



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

OF SOUTH BURNABY, BC

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA

7283 Nelson Avenue, Burnaby, BC V5J 4C2

Phone: 604-433-1515

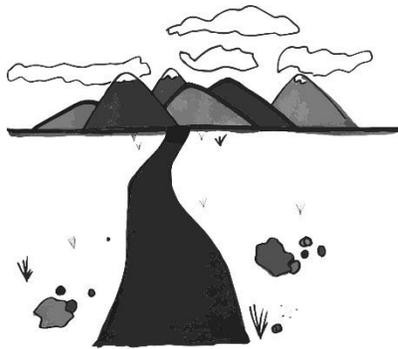
Website: www.graceburnaby.com

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)



Second Sunday in Lent

March 1, 2026

ELW Holy Communion, Setting Three

During Lent we journey with all those around the world who will be baptized at the Easter Vigil. In today's gospel Jesus tells Nicodemus that he must be born of water and Spirit. At the font we are given a new birth as children of God. As God made a covenant with Abraham, in baptism God promises to raise us up with Christ to new life. From worship we are sent forth to proclaim God's love for all the world.

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

GATHERING

CALL TO WORSHIP

We gather together in worship this day, with our eyes lifted to the hills in knowing and appreciating all that the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth, does, has done, and will do in boundless love and grace. Our feet are not moved as God watches over us and acts as our rod and staff that carry us even when we don't see or recognise or even understand. So we give thanks and praise for the new life that we've been given, full of God's mercy and peace, and empowering us with confidence, humility, and faith, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Thanks be to God.

GATHERING SONG: God Loved the World (#323)

GREETING

The life-giving grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the strengthening love of God, and the nurturing communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

KYRIE (ELW p. 203)

PRAYER OF THE DAY

O God, we look to you as our help and protector in times of need, the Word and wisdom in times of trial, and our rock and salvation in times of death. Strengthen us to trust in your power to make all things new, that we might confidently and faithfully serve you and neighbour to the glory of your name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

WORD

FIRST READING: Genesis 12:1-4a

A reading from Genesis.

God's call of Abram and Sarai has a clear purpose—that through them all the families of the earth would gain a blessing. As they set out on their journey, they are accompanied by promises of land, nation, and a great reputation.

¹The LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. ²I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

^{4a} So Abram went, as the LORD had told him, and Lot went with him.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 121

¹ I lift up my eyes to the hills;
from where is my help to come?

² **My help comes from the LORD,
the maker of heaven and earth.**

³ The LORD will not let your foot be moved
nor will the one who watches over you fall asleep.

⁴ **Behold, the keeper of Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep;**

- ⁵ the LORD watches over you;
the LORD is your shade at your right hand;
⁶ **the sun will not strike you by day,
nor the moon by night.**
⁷ The LORD will preserve you from all evil
and will keep your life.
⁸ **The LORD will watch over your going out and your coming in,
from this time forth forevermore.**

SECOND READING: Romans 4:1-5, 13-17

A reading from Romans.

In the person and example of Abraham we discover that a right relationship with God does not involve earning a reward from God but entails trusting God's promises. Abraham is the forebear and model for both Jews and Gentiles, because we too trust that ours is a God who gives life to the dead.

¹ What then are we to say was gained by Abraham, our ancestor according to the flesh? ² For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. ³ For what does the scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness." ⁴ Now to one who works, wages are not reckoned as a gift but as something due. ⁵ But to one who does not work but trusts him who justifies the ungodly, such faith is reckoned as righteousness.

¹³ For the promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. ¹⁴ For if it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. ¹⁵ For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law, neither is there transgression.

¹⁶ For this reason the promise depends on faith, in order that it may rest on grace, so that it may be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (who is the father of all of us, ¹⁷ as it is written, "I have made you the father of many nations"), in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (ELW p. 142)

GOSPEL: John 3:1-17

The holy gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

A curious Pharisee visits Jesus by night to learn from the teacher his friends reject. Jesus speaks to him about life in the Spirit and the kingdom of God.

¹ Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. ² He came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with that person." ³ Jesus answered him, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above."

⁴ Nicodemus said to him, "How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a

second time into the mother's womb and be born?"⁵ Jesus answered, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit.⁶ What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit.⁷ Do not be astonished that I said to you, 'You must be born from above.'⁸ The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."⁹ Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?"¹⁰ Jesus answered him, "Are you the teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?

¹¹ "Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen, yet you do not receive our testimony.¹² If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things?¹³ No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man.¹⁴ And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up,¹⁵ that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

¹⁶ "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

¹⁷ "Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world but in order that the world might be saved through him."

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

God of signs and wonders, we come to you seeking your Word, your wisdom, your very presence among us, that we might be filled with your Spirit and be shown your ways of righteousness and grace, through Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord. Amen.

Do you have someone in your life that you just can't stand? Hopefully it's not me, but I'm talking about those that just get under your skin? The people that can only be classified as thorns in your sides? The ones where "never again" would be just too soon?

