



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

OF SOUTH BURNABY, BC

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA

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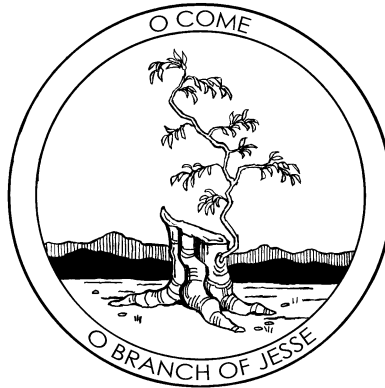
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Second Sunday of Advent

December 7, 2025

Tree of Life

At the heart of our Advent preparation stands John the Baptist, who calls us to repent and make a new beginning. As the darkness increases we turn toward the approaching light of Christ. For Christians he is the root of Jesse, the righteous judge who welcomes all, especially the poor and meek of the earth. We wait with hope for that day when the wolf will dwell with the lamb, and there will be no more hurt or destruction. From the Lord's table we are sent in the spirit of John the Baptist to proclaim that in Christ the kingdom of God has come near.

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 God, who rules with righteous justice and gracious peace. For our God defends the needy, rescues the poor, and crushes all that might oppress us. And above all, God joins us together in the kingdom as one family, revealing to us the wondrous deeds that move us to bless God's glorious name throughout all the earth forever, through Jesus Christ. **Amen. Thanks be to God.**

LIGHTING OF ADVENT WREATH

And in our blessing of God's name, we look to this wreath upon which are the candles that represent the progression through this season of Advent and the themes that it holds. May the hope in Christ lead us to see God's reign of peace in and around us, as we are joined together as siblings, equally beloved by a benevolent God. **Amen.**

Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah (ELW #240) vs 1 – 2

O Branch of Jesse, come.

Let us walk in the light of the Lord. Amen.

GATHERING SONG: Beneath The Tree of Life (TOL p. 3) verses 1, 3, 4, 5

GREETING

May the forgiving grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the steadfast love of God, and the welcoming communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

HYMN OF PRAISE (TOL p. 6)

PRAYER OF THE DAY

O God, by your Spirit may your power be stirred up within us, that as we wait with abundant expectation and hope, we might thrive in community, flourish in service, and prosper in the peace of knowing that you are with us always, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

WORD

FIRST READING: Isaiah 11:1-10

A reading from Isaiah.

Isaiah describes the coming of a future, ideal ruler who will renew David's royal line (the stump of Jesse). Gifted by the spirit of God, this ruler will reign with perfect justice. Enmity and danger will be restored to harmony and peaceful coexistence.

¹ A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse,
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.

² The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him,
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and might,
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

³ His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.
He shall not judge by what his eyes see

or decide by what his ears hear,
⁴ but with righteousness he shall judge for the poor
and decide with equity for the oppressed of the earth;
he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,
and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.
⁵ Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist
and faithfulness the belt around his loins.
⁶ The wolf shall live with the lamb;
the leopard shall lie down with the kid;
the calf and the lion will feed together,
and a little child shall lead them.
⁷ The cow and the bear shall graze;
their young shall lie down together;
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
⁸ The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp,
and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.
⁹ They will not hurt or destroy
on all my holy mountain,
for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD
as the waters cover the sea.
¹⁰ On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall inquire
of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19

- ¹ Give the king your justice, O God,
and your righteousness to the king's son;
² **that he may rule your people righteously
and the poor with justice;**
³ that the mountains may bring prosperity to the people,
and the hills, in righteousness.
⁴ **Let him defend the needy among the people,
rescue the poor, and crush the oppressor.**
⁵ May he live as long as the sun and moon endure,
from one generation to another.
⁶ **Let him come down like rain upon the mown field,
like showers that water the earth.**
⁷ In his time may the righteous flourish;
and let there be an abundance of peace till the moon shall be no more.
¹⁸ **Blessed are you, LORD God, the God of Israel;
you alone do wondrous deeds!**
¹⁹ And blessed be your glorious name forever,
and may all the earth be filled with your glory. Amen. Amen.

