



**GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH**

**OF SOUTH BURNABY, BC**

**EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA**

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## **Fifth Sunday in Lent**

**March 22, 2026**

### **ELW Holy Communion, Setting Three**

In today's gospel Jesus reveals his power over death by raising Lazarus from the dead. The prophet Ezekiel prophesies God breathing new life into dry bones. To those in exile or living in the shadows of death, these stories proclaim God's promise of resurrection. In baptism we die with Christ that we might also be raised with him to new life. At the Easter Vigil we will welcome the newly baptized as we remember God's unfailing promise in our baptism.

*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 hən̓q̓əmi̓nəm̓ (Musqueam) and Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) speaking peoples.

## GATHERING

### CALL TO WORSHIP

We gather together to worship the Lord our God, who hears our cries and is attentive to our supplications. For our sin is not held against us, but is forgiven by a grace that unbinds us, frees us, and grants to us a hope and peace. And so we wait for the Lord, who redeems us with a steadfast love, and invites us all to the life that truly is life, through Jesus Christ the Messiah, our Saviour. **Amen. Thanks be to God.**

**GATHERING SONG:** Here on Jesus Christ I Will Stand (ACS #1024)

### GREETING

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

**KYRIE** (p. 138)

### PRAYER OF THE DAY

You, O God, are the resurrection and the life, and we worship you this day. Remind us as our role as bearers of your good news in the world, that we might with confidence proclaim your forgiveness, your welcome, and your love for all people, through Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

## WORD

### FIRST READING: Ezekiel 37:1-14

A reading from Ezekiel.

*Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones is a promise that Israel as a nation, though dead in exile, will live again in their land through God's life-giving spirit. Three times Israel is assured that through this vision they will know that "I am the LORD."*

<sup>1</sup>The hand of the LORD came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. <sup>2</sup>He led me all around them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. <sup>3</sup>He said to me, "Mortal, can these bones live?" I answered, "O Lord GOD, you know." <sup>4</sup>Then he said to me, "Prophecy to these bones and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. <sup>5</sup>Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. <sup>6</sup>I will lay sinews on you and will cause flesh to come upon you and cover you with skin and put breath in you, and you shall live, and you shall know that I am the LORD."

<sup>7</sup>So I prophesied as I had been commanded, and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. <sup>8</sup>I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them, but there was no breath in them. <sup>9</sup>Then he said to me, "Prophecy to the breath, prophecy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live." <sup>10</sup>I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.

<sup>11</sup>Then he said to me, "Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely.' <sup>12</sup>Therefore prophecy and say to them: Thus says the Lord GOD: I am going to open your graves and bring you up from your graves, O my people, and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. <sup>13</sup>And you shall know that I am the LORD when I open your graves and bring you up from your graves, O my people. <sup>14</sup>I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken and will act, says the LORD."

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**PSALM: Psalm 130**

<sup>1</sup> Out of the depths

I cry to you, O LORD;

<sup>2</sup> **O LORD, hear my voice!**

**Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplication.**

<sup>3</sup> If you were to keep watch over sins,

O LORD, who could stand?

<sup>4</sup> **Yet with you is forgiveness,**

**in order that you may be feared.**

<sup>5</sup> I wait for you, O LORD; my soul waits;

in your word is my hope.

<sup>6</sup> **My soul waits for the Lord more than those who keep watch for the morning,**

**more than those who keep watch for the morning.**

<sup>7</sup> O Israel, wait for the LORD, for with the LORD there is steadfast love;

with the LORD there is plenteous redemption.

<sup>8</sup> **For the LORD shall redeem Israel**

**from all their sins.**

**SECOND READING: Romans 8:6-11**

A reading from Romans.

*For Paul, Christian spirituality entails living in the reality of the Holy Spirit. The driving force behind our actions and values is not our sinful desire for self-satisfaction but the very Spirit by which God raised Jesus from the dead and will also raise us from the dead.*

<sup>6</sup> To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. <sup>7</sup> For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law—indeed, it cannot, <sup>8</sup> and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

<sup>9</sup> But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. <sup>10</sup> But if Christ is in you, then the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. <sup>11</sup> If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (p. 142)**

**GOSPEL: John 11:1-45**

The holy gospel according to John.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

*Jesus is moved to sorrow when his friend Lazarus falls ill and dies. Then, in a dramatic scene, he calls his friend out of the tomb and restores him to life.*

<sup>1</sup> Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha.

