



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

OF SOUTH BURNABY, BC

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA

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**First Sunday in Lent
February 22, 2026
ELW Holy Communion, Setting Three**

Today's gospel tells of Jesus' temptation in the desert. His forty-day fast becomes the basis of our Lenten pilgrimage. In the early church Lent was a time of intense preparation for those to be baptized at the Easter Vigil. This catechetical focus on the meaning of faith is at the heart of our Lenten journey to the baptismal waters of Easter. Hungry for God's mercy, we receive the bread of life to nourish us for the days ahead.

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 Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh (Squamish) speaking peoples.

GATHERING

CALL TO WORSHIP and INVITATION TO LENT

We gather for worship this day with the whole church, entering into a time of reflection and renewal, and remembrance of Jesus' passover from death to life. We embark into this season by acknowledging our need for repentance and for God's mercy. We start this season by recognizing the joy we are given in communion with God, in loving one another, and in living in harmony with all of creation. We begin this season by admitting to and repenting from our sinful rebellion that separates us from God, our neighbours, and creation, that tears us away from the life that truly is life .

So as disciples of Christ, we answer the call to a discipline that contends against evil and resists whatever leads us away from love of God and for neighbor. We are invited into this season of Lent— to self-examine and repent, to pray and fast, to be generously sacrificial and do works of love—strengthened by the gifts of word and sacrament and community. So we together journey through these forty days to the great Three Days of Jesus' death and glorious resurrection. **Amen. Thanks be to God.**

GATHERING SONG: O Lord, throughout These Forty Days (#319)

GREETING

The emboldening grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the strengthening love of God, and the empowering fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

KYRIE (ELW p. 203)

PRAYER OF THE DAY

O God of heaven and earth, as we enter into these forty days of discipline, reflection, and repentance, we ask that you strengthen and shape us by your Spirit, that we might, by your grace, display the image of Christ and be ready to confront the power of death with the promise of eternal life, through Jesus our Saviour and brother. **Amen.**

WORD

FIRST READING: Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7

A reading from Genesis.

Human beings were formed with great care, to be in relationship with the creator, creation, and one another. The serpent's promise to the first couple that their eyes would be opened led, ironically, to the discovery only that they were naked.

¹⁵ The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. ¹⁶ And the LORD God commanded the man, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden, ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die."

^{3:1} Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God say, 'You shall not eat from any tree in the garden?'" ² The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, ³ but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.'" ⁴ But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not die, ⁵ for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." ⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was a delight to the

eyes and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. ⁷ Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked, and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 32

¹ Happy are they whose transgressions are forgiven,
and whose sin is put away!

² **Happy are they to whom the LORD imputes no guilt,
and in whose spirit there is no guile!**

³ While I held my tongue, my bones withered away,
because of my groaning all day long.

⁴ **For your hand was heavy upon me day and night;
my moisture was dried up as in the heat of summer.**

⁵ Then I acknowledged my sin to you, and did not conceal my guilt.

I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD." Then you forgave me the guilt of my sin.

⁶ **Therefore all the faithful will make their prayers to you in time of trouble;
when the great waters overflow, they shall not reach them.**

⁷ You are my hiding-place; you preserve me from trouble;
you surround me with shouts of deliverance.

⁸ **"I will instruct you and teach you in the way that you should go;
I will guide you with my eye.**

⁹ Do not be like horse or mule, which have no understanding;
who must be fitted with bit and bridle, or else they will not stay near you."

¹⁰ **Great are the tribulations of the wicked;
but mercy embraces those who trust in the LORD.**

¹¹ Be glad, you righteous, and rejoice in the LORD;
shout for joy, all who are true of heart.

SECOND READING: Romans 5:12-19

A reading from Romans.

Through Adam's disobedience, humanity came under bondage to sin and death, from which we cannot free ourselves. In Christ's obedient death, God graciously showers on us the free gift of liberation and life.

¹² Just as sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned ¹³ for sin was indeed in the world before the law, but sin is not reckoned when there is no law. ¹⁴ Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who did not sin in the likeness of Adam, who is a pattern of the one who was to come.

¹⁵ But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died through the one man's trespass, much more surely have the grace of God and the gift in the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abounded for the many. ¹⁶ And the gift is not like the effect of the one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the gift following many trespasses brings justification. ¹⁷ If, because of the one man's trespass, death reigned through that one, much more surely will those who receive the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

¹⁸ Therefore just as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all, so one man's act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all. ¹⁹ For just as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so through the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (ELW p. 142)

GOSPEL: Matthew 4:1-11

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus experiences anew the temptations that Israel faced in the wilderness. As the Son of God, he endures the testing of the evil one.

