



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)



Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

February 1, 2026

ELW Holy Communion, Setting 10

Who are the blessed ones of God? For Micah, they are those who do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God. For Paul, they are the ones who find wisdom in the weakness of the cross. For Jesus, they are the poor, the meek, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, those who mourn, and those who hunger for righteousness. In baptism we find our blessed identity and calling in this countercultural way of living and serving.

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

GATHERING

CALL TO WORSHIP

We gather in this place, the tabernacle of the Lord, upon God's holy hill, to sing praises to God who has made us blameless and righteous by grace. So in honour and fear of the Lord, we humbly offer all that we are, as proclaimers of God's truth, as God's faithful servants in the world, and as God's dearly beloved and blessed people, that we might all reflect the love that has been so graciously given to us, through Jesus Christ. **Amen. Thanks be to God.**

GATHERING HYMN: When the Poor Ones (#725)

GREETING

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

CANTICLE OF PRAISE (p. 204)

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Redeeming God, you come to us in Christ to rescue us from our slavery to sin and shame, and you lead us out of captivity and into the freedom of your love and blessing. Guide us by the wisdom of the cross, and show us how to live lives full of humility, justice, and hope, through Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

WORD

FIRST READING: Micah 6:1-8

A reading from Micah.

With the mountains and the foundations of the earth as the jury, God brings a lawsuit against Israel. God has "wearied" Israel with a long history of saving acts. God does not want or expect lavish sacrifices to attempt to earn divine favor. Rather God empowers the people to do justice, to love loyalty to God, and to walk shrewdly in God's service.

¹ Hear what the LORD says:

Rise, plead your case before the mountains,
and let the hills hear your voice.

² Hear, you mountains, the case of the LORD,
and you enduring foundations of the earth,
for the LORD has a case against his people,
and he will contend with Israel.

³ "O my people, what have I done to you?
In what have I wearied you? Answer me!

⁴ For I brought you up from the land of Egypt
and redeemed you from the house of slavery,
and I sent before you Moses,
Aaron, and Miriam.

⁵ O my people, remember now what King Balak of Moab devised,
what Balaam son of Beor answered him,
and what happened from Shittim to Gilgal,
that you may know the saving acts of the LORD."

⁶ "With what shall I come before the LORD
and bow myself before God on high?

Shall I come before him with burnt offerings,
with calves a year old?
⁷ Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams,
with ten thousands of rivers of oil?
Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression,
the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?"
⁸ He has told you, O mortal, what is good,
and what does the LORD require of you
but to do justice and to love kindness
and to walk humbly with your God?

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 15

¹ LORD, who may dwell in your tabernacle?
Who may abide upon your holy hill?
² **Those who lead a blameless life and do what is right,
who speak the truth from their heart;**
³ they do not slander with the tongue, they do no evil to their friends;
they do not cast discredit upon a neighbor.
⁴ **In their sight the wicked are rejected, but they honor those who fear the LORD.
They have sworn upon their health and do not take back their word.**
⁵ They do not give their money in hope of gain, nor do they take bribes against the innocent.
Those who do these things shall never be overthrown.

SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

A reading from 1 Corinthians.

According to the world's standards of power and might, the message of the cross seems stupid and offensive. Yet this word reveals the paradoxical way God has chosen to work power and salvation through weakness, rejection, and suffering. Hence the message of the cross becomes true wisdom and power for believers.

¹⁸ The message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹ For it is written,

"I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,
and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart."

²⁰ Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scholar? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ²¹ For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of the proclamation, to save those who believe. ²² For Jews ask for signs and Greeks desire wisdom, ²³ but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to gentiles, ²⁴ but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

²⁵ For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

²⁶ Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. ²⁷ But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the

strong; ²⁸ God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to abolish things that are, ²⁹ so that no one might boast in the presence of God. ³⁰ In contrast, God is why you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, ³¹ in order that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (p. 205)

GOSPEL: Matthew 5:1-12

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus opens the Sermon on the Mount by naming those who are blessed in the reign of God.

¹ When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. ² And he began to speak and taught them, saying:

³ "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴ "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

⁵ "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

⁶ "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

⁷ "Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

⁸ "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

⁹ "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

¹⁰ "Blessed are those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹ "Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

Holy God, your blessings are abundant and reach every person. Fill us with your Spirit that we might hear you speaking, see you working, and lean on your everlasting and eternal wisdom and love, through Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

As you may or may not know, I love movies. I love being able to unplug for a little bit and get lost in the story, the cinematography, and the overall production of a well put together film. I'm not a super hardcore cinephile or whatever they call those movie buffs, but I can be a little more critical than your average movie-goer, especially when the movie is based on something that I'm really familiar with, like the bible, comic books, or a TV show from my childhood. Because it seems like more often than not, when such movies come out, they tend to lean heavily on their "artistic license" and totally butcher their source material. So often I go to these movies with my back somewhat raised and I'll judge it by a higher standard than I would with a totally original movie based on a totally original idea.