<sup>2</sup> Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. <sup>3</sup> So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, "Lord, he whom you love is ill."

<sup>4</sup> But when Jesus heard it, he said, "This illness does not lead to death; rather, it is for God's

glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.”<sup>5</sup> Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus,<sup>6</sup> after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

<sup>7</sup> Then after this he said to the disciples, “Let us go to Judea again.”<sup>8</sup> The disciples said to him, “Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?”<sup>9</sup> Jesus answered, “Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble because they see the light of this world.<sup>10</sup> But those who walk at night stumble because the light is not in them.”<sup>11</sup> After saying this, he told them, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him.”<sup>12</sup> The disciples said to him, “Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right.”<sup>13</sup> Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep.<sup>14</sup> Then Jesus told them plainly, “Lazarus is dead.<sup>15</sup> For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.”<sup>16</sup> Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, “Let us also go, that we may die with him.”

<sup>17</sup> When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days.<sup>18</sup> Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away,<sup>19</sup> and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother.<sup>20</sup> When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home.<sup>21</sup> Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.<sup>22</sup> But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.”<sup>23</sup> Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.”<sup>24</sup> Martha said to him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.”<sup>25</sup> Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live,<sup>26</sup> and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?”<sup>27</sup> She said to him, “Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world.”

<sup>28</sup> When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary and told her privately, “The Teacher is here and is calling for you.”<sup>29</sup> And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him.<sup>30</sup> Now Jesus had not yet come to the village but was still at the place where Martha had met him.<sup>31</sup> The Jews who were with her in the house consoling her saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there.<sup>32</sup> When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.”<sup>33</sup> When Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved.<sup>34</sup> He said, “Where have you laid him?” They said to him, “Lord, come and see.”<sup>35</sup> Jesus began to weep.<sup>36</sup> So the Jews said, “See how he loved him!”<sup>37</sup> But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?”

<sup>38</sup> Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it.<sup>39</sup> Jesus said, “Take away the stone.” Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, “Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days.”<sup>40</sup> Jesus said to her, “Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?”<sup>41</sup> So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and said, “Father, I thank you for having heard me.<sup>42</sup> I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me.”<sup>43</sup> When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!”<sup>44</sup> The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Unbind him, and let him go.”

<sup>45</sup> Many of the Jews, therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did believed in him.

The gospel of the Lord.  
**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## SERMON

May the inspiration of your Word, O God, increase our faith, strengthen our trust, and deepen our love, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

I have another confession to make. Last week, if you can remember back that far, we talked about arguments and our inherent need to be right. I mentioned how I don't like to lose arguments even though I don't get into very many due to my being as laid-back as I am... and that was only mostly true. "Mostly" because while everything I said is true, I admit that I left some important aspects of that out. See, I neglected to mention that perhaps a bigger reason why I don't get into many arguments is that... well, I'm not exactly a fan of conflict.

In fact, I'm so uncomfortable with it that I more often than not avoid it altogether.

Of course, things still happen and one thing still can lead to another and before I know it, I can still find myself in full-blown battles that I never wanted. But if I were given the choice, I would do what I can to de-escalate the situation as quickly as possible with the fewest number of casualties. Unfortunately when push inevitably comes to shove, those casualties usually are my pride, my need to be right, and maybe even my image and integrity as I'd sooner sacrifice myself than to jeopardize the peace. That is just how much I dislike conflict and the harsh feelings they might bring.

Now, I should say that I'm fully aware of how unhealthy this could be. A bit of conflict does a relationship good, they say, and helps to develop one's personality, convictions, and self-worth. But I just feel like I can do all of that without the yelling, the anger, and maybe the fear of another broken relationship, which could then lead to shame, guilt, and even humiliation. Thanks, but no thanks, am I right?

And so I might try a bit too hard to brush things off and let them slide. Give others the probably enabling benefits of the doubt. Even deny myself and my own needs just to avoid that ever burdensome conflict.

I get that I'm probably a next-level and extreme case, perhaps one that should be checked out by a professional or something, but I think we're all have these feelings to a certain extent. I think we'd all prefer not fighting over actively fighting. I think we all would rather things to be calm and not heated. I think we all, in some way or another, want to avoid conflict.

