



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

OF SOUTH BURNABY, BC

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA

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Third Sunday after Epiphany

January 25, 2026

ELW Holy Communion, Setting 10

Jesus begins his public ministry by calling fishers to leave their nets and follow him. In Jesus the kingdom of God has come near. We who have walked in darkness have seen a great light. We see this light most profoundly in the cross—as God suffers with us and all who are oppressed by sickness, sin, or evil. Light dawns for us as we gather around the word, the font, and the holy table. We are then sent to share the good news that others may be “caught” in the net of God’s grace and mercy.

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 this day to worship the Lord, our light and salvation, our stronghold in whom we have no fear. For we enter this house to gaze on the beauty of the Lord and to seek God's face, and we are given shelter and sanctuary and welcome into God's community. And so we rejoice and are glad, for God is present here with us and resides among us, not forsaking us but sending the Spirit to help, to save, and strengthen for service, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen. Thanks be to God.

GATHERING HYMN: Will You Come and Follow Me (#798)

GREETING

The saving grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the redeeming love of God, and the supportive fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

CANTICLE OF PRAISE (p. 204)

PRAYER OF THE DAY

O God, you are our light and our salvation, and your kingdom has come near to us through the life and teachings of Jesus, who calls us, equips us, and empowers us for your service. Give us courage to answer, wisdom to discern, and the love that heals, that we can be faithful witnesses to your grace and mercy, through Jesus our Lord. **Amen.**

WORD

FIRST READING: Isaiah 9:1-4

The northern tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali experienced the gloom of defeat by Assyrian military forces, but they are assured that their condition will be reversed when God makes a light-filled appearance. The joy they will experience will resemble celebrations of great harvests, because God will deliver them from everything that diminishes or oppresses them.

¹ There will be no gloom for those who were in anguish. In the former time [the LORD] brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he will make glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.

² The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—
on them light has shined.

³ You have multiplied exultation;
you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you
as with joy at the harvest,
as people exult when dividing plunder.

⁴ For the yoke of their burden
and the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor,
you have broken as on the day of Midian.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 27:1, 4-9

¹ The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom then shall I fear?

The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

⁴ **One thing I ask of the LORD; one thing I seek;**

that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life; to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to seek God in the temple.

⁵ For in the day of trouble God will give me shelter,

hide me in the hidden places of the sanctuary, and raise me high upon a rock.

⁶ **Even now my head is lifted up above my enemies who surround me.**

Therefore I will offer sacrifice in the sanctuary, sacrifices of rejoicing; I will sing and make music to the LORD.

⁷ Hear my voice, O LORD, when I call;

have mercy on me and answer me.

⁸ **My heart speaks your message— “Seek my face.”**

Your face, O LORD, I will seek.

⁹ Hide not your face from me, turn not away from your servant in anger.

Cast me not away—you have been my helper; forsake me not, O God of my salvation.

SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 1:10-18

A reading from 1 Corinthians.

Paul calls on the Corinthians to end their dissensions and share the unified outlook of the gospel. Discord arises when we forget that we belong not to human leaders or institutions but to Christ. Indeed, the unifying word of the cross of Christ is the center of the gospel and the power of God's salvation.

¹⁰ Now I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you be in agreement and that there be no divisions among you but that you be knit together in the same mind and the same purpose. ¹¹ For it has been made clear to me by Chloe's people that there are quarrels among you, my brothers and sisters. ¹² What I mean is that each of you says, "I belong to Paul," or "I belong to Apollos," or "I belong to Cephas," or "I belong to Christ."

¹³ Has Christ been divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? ¹⁴ I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, ¹⁵ so that no one can say that you were baptized in my name. ¹⁶ I did baptize also the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else. ¹⁷ For Christ did not send me to baptize but to proclaim the gospel—and not with eloquent wisdom, so that the cross of Christ might not be emptied of its power.

¹⁸ For 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.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (p. 205)

GOSPEL: Matthew 4:12-23

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus begins his public ministry shortly after John the Baptist is imprisoned by Herod. He proclaims the nearness of God's reign and calls four fishermen to be his first disciples.

¹² Now when Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee. ¹³ He left Nazareth and made his home in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, ¹⁴ so that what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

¹⁵ “Land of Zebulun, land of Naphtali,
on the road by the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the gentiles—

¹⁶ the people who sat in darkness
have seen a great light,
and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death
light has dawned.”

¹⁷ From that time Jesus began to proclaim, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”

¹⁸ As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea—for they were fishers. ¹⁹ And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of people.” ²⁰ Immediately they left their nets and followed him. ²¹ As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. ²² Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

²³ Jesus went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people.