SECOND READING: Romans 15:4-13

A reading from Romans.

God's promise to include Gentiles within the circle of God's blessed people has been fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Christians live out their unity by welcoming and encouraging each other just as Christ has welcomed them into God's family.

⁴ Whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. ⁵ May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, ⁶ so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁷ Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

⁸ For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the circumcised on behalf of the truth of God in order that he might confirm the promises given to the ancestors ⁹ and that the gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written,

"Therefore I will confess you among the gentiles
and sing praises to your name";

¹⁰ and again he says,

"Rejoice, O gentiles, with his people";

¹¹ and again,

"Praise the Lord, all you gentiles,
and let all the peoples praise him";

¹² and again Isaiah says,

"The root of Jesse shall come,
the one who rises to rule the gentiles;
in him the gentiles shall hope."

¹³ May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (TOL p. 10)

GOSPEL: Matthew 3:1-12

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Just before Jesus begins his public ministry, John the Baptist appears, calling people to mend their ways and speaking of a powerful one who is to come.

¹ In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, ² "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." ³ This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said,

"The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:
'Prepare the way of the Lord;
make his paths straight.' "

⁴ Now John wore clothing of camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was

locusts and wild honey. ⁵ Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region around the Jordan were going out to him, ⁶ and they were baptized by him in the River Jordan, confessing their sins.

⁷ But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for his baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? ⁸ Therefore, bear fruit worthy of repentance, ⁹ and do not presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our ancestor,’ for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham.

¹⁰ Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

¹¹ “I baptize you with water for repentance, but the one who is coming after me is more powerful than I, and I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹² His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

By the truth of your Word, O Lord, may our ears be opened to hear your voice. By the presence of your Spirit may our eyes learn to see you in the world. And by the power of your love, may our hearts soften to feel you, be led by you, and know you as our shepherd and guide, through Jesus our Lord. **Amen.**

So I was late for my dentist appointment the other day, and let me tell ya, nothing stresses me out more. I got there safely, thankfully, but let's just say I was trying to drive as, uh, *efficiently* as possible because I hate being late for anything. And whenever I'm as late as I was and feeling the stress that I was feeling, *of course* traffic would be especially bad, of course the roads would be especially congested, and of course all the other drivers would be especially slow, especially oblivious to how they're in my way, and especially annoying as heck.

I know, I'm driving this giant beast of a car that isn't really built for speed or defensive driving, so it's not exactly conducive for effectively getting around traffic. And I understand that being late isn't the end of the world so there's no need to get as flustered as I was. And I admit that the only reason I was running late was because I remembered my appointment wrong and thought it was for 30 minutes after what it actually was for.

So all those people on the road in front of me, you know, those driving with due care and attention and maintaining appropriate speeds for the conditions, were doing nothing to help me get to my destination any quicker. And that is so typical, isn't it? Like I totally knew that this would happen before I even started the car. I anticipated the abundance of these others that would appear on my way and in my way and just blocking my way. I almost expected to feel frustrated with those who will inevitably be completely unaware of my situation, my need to move quicker, my feelings around something that is totally my own fault.

Having said that, as I mentioned a few weeks ago I'm really a road rage monster or anything, but I'm actually very pleasant and courteous on the road. Like I would never yell expletives at anyone, not audibly at least. Nor would I make any rude gestures in their direction, not outside of my mind or in the sight line from my windows, anyway. I barely ever even honk my horn

unless it is absolutely necessary to inform the other driver that where their car is and where my car is are about to be the same place. I can give a pretty mean side-eye though.

So while again I admit that it was my own fault for being late, while I cognitively know that the others on the road aren't purposely getting in my way or intentionally inconveniencing me specifically, while I am fully aware that I'm subconsciously making this mountain out of a mole hill, I continue to hold the other drivers with contempt, I continue to feel frustrated with them, I continue to see them as lesser and not as good as me.

