

DATE May 2, 2021 THEME I AM the vine, you are the branches

God's People Gather

Prelude Pondering

A garden requires patient labor and attention. Plants do not grow merely to satisfy ambitions or to fulfill good intentions. They thrive because someone expended effort on them. Liberty Hyde Bailey (1858-1954)

Call to Worship

Leader: We come to worship our Creator, who walked in the garden in the cool of the day

People: May God plant seeds of love in our hearts.

Leader: We come to grow as faithful disciples of Jesus

People: May his grace grow in our lives

Leader: We come to feel the gentle rain of the Spirit

People: Let that Spirit flow through our lives and nurture us in discipleship.

Leader: May Christ abide in us now and always.

ALL: Let us worship God!

Opening Song

Bind Us Together

Bind us together, Lord

Bind us together

With cords that cannot be broken.

Bind us together, Lord

Bind us together, Lord

Bind us together with love.

There is only one God,

There is only one king;

There is only one body.

That is why we can sing.

Bind us together, Lord
Bind us together
With cords that cannot be broken.
Bind us together, Lord
Bind us together, Lord
Bind us together with love.

Prayer of Confession

We know that apart from Christ, we can do nothing, and that cut off from one another, we have no vitality. Still, we attempt to go it alone, thinking that our own will is better than God's commands. In faith and trust, join me as we offer our prayers of confession.

Silence is kept

Assurance of Pardon

Friends, hear the good news. Christ is the true vine; we are the branches. Through his weakness, we have strength. Through his death, we have life. Through his resurrection, we have life eternal.

People: In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven! Thanks be to God. Amen.

Sharing the Peace of Christ

Response

Peace Song

Peace I leave with you my friends
Shalom my peace in all you do
Peace I leave with you my friends
I give to you so you can give to others too.

God's Word is Proclaimed

Children's Time

Scripture Reading John 15:1-8 – Common English Bible

1 "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vineyard keeper.

2 He removes any of my branches that don't produce fruit, and he trims any branch that produces fruit so that it will produce even more fruit.

3 You are already trimmed because of the word I have spoken to you.

4 Remain in me, and I will remain in you. A branch can't produce fruit by itself, but must remain in the vine. Likewise, you can't produce fruit unless you remain in me.

5 I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, then you will produce much fruit. Without me, you can't do anything.

6 If you don't remain in me, you will be like a branch that is thrown out and dries up. Those branches are gathered up, thrown into a fire, and burned.

7 If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask for whatever you want and it will be done for you.

8 My Father is glorified when you produce much fruit and in this way prove that you are my disciples.

Sermon

Vine and Branches

Responding to God's Word

Offering

If you are able, please continue to send in your offering and pledge. If you are enrolled in electronic funds transfer, there is no need to do anything different. If you would like to give online using Paypal, click this link: bit.ly/FPCsterling

Prayer of Dedication

Holy God, in your vineyard, we know that all strength and growth come from you. Help us to thrive in generosity, to produce much good fruit, and to nurture faith in others with these, our gifts. We offer them in the name of the true vine, even Jesus. Amen.

Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

Invitation

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Let us lift up our hearts to God, so that God may plant fruit-bearing seeds within us.

Let us offer up our voices in song, proclaiming that we are witnesses to all that God has done!

Gracious God, we give you thanks and praise. You call forth life out of nothingness; you plant seeds that branch into vines; you pour clear water into earth's hollows; you crafted us in your image. But we entangled ourselves in the briars and thorns of sin and selfishness, and at last you came to us as the true vine. You grafted us into yourself so that we, too, could bear the fruit of grace and mercy and joy. So we, the branches, sing to you with unending joy:

Sung Response: You Are the Vine

Jesus Christ, our Savior is the true Vine and we are the branches, growing and flourishing in him. He gives new life where there once was only death. He nourishes us to bear fruit in this world. In him we encounter the mystery of our faith: Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.

Abide in us at this Table, as you pour out your Spirit on these gifts of the bread and cup, and all who partake of them. Let the bread be a reminder to us of your self-giving love, so that we might feed the hungry and comfort the lonely, reach out to the searching and heal the hurting. Let this cup fortify us to stand with the oppressed and the outcast, linking arms like entwining branches, connecting all in the vine of justice that bears the fruit of peace.

Sung Response: You Are the Vine

Then, when we are gathered at last around your table with all your people from every time and place, and all the angels in eternal glory, we will sing glory to you, in whom we live and move and have our being, in whom we abide for all eternity. Now hear our prayers for this world, for our community, for one another and for all the created order, O God, and hear the prayers of our hearts as we pray the prayer Christ taught us ...

The Lord's Prayer

AMEN

Words of Institution

Sharing in the Bread and the Cup

Prayer after the Supper

We thank you, gracious God, that you have fed and nourished us at Christ's table. We thank you for the bread of life and the fruit of the vine, for the refreshing communion we have shared, bringing us together in your Spirit, welcoming and uniting us. Now send us forth to share this life and strength, welcoming and loving this world. Amen.

God's People are Sent

Closing Song

Sheaves of Summer

Sheaves of summer turned golden by the sun,
Grapes in bunches cut down when ripe and red,
Are converted into the bread and wine of God's love
In the body and blood of our dear Lord.

Like the grains which become one same whole loaf,
Like the notes that are woven into song,
Like the droplets of water that are blended in the sea,
We, as Christians, one body shall become.

Benediction

Leader:....and let all God's people say...

People: Alleluia! Amen!