¹ Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tested by the devil. ² He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterward he was famished. ³ The tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." ⁴ But he answered, "It is written,

'One does not live by bread alone,
but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.' "

⁵ Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, ⁶ saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.' "

⁷ Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.' "

⁸ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, ⁹ and he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! for it is written,

'Worship the Lord your God,
and serve only him.' "

¹¹ Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

O God, lead us with your Spirit, feed us with your Word, and empower us with your grace, through Jesus our Lord. **Amen.**

I'm not sure if I've ever told you this before, but my dad is one of the strongest humans I have ever personally known. I mean, he's not going to be winning any World's Strongest Man competitions any time soon, mostly because he's been dead for almost 9 years, but when he was alive, he would time and again surprise me with just how physically strong he was. I have experience after experience and story after story and example after example to prove this to you, but I don't have that kind of time so you'll just have to take my word for it. Let's just say that I've often wondered if my dad had Mongolian blood in him or something, because to me, he seemed like a mythical warrior for how strong he was.

But even after all that, after everything I've witnessed and experienced, after being convinced of how truly and insanely strong he is, I had never once in my life, in any seriousness, used the line, "my dad is tougher than your dad." Not to my friends, not to the kids that I wouldn't really consider my friends, not even to my worst enemy, but mostly because he had the same dad as me.

Seriously though, even when claiming that "my dad is tougher than your dad" would have been very likely true regardless of who I would say it to (with the possible exception of my own kids of course), I never thought it would work to fend any one off, strike any fear in any hearts, or get me out of any dillies of any pickles whatsoever. Because the fact of the matter is, if anyone ever saw my dad after I told them that they should be afraid of him, they would have probably just busted out laughing. I mean, he wasn't exactly strong looking. He was like this unassuming, just over 5-foot Asian guy with glasses and a pseudo comb-over, who wore the same polo shirt for like 17 or 18 years straight, and didn't have any real definite shape to his body. I wasn't lying about him being super strong though, it's just that no one would ever believe it by looking at him, so actually using that line for my benefit would almost seem comical.

So I knew I couldn't rely on my dad to intimidate the other kids. I knew he didn't have the image of a tough dad who would protect me from the schoolyard bullies. I knew my dad could never be *weaponized* to up my own street cred, to feed my own ego, to carter to my own... selfish benefit. I was often tempted to, but I never did because I knew it wouldn't work.

Maybe you know what I mean. Not that your dad was as tough as mine, as he probably wasn't, but wanting to have that back up when the going gets tough, that protection whenever things got scary, that bail-out whenever we find ourselves in a little hot water.

And I wonder if this is what, at its very core, Jesus was tempted with today. I know, there has been like a bajillion different interpretations and commentaries that break down each of these temptations of Jesus and how we can follow Jesus' example of leaning on scripture to resist them, and not one of them ever talks about how tough our dads are. Not that I've seen, at least. No, often they'd say that these temptations are around power, identity, and even loyalty to mission and call.

But be that as it may, I wonder if there is more to it than that. We know these temptations really well because we get them in some shape or form every 1st Sunday in Lent, but I wonder if peeling back the layers might give us different insights on what we might be facing, where we might need to reflect on, how we might be tempted in our own lives.

I mean, I can only speak for myself, but I've never been tempted to turn a rock into bread. But I have prayed for security, wealth, and maybe even the winning lottery numbers. I would think that maybe God would give it to me because, I don't know, I deserve it?

I never wanted to jump off a building to see if angels will catch me from falling. But I have hoped that God would send guardian angels to get me out of whatever mess that I might have put myself in, which may or may not have happened more than once in the past. I mean, God says that we're watched over and protected, right? So shouldn't I be?

And I've never once felt the need to sell my soul to the devil to gain ultimate power and authority over the world. But I have tried to *weaponize* my education, training, and knowledge of scripture to not just prove myself right, but to also prove others wrong and hopefully put them in their place. I have wanted to throw my theological weight around and earn that respect. I've attempted to idolize my accomplishments and accolades for my own personal power gain.

And I think that is where the true temptations lie.

Not in the obvious things like gluttony, wrath, and envy, but in more subtle ways that we might feel justified in. Like, we sometimes think that God could be our personal body guard. We sometimes confuse our selfishness with faithful living. We sometimes are tempted to be God in God's place. So we might name drop a couple of verses here and there and say that we know God's ways and teaching better than our opponent. We might claim God's anointing and empowering and say that God hates the same people we hate. We might shape and form and recreate God to look more like us, in hopes that we'd gain more clout, more respect, more power.

And the biggest problem with all that is that we all know someone *else* who fits this bill to a tee. And we might even be thankful that we're not like them because we have God on our side, and we can't be wrong, can we?

Honestly? We can, and we probably are a lot more than we know or recognise in ourselves.

This season of Lent that we've just entered into encourages us to look in ourselves and see where *we* are falling for this, where *we* are believing the lies that we're better than we are and deserve more than we have, where *we* are tempted to be God in God's place. This season gives us space for that reflection and repentance. And Lent calls us, to loosely quote the prophet Joel that we get on Ash Wednesday, to return to the Lord our God, who is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love.

And this return to God isn't so God can give us power for our own gain, but to empower us to stand up for the marginalized, the outcast, and the forgotten. We don't reflect on where we face and fall for temptations so we can use our good deeds and discipline to shame others, but so we can recognise how big and wide God's grace and mercy for us and all people is. We don't repent from sin so God can smite those we want smote for not doing the same, but to humble us to see us how others are just as sinful as we are, but also just as forgiven and just as saved.