Because even if you're not even close to being adversely avoidant to conflict like I am, you know what I mean about it being uncomfortable, don't you? We generally don't like to sit in those feelings, wallow in that space, or linger in the uneasy air. And this isn't just in conflict, but pretty much any situation that brings about these "negative" emotions. The anger that can be present in conflict, yes, but also the disappointment in things not done properly or adequately, the guilt in being called out as not up to snuff, and even the sadness in regret, brokenness, and loss.

We see a lot of these emotions in the story we get in today's gospel reading, which is probably one of the most well-known and commonly-referred-to miracles of Jesus. But while we know all about Jesus bringing his buddy Lazarus back from the dead, we might not be aware of all the other emotions present and surrounding this emotional episode.

Of course, there is sadness. I mean it's a death, so for sure people are going to be upset, especially when the deceased is as popular and loved as Lazarus sounds to be. But there's also the anger Martha had towards Jesus for not being there. The disappointment Mary felt for Jesus taking his time to show up. And then the condescending jabs from the people thinking that maybe this Jesus character, the guy who healed the blind man last week, isn't all that he's cracked up to be.

And to be honest, when I noticed all these emotions reading the story this time around, I got a bit uncomfortable. Like I felt all those things that everyone felt, the anger, sadness, and disappointment. Because, like what the heck, Jesus, why didn't you hightail it over there to at least be with your friends during their difficult time, if not to prevent the disaster altogether? But at the same time, I also wanted to defend Jesus, like he knows what he's doing so just get off his case already, sheesh. It was a struggle for me to get to the point of the story in the midst of these thoughts, to see what God is up to here in spite of my feelings, to recognise where the good news in all this is regardless of my need to make the senselessness make sense.

Because in the discomfort of all the emotions, I wanted to find a way to make it comfortable. In this tumultuous rollercoaster ride of unexpected variables, I wanted to put things in order, rationalise away the feelings, and box it all up in a nice neat package ready to be presented as a happy clappy message. In the brokenness and pain of this story, I wanted to fix it all.

And I realised... that's real life, isn't it?

Maybe not in our own anger and various other emotions, but when we see someone else in a bad place, don't we want to try to fix it? Don't we offer perhaps poorly thought-out advice and words that are really more comforting for ourselves than for them? Don't we get trapped in thinking that we can save the situation if we avoided it or prevented it altogether?

I know I do. While I want to do what's best for everyone, what I might actually be doing is inadvertently disallowing others to feel, to be human, to live. While I might think that I'm freeing people from pain and harsh feelings, I'm actually just boxing them up into controllable bite sizes that aren't at all resembling any kind of individuality, uniqueness, or life. While I think I'm saving others and probably more likely myself from conflict, I'm just trapping all of us in my own narrow view of who we are and created to be.

"Unbind him, and let him go."

Jesus' words to the people after bringing dear Lazarus back to life and out of the dark, cold, and smelly tomb now hit a bit differently. They now shed a new light on the feelings and emotions that we all might have been feeling and emoting. They now reveal to them and us the life that truly is life, a life in community, in relationship, and in the freedom to be.

Free to be human. Free to be healed. Free to be loved even in our flaws.

Because I think that is what that micro-managing control over our emotions robs us of. When we are stuck in the fear of hard feelings, second-guessing our actions with the woulda/shoulda/coulda's, and trapped in need to rationalize away our feelings, cognitively fix away our problems, and desperately avoid any kind of conflict, we lose sight of God present in our lives: welcoming us into community, lifting us up in grace, and leading us to peace.

Peace not in the absence of conflict and friction, but peace in knowing that we are secure in our position as God's people in spite of it all.

Now, this isn't to say that we should go around picking fights and slapping people in the face. I'm not suggesting that we should point our fingers more pointedly, voice our criticisms more critically, or condescend others more condescendingly. I'm not telling anyone to run head first and incite conflict.

Instead, I'm saying that when these things happen, and they will happen, we needn't be afraid because it is part of the human experience. When we feel those feelings that we might not want to feel, it's ok to try to understand them instead of running away from them. When unwanted conflict arises, they can be for us learning opportunities to further deepen our sense of self, our love for others, and our faith in the God who breathes into us life and frees us from all that we're trapped in.

To be honest, I will likely still not be all that comfortable with conflict. But thanks be to God, I can be confident in my identity in spite of it, I can trust in God's promises of salvation even in the midst of it, and I can have faith that my feelings, be it negative or positive, will not disqualify me from being forgiven, healed, and saved.