For example, there is a new live-action He-Man movie, called Masters of the Universe, set to release later on this year. I'm pretty sure you're all super familiar with He-Man in general, but just in case, let me get you up to speed real quick. It is basically a toy-line from the 80s that turned into a Saturday morning cartoon/commercial. It takes place on this far-off planet called Eternia, where its main character, Prince Adam, has fabulous powers revealed to him the day he held aloft his magic sword that he has for some strange reason, and instinctively and inexplicably said, "By the power of Grayskull!" That somehow turned him into He-Man, the most powerful man in the universe, which really just means above-average human strength in an insanely muscle clad body. He-Man and his equally impossibly muscular-but-not-as-strong friends defend the planet from the evil forces of Skeletor, the main villain of the series, who is able to function completely fine despite having only a skull for a head. I know, it's all really cool stuff, so you can see why I'm such a fan.

But because I'm such a fan, and for reasons I already mentioned, when they announced the movie, I kept my expectations low and my critical eyes of criticism up. I was ready to tear this movie apart, as I was pretty sure it'll be awful. But then, the trailer dropped a week and a bit ago, and I have to say, so far it looks not bad, not bad. I was pleasantly surprised with how closely they are honouring the original with the costumes and overall look and feel. So maybe this movie will be ok after all... except for one small thing. See, the trailer starts with Adam on Earth, living as a regular human.

It also shows that he makes it back to Eternia and it looks like that is where most of the movie takes place, but why have him on Earth at all to begin with? And I know, the true fans out there would know that Earth does play a very minor role in the original, no need to blast me in the comments. I am fully aware that Adam's mom is from Earth, but that is a pretty obscure fact and Earth is barely ever mentioned. So would they now?

I guess it's to make the movie more relatable? At least that's what a lot of people online say. But what's not relatable about an alien planet with magic swords, mysterious creatures and powers, and close to 0% body fat ratios? That's like my every day life.

Really though, I don't like it but it makes sense. If it's not relatable, then people can't relate to it. They will lose interest regardless of how interesting it could be. You can make the greatest movie ever made, but that means nothing if no one pays attention to it, watches it, or receives what it has to offer.

Sounds kind of like the bible now, doesn't it?

I mean, this book that we read out of at least once a week is pretty old. It comes from a far-off place. And it talks about a culture that is very, very different from our own. How can it be expected of us to relate to it in any way whatsoever?

Take the text that we get for today, for example. It's a very well-known portion from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, called the Beatitudes. Why they were so named or if we should still refer to them as that isn't as important, I think, as what these verses are saying to us. Because as they are, what they're saying doesn't really seem all that relatable to our current worldview. And to be honest, I can't see them being relatable in any worldview of any time and/or place and/or culture.

What I mean is, Jesus here is lifting up traits that no one is really trying out for. Jesus honours these personality defects that are more of a woe than anything else. Jesus says “blessed are” these types of people that honestly none of us are actually hoping to become, even if we say we are.

If anything, we do everything we can to *not* be these things, be it for our own protection, our own image, our own integrity, perhaps. I mean in all our programming and teaching and ministry in our churches, don’t we try to get people to be stronger, bolder, and more enriched in their faith and spirit? Don’t we fight those who fight us, protest against those we disagree with, and persecute anyone who doesn’t fit our image of what we think God calls us to be? And if we don’t do all this, don’t we admire and look up to those who do?

Now I’m not saying that it’s bad to do these things or that we shouldn’t do them, but I’m saying that what Jesus declares as blessed are not at all these things. Jesus’ list, at its very core, is foreign to us, different from what we’re used to, and unrelatable to say the least.

So what does this mean? That we aren’t blessed? That we’re woe’d? That God doesn’t love us as much because we’re not lost, we’re not weak, we’re not... for the lack of a better term... *unsaved*?

Well, of course not. We know that’s not at all true. But what I think is going on here is that Jesus is revealing to his disciples, the crowd within earshot, and to us, how those that we might assume aren’t included in God’s plan actually are included. The point of this portion of his sermon is to show how those who we think don’t belong actually belong. I think we’re being taught that those we feel aren’t deserving of blessing are actually blessed anyway. Mind you, not any more than we are blessed, the text doesn’t say that, but *just as* we are blessed when others might not think we deserve it either.

Again, this isn’t to say that we should stop our learning, our proclaiming, or our justice-seeking. But it is to say that God’s love for us isn’t dependant on these things. God’s presence among us isn’t evoked by any of that. God’s blessing isn’t something that we can choose for ourselves or earn or ever deserve. It might not even seem relatable to us.

But we get it anyway.

We are blessed by God’s choice out of the richness of God’s character. We belong because of God’s unending welcome that includes us all in community and fellowship. We are saved by God’s care and compassion that covers each and every one of us, not because we have a certain level of education or understanding, not because we have accomplished, done, and said all the right things, not because we force ourselves into some box and mold that really isn’t us, but because God is God: full of grace, mercy, and love.

