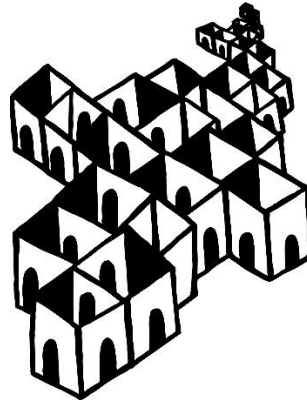




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Fifth Sunday of Easter
May 3, 2026
Now the Feast and Celebration
Hymnal Supplement (1991)

As we continue to celebrate the fifty days of Easter, today's gospel includes Jesus' promise that he goes to prepare a place for his followers in his Father's house. Our baptism commissions us to share Jesus' mission in the world. As 1 Peter reminds us, we are a holy people, called to proclaim the one who called us out of darkness into light. In words and deeds we bear witness to the risen Christ—our way, our truth, our life.

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 hən̓q̓əmiñəṁ (Musqueam) and Sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish) speaking peoples.

GATHERING

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP

We gather in the name of our Lord, in whom we take refuge and through whom we are never put to shame. For the very ear of God is inclined to us in our time of need, that we might find the safety offered to us in the stronghold of God's love. So as we are released from the snare of sin and guilt, as we are rescued from burden and shame, as the light of God's love shines on us and welcomes us into God's presence, let us rejoice and give thanks through Jesus Christ, our risen Saviour. **Amen. Thanks be to God.**

GREETING HYMN: Lord of All Hopefulness (#765)

GREETING

The faith-forming grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the faith-increasing love of God, and the faith-building fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

NOW THE FEAST (HS p. 4)

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Almighty God, through the life and teachings of Jesus you have shown us the way, revealed to us your truth, and offered to us a role to play in the everlasting life of your love and community. May our eyes be fixed on you and your presence among us that we might know your grace more fully, walk your paths of righteousness more boldly, know your truth more fully, and live your love more abundantly, in the name of our Lord and Saviour, the risen Christ. **Amen.**

WORD

FIRST READING: Acts 7:55-60

A reading from Acts.

Stephen was one of the seven men chosen by the apostles to serve tables so that the apostles could be free to serve the word (Acts 6:1-6). Stephen does more than distribute food, however. For his preaching of God's word, he becomes the first martyr of the faith.

⁵⁵ Filled with the Holy Spirit, [Stephen] gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. ⁵⁶ "Look," he said, "I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!" ⁵⁷ But they covered their ears, and with a loud shout all rushed together against him. ⁵⁸ Then they dragged him out of the city and began to stone him, and the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. ⁵⁹ While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." ⁶⁰ Then he knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he died.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16

¹ In you, O LORD, have I taken refuge; let me never be put to shame;
deliver me in your righteousness.

² **Incline your ear to me;
make haste to deliver me.**

- ³ Be my strong rock, a castle to keep me safe, for you are my crag and my stronghold;
for the sake of your name, lead me and guide me.
- ⁴ **Take me out of the net that they have secretly set for me,
for you are my tower of strength.**
- ⁵ Into your hands I commend my spirit,
for you have redeemed me, O LORD, God of truth.
- ¹⁵ **My times are in your hand;
rescue me from the hand of my enemies, and from those who persecute me.**
- ¹⁶ Let your face shine upon your servant;
save me in your steadfast love.”

SECOND READING: 1 Peter 2:2-10

A reading from 1 Peter.

Christ is the cornerstone of God's saving work and the foundation of our lives. We are God's chosen, holy people who continuously celebrate and declare the mercy of God we experience through Jesus Christ.

² Like newborn infants, long for the pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow into salvation—³ if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

⁴ Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight, and ⁵ like living stones let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶ For it stands in scripture:

“See, I am laying in Zion a stone,
a cornerstone chosen and precious,
and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.”

⁷ This honor, then, is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe,

“The stone that the builders rejected
has become the very head of the corner,”

⁸ and “A stone that makes them stumble
and a rock that makes them fall.”

They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

⁹ But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the excellence of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

¹⁰ Once you were not a people,
but now you are God's people;
once you had not received mercy,
but now you have received mercy.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (HS p. 8)

GOSPEL: John 14:1-14

The holy gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

On the night that he is to be arrested, Jesus shares final words with his disciples. As the one through whom God is known, he promises to go before them and act on their behalf.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] ¹ “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. ² In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. ⁴ And you know the way to the place where I am going.” ⁵ Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” ⁶ Jesus said to him, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷ If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.”

⁸ Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.” ⁹ Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? ¹⁰ Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. ¹¹ Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, but if you do not, then believe because of the works themselves. ¹² Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. ¹³ I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.”

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

God of all goodness and mercy, by the power of your Spirit, open our eyes, ears, and hearts, that we might see your way, hear your truth, and be filled with the life that you give, through Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

So something happened this week that scared the living tar out of me.