I know, this makes no logical sense. I even got to my destination at the exact time that my GPS said I would. So unless Google can magically predict that guy in front of me taking forever to wait for those pedestrians to cross the street before turning and getting out of my way, all those thoughts I had were really just in my head. I had no real quantifiable reason to feel that anger, indignation, and even offense at their very oblivious incompetence and complete ignorance around what a proper flow of traffic should look like. And while I said that I might not react in an outwardly obvious way, there are times when it takes my all to not just yell, "you brood of vipers! Who the heck taught you how to drive?"

I know, these aren't the exact words of John the baptizer that we get in our gospel lesson for today, but I think he might understand those feelings of indignation that I just described. Not around being late or inconvenienced or having to navigate through heavy traffic in rainy and wet conditions, but around seeing the improper and possibly detrimental actions and attitudes of others. In understanding how certain situations are shaping out in ways that are less than ideal due to the fault of others. In predetermining outcomes and conclusions and labelling and pinpointing our enemy as those others.

I mean when we look at how the story is described to us, it doesn't look like the Pharisees did anything to set John off the way he was set off. There was no reason for them to be called a brood of vipers. There was no reason for him to question their desire to be baptised. Nothing in this portion of the story, at least. But we can gather from the tidbits we get from the other stories and passages that maybe they aren't the right kind of candidate for baptism that we, or apparently John, would have imagined or even expect.

And so, we might be able to understand John's distaste. We might get his frustration. We might even want to join in on the finger-pointing, the scapegoating, the *othering* of those who aren't like us, don't see the world like us, or maybe even perceived to be harming us in some way. We might want to make them our enemies too.

John even qualifies his assertions and stereotypes of them by describing how they aren't bearing good fruit in their actions and attitudes, how they assume that just because they're Abraham's descendants that they're good, and how his baptism is about repentance and so they're clearly not it.

Again, this passage doesn't say much about what they did other than go to the river to be baptized, which was kind of the trend of the time. But we know enough about these Pharisees that we can fill in the blanks. We read enough about what they're about to see that they're just doing this for show and for the clicks and likes. We have enough evidence to draw from that we can confidently conclude that they're religious hypocrites. They're pompous, arrogant, and entitled. They think they're better, smarter, and more worthy. They don't fit the mold, they

don't get it right, they aren't worthy of repentance. And they'd probably be bad drivers too, for crying out loud.

But then, doesn't that kind of sound like us? Minus the bad driver part, of course.

John says that his baptism is for repentance, yes, and maybe the Pharisees aren't a good fit for that. But John also acknowledges that there is a new thing coming. There is a new baptism with the Holy Spirit and fire. There is a new way to see, to react, to be together in community with each other and God.

See, while John's repentance was about changing the self to be better and more obedient to the law, this new baptism that is coming is about being changed by the Spirit.

While John's baptism says, "do better," this new baptism says, "be made new."

John's wisdom says, "act right," this new incarnate wisdom says "become righteous through grace."

John's philosophy was essentially to take a bath to scrub off some of dirt, but this new paradigm offers a transformation that removes the perception that you are defined by the dirt.

John knows the old ways and sees how the One who is to come will make them new.

John understands the expectations of righteousness but realises that the God with us is how we are truly transformed.

John gets the limitations of his baptism, and recognises that we need Jesus to save us.

See John exposes what is wrong. Jesus forgives it with grace and love.

John prepares the way. Jesus walks with us along the way.

John points out our brokenness. Jesus heals us and reconciles us.

John encourages repentance and a turning around in our actions and attitudes. Jesus changes us and leads us to peace.

A peace in belonging. A peace that brings us together in spite of difference and diversity and division. A peace that allows the wolf to live with the lamb, the calf to feed with the lion, the natural enemies to be together, relate to one another, and even drive on the same roads with each other.

This is the peace that is brought by Jesus. This is the peace we look forward to in this season that leads to Christmas. This is the peace that is for us all, calling us, reconciling us, and revealing to us how we all belong to this brood of vipers but the Christ child chooses to play with us anyway.

So on this 2nd Sunday of Advent, may this peace bring understanding over our assumptions.

