



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

OF SOUTH BURNABY, BC

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA

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Twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost

November 16, 2025

ELW Holy Communion, Setting Eight

The end is near. There is no doubt about it. The warnings are dire. The tone of today's texts is ominous. But the baptized know how to live in the meantime. The baptized are strengthened for the living of these days in word and sacrament. The baptized rally around the invitation of the apostle: "Do not be weary in doing what is right."

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 hən̓q̓əmi̓n̓əḥ̓ (Musqueam) and Sḵw̓x̓w̓ú7mesh (Squamish) speaking peoples.

GATHERING

CALL TO WORSHIP

We gather together this day to worship and sing to our Lord, who has marvelous things and whose right hand and holy arm has lifted us up in love and salvation. God remembers us with a steadfast love and with faithfulness God leads us out of despair, brings us into peace, and strengthens us to live and serve in community. So we praise this God with a new song, we joyfully lift our voices and rejoice, and our hearts ring out with joy before the Lord, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen. Thanks be to God.**

GATHERING SONG: Earth and All Stars! (#731)

GREETING

The reassuring grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the comforting love of God, and the steadfast fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

CANTICLE OF PRAISE (p. 185)

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Loving God, in the light of your redeeming grace, all creation sings your praise for your love and faithfulness. By your mercy may we always see you present and working in the world, that we might be filled with hope in your promises of peace and justice, through Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

WORD

FIRST READING: Malachi 4:1-2a

A reading from Malachi.

Malachi, whose name means "my messenger," warns that "the day is coming." On that day, the evil will be destroyed like stubble in a fire, but the "sun of righteousness" will shine on those who honor God.

¹ See, the day is coming, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble; the day that comes shall burn them up, says the LORD of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch. ^{2a} But for you who revere my name the sun of righteousness shall rise, with healing in its wings.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 98

¹ Sing a new song to the LORD, who has done marvelous things,
whose right hand and holy arm have won the victory.

² **O LORD, you have made known your victory,
you have revealed your righteousness in the sight of the nations.**

³ You remember your steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel;
all the ends of the earth have seen the victory of our God.

⁴ **Shout with joy to the LORD, all you lands;
lift up your voice, rejoice, and sing.**

⁵ Sing to the LORD with the harp,
with the harp and the voice of song.

⁶ **With trumpets and the sound of the horn
shout with joy before the king, the LORD.**

⁷ Let the sea roar, and all that fills it,
the world and those who dwell therein.

⁸ **Let the rivers clap their hands,
and let the hills ring out with joy before the LORD, who comes to judge the earth.**

⁹ The LORD will judge the world with righteousness
and the peoples with equity.

SECOND READING: 2 Thessalonians 3:6-13

A reading from 2 Thessalonians.

Some members of the Thessalonian community, because of their belief in the nearness of Christ's return, had ceased to work, living off the generosity of other members of the community. The writer of this letter warns them bluntly that if they want to eat, they need to work.

⁶ Now we command you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to keep away from every brother or sister living irresponsibly and not according to the tradition that they received from us. ⁷ For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us; we were not irresponsible when we were with you, ⁸ and we did not eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with toil and labor we worked night and day so that we might not burden any of you.

⁹ This was not because we do not have that right but in order to give you an example to imitate.

¹⁰ For even when we were with you, we gave you this command: anyone unwilling to work should not eat. ¹¹ For we hear that some of you are living irresponsibly, mere busybodies, not doing any work. ¹² Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living. ¹³ Brothers and sisters, do not be weary in doing what is right.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (p. 188)

GOSPEL: Luke 21:5-19

The holy gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

As history moves toward God's fulfillment there will be frightening signs and events. Before the end, believers will draw strength from their relationship to God and will be given the words they need to testify and to endure without fear.

⁵ When some were speaking about the temple, how it was adorned with beautiful stones and gifts dedicated to God, [Jesus] said, ⁶ "As for these things that you see, the days will come when not one stone will be left upon another; all will be thrown down."

⁷ They asked him, "Teacher, when will this be, and what will be the sign that this is about to take place?" ⁸ And he said, "Beware that you are not led astray, for many will come in my name and say, 'I am he!' and, 'The time is near!' Do not go after them.

⁹ "When you hear of wars and insurrections, do not be terrified, for these things must take place first, but the end will not follow immediately." ¹⁰ Then he said to them, "Nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom; ¹¹ there will be great earthquakes and in various places famines and plagues, and there will be dreadful portents and great signs from heaven.

¹² "But before all this occurs, they will arrest you and persecute you; they will hand you over to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors because of my name. ¹³ This will give you an opportunity to testify. ¹⁴ So make up your minds not to prepare your defense in advance, ¹⁵ for I will give you words and a wisdom that none of your opponents

will be able to withstand or contradict. ¹⁶ You will be betrayed even by parents and siblings, by relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death. ¹⁷ You will be hated by all because of my name. ¹⁸ But not a hair of your head will perish. ¹⁹ By your endurance you will gain your souls.”

The gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

Almighty God, through your Word and by your Spirit, may your salvation be revealed and your love restore our hope and faith given to us by Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

I may have mentioned this before, but one of my favourite movies of all time is 1985's Back to the Future, starring Michael J. Fox and Christopher Lloyd. In spite of all the nonsensical plot holes and the famously mispronounced “gigawatt”, watching that movie almost daily as like a 10-year-old kid was truly magical. It opened up for me a whole world of possibility, fantasy, and time-travel.

If by slight chance you haven't seen this movie, I'm going to have to ask you to leave now. Just kidding, you can stay, but the movie is about a high school kid named Marty McFly who accidentally activates his much older friend Doctor Emmet Brown's time machine that he made out of a DeLorean. The way Doc saw it is if you're going to build a time machine into a car, you might as well do it with some style. And so circumstance has Marty going back in time to when his parents were his age and he almost destroys their chances of getting married which would paradoxically end his life before it even begins. See this is what I meant with the plot holes.

This movie became a trilogy of the duo travelling back and forth through time, and it was interesting to see how Marty and Doc were able to operate in their adventures with this upper hand of knowing what will happen in the future. But at the same time, the whole premise of these movies was that the future isn't written, and that the slightest variance they cause in past events could set off this butterfly effect and drastically alter the course of their futures.

And so Doc even says very clearly to Marty... well, the past Doc says to present day Marty, when present day Marty tries to warn past Doc about what happens to present day Doc in past Doc's future, which is present day Marty's past... you know what I mean. Anyway, Doc tells Marty that no one should know too much about their own destiny as they could endanger their very existence... just like how Marty endangered his by almost causing his parents to never even meet.

That always stuck with me. Even though there were millions of other time travel theories in various other movies franchises, like Terminator, Star Trek, and the Bill and Ted adventures and journeys, this thing that Doc says about us knowing too much about our futures just stood out.

I mean it makes sense. Maybe not in the way that we'd break our parents up so we'll never be born, but like if we knew exactly how our future looks, I don't know if we'd bother trying anymore. If we knew what our fate will be then we might stop caring. If we truly believed that our destiny is set, then we could lose our sense of purpose, meaning, and hope.

But yet, we *want* to know the future, don't we? I mean, beyond the winning lottery numbers or when the bus we're waiting for will finally get here, we want to know *our* future. Like how we'll grow and change. Like where the next step in life will take us. Or maybe even when our last day will be, just so we can prepare. I know I often wonder what my kids will be like when they grow up, if I'll ever be a grandparent, and mostly if they would ever make me rich.

So I do think Doc was onto something when his past self gave that advice to a time-displaced Marty. Again, not in an inadvertent preventing yourself from being conceived kind of way, but in a complete demotivation, a taking the wind out of your sails, a sheer hopelessness that could come from knowing too much of our own future. Because sometimes that future doesn't come soon enough. It doesn't come about the way that we thought it would. And it doesn't line up with our preferences, our conveniences, and our timing.

I mean, that's why parts of the gospels were written. They were written much after the fact and people were antsy as they stared in the sky thinking that Jesus will be back any day now. Any... day... now...

Those days turned into months, those months into years, and years into discouraging disappointment as things didn't get better but worse.

So these gospels were written down to remind the people of who they are. They were shared so that their spirits could be lifted and rejuvenated. The purpose of these writings, this record of events, the re-telling of the gospel, was to show everyone that even when things aren't going our way, even when the chips are down, even when the waiting is just too much, that Jesus' promise of being part of our lives remains true. But it's not something that we can manipulate with the different signs and wonders and wars and rumours of wars, nor is it something that will happen far off into the future. Rather, Jesus is in our lives now. In the present. In the past too. And will continue to be in the future.

See the second reading that we get from Paul's letter to the Thessalonians today talks about people being busybodies (which I find hilarious by the way) and not contributing really to the overall community and/or culture. Many scholars suggest that what is happening here is that those aforementioned busybodies have it set in their minds that Jesus is coming back soon and everything will end with them as the victors. So why work? Why toil? Why bother to do anything at all?

This is the danger I'm talking about. This is the danger that Paul seems to be warning the Thessalonian church about. And in a roundabout way this is the danger that past Doc was telling present day Marty about. In that if we "know" our future too well, if we are too cocksure of our fate, if we are adamant that we somehow know better than others and moralize that, then we've missed the point. We've misheard the call. We aren't living the life that God has given us.

In that Jesus didn't save us just so we'd have a place to go to when we die. Jesus didn't hang on a cross so we'd then not have to face any kind of suffering whatsoever. Jesus didn't enter our lives just so we can sit on our hands just to wait for some kind of loud second coming.

No, Jesus saved us so we can live the life that is truly life, here and now. Jesus died on the cross because of human greed and evil but God brought him back to show us how strong and

powerful forgiveness and grace can be. Jesus entered our lives so we could know true community, true relationship, true love, with Christ, through Christ, and in Christ by the power of Holy Spirit.