Maybe it's that acquaintance you just can't get away from, or a person at work who just won't quit, or maybe even a family member who is such an annoyance that you can't even take the sound of their breath. Or maybe they're not in your personal circle at all, but their nonsense still affects you. Like maybe it's that irritating and over-the-top influencer whose exploits keep popping up on your feed. Or that celebrity whose no-talent self doesn't really deserve all their fame and wealth. Or that politician whose policies just make absolutely no sense whatsoever and it drives you bananas. Or maybe it's all 3 of those combined... I shudder at the thought.

Whoever it might be, just the sound of their name might be like fingernails on a chalkboard. The sight of their face might make you squirm with a full-body eye roll. The very notion of them being in the same room as you might cause you to break into a cold sweat as you perform the necessary mental gymnastics in finding how all of this is their fault.

I mean, they caused the situations of the past has led us to think this way about them. It was the interactions with them that have happened before that has shaped our opinions. All the major irritations and annoyances all stem from who they are, how they are, and seem to be beckoning us to not like them at all.

And while you might not have people like this to this degree in your life, I think that is more the exception than the rule. I think at some point in our lives we've all encountered personalities

that are really hard to be nice around. We've all met people whose demeanor have led us to wonder how much better life would have been if we've never met them at all. There are just some people we know or know of who make it darn near impossible to be Christian around them. Because to us, they can do no right. No matter what it is, we will just interpret it as wrong. To us, they are unredeemable, incorrigible, and just... condemned to this fate of being on our "no thank you" list.

And that's a problem.

Because when someone reaches that point in our minds, when we don't have anything good to say about them, when we can't see how on earth they ever could be loved, then we might feel that we are warranted to be angry at them, legitimized in our distaste of them, justified to even hate them.

Kind of like how the Pharisees did with Jesus.

I know, sometimes it's really hard for us to imagine that they could see him that way, as Jesus is so easy for us to love, what with the whole salvation thing. But if we put ourselves in their shoes, like if we were at the top of our game, admired from all fronts, and could do no wrong in the eyes of the public, and then some backwater hick comes and turns that all around, gets the people to unlearn all that we've taught them, and slowly takes away all of our hard-earned power and respect? Wouldn't we be a bit more than irritated?

So it's a no wonder that the Pharisee always seemed to be at odds with Jesus. Like they could never see eye-to-eye, were never on the same page, and can never even have a cordial conversation without some contradicting contradictions thrown in there. Their feelings toward him wouldn't let that happen.

All that tracks with the story we get today out of John, doesn't it? The conversation seems to start innocently enough, with Nicodemus offering pleasantries to Jesus. But then in typical Jesus fashion in the eyes of someone who might not exactly be enamoured with him, almost without waiting for Nicodemus to even ask a question, Jesus goes on this theological tirade about being born again from above in order to see the kingdom, and how that's the obvious truth that anyone, especially one as educated as a Pharisee, should see.

Well, that escalated quickly.

But imagine it from Nicodemus' perspective. Like, he's already a bit sensitive to Jesus' counter-cultural teaching, a little raw from being burned by his own followers and students comparing his traditional teaching to this new-fangled stuff, somewhat on edge enough to see Jesus at night because perhaps fraternizing with the enemy so to speak wouldn't be a good look for any Pharisee, and then Jesus lambasts him with more nonsense. Tries to put him in his place with this never-before-heard theology. Calls him and his very prestigious and expensive education out as inadequate. We would probably be mad too. We'd probably be throwing shade Jesus' way. We'd probably want him to disappear out of our lives as well.

But then the tone changes, almost drastically. I wonder if Jesus notices the rising tension, because he quickly begins to talk about love, grace, and in one of my favourite verses of the

bible John 3:17 that comes right after a much more favoured verse in the bible of John 3:16, Jesus reveals how he wasn't sent here to condemn, but to save.

It's almost as though Jesus is de-escalating the situation by saying, "It's alright, dude, I'm not mad at you."

But the words fell on deaf ears, then and now. I mean they were correct and all, and the intention was in the right place, but it wasn't enough for the eyes that already had it out for him. Jesus didn't do anything wrong but avoid conflict that he didn't even start, but in their preconceived hate for him they interpreted his actions as hostile, malicious, and punishable by death. Jesus acted out of grace, peace, and love, but they still killed him anyway.

See Jesus had every right to put them in their place, but he welcomed them instead. He had every right to be angry and hate back, but he forgave and loved. He had every right to condemn but instead he saved. Saved them. Saved us. Saved all from that self-righteousness, from that religious indignation, from that sinful entitlement that has us thinking that it is all and only about us.

It's that thinking that narrows our minds, tunnels our vision, and makes us gloss over that very important part of that widely favourite verse I just mentioned, that God so loved the world. The. World.

It's not God so loved me and people like me. It's not God loved only those who voted a certain way. It's not God loves those who love God first. But it's the world. And it's the world that Jesus saves.

