



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

OF SOUTH BURNABY, BC

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA

7283 Nelson Avenue, Burnaby, BC V5J 4C2

Phone: 604-433-1515

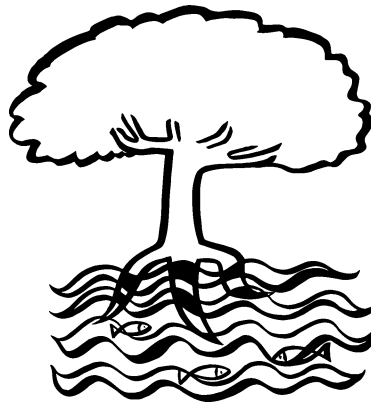
Website: www.graceburnaby.com

Email and e-transfers: office@graceburnaby.com

Pastor's email: pastor@graceburnaby.com

Facebook: [GraceLutBurnaby](https://www.facebook.com/GraceLutBurnaby)

Youtube: [@graceburnaby](https://www.youtube.com/@graceburnaby)



Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost

October 5, 2025

ELW Holy Communion, Setting Eight

A little faith goes a long way is Jesus' point in the gospel. A mustard seed's-worth of faith has miraculous potential. The patience, tenacity, and endurance required for the life of faith are the blessings received in holy baptism, holy communion, and the word read and proclaimed in this assembly. Anticipate them. Receive them with thanksgiving.

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

GATHERING

CALL TO WORSHIP

We gather in the name of our Lord, not provoked or jealous of the world but with our trust in God where we find safety and peace. So we declare our delight in the Lord to whom we commit our ways, and we look forward to God's presence revealed in and around us in which we find our hope, through Jesus Christ our Saviour and brother. **Amen. Thanks be to God.**

GATHERING SONG: Built on a Rock (#652)

GREETING

The faith-increasing grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the powerful love of God, and the sustaining fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

CANTICLE OF PRAISE (p. 185)

PRAYER OF THE DAY

God of our salvation, we give you thanks for the gift of faith and all those who have taught us the good news and proclaimed your gospel. May this gift you have given us always be kindled, that we may live the life to which you have called us, according to your purpose and grace, through Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

WORD

FIRST READING: Habakkuk 1:1-4; 2:1-4

A reading from Habakkuk.

Injustice and violence in the time leading up to the Babylonian exile move this prophet to lament: How can a good and all-powerful God see evil in the world and seemingly remain indifferent? God answers by proclaiming that the righteous will live by faith.

¹ The oracle that the prophet Habakkuk saw.

² O LORD, how long shall I cry for help,
and you will not listen?

Or cry to you "Violence!"
and you will not save?

³ Why do you make me see wrongdoing
and look at trouble?

Destruction and violence are before me;
strife and contention arise.

⁴ So the law becomes slack,
and justice never prevails.

The wicked surround the righteous;
therefore judgment comes forth perverted.

^{2:1} I will stand at my watchpost
and station myself on the rampart;
I will keep watch to see what he will say to me
and what he will answer concerning my complaint.

² Then the LORD answered me and said:

Write the vision;
make it plain on tablets,
so that a runner may read it.

³ For there is still a vision for the appointed time;
it speaks of the end and does not lie.
If it seems to tarry, wait for it;
it will surely come; it will not delay.

⁴ Look at the proud!
Their spirit is not right in them,
but the righteous live by their faithfulness.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 37:1-9

¹ Do not be provoked by evildoers;
do not be jealous of those who do wrong.

² **For they shall soon wither like the grass,
and like the green grass fade away.**

³ Put your trust in the LORD and do good;
dwell in the land and find safe pasture.

⁴ **Take delight in the LORD,
who shall give you your heart's desire.**

⁵ Commit your way to the LORD; put your trust in the LORD,
and see what God will do.

⁶ **The LORD will make your vindication as clear as the light
and the justice of your case like the noonday sun.**

⁷ Be still before the LORD and wait patiently.
Do not be provoked by the one who prospers, the one who succeeds in evil schemes.