And so when the people asked Jesus for the signs of when the end will come, when they were more concerned with the clues and hints that will tell them when it'll happen, when they wanted a fortune teller or time traveller to tell them their future, Jesus reminds them that they aren't living for the future, but they are living now. They aren't waiting for a Jesus to come later on but they are with Jesus now. They aren't to be sitting around, biding their time until the end, but they are called to be active participants in what God is doing now in the world. In grace, in love, and in peace.

See, Jesus never promises us an easy life. In fact, he says it'll be hard. He says we're going to go through some stuff. He said that we'll face hardship, turmoil, and death. But he also promises that he'll be with us. Always. Strengthening us. Lifting us up. And showing us the ways of God's righteousness and faithfulness.

So life will get hard. Anyone of you have been paying attention know how hard just the past couple of weeks have been for us. But through it all, we have each other. We have our community. We have Jesus living in us, among us, and all around us, reminding us that whatever the future might hold, we have our right now that continues to be full of God's presence and truth, showing us joy, giving us reasons to worship and praise, and leading us into the peace that surpasses all understanding.

Peace in knowing that Jesus is with us now.

As we approach the end of this season after Pentecost and this church year, may we remember all that we've learned and seen of Jesus in our lives and in our community, that we might confidently live for him in love and service, knowing that God is present with us always. Thanks be to God. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY: My Life Flows On in Endless Song (#763)

CREED

In sure and certain hope, 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

Led to live in faith, peace, and love, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. Each petition will end with “by your everlasting mercy, O God,” and you all may respond with **hear our prayer**. By your everlasting mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, we sing songs of appreciation for the new and marvelous things that you have done throughout the earth. May your hand at work be always apparent in and around our lives, that we be filled with hope continually. By your everlasting mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, you reveal to us your righteousness and you redeem us by your love. Strengthen us in our ministry and service, and may we continue to reflect your grace into the world. We especially lift 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 leaders, congregations, and ministries of the ELCIC. In particular, we pray for Grace Lutheran and South Peace United Church in Dawson Creek and their United minister Marilyn Carroll; and for Deo Lutheran Church in Salmon Arm and their pastor Erik Bjorgan. By your everlasting mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, your steadfast love and faithfulness are seen in all the ends of the earth, through all that you do and all that you have made. May our stewardship of this planet be pleasing to you as we look forward to what we leave behind for the future generations. By your everlasting mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, you bring joy to all people throughout the lands, even when its people don't recognize your presence. Be with all world leaders, politicians, and people of influence, that your love might lead all people into peace. We also pray for the continued support for those that we've sponsored to come into our country: Abraham Barhane; Solyana Amanuel; Filimon Abraha; as well as those who have not yet arrived: Maekele Kiflu, Selam Haile, and their children; and Meri Gabramikael. By your everlasting mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, you have formed us with your loving hands and you lead us into joy. Bring your healing to all who suffer, in pain, or mourn, and remind us all that you are with us always until the end of the age. We pray for your hand of healing especially for Kathy and family; Bryan and Chona; Ron, Tess, and Mineko; Beulah; Greg and Akiko; Bev and family; John and Betty; Sukhwant; Pastor Kristen; Laura; Kandie; Will; Chris; Larry; Walter; Piet; Kelly; Betty; Tracy, Jacob, and Joshua; and all those we name aloud or quietly in our hearts at this time...

By your everlasting mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, in your righteousness you bring us into community to live with you and all the saints in your eternal kingdom. Remind us always of the faith of the past, that we might be inspired to live faithfully into the future. By your everlasting mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your steadfast love 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 we should at all times and in all places
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,
through our Savior Jesus Christ;
who gives us the hope, peace, and joy
that allows us to join with the choirs of angels,
the church on earth, and the hosts of heaven,
in praising your name with this unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (p. 190)

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Holy God, merciful and mighty, you have the power to heal and the love to save. You quell our fears and calm our anxieties as you remain faithful in your promises and redeem us from our sin. Through your Son Jesus, you lift us up and lead us into hope in knowing that you join us together in the community of all the saints, forever praising your name to the ends of the earth.

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

And 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."

It is in this bread and cup that we are reassured of your love and faithfulness, even as we declare this mystery of faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

O God, you bless us in with your holiness, this food is infused with your Spirit, and your love brings us into the everlasting hope of your eternal presence with us in healing and grace, 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 into God's eternal 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 steadfast love and faithfulness.

Thanks be to God.

COMMUNION

COMMUNION HYMNS: Lamb of God (p. 191)
The Lord's My Shepherd (#778)
When Peace like a River (#785)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Holy God, we again give thanks to you for feeding us with your truth and nourishing us with your Spirit, moving us to be your hands and feet in the world. May your love always be proclaimed and the hope in your grace always be found, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

SENDING

BLESSING

May the grace of God the Shepherd bless you and keep you,
the power of God the Saviour shine on you and be gracious onto you,
and the love of God the Spirit look upon you with favour, and give you peace.
Amen.

SENDING SONG: Day by Day (#790)

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, live without fear and love without reserve.
Thanks be to God.