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

O God, may our minds be illumined by your Spirit, that we might hear you better, see you more, and know you as you will be known through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

So the other day a good friend of mine from back east messaged me with an urgent request. She was flying in that night to see her mom who was just admitted to the hospital, and needed a ride from the airport to Surrey Memorial. Of course, I agreed to pick her up and drive her. Like I said, this was a good friend and I’ve driven that route from the airport to Surrey countless times. The problem? The flight was expected to arrive at 12:50 in the morning, and Toronto was hit with another snowstorm, meaning delays were probably likely.

Still, I agreed to pick her up as I knew I’d be awake anyway. In fact, I think that might have been on my friend’s mind when deciding who to ask for this favour: 1. Who will be up? 2. Who is stupid enough to say yes? Well, I sure fit that bill.

Anyway, like I said, I was happy to drive. I mean this ask was just allowing me to do some of my favourite things. Like driving for longer periods of time, of course, but also hanging out with friends. Especially those that I don’t get to see too often. Oh, and don’t forget I really like staying up late.

The flight of course was delayed as expected, but not by much. I waited just a few minutes and by around 1:30 or so, we were on the road. And again, this is a route that I’ve taken like a million times in the past, so I knew it like the back of my hand, so to speak. But there was one thing on this trip that I didn’t account for. Well, two actually. The first was how thick the fog was, which severely limited visibility. And the second was how almost every road I took was under construction, which made everything look really, really different from what I was used to.

It was so bad that there were a few times that I actually had to slow down to regain my bearings, make sure I'm in the right place and going the right way, and just to be careful that I don't hit or run over anything I shouldn't hit or run over. It was really weird for me. Disorienting. Just a little change in scenery and layout caused so much confusion, discomfort, and I'll admit, a bit of fear.

These familiar roads had become very unfamiliar. This route that I've taken so many times was rendered almost unrecognisable. Even my driving muscle memory seemed to have forgotten how to do what needs to be done, all because of some dug up pavement and moved barriers, very thick fog, and the darkness of a mid-January morning.

This experience for me really shed some light on the whole "people who walked in darkness" thing we see in a couple of our readings for today. In our modern times we don't often know what it's like to walk in darkness because we have so many sources of artificial light, gps built right into our phones, and of course handy every day carry flashlights that I'm sure we always have in our pockets. The modern conveniences make it hard for us to find ourselves in the darkness, unable to see or know where we're going, and just that feeling of being lost.

But maybe these texts aren't talking about literal darkness, although that would have really evoked some first-hand experiences in the people of that time. Maybe they mean a disorientation, an uncertainty of where one is or where one is going, or a sense of being lost, aimless, and perhaps without purpose. Something that we might have felt ourselves, like maybe as recently this past week if you found yourself driving in the fog, even when surrounded by all these modern advances designed to specifically keep that from happening.

I mean, I wonder if that is what the disciples were feeling when they were called by Jesus. The text is pretty clear that they *immediately* dropped their stuff to follow Jesus. Like either Jesus was super convincing, or they were itching for something different, something new, something fresh from the same old, same old that they were constantly engaged in and a part of, day in and day out.

Like maybe, the "darkness" that these first of Jesus' disciples according to Matthew, were walking in was just the rut that is their life. The ordinary walk that they walk every single day. The muscle-memorised motions that are expected of them but no longer fulfilling, purposeful, or giving of any joy. So maybe they needed a change of focus, direction, and source of life. Maybe they needed something new.

My friend and I got to the hospital safely that night, with much thanks to my highly developed driving skill of course, and after dropping her off, I headed home. The fog didn't ease up at all, in fact I think it got worse as the temperature kept dropping and the sky seemed to get darker. And the construction didn't get better either, especially heading down King George over to New West. I kept thinking that I was on the wrong side of the road. I was worried that I lost my way. I actually wondered at one point if I was even on the correct bridge.

But then, just as I crossed over to this side of the river, the fog had completely lifted. It was a very stark contrast from being unable to see like 10 meters in front of me to having a complete unobstructed view of everything, limited only by my aging eyes and worsening prescription, that is. I had this moment of clarity, where suddenly my vision snapped back, my bearings

returned, and I was filled with confidence as to where I was, where I was going, and how I'll get there. Thank Jesus.

Now, I'm not saying that Jesus miraculously pushed the fog away just so I could get home in those wee hours of the morning, but I'm saying that sometimes when our lives seem cloudy, when we're unsure of where we're going, or we feel like we're walking in the dark, sometimes we are granted these moments of clarity, where we suddenly or perhaps gradually start to see things more clearly, with more purpose, and we're told exactly what we are to do.

Maybe this is that "great light" that was seen by those walking in the darkness. Maybe that's what the disciples heard and felt when Jesus called them. Maybe this is how we are made able to see a new way, a new purpose, a new focus in what they're doing.