As we near the end of this season of Lent and look forward to the glorious and salvific resurrection of our Lord, may we learn to see ourselves as who we are, recognise God's role in our healing and making us whole, and be unbound and set free from all that traps us in believing we are anything but beloved. Thanks be to God. Amen.

**HYMN OF THE DAY:** Restore in Us, O God (#328)

**CREED** (p. 105)

With all those brought into new life by God's grace, 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 the life that truly is life, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. Each petition will end with, “by your resurrecting mercy, O Lord,” and you are all invited to respond with **hear our prayer**. By your resurrecting mercy, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, we know that you hear our voice. Increase our faith in you and your promises, that we might serve you more fervently and live in community more joyfully, by the power of your Spirit. By your resurrecting mercy, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, you are attentive to our supplications out of your grace. Be with us as we care for and serve our neighbours, that all who we minister to might see the goodness of your ways and truth and love. 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 Spirit of Life Lutheran Church in Vancouver and their pastor Aneeta Saroop; and for North Thompson Ecumenical Shared Ministry in Barriere and Clearwater, and the pastors and ministers that serve there. By your resurrecting mercy, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, even in our sin you provide for us a redemption through the love you show us in creation: through the trees and skies, the lands and waters, the hills and valleys, and you unite us with all its beauty and splendour. Strengthen our stewardship of this planet, that its wondrous glory serve as our home and reminder of your love for the generations to come. By your resurrecting mercy, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, with you there is forgiveness, and you teach us the ways of your grace and mercy. Be with all world leaders and politicians as we learn to work together toward true peace and freedom from hatred and violence. We pray for the continued support of those that we’ve sponsored to come into 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 resurrecting mercy, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, our souls wait for you as you are our healing and our hope. Be with those among us who are sick, who mourn, or who feel lonely, that your love continue to shine in and through us and be reflected onto all people. Especially we pray for Bryan and Chona; Ron, Tess, and Mineko; Greg and Aikiko; Bev and family; John and Betty; Sukhwant; Pastor Kristen; Pastor Carol; 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 resurrecting mercy, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, with you there is steadfast love and plenteous redemption from all our sin, and you welcome us to live with you and all the saints in your kingdom forever. May the lives of faith of those that we’ve loved and lost reside always in our hearts that we might continue their work of sharing the legacy of community and good news for all the world. By your resurrecting mercy, **hear our prayer**.

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in the saving grace shown to us through your Son 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 calls us out of our despair and lifts us up into your light, love, and life,  
and joins us with all the choirs of angels,  
the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,  
to praise your name with this unending hymn:

## **HOLY, HOLY, HOLY** (p. 144)

## **THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE**

Holy, almighty, and merciful God, you call us by name and seat us with you at your table of goodness and grace, and you welcome us to be your children forever. Then to help us to see the fullness of your love, you send to us your Son Jesus to live among us as one of us, showing us the ways of your righteousness and redemption, and bringing us together as a community of forgiven sinners, made to be saints.

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, Jesus took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them to drink from saying, "This cup in 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 moving from death into life, welcoming us all along for the journey of grace and peace, empowering us to proclaim this mystery of faith:

**Christ has died.**

**Christ is risen.**

**Christ will come again.**

All honour and glory belong to you, O Lord, for your gracious welcome and merciful forgiveness, bringing us all together as a community, a church, and as the body of Christ, serving you and neighbour for the sake of the world, through Jesus our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

## **LORD'S PRAYER** (p. 145)

Gathered into life 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 the life that truly is life.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **COMMUNION**

**COMMUNION HYMNS:** Lamb of God (p. 146)

Beneath the Cross of Jesus (#338)

Let Us Break Bread Together (#471)

## **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Compassionate God, you have fed us with your Word and nourished us with your truth, revealing to us your love through this heavenly food. Strengthen us in our service to you and neighbour, that we be faithful reflections of the life found in you, through Jesus Christ.

**Amen.**

## **SENDING**

### **BLESSING**

May the God, the giver of life, bless you and keep you,  
God, the sustainer of life, shine on you and be gracious onto you,  
God, the resurrection and the life, look upon you with favour, and give you peace.

**Amen.**

**SENDING SONG:** O God, Who Gives Us Life (ACS #1086)

### **DISMISSAL**

Go in peace, live in God's love and peace.

**Thanks be to God.**