



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

OF SOUTH BURNABY, BC

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA

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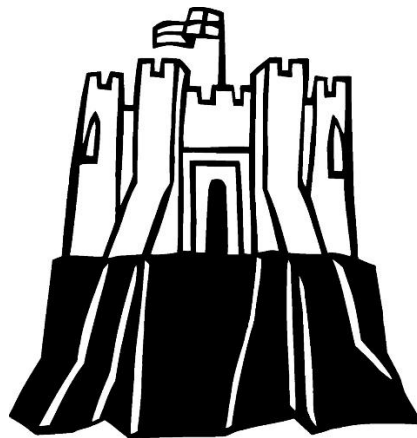
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Reformation Sunday

October 26, 2025

ELW Holy Communion, Setting Eight

Rooted in the past and growing into the future, the church must always be reformed in order to live out the love of Christ in an ever-changing world. We celebrate the good news of God's grace, that Jesus Christ sets us free every day to do this life-transforming work. Trusting in the freedom given to us in baptism, we pray for the church, that Christians will unite more fully in worship and mission.

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 hən̓q̓əmi̓nəm̓ (Musqueam) and Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) speaking peoples.

GATHERING

CALL TO WORSHIP

We gather in the name of our God, our refuge and strength, our very present help in times of trouble. For in God there is no fear, as we are made glad by the blessing and presence of God. So together we regard the works of the Lord our stronghold, we sing praise for all that God has done and continues to do, and we are made to be still in our knowledge of who God is, exalted over all the earth, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen. Thanks be to God.

GATHERING SONG: A Mighty Fortress Is Our God (#504)

GREETING

The freeing grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the reforming love of God, and life-giving fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

CANTICLE OF PRAISE (p. 185)

PRAYER OF THE DAY

O God, you are the foundation of our faith and freedom, and in you we have nothing to fear. Embolden us with your Word, that we be reminded of the truth of your reforming grace and goodness, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

WORD

FIRST READING: Jeremiah 31:31-34

A reading from Jeremiah.

The renewed covenant will not be breakable, but like the old covenant it will expect the people to live upright lives. To know the LORD means that one will defend the cause of the poor and needy (Jer. 22:16). The renewed covenant is possible only because the LORD will forgive iniquity and not remember sin. Our hope lies in a God who forgets.

³¹ The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. ³² It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the LORD. ³³ But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ³⁴ No longer shall they teach one another or say to each other, “Know the LORD,” for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD, for I will forgive their iniquity and remember their sin no more.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 46

¹ God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.

² **Therefore we will not fear, though the earth be moved,
and though the mountains shake in the depths of the sea;**

³ though its waters rage and foam,

and though the mountains tremble with its tumult.

⁴ **There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy habitation of the Most High.**

⁵ God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be shaken;
God shall help it at the break of day.

⁶ **The nations rage, and the kingdoms shake;
God speaks, and the earth melts away.**

⁷ The LORD of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our stronghold.

⁸ **Come now, regard the works of the LORD,
what desolations God has brought upon the earth;**

⁹ behold the one who makes war to cease in all the world;
who breaks the bow, and shatters the spear, and burns the shields with fire.

¹⁰ **“Be still, then, and know that I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations; I will be exalted in the earth.”**

¹¹ The LORD of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our stronghold.

SECOND READING: Romans 3:19-28

A reading from Romans.

Paul's words stand at the heart of the preaching of Martin Luther and other Reformation leaders. No human beings make themselves right with God through works of the law. We are brought into a right relationship with God through the divine activity centered in Christ's death. This act is a gift of grace that liberates us from sin and empowers our faith in Jesus Christ.

¹⁹ Now we know that, whatever the law says, it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world may be held accountable to God. ²⁰ For no human will be justified before him by deeds prescribed by the law, for through the law comes the knowledge of sin.

²¹ But now, apart from the law, the righteousness of God has been disclosed and is attested by the Law and the Prophets, ²² the righteousness of God through the faith of Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction, ²³ since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; ²⁴ they are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵ whom God put forward as a sacrifice of atonement by his blood, effective through faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over the sins previously committed; ²⁶ it was to demonstrate at the present time his own righteousness, so that he is righteous and he justifies the one who has the faith of Jesus.

²⁷ Then what becomes of boasting? It is excluded. Through what kind of law? That of works? No, rather through the law of faith. ²⁸ For we hold that a person is justified by faith apart from works prescribed by the law.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (p. 188)

GOSPEL: John 8:31-36

The holy gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus speaks of truth and freedom as spiritual realities known through his word. He reveals the truth that sets people free from sin.

³¹ Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, “If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples, ³² and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.” ³³ They answered him, “We are descendants of Abraham and have never been slaves to anyone. What do you mean by saying, ‘You will be made free’?”

³⁴ Jesus answered them, “Very truly, I tell you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin.

³⁵ The slave does not have a permanent place in the household; the son has a place there forever. ³⁶ So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.”