May this peace speak truth in our anger and frustration. May this peace transform us to listen, relate, and love. Thanks be to God. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY: On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry (ELW #249)

APOSTLES' CREED (TOL p. 12)

Together with all of God's beloved, 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 repentance and peace, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. Each petition will end with "God, in your righteous mercy," and you are all invited to respond with **hear our prayer**. God, in your righteous mercy, **hear our prayer**.

O God, you are just and you judge us with righteousness. May your grace be apparent to us, that we might live lives full of repentance and peace. God, in your righteous mercy, **hear our prayer**.

O God, you rule over us with a righteous justice, and you grant to us all your boundless and abundant love. May we reflect that love onto all the world, that people of every description and identity might feel the call to live in peace. We pray especially 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 Chetwynd Shared Ministry in Chetwynd and all the pastors and leaders that serve them; and for Christ Lutheran Church in Chiliwack as they discern what the future has in store for their community. God, in your righteous mercy, **hear our prayer**.

O God, may the mountains and hills that you have created bring prosperity and peace, that all the world might see your righteousness throughout all of creation. God, in your righteous mercy, **hear our prayer**.

O God, we pray for all world leaders and politicians, that they may defend the needy among the people, rescue the poor, and crush all oppression wherever it may happen. We also pray for the continued support of those that we've sponsored to come to this country: Abraham Barhane; Solyana Amanuel; Filimon Abraha; as well as for those who have not yet arrived: Maekele Kiflu, Selam Haile, and their children; and Meri Gabramikael. God, in your righteous mercy, **hear our prayer**.

O God, strengthen us to endure the hardship that life at times gives us, that we may continue to flourish in your righteousness. We pray for all who are sick, who mourn, or who feel lonely,

that your peace might be seen and felt throughout the generations. We pray especially 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; Tracy, Jacob, and Joshua; and all those we name aloud or quietly in our hearts at this time... God, in your righteous mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O God, your glorious name be blessed forever, as we remember your wonderful deeds throughout the ages, giving peace to us and your saints of all times and places, and joining us together as the one body of Christ. God, in your righteous mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your righteous justice and peace, displayed by Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

MEAL

DIALOGUE (TOL 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 indeed right, our duty, and our joy, that we should at all times and places give thanks and praise to you, O God, through our Saviour Jesus Christ, who came to us as the fulfilment of the promise of purpose and peace, thus joining us with the choirs of angels, the hosts of heaven, and the whole church on earth in praising your name with this unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (TOL p. 14)

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Holy God, mighty and merciful, you give us the joy of being your people in the world, connected by your love and brought together by your grace. You lead us to live with each other in peace, that we might see the value and identity you give to all people, reminding us that in you we are made to be worthy of your redeeming and salvation. For in the fullness of time you sent to us Jesus, your Son, to live among us as one of us as an example of how we can live in harmony in spite of difference and disparity, lifted up by your wisdom, welcome, and wide mercy.

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 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."

In this bread and cup that we are reminded of how truly connected and equal we are, together regarded as God's beloved, even as we declare this mystery of faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

O God, bring to us your peace that it might reign through our communities and congregations. Bring to us your love, that it might ring through our hearts and relationships. Bring to us your Spirit, that we might all be blessed by your grace and always remember all that you do in lifting us up by your arms of mercy. And so all honour and glory be to you, O God, through our Saviour Jesus Christ with whom we partake in this holy meal, by the power of your Spirit, living and reigning together as one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER (TOL p. 17)

Joined to be God's people together in the world, 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 equitable and welcoming love.

Thanks be to God.

COMMUNION

COMMUNION HYMNS: Lamb of God (TOL p. 17)

Come Now, O Prince of Peace (ELW #247)

There's a Voice in the Wilderness (ELW #255)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Holy God, we give you thanks for again feeding us with your Word and nourishing us with your truth. Empower us as your people in the world, that our proclamation of your love and grace be fruitful in bringing about your peace, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

SENDING

BLESSING

May the God of love fill you with joy and grace,
the God of mercy bless you with all welcome and belonging,
the God of salvation bring you to peace, now and forever.

Amen.

SENDING HYMN: Prepare the Royal Highway (ELW #264)

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, encouraged by grace and God's unconditional love.

Thanks be to God.

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