Ok, maybe I’m exaggerating a bit, but it was a pretty scary situation. See, this ring that I’ve been wearing the past few weeks isn’t an ordinary ring. It has some smart features and stuff but its main purpose is to act as a remote for these glasses that I’ve also been wearing for the past few weeks and are also not ordinary glasses, as some of you know. But the tech isn’t the point. The point is that while I was taking out the garbage on Tuesday evening, I slipped the ring into my pocket just to protect it a bit and keep it cleaner than my other actually ordinary ring that I didn’t even bother to take off at all. But after I finished that particular chore, I washed my hands, dried them thoroughly, and then slipped one into my pocket to grab my ring only to find... that I couldn’t find it.

Panic immediately set in. I mean, spoiler alert, I found it as it’s obviously on my finger right now, but not before I retraced my steps several times throughout the house and yard and even to the alley to no avail. I just got this ring and so I was really worried that I lost it already. I kept going over everything in my head, every step, every move, everything I even touched, to see if I could remember the vital clue that would help me find this thing. I even went as far to take out the garbage bags that I just threw out and sifted through them a bit, which really isn’t a

pleasant experience especially when you have 3 kids at varying levels of cleanliness, hygiene, and uh, puberty...

Anyway, just as I was getting close to thinking that all hope was lost, an idea popped into my head. My ring is connected to my phone over Bluetooth, and the range of its connection is pretty limited, like 10 feet or so, roughly. So I thought maybe I could use my phone as a crude tracker of sorts by seeing where the where the Bluetooth connection is and where it drops. I pulled out my phone and *my ring was still connected*. There was a glimmer of hope, after all. I walked around a bit on and off our property and before too long, *I found it*. Not in my pocket as I'm sure many of you were thinking, but on the grass, which is still weird because that is literally like the third place I looked. I guess when I grabbed my keys from my pocket, the ring came out with them and landed ever so quietly and gently on the grass that I didn't even notice it.

But that relief I felt after finding it, it was like all this worry was lifted off my shoulders. Worry that lasted maybe a max of about just 20 minutes of looking, but still. And truth be told, I'm a bit embarrassed that it took me as long as it did to think of tracking the ring with the Bluetooth trick, because as soon as I did, it took like another minute before I found it. But now that I did figure it out, I probably won't ever forget it. It is a lesson that will stay with me forever. Although I'm sure with future updates and software improvements both on the ring and my phone, that this kind of thing will be less likely to happen. But for now, I know that if I were ever to drop it again, I will have an idea of how to find it again. I'll remember how to get a rough perimeter of where it could be. I'll know generally *the way* to retrieve what has been lost.

And I wonder if this was a bit of the lesson that Jesus was teaching his disciples in today's gospel reading. Jesus, in this beginning portion of his Farewell Discourse, which was his way of saying goodbye and preparing them for his impending departure, reveals that he is leaving them to set up a place for them.

I should say briefly that the place that he is preparing isn't a literal room in a literal house, nor is it even a figurative room in a figurative house, but it's more of a position in relation to him, or a rough proximity to God, or this *identity* we share as God's beloved people. Jesus promises that, through him, we are secured in that invitation, that welcome, this community to which we are all made and created and reformed to belong.

I know a lot of people will equate this "place" to something else, and technically that's fine. But I think the main part that we shouldn't lose sight of is that Jesus doesn't point to a goal or a destination or an end result. Rather, his response to his disciples tells us that he's preparing them for the journey of relationship, the path of righteous living, the connection with God and each other.

See when Jesus first tells his disciples about him preparing a place for them and how they are welcome in this fold, they don't seem to understand where it is he's talking about. Like we probably would do, they try to pinpoint the location with precise coordinates. They want a map and explicit turn-by-turn instructions on how they can get to this place. They'll follow Jesus there, for sure, but they just want to know where "there" even is.

But that's not what Jesus gives them. Jesus doesn't drop a pin for them. He doesn't show them a street view image of what he's talking about. He doesn't even give them a rough perimeter of where it'll be. Rather, he says that he is the way. Jesus declares that he is the truth. He reveals to them and us that he is the life. So it's not a place that he's talking about, but a journey. It's not a destination that he's describing, but a way of living. It's not a room per se that is being prepared for us to live in, but a connection to God and God's community in love, peace, and hope.

This is seen even more in the grammar of the original language that starts this passage off. Because of the limitations of our language, our English translations have no choice but say "don't let your hearts be troubled." But the Greek is a bit more nuanced in that "your" is in plural form, and "heart" is in the singular. Jesus is talking about our collective one heart that we share and joins us all together. Jesus is talking about the one body to which we are connected and in which we find who we are. Jesus is talking about the unity that we are graciously welcomed into as God's people in the world.

This is what Jesus is teaching them. This is what Jesus wanted them to know. This is what Jesus was helping them to see in themselves. That they are united. Connected. Loved.