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

Send your Spirit, O God, that we might be renewed, redeemed, and reformed by your grace, through Jesus our Lord. **Amen.**

What in the atmospheric river is up with this weather? In case you weren't aware or were fortunate to be outside of the Pacific Northwest since this past Friday, we have been hit again with yet another atmospheric river. A term, by the way, that I never even heard of until like a few years ago, and now I can't seem to escape it. It is talked about so often in the news, and every time I shutter.

Not because I'm afraid of the rain, mind you, it's just a bit of water and I can handle that. Not because I'm afraid of the cold, a short bout in prairie winters has taught me how to deal with that. And not because the heavy rain does a number on my lawn. I mean, that does bother me but I have to admit that my lawn wasn't that great to begin with despite my best efforts.

What makes me cringe when these rains hit the part of the world that I happen to be in ... is how the traffic goes. Or doesn't go, as it were.

I mean, I get it. The rain makes the driving conditions difficult. The roads are wet and more slick and hydroplaning is a real concern. The visibility is almost nonexistent because of the water beating on your windows and how it could so easily fog up. And who knows what kinds of debris, potholes, and small animals could be lurking under those puddles that we have to drive through?

But my goodness is it frustrating trying to get anywhere by car in this rain. The other day I had to go out to Langley for something and what an ordeal that was to be stuck behind all these unnecessarily slow moving cars and forced to stay at or below the speed limit. Don't get me wrong, I'm not a road rage monster or anything, no matter what my family, friends, or anyone who gets in my way on the road will tell you.

It's just that when the rain hits, it's like all our past experiences and learned skill means nothing. Our ability to read, predict, and navigate through traffic patterns is negated when people start to drive erratically and nonsensically because of this water falling onto their windshields. Driving in general in this weather is less of an experience and much more of a chore when we have to pander to the insecurities of others, those who like to camp in the fast lane while going well below the flow of traffic, and basically everyone who isn't as good a driver as me. Who again, isn't at all a road rage monster but is actually quite pleasant and patient behind the wheel.

I know, you might not share these specific frustrations around driving, in fact, it might sound foreign to you, which might make you the problem. Seriously though, maybe you have similar frustrations in other

areas outside of driving, like when those around you seem to hold you back because they aren't at your level. Perhaps it's your less-skilled teammates in whatever sport you play, or your colleagues at work or school who like to ride on the coattails of your hard work, or maybe even your partner or spouse who can't seem to ever get things right the way you say they should be.

Or, maybe it's those who claim the same faith or religion as you, but have absolutely no idea what they're talking about when it comes to theology, doctrine, or practice. The frustration comes when we have to deal with people who don't get it, who can't do it, who just aren't as good at whatever it is as we are. It tests our patience and we feel frustrated.

And we wouldn't be the first ones to feel this kind of frustration with our peers and those around us. It's been going on I'd imagine since the beginning of humanity. Our bibles give us a creation story that is riddled with frustrations, unmet expectations, and comparisons that just aren't all that fair. And then throughout the history that we get, we see nation against nation, tribe against tribe, and religion against religion in this fabricated competition of who is best, who is the most faithful, and who can get to their destination the quickest, even through unfavourable weather.

I mean, when I say it out loud, it seems silly, doesn't it? Yet we engage in this mentality anyway. We can't help it. It's in our nature. It's like... we're *slaves* to it.

And I think this is what Jesus was talking about in today's gospel reading. In this part of John, Jesus was teaching them all of how they were equally sinful and without a right to condemn each other. Many believed in his words, but some did not. And so he tells them that abiding in him and his Word is what will set them free.

This is where the people lose it. Set us free? *Us*? We're not slaves to anyone.

Well, maybe not slaves in the strictest sense of being someone's property. But we are controlled by our impulses, by our paradigms, by our sin that tells us that we aren't who we are and we need to do something about it.

And so we compete. We compare. We size ourselves up against each other to see who wins the battle of humanity. This is what I think Jesus was talking about. This is what he tells us that abiding in his Word will set us free from.

Free from sin, as he describes. But also free from the mentality that we are in competition with each other. Free from the need to compare our value and worth against each other. Free from thinking that because we are better than the notorious "them" that we should have the right and responsibility to put them into their place.

That is nice and all, but I think there's more. Abiding in God's Word doesn't just "free us from" but also "frees us to". See the truth that Jesus gives and teaches frees us to love, to be in community, and to see how we are forgiven and welcomed into God's family as God's people. We are freed to serve others, to witness God's grace, and to simply be.

Be saved. Be loved. Be still to know God.

Those are the words of the Psalmist for today, but also I think this is what Jeremiah was saying in our first reading as well, how we are able to know God and God's laws as they are written in our hearts. It isn't a matter of doing or acting, but a matter of being. Being a human, being a sinner, and being lifted up and brought into God's fold anyway.

This is what our faith hinges on. This is the truth that sets us free. And this was the motivation for the Protestant Reformation that we observe today.

See roughly 508 years ago (I know right, it seems like only yesterday), but back then a little known Benedictine monk by the name of Martin Luther saw incongruencies in the theology and practices that he was taught and what he was seeing in scripture. He felt that there were a lot of do's and do-not's prescribed by the church that weren't necessarily founded in the Word. His frustration came as he tried and tried to do all that he was required to do and not do all that he was required to not, but he felt himself failing every time. It got so bad that it's reported that he even threw his bible against the wall.