What does Jesus call these first disciples to do? "Fish for people." Without getting into the problematic language of fishing people who didn't ask to be fished, I think Jesus is actually drawing on their muscle memory of already knowing how to fish, and just shifting that paradigm a little. They're still who they are and will be doing what they do, but their focus will be different. They came to work that morning thinking it'll be the same old same old, but their encounter with Jesus left them changed.

As it is with us. I'm not saying that we have to drop everything to immediately follow Jesus, but I think that light shines in the dark places along our paths, at points in our vocations, and in and around our lives. In our times of limited visibility, uncertain routes, and mental fogginess, I believe that Jesus continues to be with us, calling us, leading us, and shining light onto our paths that we might be able to see our goal, find our purpose, and walk with him.

Just as I unexpectedly found myself disoriented in familiarity doing something that I've done countless times before, I needed that clarity to be reminded of where I was and where I was going. I needed to see that I was on the right path toward home. I needed the light to shine through the fog and darkness to lead me, guide me, and tell me that I'm safe.

This is what Jesus means by the kingdom has come near. Not far off in the future. But now. In our time. In our lives. And its coming near isn't to scare us straight or to pressure us to be something we're not, but it's to help us refocus our minds, reorient our paths, and radiate light in our darkness. It's to shift our paradigms and muscle memories to believe, trust, and have faith. And above all, it's to remind us that through this journey of life, we aren't alone but surrounded by a community of saints, part of a family of support, and belong to a body of believers with Christ as its head.

In this season after the Epiphany, may the light of God always be apparent to us as it leads us, guides us, and reorients our focus and purpose. Thanks be to God. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY: Let Us Ever Walk with Jesus (#802)

CREED (ELW p. 104)

Together with all called by Christ, 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

Welcomed into God's kingdom and called to serve, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. Each petition will end with "by your empowering mercy, O God," and you all may reply with **hear our prayer**. By your empowering mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, you are our light and salvation and stronghold, in you we have nothing to fear. Strengthen us to boldly proclaim your kingdom in the world, that all might hear your call to live in community and service. By your empowering mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, throughout life we seek your face, that we might better recognise and proclaim your works of grace and mercy in the world. We lift up 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 Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church in Langley, their pastor Kristen Steele, and all the other pastors and leaders that support and serve them as Pastor Kristen continues on sick leave; and for St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Vancouver and their pastor Ulrich Hossbach. By your empowering mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, we wish to dwell in your creation all the days of our lives and gaze upon and appreciate your beauty revealed in all that you have made. May our stewardship of this planet be faithful proclamations of your love and providence. By your empowering mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, you are with us in our days of trouble and you show us true strength and peace. May all world leaders and politicians know the power of your love, that they might govern with grace and justice in your name. We pray especially for those that we've sponsored to come to our 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 empowering mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, you hear us when we call and answer us out of your love and healing. Be with those among us who feel sick, who mourn, or who feel lonely, that your love might shine in all our

hearts. Especially we pray for 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 empowering mercy, O God, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, your face is not hidden from us as you continue to help and save us, and you welcome us to live with you and all your saints in your kingdom. Continually remind us of the lives of those we've loved and lost, that we be always inspired in our faith and service. By your empowering mercy, O God, **hear our prayer.**

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your leading and call, revealed 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 calls us into your service and reveals to us your kingdom, that we be joined with the choirs of angels, the hosts of heaven, and the whole church on earth to praise your name with this unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (p. 207)

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

O God, you are holy and mighty and you draw near to us in our times of need. You answer us when we call on your name and you are present throughout our lives. And in the fullness of your love, you send to us your Son, Jesus, to show us the ways of your truth and peace and to welcome us all into your kingdom, where you reside full of saving grace and redeeming mercy.

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

And 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 God residing among us, drawing the kingdom near, and welcoming us all into community, where we together declare this mystery of faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

For it is to you, O God, that all praise is due, for your unending providence and love, for your eternal redemption and salvation, for your everlasting grace and mercy, shown and given to us through 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 together 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 calling us and welcoming us into the kingdom.

Thanks be to God.

COMMUNION

COMMUNION HYMNS: Lamb of God (p. 208)

Lord Jesus, You Shall Be My Song (#808)

Take, Oh, Take As I Am (#814)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

O Lord, we give you thanks for feeding us yet again with your Word and truth, and showering us with your blessings of love and grace. Strengthen our hearts as we go from here, that we might heed your call as your servants and bring honour to you through our ministry and community, through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. **Amen.**

SENDING

BLESSING

The grace of God who calls us bless you and strengthen you,
the love of God who empowers us sustain you and lift you up,
the salvation of God who welcomes us all reveal to you all grace and peace, now and forever.
Amen.

SENDING HYMN: You Have Come Down to the Lakeshore (#817)

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, love and serve our God.
Thanks be to God.

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