See the temptations that we face aren't around doing bad things, breaking rules and laws, or whether or not we should eat that last piece of cake, but they are much more subtle than that. They are more around our self-importance, the notion that our knowledge and understanding of good and evil supersedes all, and our thinking that we know how God should act instead of reflecting on how God acts and weaponizing God for our own advantage, gain, and power.

So I again invite us all into this season of Lent, where we aren't shamed by our sin, but forgiven in them. Where we aren't compared to others, but humbled to reflect on where we are and what we've been given. Where we aren't made to feel bad for the things we've done or left undone, but empowered to be God's people in the world, not as perfect or insanely strong humans but as reflections of grace, mercy, and steadfast love.

And then when this season culminates in Holy Week and the death and glorious resurrection of Jesus, we can be more prepared to see how God is strong not for the benefit of our egos, but for our salvation. How God welcomes us not because we have earned it, but because God is gracious and kind. How God empowers us not to be better than others so we can shame them and uplift ourselves, but to recognise, accept, and be thankful that it is God in God's place and God chooses to bring us along for the ride anyway.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY: I Want Jesus to Walk with Me (#325)

CREED (p. 105)

Together with all those embarking on these forty days in the wilderness, 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 into the world to live by the Spirit, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. Each petition will end with, "by your guiding mercy, O God," and you all may respond with **hear our prayer**. By your guiding mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, you have forgiven us all of our transgressions and you remind us of who we are as your children in the world. Keep our eyes open to see you in the world, that we might faithfully hear your call and follow you throughout the days of our lives. By your guiding mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, you put away our sin and impute no guilt on us, leading us into worship and service. May all that we do bring glory to your name, that our lives be faithful reflections of your love and grace. We remember in prayer our neighbouring faith communities; those that 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 Christ the King Lutheran Church in Surrey and their pastor

Nicolas Alexandre; and for all our Lutheran clergy who are serving our full communion partners and vice-versa. By your guiding mercy, O God, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, we confess that we have not been faithful in our care of this planet that you have entrusted to us, and you continually forgive us the guilt of our sin. May we move into the future with newfound responsibility and stewardship for all of creation, that our connection to you through nature be strengthened. By your guiding mercy, O God, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, you are our hiding place and you preserve us from trouble and deliver us from the evils of this broken world. Be with all politicians and people of influence, that their leading of nations and communities be moved by your love and grace. We especially pray for the continued support of those that we've sponsored to come to our 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. By your guiding mercy, O God, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, when we face the tribulations of life, you embrace us with your mercy and lead us into peace. Be with those among us who are sick, who mourn, or who feel lonely, that your presence in our community and world may never be forgotten or overlooked. We pray especially 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; Saraswathi (Sara SWA-tee); and all those we name aloud or quietly in our hearts at this time...
By your guiding mercy, O God, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, your righteousness makes us glad and we rejoice in your eternal truth, which connects us with you and all the saints living in your kingdom and in our hearts. May the inspiration of the lives of those we've loved and lost remain alive in our community, that we be continually strengthened in faith and service to you and neighbour. By your guiding mercy, O God, **hear our prayer.**

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your leading and guiding throughout life and community, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

PEACE (p. 143)

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

MEAL

DIALOGUE (p. 144)

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 Saviour Jesus Christ; who by your

power overcame death and the grave, opening for us the way of everlasting life with you and all the saints, joining us with the choirs of angels, the hosts of heaven, and the church on earth in praising your name with this unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (p. 144)

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, for your everlasting mercy and faithfulness. We praise you for all that you have done in creation, for leading and guiding us into peace and saving us from the guilt and shame of our sin. And ultimately sending to us your Son Jesus to reveal to all the boundless grace found in your love.

For on the night that he was betrayed, your Son Jesus sat with his friends for a meal, where he took the bread, thanked you for it, and 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 common cup that they shared, 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 remember Jesus' Passover from death to life, even as we proclaim the mystery of our faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

Pour your Spirit on this meal and into our hearts, that we be able to recognise your presence among us, revealed in our community and fellowship. And so with all people joined together by your love, we praise you, O God, for feeding us with your salvific truth and grace, through Jesus Christ our Saviour, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER (p. 145)

Led into trusting God and 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 joining us together in love and grace.

Thanks be to God.

COMMUNION

COMMUNION HYMNS: Lamb of God (p. 146)

Here is Bread (#483)

Lord Jesus, Think on Me (#599)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Compassionate God, you have fed and nourished us with the heavenly food of your truth and you lead us into righteousness by your grace. Sustain us as we begin this Lenten pilgrimage, that we might grow in our faith and hunger for justice, through Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord. **Amen.**

SENDING

BLESSING

May the grace and mercy of God bless you and keep you,
the steadfast love of Christ surround you and protect you,
and the leading of the Spirit guide you into the life that truly is life, these 40 days and always.
Amen.

SENDING SONG: Guide Me Ever, Great Redeemer (#618)

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, Listen to the Spirit.

Thanks be to God.