That is what I call frustration. He couldn't help but feel condemned by his own faith. He compared himself to what he learned was good and right, and they would not, could not, and never have been able to line up.

And so he spent time in the Word. He read with new eyes. He abided and put his faith in Jesus.

There he saw something new. Grace. He studied specifically the book of Romans, a portion of which we get as our second reading for today, and saw that he, we, and all people are justified and saved by God's grace as a gift, so that it cannot be earned by knowledge, actions, or driving skill, but through the faith of Jesus Christ.

Imagine the liberation he must have felt. Sure, things didn't change over night or even much over the next 500 or so years, but the truth was there. We needn't compete. We needn't point fingers. We needn't put others down to lift ourselves up.

Rather, we can see how we've been saved from ourselves, freed to know our unchanging position in God's kingdom, and constantly being reformed to be God's people in the world, beloved, redeemed, and welcomed to be part of this eternal and equitable body of Christ in the world. Thanks be to God. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY: Making Their Way (ACS #979)

CREED

Reformed and set free by the gospel, 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 the reforming grace and freedom of God, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. Each petition will end with, “by your liberating mercy, O Lord,” and you are all invited to respond with **hear our prayer**. By your liberating mercy, O Lord, **hear our prayer**.

God, you are our refuge and strength and our very help in times of trouble. By your Word we are redeemed and made free. May we always be aware of your presence in and around our community, and may we proclaim the truth of your love always. By your liberating mercy, O Lord, **hear our prayer**.

God, in you we have nothing to fear, even in our uncertainty you lift us up by your grace. Strengthen us in our ministry of hope and peace, and inspire all people with your message of love. We remember in prayer our neighbouring faith communities; those who use this building for worship, work, and play; our partners Anglican Church of Canada and Moravian Church in Canada; and our bishops, rostered ministers, congregations, and ministries of the ELCIC. In particular, we pray for St. Peter’s Estonian Lutheran Church in Vancouver and their interim pastor Andres Rebane; and Peace Lutheran Church in Vernon and the pastors and leaders that serve them. By your liberating mercy, O Lord, **hear our prayer**.

God, the mountains and seas and all that you have made in them proclaim your glory, and through them we see the blessing that you give. May our stewardship of this planet be pleasing to you and reflect the love that you’ve first given us. By your liberating mercy, O Lord, **hear our prayer**.

God, your justice and grace reign in our hearts, and we shall not be shaken. Even in the sinfulness that leads us into greed and selfishness, you remain faithful. Grant all world leaders and politicians a genuine humility, that all people of the world might learn to move toward true peace with our neighbours. 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; as well as for those who have not yet arrived: Maেকে Kiflu, Selam Haile, and their children; and Meri Gabramikael. By your liberating mercy, O Lord, **hear our prayer**.

God, you are our stronghold and in you we find healing and wholeness as your love washes over us all. Be with those among us who are ill, who mourn, or who feel lonely, and may we all realise the freedom found in you. 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 liberating mercy, O Lord, **hear our prayer**.

God, we stand in awe of the majesty of your name and you are exalted in all the earth. You welcome us to live in freedom with all the saints of all times and places, and you inspire us into faith and truth, where we might stand boldly in your love and grace forever. By your liberating mercy, O Lord, **hear our prayer**.

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your truth and grace, through 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, that should at all times and places give thanks and praise to you, almighty God, through our Saviour Jesus Christ, who teaches us the truth about your freeing grace and liberating love and joins us with the choirs of angels, hosts of heaven, and church on earth in praising your name with this unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (p. 190)

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

O God, how majestic is your name in all the earth. Throughout the ages you have revealed your mercy and grace and blessed our homes, our communities, and our hearts. We stand in awe of your love and promises, and we offer you our worship and praise and thanks. For in you there is freedom, by your truth we are redeemed, and through your Son Jesus we know of your salvation and the eternal welcome into your kingdom.

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

Then after they ate, he took the cup, gave thanks, and 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."

So as we are gathered around this table in remembrance, in worship, and in awe, we together proclaim this mystery of faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

O God our Creator, you are present with us in this meal as you bless us, redeems us, and reform us, granting us a freedom and peace that surpasses all understanding and revealing to us a love that never ends, 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

Together in the freedom of the 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 God's liberating love for us all.
Thanks be to God.

COMMUNION

COMMUNION HYMNS: Lamb of God (p. 191)
Just As I Am, without One Plea (#592)
In Christ There Is No East or West (#650)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

We thank you, O God, that you have strengthened our hearts with this feast of life and salvation. Shine the light of Christ on our path and journey, that we may do justice, love kindness, and walk with you in humility, through Jesus our Lord. **Amen.**

SENDING

BLESSING

Now may God, the source of all glory and grace,
the saving Word of life,
the very Spirit of truth and freedom,
bless you all with love and grace, both now and forever.
Amen.

SENDING SONG: Rise, Shine, You People! (#665)

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, live in freedom by the grace of God.
Thanks be to God.