⁸ **Refrain from anger, leave rage alone;
do not be provoked; it leads only to evil.**

⁹ For evildoers shall be cut off,
but those who hope in the LORD shall possess the land.

SECOND READING: 2 Timothy 1:1-14

A reading from 2 Timothy.

This letter written to Timothy is a personal message of encouragement. In the face of hardship and persecution, Timothy is reminded that his faith is a gift of God. He is encouraged to exercise that faith with the help of the Holy Spirit.

¹ Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, for the sake of the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus,

² To Timothy, my beloved child:

Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

³ I am grateful to God—whom I worship with a clear conscience, as my ancestors did—when I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. ⁴ Recalling your tears, I long to see you so that I may be filled with joy. ⁵ I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that lived first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, lives in you. ⁶ For this reason I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands, ⁷ for God did not give us a spirit of cowardice but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline.

⁸ Do not be ashamed, then, of the testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner, but join

with me in suffering for the gospel, in the power of God, ⁹ who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works but according to his own purpose and grace, and this grace was given to us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, ¹⁰ but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. ¹¹ For this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher, ¹² and for this reason I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know the one in whom I have put my trust, and I am sure that he is able to guard until that day the deposit I have entrusted to him. ¹³ Hold to the standard of sound teaching that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. ¹⁴ Guard the good deposit entrusted to you, with the help of the Holy Spirit living in us.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (p. 188)

GOSPEL: Luke 17:5-10

The holy gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

On the way to Jerusalem, Jesus instructs his followers about the power of faith and the duties of discipleship. He calls his disciples to adopt the attitude of servants whose actions are responses to their identity rather than works seeking reward.

⁵ The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!" ⁶ The Lord replied, "If you had faith the size of a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it would obey you.

⁷ "Who among you would say to your slave who has just come in from plowing or tending sheep in the field, 'Come here at once and take your place at the table'? ⁸ Would you not rather say to him, 'Prepare supper for me; put on your apron and serve me while I eat and drink; later you may eat and drink'? ⁹ Do you thank the slave for doing what was commanded? ¹⁰ So you also, when you have done all that you were ordered to do, say, 'We are worthless slaves; we have done only what we ought to have done!' "

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

Holy God, through your Son Jesus the light of your gospel was revealed. May it illumine our hearts, minds, and lives, that we might proclaim its truth and love with that same Son, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Which came first, the chicken or the egg...?

I'm actually asking... because I have no idea.

That's the thing about this age-old question, right? None of really know. We might have our opinions and reasons that range all over the map, but really, we just don't know. We weren't there. We didn't witness it. There are no medical records we can refer to. It just isn't possible to have the correct answer with 100% certainty.

But people ask it anyway.

Why? Because it's a philosophical conundrum. It's an infinitely circular cause-and-effect argument. It's something that will truly bake our noodles as we try and try to figure it out.

Every answer we come up with will have a counter. Every theory will hit a snag. Everything we think of can be disproven. And I guess that's the fun in it? But one thing seems to be set in our minds, it was one or the other. One of the two choices had to have been created before the other one. One of them begat while the other was begotten.

And so to tie this mildly amusing debate to the themes for today, let me pose this different but similar question: which comes first, faith or works? This is something we may have asked or been asked in the past, and like the chicken/egg question, it's a tough one to crack, but for different reasons. This one because our source material, the bible, seems to support either answer. Paul tells us that we're saved by faith and not by works. So that sounds like we have our answer. But then James tells us that faith without works is dead. And we're back at square one.

But even with seemingly contradictory passages, I think practically speaking we as Lutherans tend to lean toward the notion that it's actually faith that comes first. I mean, faith is what motivates us, right? Faith strengthens us, helps us see things differently, and reminds us of who we are and whose we are, right? Faith is the reason why we even have any works to do, right?

Sure, while there will always be exceptions to the rule, like there will be good people out there who don't hold any religious affiliation. Like really good people who have been role models for so many and pillars of morality and compassion. People like Angelina Jolie, Keanu Reeves, and Cyclops from the X-Men (the original comic version not that watered-down movie version).

