



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

OF SOUTH BURNABY, BC

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA

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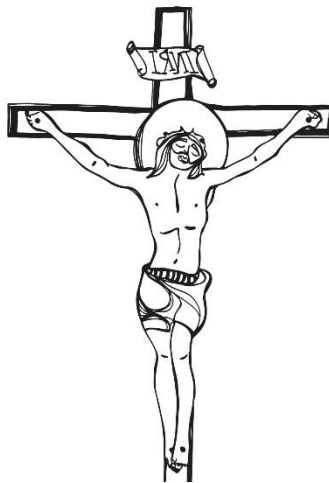
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Christ the King Sunday

November 23, 2025

ELW Holy Communion, Setting Eight

Jeremiah's promise of the execution of "justice and righteousness in the land" finds ironic fulfillment in the execution of Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews. It appears utterly contradictory that a king should be crucified with a criminal. This victory appears for all the world as humiliating defeat. Yet through the gate of death Jesus opens the door to paradise.

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 hə́nqəmíṇəṁ (Musqueam) and Sḵwə́wú7mesh (Squamish) speaking peoples.

GATHERING

CALL TO WORSHIP

We gather this day in the name of our God, our refuge and strength, our present help in times of trouble. While the world moves and shakes around us, we are reminded that we have nothing to fear, for God is in our midst, speaking truth, grace, and peace to us all. And so we come into God's presence, we regard all of God's works, and we exalt God's name in all the earth, through Jesus Christ our Sovereign, Saviour, and Shepherd. **Amen. Thanks be to God.**

GATHERING SONG: The Church's One Foundation (#654)

GREETING

The humbling grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the saving love of God, and the eternal community of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

CANTICLE OF PRAISE (p. 185)

PRAYER OF THE DAY

God of all times and places, we know that you are here with us, leading and guiding us and speaking to us through your holy Word. Open our ears to hear, our eyes to see, and our hearts to receive your righteous and faithful love that empowers us to act in your creation for all the world, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

WORD

FIRST READING: Jeremiah 23:1-6

A reading from Jeremiah.

Today's reading builds on the common, ancient Near Eastern metaphor of the king as shepherd. Judah's unjust rulers have caused their people, their "flock," to be scattered. Nevertheless, God will raise up a new and righteous shepherd who will rule a restored Judah.

¹ Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! says the LORD.

² Therefore thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning the shepherds who shepherd my people: It is you who have scattered my flock and have driven them away, and you have not attended to them. So I will attend to you for your evil doings, says the LORD. ³ Then I myself will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the lands where I have driven them, and I will bring them back to their fold, and they shall be fruitful and multiply. ⁴ I will raise up shepherds over them who will shepherd them, and they shall no longer fear or be dismayed, nor shall any be missing, says the LORD.

⁵ The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. ⁶ In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will live in safety. And this is the name by which he will be called: "The LORD is our righteousness."

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: Colossians 1:11-20

A reading from Colossians.

An early Christian hymn praises the mystery of the political, personal, and mystical Christ, the one who was present at creation and is eternally reigning with God.

¹¹ May you be made strong with all the strength that comes from his glorious power, so that you may have all endurance and patience, joyfully ¹² giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light. ¹³ He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation, ¹⁶ for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. ¹⁷ He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸ He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. ¹⁹ For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, ²⁰ and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (p. 188)

GOSPEL: Luke 23:33-43

The holy gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Amid scoffing and slander from those who sarcastically call him Messiah and king, Jesus reveals that to be Messiah and king is to give one's life for others. Here he uses his power to welcome a despised sinner to paradise but puts his own death into God's hands.

³³ When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. ³⁴ [[Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."]] And they cast lots to divide his clothing. ³⁵ And the people stood by watching, but the leaders scoffed at him, saying, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah of God, his chosen one!" ³⁶ The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine ³⁷ and saying, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!" ³⁸ There was also an inscription over him, "This is the King of the Jews."

³⁹ One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, "Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!" ⁴⁰ But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? ⁴¹ And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong." ⁴² Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come in your kingdom." ⁴³ He replied, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise."

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

SERMON

O Lord, may our eyes be opened to see you, our ears opened to hear you, and our hearts opened to receive your truth, the truth that frees us from darkness, through Jesus Christ.
Amen.

I didn't want to talk about this, but I have to admit that this past week I had a hard time concentrating on anything else. There's just been something that has just been eating away at me. It's just that... well, have any of you been following that sound effect contest on the radio?

In case you aren't, the premise of the contest is that they play this everyday sound, and callers have to correctly guess what it is in order to win the growing jackpot. Sort of like a "name that tune" but for sound effects. This contest has become so popular that I've heard that there are a few radio stations out there that have copied it, albeit with different sized jackpots. In the particular station that I'm thinking about, their pot grew over the past few months, and it's now capped at \$100,000.

