



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

OF SOUTH BURNABY, BC

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA

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First Sunday of Christmas

December 28, 2025

Tree of Life

As we celebrate the Twelve Days of Christmas, our gospel today confronts us with the death of innocent children at the hands of Herod. The birth of Christ does not remove the power of evil from our world, but its light gives us hope as we walk with all the “holy innocents” of past generations and today who have suffered unjustly. In our gathering around word and meal, God continues to redeem us, lift us up, and carry us as in days of old.

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

GATHERING

CALL TO WORSHIP

We gather together this day with all the saints and angels and all the lands and seas and everything in them, to praise the Lord who reigns from on high. For our God has done marvelous things, in speaking creation into being, in speaking to us the Word of grace and mercy, and in sending to us a Son to save us with a love that is beyond description. So let God's name be exalted over earth and heaven, and may we faithfully serve this God and all of God's people, as we are welcomed into this community and family, this day and always. **Amen.**
Thanks be to God.

GATHERING SONG: The First Noel (#300)

GREETING

The protecting grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the welcoming love of God, and the accepting fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

HYMN OF PRAISE: What Child Is This (#296) vs 1, 3

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Holy and Almighty God, even as the heavenly host sang of your glory in the night skies over Bethlehem, even as the star shone in the heavens, and sheep and cattle gathered in that light, so we gather, young and old together, to recount all that you have done for us in mercy and steadfast love. No tyrant's treat or deadly act can destroy the dreams and visions you have placed within us, for you have drawn us close. With all creation, we praise you and exalt your name forever and ever. **Amen.**

WORD

FIRST READING: Isaiah 63:7-9

A reading from Isaiah.

God does not delegate divine intervention to a messenger or angel. God's own presence brings salvation. The prophet and all who read these words join in celebrating God's gracious deeds. God trusts that God's people will not act falsely.

⁷ I will recount the gracious deeds of the LORD,
the praiseworthy acts of the LORD,
because of all that the LORD has done for us
and the great favor to the house of Israel
that he has shown them according to his mercy,
according to the abundance of his steadfast love.

⁸ For he said, "Surely they are my people,
children who will not act deceitfully,"

and he became their savior

⁹ in all their distress.

It was no messenger or angel

but his presence that saved them;

in his love and pity it was he who redeemed them;
he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 148

- ¹ Hallelujah! Praise the LORD from the heavens;
praise God in the heights.
- ² **Praise the LORD, all you angels;
sing praise, all you hosts of heaven.**
- ³ Praise the LORD, sun and moon;
sing praise, all you shining stars.
- ⁴ **Praise the LORD, heaven of heavens,
and you waters above the heavens.**
- ⁵ Let them praise the name of the LORD,
who commanded, and they were created,
- ⁶ **who made them stand fast forever and ever,
giving them a law that shall not pass away.**
- ⁷ Praise the LORD from the earth,
you sea monsters and all deeps;
- ⁸ **fire and hail, snow and fog,
tempestuous wind, doing God's will;**
- ⁹ mountains and all hills,
fruit trees and all cedars;
- ¹⁰ **wild beasts and all cattle,
creeping things and flying birds;**
- ¹¹ sovereigns of the earth and all peoples,
princes and all rulers of the world;
- ¹² **young men and maidens,
old and young together.**
- ¹³ Let them praise the name of the LORD,
whose name only is exalted, whose splendor is over earth and heaven.
- ¹⁴ **The LORD has raised up strength for the people and praise for all faithful servants,
the children of Israel, a people who are near the LORD. Hallelujah!**

SECOND READING: Hebrews 2:10-18

A reading from Hebrews.

Through Jesus' suffering and death, the trail to eternal salvation has been blazed for us. We do not fear death, because he has conquered the power of death. Thus Christ, our merciful and faithful high priest, has the final say over the destiny of our lives.

¹⁰ It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings. ¹¹ For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. For this reason Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters, ¹² saying,

"I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters;
in the midst of the congregation I will praise you."

¹³ And again,

"I will put my trust in him."

And again,

"Here am I and the children whom God has given me."

¹⁴ Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵ and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. ¹⁶ For it is clear that he did not come to help angels but the descendants of Abraham. ¹⁷ Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. ¹⁸ Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION: Go Tell It on The Mountain (#290) v. 3

GOSPEL: Matthew 2:13-23

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

In a dream, Joseph is warned to flee to Egypt to protect the infant Jesus from the jealousy of Herod.

¹³ Now after [the magi] had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." ¹⁴ Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt ¹⁵ and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, "Out of Egypt I have called my son."

¹⁶ When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the magi, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the magi. ¹⁷ Then what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled:

¹⁸ "A voice was heard in Ramah,

wailing and loud lamentation,

Rachel weeping for her children;

she refused to be consoled, because they are no more."

¹⁹ When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, ²⁰ "Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child's life are dead." ²¹ Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. ²² But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. ²³ There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, "He will be called a Nazarene."