But even with those exceptions, I think we as church goers will just naturally be team faith. It's what speaks to us the most, it's what we've been taught and experienced, it is the example that we've been given by the disciples even, when they asked for Jesus to increase their faith.

Relatable, right? Their request is the same one that we make, their hope is what we also hope in, their prayer is just like ours because they and we all know that we can't get through this crazy thing called life on our own. We need help. We need God. We need faith. So we totally get where the disciples are coming from. They're not so different from us, so it seems.

And so it's that relatability of the first part of this passage that makes Jesus' response so confusing, to the point that we might wonder if we're even right about this faith stuff. In an almost mockingly challenging way, Jesus says that if they only had just a tiny, eensy weensy bit of faith, like the size of a mustard seed, they could do some crazy supernatural things that we only see in movies. Like being able to recognise what a mulberry tree even is in the wild, for goodness sake. Talk about the X-men, that's some amazing mutant ability right there. And then after recognising it, using your Jedi powers to force lift it up and toss it in the ocean? Could you imagine? It'd make raking up those leaves that will soon cover our front yard child's play. And all we need an iota of faith? Bet.

Except... we can't do that, can we? At least, I've never seen any of us doing that. And believe me, I'd pay good money to see that and also just to get some help to clear up our yard because it really can get ridiculous out there. So this makes it sound like Jesus might not be on team faith like us. The disciples are just asking for a bit more of that faith juice to be able to do the things that Jesus asks of them in the few verses before today's selection. And this is Jesus' answer?

Then to confuse matters even more, he goes on this discourse about slaves and how they should be treated and how we should admit that we're but slaves. What does he mean? What could he mean?

All this just leaves us scratching our heads, almost wishing our faith be increased just to help us understand it. I mean, it's pretty confusing.

But maybe that's the point. Maybe that's what Jesus is trying to show them and us. Maybe he's saying that it isn't about our faith, how big or how strong it is, or how wide and far reaching. Nor is it about works, because Jesus doesn't tell them to do or do not or anything, but he just makes up these crazy and impossible scenarios.

So this leads me to believe that it's not about faith or works at all. But rather, it's about who we are in God's family. Who we are not by our own doing or making or will, but by how God creates us, forms us, and saves us to be.

And then we might think, but don't we still need faith to even believe that? Well, I guess so because let's be real, some of us are really hard to love. Really though, our belief in anything isn't what makes it true or not. Rather, it is all God. It is God who chooses us, calls us by name, and lifts us up with healing and love.

I mean, this bible is full of stories of these faithful characters that don't start with faith at all. Like Abraham, Moses, David, Esther, all those prophets, the different Marys, the apostles, and the epistle writers. And while all of them had faith and did some amazing things, that's not where their greatness came from. Their works didn't come from their faith nor did their faith come from their works. But all that they are and were able to do came from God. It is always God who first reaches out, anoints, and empowers them, us, and all people to be God's children in the world.

This doesn't mean that we don't need faith. It doesn't mean that we shouldn't strive to do good works. But it means that who we are, our salvation, and our place in this community isn't because of that. But it's by God's own doing, God's own calling, God's own gracious love for us and all the saints of all times and places.

The past few weeks I've been talking about how difficult the world is to live in. Any one who watched the news, opened a newspaper, or even got on the internet has heard about the awful state that the nations, the relationships between them, and just people in general are in. And it is sometimes so overwhelming. We might shake our heads and think that we can't even. We might raise our eyes to heaven and cry out "why" and wonder how we can ever make it in this mess. We might even ask for our faith to be increased.

But through it all, we are reminded of who holds our future. We are reminded of who has knit us together to live in community and relationship. We are reminded of who calls us, empowers us, and sends us out to be, to do, and to love. Still, it isn't easy. There is so much we want to do but are unsure if we can. We worry that we might not be strong enough, good enough, or faithful enough to make a difference. But again, it isn't by our strength, our morality, or our faith that makes things happen. Rather, it's God.

