that we aren't beholden to our reputations. We aren't slaves to the labels that we've been given and perhaps even earned. We're not only what we're told we are. And then we can push past those label and identities and see how we are called by name to be beloved, cherished, and saved children of God.

Of course, this doesn't mean that we're perfect. This doesn't entitle us to get everything we want. This doesn't even mean that we will no longer be mislabelled or people won't get our names wrong anymore. But it does mean that even in our spotty track records, even in our shady pasts, even in our inability to live down the names and labels that we've been given, God remains with us, reshaping us and reforming us, and reminding us that we are so much more than what the world tells us that we are, we worth more to God and our communities than we might tell ourselves we are, and we are loved beyond anything we could ever ask or imagine.

So the persistence that the widow in the parable shows, may that be the persistent voice of God telling us who we are. The wresting that Jacob engaged in for a blessing, may that be the wrestling we have with what the world tells us we are versus the blessing that God has always and will continue to give. The change in heart, mind, and label that is seen throughout these texts, may that be a call to us to see God at work in our lives, and to lean on the strength of God's everlasting arms to guide us, equip us, and name us as God's own beloved people. Thanks be to God. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY: If You But Trust in God to Guide You (#769)

CREED

Together with the whole church of God, let us confess the Christian faith with the Apostle's Creed:

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

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Called into faith and humility, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. Each petition will end with "by your life-changing mercy, O God," and you are all invited to respond with **hear our prayer**. By your life-changing mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, as our eyes are drawn to the hills, we trust that our help comes from you. Grant us the peace that comes from this truth, that our faith be strengthened and we be inspired to live as your beloved children in the world. By your life-changing mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, you watch over us and guard us from evil. You are the source of our worship and proclamation. Strengthen us in our sense of justice and ministry, and may our witness to your goodness be pleasing to you. 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 Hills of Peace Lutheran Church in Kamloops and the pastors and leaders that serve them; and Redeemer Lutheran Church in Vancouver and their pastor Katrina Vigen. By your life-changing mercy, O God, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, you have made heaven and earth and your love is revealed to us throughout your creation. May our stewardship of this planet be pleasing to you, and may its beauty and resourcefulness remain throughout the generations. By your life-changing mercy, O God, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, you keep watch over us and you lead us away from evil, but in our shortcomings we turn away from you and toward our own selfish gain. Grant us the humility to learn your truth of community and peace, and may we be reformed to see your justice reign throughout the earth. We pray especially for the continued support of those that we've sponsored to come into our country: Abraham Barhane; Solyana Amanuel; and Filimon Abraha; and as well as for those who have not yet arrived: Maekele Kiflu, Selam Haile, and their children; and Meri Gabramikael. By your life-changing mercy, O God, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, you keep us and preserve us, and you bring us healing when we are ill. Be with those among us who are in need of your healing, that your love be apparent to all. 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 life-changing mercy, O God, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, you watch over us in all that we do, and from beginning of time and forevermore you connect us with you and all the saints in your kingdom. Remind us of the faith of the past and present, that we be inspired to further the faith of the future. By your life-changing mercy, O God, **hear our prayer.**

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in the full and wondrous love of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

MEAL

DIALOGUE

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty, and our joy, to at all times and places give thanks and praise to you, O God, through our Saviour Jesus Christ, who reveals to us your faithfulness and love, joining us with all the choirs of angels, the hosts of heaven, and the church on earth in praising your name with this unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (p. 190)

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

O Lord, you are merciful and kind and you move us in our faith and service. You remain with us even when we lose heart, and you lift us up out of our troubles and you help us in our times of need. And in the fullness of time, you sent your Son Jesus to us as one of us, to show all people the ways of your truth and life, revealing the boundlessness of your grace and mercy.

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, broke and shared it with all, saying, "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 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."

For it is in this bread and cup that we are reminded of your presence among us, O God, connecting us as a community and family and welcoming us and all people in love and grace, even as we proclaim this mystery of our faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

So it is to you, O God, that all honour and glory belong, for all that you have done and continue to do for the good of all people through Jesus Christ our Saviour and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered together by a life-changing grace, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

Our Father in heaven,
 hallowed be your name,
 your kingdom come,
 your will be done,
 on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins
 as we forgive those
 who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial
 and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power,
 and the glory are yours,
 now and forever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Taste and see God's grace residing in us all.

Thanks be to God.

COMMUNION

COMMUNION HYMNS: Lamb of God (p. 191)

Be Thou My Vision (#793)

Change My Heart, O God (#801)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Holy God, your love is seen and felt in this place, and we give you thanks for being present and meeting us where we are, feeding us with your truth and nourishing us with your grace.

Strengthen us in all that we do, that your promises of welcome and belonging be revealed through us into all the world, in Jesus we pray.

Amen.

SENDING

BLESSING

May God our Shepherd bless you and keep your going out and coming in,

God our Saviour shine on you and bestow gracious help unto you,

God the Spirit look upon you with favour and give you peace, this time on and forevermore.

Amen.

SENDING SONG: Lord Jesus, You Shall Be My Song (#808)

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, be persistent in humility and faith.

Thanks be to God.

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