That's... One. Hundred. Thousand. Dollars.

For a radio contest, of all things. That's what has me all distracted this week, I'm pretty sure I know what it is. So if they'd just answer my call, that money is good as mine. Could you imagine? I mean when we hear an amount like that, it's hard to not let our minds wander a bit, right?

Like maybe we'd go on a trip. Perhaps buy a car. Or be responsible and pay some bills or even invest it. The possibilities are endless.

Or are they?

It was funny because one of the DJs was talking about this “life-changing” money, which it totally is, but he impetuously said “you can buy a house in Vancouver with it” and he realised what he said and backtracked and clarified that you could make a pretty good dent in buying a house in Vancouver. And... even that’s kind of a stretch. Condo, sure. Townhouse, maybe. Detached home? Not even for a teardown.

Suddenly, \$100,000 doesn’t even sound like enough anymore. But then what would? 200? 500? A million? I personally know people who think that the astronomically low odds of winning the lottery aren’t even worth it if the pot is under like 60 mil.

Now, I’m not saying that I don’t want to win this radio contest, I totally still do. But it’s just crazy how we can almost just brush that amount off these days as not enough. What a time to be alive. I mean with the way prices are now, I’m pretty sure any one of us could spend all that prize money in like a day if we wanted to. That just hits me with this stunning realisation: my goodness are we ever stuck in this system.

This system that governs our worth. This system that dictates the value of this arbitrary currency. This system that rules us.

I know, perhaps I’m being a little dramatic. I’m fully aware that we need money to live. But when our goal and end game evolves into our happiness hinging on having a semblance of “enough”, then perhaps there’s a problem. When we give up most of our free time just to earn money, then maybe there is an issue. When we see politicians building their platforms on the promise of wealth, not for the city or country, but for individuals, then I think it’s time to question for what and for who are we even living.

Today is Christ the King Sunday, the last Sunday of the church calendar. The day that is supposed to be the culmination of 52ish themes, lessons, and sermons that tried to remind us of exactly that: for what and for who are we even living. And the obvious answer of course would be for God, and that all we do is for God. But in reality? It’s probably something more closely resembling that system that I just spent like 600 words describing.

I mean even Jesus was subject to that system. That’s what put him on the cross, if you really think about it. The powers that be deemed that they were deserving of being the powers that be and so set up the rules, checks, and balances to keep it that way. And when someone challenged that, like Jesus, they had to remove him in order to keep the status quo that they benefit from for so long.

Even when this new thing Jesus taught was better. Even when this message Jesus proclaimed helped more people. Even when this gospel Jesus brings reveals everyone’s inherent value and worth that is graciously given by God, the people essentially stuck their fingers in their ears, yelled “LA LA LA”, and decided to cling to what they knew, what they were comfortable with, what they felt was best only because it was familiar.

See, the people are ruled by the system. They were unable to see past how life was set up to keep the poor poor and help the rich to get richer. They were stuck in wanting what they didn’t have. They were told to believe that their value and worth was solely determined by what they have and how much they could offer.

Essentially, the system tells us that we are individuals living only to protect ourselves and our wealth and that anyone above us or below us on that social ladder is somehow our enemy and we have the right to protect what is defined as “ours” at any cost.

I mean look at the people deriding Jesus as he hung on the cross. “Save yourself” they said. “Prove yourself” they insinuated. “Amass power and hoard wealth for yourself” they basically meant as they shouted at him, insulted him, and dehumanized him because he didn’t fit into the system that was their god.

But Jesus didn’t give in. He didn’t cave. He didn’t forfeit his mission to save not himself, but everyone else.

See as the people punished Jesus, he forgave them. As they insulted him, he responded by praying for them. As they hated on him, he continued to show them love.

Love that saves. Love that changes. Love that frees.

We know what happens. We heard this story like 7 months ago during Easter. Jesus dies because of sin, yes. Human greed and selfishness piled onto his shoulders and dragged him to the cross. The system and powers of the people demanded that he be dead and that’s what they got.

But that death didn’t stick.

And with it, melted off the anger. The hate slid off of Jesus’ beaten and battered back. The evil was replaced with grace, mercy, and love.

See this love doesn’t demand us to be pit against each other, but it joins us together as Christ’s own body in the world. This love doesn’t require us to work and work to earn our value and worth, but it reminds us of how we are unconditionally welcomed, just as we are, into God’s kingdom. This love doesn’t lord over us as a superpower and commands our respect and loyalty, but it empties itself, humbles itself, and levels itself out just so we can see how relatable, equitable, and accessible it truly is.

All this doesn’t mean that we can live outside the systems of the world. It doesn’t mean that we can just break free and do our own thing from here on out. It doesn’t even mean that we won’t need money to live anymore. But it does mean that we don’t need to equate our value to our pocketbooks. It means that we don’t have to look at each other and those at different places in that false hierarchy with contempt or suspicion, but rather we can see them as partners in mission and co-heirs of the gospel. It means that while we live in the system, we don’t have to be ruled by the system. That is, we don’t have to be ruled by these laws that teach hate, segregation, and self-importance. But we can live under God’s rule that teaches us God’s ways of humble righteousness, faithful service, and loving peace.