Love for you. Love for me. Love for all people wherever or however they may find themselves.

So again, I’m not saying that we should stop doing what we’re doing or start doing what we’re not. I’m not saying that we aren’t good people and we need to be better. I’m not even saying that this He-Man movie will be the greatest release to ever be released, because it probably won’t be.

But what I'm saying is that we needn't judge others or ourselves based on who we are or our merit. We needn't be disappointed in ourselves or others for what we've done or left undone. We needn't ever be worried about or question our position in God's family and love.

Because, my friends, we are blessed.
When we are strong or when we are weak.
When we are knowledgeable or when we are ignorant.
When we are in plenty or when we are in want.
When we are in control or when we've totally lost it.
When we are all that we are and when we aren't quite.
When we totally get it, and when we can't at all relate.
When we are this or that and anything in between.
We are blessed.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY: Light Dawns on a Weary World (#726)

CREED (ELW p. 104)

Together with all of God's blessed, 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

Blessed into caring community and humble service, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. Each petition will end with, "by your blessed mercy, O God," and you all may respond with **hear our prayer**. By your blessed mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, we pray for all your people, whom you bless and save. May we all learn to rely on your grace, that our strength be found in you. By your blessed mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, we pray for the poor in spirit, for your kingdom will be revealed in them. Bless us as your church, that our ministry be effective and fruitful. We pray also for our neighbouring faith

communities; those who use this building for worship, work, and play; our partners Anglican Church in Canada and Moravian Church in Canada; and our bishops, rostered leaders, congregations, and ministries of the ELCIC. In particular we pray for St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Maple Ridge and their pastor Erik Reedman-Parker to start his call there today; and for Matsqui Lutheran Church in Matsqui and all the pastors and leaders that serve them. By your blessed mercy, O God, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, we pray for the meek who mourn this earth and how we've cared for it, that they be comforted by the inheritance of your grace. We repent from our selfishness and ask that you strengthen our stewardship, that it be pleasing to you. By your blessed mercy, O God, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, we pray for those who hunger and thirst for righteousness in their regions, countries, and the whole world, that they might receive mercy and justice. Instill in all world leaders and politicians a wisdom in their leadership, and may we all work together toward peace. We pray 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 blessed mercy, O God, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, we pray for all those among us who are sick, who mourn, or who feel lonely, that their hearts remain purified and blessed with your love. Be apparent to all of us and lead us into your wholeness. Especially we pray for Janet; Bryan and Chona; Ron, Tess, and Mineko; Greg; Bev and family; John and Betty; Sukhwant; Pastor Kristen; Laura; Kandie; Will; Chris; Larry; Walter; Piet; Kelly; Betty; Ngan Kew (nan CUE); Matt; Patty; and all those we name aloud or quietly in our hearts at this time...
By your blessed mercy, O God, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, we pray for those who have been persecuted in your name, that their hope in your promises never falter but continue to be strengthened in their journey. Remind us of these stories of faith, that we be inspired by them and the connection we share in our own lives and community. By your blessed mercy, O God, **hear our prayer.**

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your love and blessing shown to us through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

PEACE (p. 106)

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 places give thanks and praise to you, O God, through our Saviour Jesus Christ, who shows us the way of your truth and blessing, includes us in your plan of salvation, and joins us together 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 (p. 207)

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Holy are you, O God, for all that you have done and continue to do in welcoming us, redeeming us, and saving us from our sin and shame. For you bring us up out of our hurts and struggles and you bless us with the true nature of your gracious love, where we are forgiven and brought into communion with you and all your saints. And in the fullness of time you send to us your Son Jesus, to further display and solidify our nature as your people in your family and your kingdom.

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 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."

It is in this bread and cup that we are reminded of how we are connected, provided for, and blessed by God's redeeming grace, even as we ponder the mystery of our faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

So it is to you, O God, that all honour and glory belong, for you have given us all that we need for life and reformed us to be all that we are in your name. As you have blessed our time together thus far, may you also bless this food, feed our hearts, and nourish our souls with your love, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER (p. 112)

Gathered into blessing and community by the Holy 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 blessing for us all.
Thanks be to God.

COMMUNION

COMMUNION HYMNS: Lamb of God (p. 208)
Touch That Soothes and Heals (ACS #939)
Look Who Gathers at Christ's Table (ACS #977)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Holy God, we give you thanks for again feeding us and blessing us with your love. Strengthen us with your truth, that as we go from here, we might together do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with you, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

SENDING

BLESSING

May the righteousness of God shine brightly on your paths of justice and grace,
may the love of God show you kindness in community and faith,
and the blessing of God be upon you and grant you peace and hope, now and always.
Amen.

SENDING HYMN: Build a Longer Table (ACS #1062)

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, be blessed and walk humbly with God.
Thanks be to God.