It's God who is worthy of our trust and gives us faith and hope. It's God who calls us to follow and strengthens us to pray and be answers to prayer. It's God who created us to be not perfect in faith and works, but beloved and forgiven and accurate reflections of this unending and steadfast love in the world.

So as we continue through this season after Pentecost, may we always see God working in us, through us, and in spite of us in our community and world, bringing to light our welcome, our salvation, and this gospel that joins us all together to be the body of Christ in love and peace. Thanks be to God. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY: Christ Is Made the Sure Foundation (#645)

CREED

Together with all of God's people, 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 faith by the Holy Spirit, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. Each petition will end with "in your faithful mercy, O God," and you are all invited to respond with **hear our prayer**. In your faithful mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

Holy God, you don't treat us like the sinner we are, but as your beloved children, and you lift us up from the ashes to do your will in love and service. May this promise bring us strength, embolden us to serve, and increase our faith. In your faithful mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

Holy God, our trust is in you and that allows us to do the work that you call us to. Strengthen us to heed your call into ministry and right relationship. 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 Dunbar Lutheran Church in Vancouver and their new pastor Elina Singh who begins her ministry with them today; and for our BC Synod staff and Synod Council. In your faithful mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

Holy God, you allow us to dwell in in your lands and safe pastures, where you provide for us a home and livelihood. May we show our appreciation through proper care of this planet, that it continue to be a dwelling place for our children and our children's children. In your faithful mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

Holy God, your justice will be seen throughout the earth as clear as light, like the noonday sun. Be with all world leaders and politicians that their judgements and decisions come from a place of wisdom and peace, rather than power and greed. We also pray 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: Maekela Kiflu, Selam Haile, and their family; and Meri Gabramikael. In your faithful mercy, O God, **hear our prayer.**

Holy God, we stand before you and wait patiently for your grace and mercy. Remind us always of your love, and be especially by those who are sick, who mourn, or who feel lonely as we all look to you for guidance and strength. We pray in particular for especially for Bryan and Chona; Ron, Tess, and Mineko; Beulah; the Wong family; the Joughin family; 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... In your faithful mercy, O God, **hear our prayer.**

Holy God, you give us eternal hope, in that you promise us a home with you forever. Remind us of the lives of the faithful, that they may always serve as an example to us and our communities. In your faithful mercy, O God, **hear our prayer.**

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in the faith that saves us, 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 joy, that we should at all times and in all places offer thanks and praise to you, O God, through Christ our Lord; who increases in us a faith that leads us to join 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 (p. 190)

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Holy God, by your faithfulness you show us what is right and what is wrong, and how our trust in you can bring us to safety. Our delight is in you, O Lord, for you give us more than we could ask or imagine, leading us by still waters and green pastures. You grant your gracious justice of righteousness and peace to all, shining into our lives clear as the noonday sun. And in the fullness of time you send to us Jesus, your Son, to live with us as one of us, revealing to us the goodness 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 the bread, gave thanks, broke and shared it saying, "Take and eat, this is my body broken for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

Then after they ate, he took the cup, gave thanks, and shared that saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me."

It is in this bread and cup that we catch a glimpse of the community that is to come, even as we declare the mystery of our faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

All honour and praise be to you, O holy and mighty God, through your Son Jesus, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

Brought into faith with this community, 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 presence with us all.

Thanks be to God.

COMMUNION

COMMUNION HYMNS: Lamb of God (p. 191)

We Walk by Faith (#635)

Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me (#623)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Gracious God, you are good news for a weary world. You are hope for people in despair, and you are healing to those in need. May we go out into the world with good cheer, knowing that you are with us and your hand leads us, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

SENDING

BLESSING

May the steadfast love of God be upon you,
the grace of Christ be within you,
and the abiding presence of the Spirit uphold you, now and forever.

Amen.

SENDING SONG: My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less (#596)

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, serve God and neighbour in faith.

Thanks be to God.

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