This is a rule of forgiveness, in that we can see past the mistakes of others and know that their position in God’s family hasn’t changed, just as we’ve been forgiven and continually welcomed. This is a rule of togetherness, in that we can learn more and more how we’re all in the same boat and can strive collectively for a better future that is full of equality and community. This is a rule of love, in that as God’s people we can recognise the value in each other person

regardless of how we might feel about them, because we know that they are, just as much as we are, beloved children of God.

This is the King that we adore and worship and live for.

So as we close off this church year and look ahead to the next, may we always be filled with the lessons of grace and love we've been given, and live our lives as people of God: welcomed, forgiven, and saved. Thanks be to God. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY: Love Divine, All Loves Excelling (#631)

CREED

With all those welcomed into God's salvation, 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

Saved by grace and called to follow Christ, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. Each petition will end with, "by your redeeming mercy, O Lord," and you all may respond with **hear our prayer**. By your redeeming mercy, O Lord, **hear our prayer**.

O God, our refuge and strength, your help is with us in our times of trouble and you are always present within our community. Remind us always of your unending grace, that we be filled with confidence in our faith and service. By your redeeming mercy, O Lord, **hear our prayer**.

O God, in you we have nothing to fear, for you are our strength and stronghold. May our ministry in and around of our community be testament to the love that you have first showed us. 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, rostered leaders, congregations, and ministries of the ELCIC. In particular we pray for Peace Lutheran Church in Abbotsford and their interim pastor Dean

Andersen; and for Emmaus Lutheran Church in Burnaby and their pastor Timo Saarinen. By your redeeming mercy, O Lord, **hear our prayer.**

O God, by your power you made the earth, the mountains and the seas, and everything in them, and you charge us with the care of this planet. May our stewardship of this planet be faithful and care of it be considerate of the generations to come that will inherit the products of our actions. By your redeeming mercy, O Lord, **hear our prayer.**

O God, you are present in the midst of our cities, nations, and kingdoms, and you help us when the earth shakes and trembles. Instill a wisdom in all of us citizens of this planet, that we might learn to work together toward peace. We pray especially for the continued support of 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: Maেকেle Kiflu, Selam Haile, and their children; and Meri Gabramikael. By your redeeming mercy, O Lord, **hear our prayer.**

O God, you are the Lord of hosts, our stronghold, and in you we find our security. Be with all among us who are sick, mourn, or feel lonely, and may we all be stilled by the greatness of your grace. We pray especially for Kathy and family; Bryan and Chona; Ron, Tess, and Mineko; Beulah; Greg and Aikiko; 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 redeeming mercy, O Lord, **hear our prayer.**

O God, you are exalted among the nations and in all the earth, for your eternal love and grace have welcomed us to live with you and all the saints in your kingdom. May the lives and faith of the past continually be inspiring to us, that we be moved to humbly serve each other in all that we do. By your redeeming mercy, O Lord, **hear our prayer.**

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your reign of peace and salvation, 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 and almighty God, we give you thanks for all that you are and all that you do, as you reign in our hearts with a grace and mercy that surpass all understanding. You lift us up out of our sin and you save us from our guilt and shame, and you bring us to live in harmony with you and all the saints. Then in the fullness of time, you join us together through the life and teachings of your Son Jesus, who came to us as one of us to reveal the wideness of your love.

For on the night that he was betrayed, your Son Jesus sat with his friends for a meal, where he took some bread and after giving thanks he 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 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."

For it is in this bread and cup that we see the fullness of our joy found in you, made possible by this connection we share as we together proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

Bless this meal, O God, with your love and shine your Spirit upon us as we submit to your reign and follow you in our communities into all the world, sharing your truth and heralding the salvation that humbles us, empowers us, and saves us, through Jesus Christ who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into God's kingdom by 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 love and peace present in our lives.

Thanks be to God.

COMMUNION

COMMUNION HYMNS: Lamb of God (p. 191)

Abide with Me (#629)

Jesue, Remember Me (#616)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Holy God, you feed us with your Word and nourish us with your Spirit, and you bring us into your loving reign in our communities. Be with us as we go out from here to be your people, to proclaim your salvation, and to humbly walk with you in forgiveness and grace, through Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

SENDING

BLESSING

May the Triune God,
the visible and invisible, the holy and humble, the powerful and present,
the Creator, King, and Counsellor,
guide your feet, strengthen your hands, and fortify your heart, this day and always.
Amen.

SENDING SONG: To Be Your Presence (#546)

DISMISSAL

God in peace, as God's saved, loved, and led.

Thanks be to God.