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

RESPONSIVE HYMN: Angels We Have Heard on High (#289) v. 1, 3

REFLECTION: Peace Came to Earth (#285)

HYMN OF THE DAY: It Came Upon the Midnight Clear (#282)

APOSTLES' CREED (TOL p. 12)

Gathered together by the Spirit, 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 see Jesus in our midst, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. Each petition will end with, "by your ever-present mercy, O Lord," and you all may respond with **hear our prayer**. By your ever-present mercy, O Lord, **hear our prayer**.

Ever-loving God, you come to us in humility and service through your Son Jesus, born to us as one of us. Open our hearts to forgive one another and stand up for those who cannot stand up for themselves. Strengthen us by your wisdom and clothe us with your love, that we can see how we are bound together by your perfect harmony. By your ever-present mercy, O Lord, **hear our prayer**.

Ever-welcoming God, you come to us in our gatherings and community. Unite us with all people, show us your grace, and empower us to serve one another as we together worship you. 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 Benediction Lutheran Church in Delta and the pastors and leaders that serve them; and for King of Life Lutheran Church in Coquitlam and their pastor Dorothy Chu. By your ever-present mercy, O Lord, **hear our prayer**.

Ever-creating God, you come to us in the diverse splendor of the universe. Grant us the humility to trust our place in the network of creation, that we might live in humble and faithful service to you and the natural world. By your ever-present mercy, O Lord, **hear our prayer.**

Ever-gracious God, you come to us in acts of justice and forgiveness and you lead us into right relationship with you and neighbour. Guide us as we navigate our differences, that your wisdom will lead us to recognize the face of the Christ child in all people. We pray especially for the continued support of those that we've sponsored to come into this country: Abraham Barhane; Solyana Amanuel; and Filimon Abraha; as well as for those who have not yet arrived: Maekele Kiflu; Selam Haile, and their children; and Meri Gabramikael. By your ever-present mercy, O Lord, **hear our prayer.**

Ever-caring God, you come to us through people that the world might forget and cast aside, such as the poor shepherds, the outcasted prophets, and a young unwed mother. Send your Spirit to all who marginalized, unrecognized, or displaced, that they might find a home in you. And also we pray for those who are sick, who mourn, or who feel lonely, that none of us could forget of your love and compassion. Especially we pray for Kathy and family; Bryan and Chona; Ron, Tess, and Mineko; Beulah; Greg; Bev and family; John and Betty; Sukhwant; Pastor Kristen; Laura; Kandie; Will; Chris; Larry; Walter; Piet; Kelly; Betty; Ngan Kew; and all those we name aloud or quietly in our hearts at this time...
By your ever-present mercy, O Lord, **hear our prayer.**

Ever-lasting God, you come to us through those that we have loved and lost and yet continue to live with you and all the saints. Remind us of their faith and proclamation of your truth, that we be inspired to live and do the same. By your ever-present mercy, O Lord, **hear our prayer.**

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in the wisdom of your Word made flesh among us, Jesus Christ, our Savior.
Amen.

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.
And also with you.

MEAL

DIALOGUE (p. 14)

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 right, our duty, and our joy, that we at all times and places give thanks and praise to you, Almighty God, for you have given us your Son, Jesus Christ, born to us as one of us, revealing to us a peace that surpasses understanding, and joining us together with the choirs of angels, the hosts of heaven, and church on earth, to unendingly praise your name:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY: Silent Night, Holy Night (#281) v. 3

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Holy and Almighty God, we give you thanks for this day, we praise you for your grace, and we worship you for the gift of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Who came to us as not just one of us, but treated as the worst of us as he was marginalized, betrayed, and killed. But in your infinite grace you raised him again to show us the wideness of your love and forgiveness, foretold by Jesus in his teachings, displayed to us through his actions, and proved to us in his resurrection.

As on the night that he was betrayed. Jesus sat with his friends for a meal, where he took the bread, gave thanks, broke it, and shared with them 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 with 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 remember your love for us, O God, even as we declare this mystery of faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

So it is to you, O God, that all honour and praise belong, for all that you have done to save us, for all that you do to guide us in our journey, and for all you give even in these gifts of bread, nourishment, and your Son Jesus, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER (p.17)

Gathered into God's love and fold 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 care for us all.

Thanks be to God.

COMMUNION

COMMUNION HYMNS

Lamb of God p. 17

O Little Town of Bethlehem (#279)

Away in a Manger (#277)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Holy God, we give you thanks for again feeding and nourishing us with your Word and truth, allowing us to see just how present you are in and around our lives. May we always lean on this promise, that it might strengthen us through all of life's journey, in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

SENDING

BLESSING

May God the Creator guard your going out and coming in,
Christ the Saviour bless you with grace and forgiveness,
and the Spirit of comfort and compassion be your strength and help and every time of need,
this day and always.

Amen.

SENDING HYMN: Hark! The Herald Angels Sing (#270)

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, set free to share the good news.

Thanks be to God.