So let's not forget who we're called to be and to whom we're called to serve. Let's not forget the non-violent and gracious attitudes of Christ. Let's not forget that God sent the Son to save and not to condemn. So maybe possibly hopefully we will lose the need to condemn to the outside margins those who we deem worthy to be hated on, to condemn ourselves to stew in our own anger toward those who don't agree with us or who don't look like us, to condemn Jesus to death for shining a light into our hearts and exposing our sin. Again, Jesus doesn't do this to condemn us, mind you, but to reveal to us just how saved we are even when we were seeped in our wickedness.

Friends, in this season of Lent we are called to reflection and repentance. Not so we can escape condemnation and save ourselves, but because we have already been lifted out of condemnation and have been saved by the love and grace of Christ. Not so we can wallow in guilt and shame, but so we see how forgiven we are. Not so we can hate ourselves almost as much as we hate others, but so we can feel just how big and how wide of God's love for us is. And not just for us, but for the world. Not just for those like us, but for those who see and interpret things completely different from us. Not just for those that we love and think we deserve it, but for all those that God loves and declares worthy of salvation.

So in this season of Lent, may we always be reminded of and recognise God's expansive and steadfast love for us and all people, that brings us together as a diverse community that might disagree, have different opinions, and maybe even conflict in some ways, but is never condemned but always saved through the life and teachings of Jesus Christ our Lord. Thanks be to God. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY: Tree of Life and Awesome Mystery (#334)

CREED (p. 105)

With all those brought into life, 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 new life with God and each other, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. Each petition will end with "by your life-saving mercy, O God," and you all may respond with **hear our prayer**. By your life-saving mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, we lift our eyes to the hills and are reassured that you are with us. Fill us with hope in your promises and confidence in your truth, that our faith be strengthened and our hearts humbled as we live in community with each other and in service to you. By your life-saving mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, we know and believe that you are our help in times of need, and we are comforted and brought into peace. May this peace be reflected in our ministry and service to others, that all might find the joy in your name. 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 Our Redeemer Lutheran Church in Penticton and for Trinity Anglican and Lutheran Church in Port Alberni and all the pastors and leaders that serve them. By your life-saving mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, you have made heaven and earth, and you continue to watch over and provide for us throughout all of creation. Help us in our stewardship of this planet, that our care for it be reflective of your care for us. By your life-saving mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, you keep us and watch over us and preserve us from the evils of the world. May all world leaders, politicians, and people of influence learn to work together to bring out true peace for the benefit of all. 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 life-saving mercy, O God, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, you keep our lives and lead us into wholeness with you and each other in community. Be with all among us who are sick, who mourn, or who feel lonely, that your love might shine in and through us all. 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; Sarasawathi (SAR-ah-sa-WAH-tee); and all those we name aloud or quietly in our hearts at this time...By your life-saving mercy, O God, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, you watch over us and keep us from this time forth and for eternity with you and all the saints. May we always remember our connection with them and with you, that we be continually inspired to live our lives in faith and full of your grace. By your life-saving mercy, O God, **hear our prayer.**

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your wisdom and ways of righteousness, taught to us by 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 shows us the ways of your truth and righteousness, recreating us as your people that we might join with the choirs of angels, the hosts of heaven, and the church on earth in praising your name and join their unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (p. 144)

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Yes Lord, you are holy, mighty, and merciful, and you bring us into your kingdom to live as your people: redeemed, restored, and reborn. And through the life and teachings of your Son Jesus we see the ways of your righteousness: full of grace, love, and hope, that we might live lives worthy of your children, proclaiming this good news to all the world: the good news of your unending mercy and forgiveness.

For on the night that he was betrayed, your Son Jesus was with his friends for a meal, where he took the bread, gave thanks, and 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 that they all 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 see our connection to you and each other, filling us with your grace even as we proclaim this mystery of faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

So it is to you, O God, that all honour and glory belong, for you have brought us up out of the depths of our guilt and shame and feed us with this blessed food, that fills us with your Spirit, nourishes us with your Word and truth, and brings us together as a community of your people through Jesus Christ our Saviour and Lord, living and reigning with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER (p. 145)

Brought into new life 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 that God is good to us all.

Thanks be to God.

COMMUNION

COMMUNION HYMNS: Lamb of God (p. 146)

Bread of Life from Heaven (#474)

We Come to the Hungry Feast (#479)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Holy God, we give you thanks for feeding and nourishing us with the bread and cup of life, that fills us with your truth and grace that we might navigate this world with faith in community. Continue to strengthen and empower us to be your people, that our lives might be to all a testament of your unending love and mercy, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

SENDING**BLESSING**

May God bless you and keep you,
Christ encompass you with love and grace,
and the Spirit watch over your coming and going and empower you with new life,
this time forth and forevermore.

Amen.

SENDING SONG: Blessed Assurance (#638)

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, reborn and renewed and reformed.

Thanks be to God.