Just as I was able to use my ring's Bluetooth connection to find it, so are we found in our connection to God. Just as my ring's proximity to my phone was made visible through technology, so is our proximity to Jesus made visible but through acts of service and grace. Just as how my ring did nothing but be itself to be found, so are we called not to find our way home, but to be found and brought home into the loving arms of our Lord and Saviour.

So as Jesus prepares his disciples, so are we prepared for our rough patches. For our times when we feel lonely, abandoned, and lost. For whatever unwanted, uncomfortable, or even unexpected difficulties that might come our way, Jesus lifts us up and reminds us that we are not alone, but through him, eternally connected to God and all the saints.

I know, losing a ring sounds like a total first world problem. We have other real issues that we're facing that are much more difficult than lost property. The world can take so much more from us than just our devices and convenience. But through it all, I know and trust and believe that Jesus is ahead of us, leading us on the path, guiding us with wisdom, and journeying with us in order that we might see the life that is given and allows us to live it most abundantly.

So in this season of Easter and beyond, as we remember the joy of the Resurrection and new life, as we look upon the empty cross and are reminded of God's unending grace and mercy, may we see Jesus, the way, the truth, and the life, and be united with him and each other as the one body of God's people. Thanks be to God. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY Give Me Jesus (#770)

CREED (HS p. 11)

Together with all at home in God's love, 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 to live in community with all of God's people, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. Each petition will end with, "by your steadfast mercy, O Lord," and you are all invited to respond with **hear our prayer**. By your steadfast mercy, O Lord, **hear our prayer**.

O God, in you we take refuge and we are not put to shame, but lifted up by your grace and forgiveness. Fill our hearts always with your abundant love, that we be strengthened to proclaim the good news of your eternal presence and welcome. By your steadfast mercy, O Lord, **hear our prayer**.

O God, you call us by name and you welcome us into your righteousness. May the truth of your gracious love fuel our ministry and community, that all people might know the boundlessness of the joy found in your name. We remember in prayer for 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 all our bishops, rostered ministers, congregations, and ministries of the ELCIC. In particular, we pray for Grace Lutheran Church in Victoria and the pastors and leaders that serve them; as well as for Mount Olive Lutheran Church in South Surrey and their pastor Lori-Anne Boutin-Crawford. By your steadfast mercy, O Lord, **hear our prayer**.

O God, your creation is our strong rock that keeps us safe. Lead and guide us in our stewardship of this planet, that its health and beauty be restored and it continue to be our home for the generations to come. By your steadfast mercy, O Lord, **hear our prayer**.

O God, you rescue us from the darkness of the world, and you strengthen us with your tower of light. Continue to lead and guide us in the world, that we might learn to work together to live in true true peace. We also 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: Maেকে Kiflu, Selam Haile, and their children; and Meri Gabramikael. By your steadfast mercy, O Lord, **hear our prayer**.

O God, you have redeemed us and our times are in your hand. You bring to us healing and wholeness, and you continually welcome us into the warmth and security of your fold. Be with

all those among us who are sick, who mourn, or who feel lonely, that your love be apparent to all. Especially we pray for Kathy and family; 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; Matt; Patty; and all those we name aloud or quietly in our hearts at this time...

By your steadfast mercy, O Lord, **hear our prayer.**

O God, your face shines upon us, your servants, and you lovingly welcome us to live in your kingdom with you and all the saints. May your love inspire us in our community, that we can be strengthened by its everlasting effects on the world. By your steadfast mercy, O Lord, **hear our prayer.**

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in the stronghold of our faith, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

PEACE

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 prepares for us a place in your unified heart, that we might join the choir of angels, hosts of heaven, and the whole church on earth in praising your name with this unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (HS p. 15)

GREAT THANKSGIVING

Yes Lord you are holy, and you welcome us into your presence and love, filling our hearts and strengthening our souls with your promises of grace and mercy. And in your great compassion and love, you send to us Jesus to further reveal your welcome for us into your kingdom of forgiveness and peace.

For on the night that he was betrayed, our Lord 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 our connection to each other, our place in this community, and our belonging in God's kingdom as we are reminded of this basis of our faith:
Christ has died.
Christ is risen.
Christ will come again.

So it is to you, O God, that all honour and glory belong, through Jesus our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER (HS p. 18)

Gathered around the cornerstone of God's kingdom, 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 our hearts united in God's love.

Thanks be to God.

COMMUNION

COMMUNION HYMNS: Lamb of God (HS p. 18)
 Amazing Grace (#779)
 When Peace like a River (#785)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Holy God, we give you thanks for feeding and nourishing us with your love and truth, and strengthening us to be your hands and feet in the world. Be with us as we navigate this journey of life, and may we see your leading and guiding throughout your kingdom, with Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

SENDING

BLESSING

May the God who loves reveal to you the way,
the God who saves speak to you the truth,
and the God who redeems us with endless grace and mercy fill you with abundant life, now and forever. **Amen.**

SENDING SONG: Day by Day (#790)

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, be at home in the love of Christ.

Thanks be to God.

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