

May 2nd Worship
5th Sunday in Easter

Introduction to the Day

This Sunday's image of how the risen Christ shares his life with us is the image of the vine. Christ the vine and we the branches are alive in each other, in the mystery of mutual abiding described in the gospel and the first letter of John. Baptism makes us a part of Christ's living and life-giving self and makes us alive with Christ's life. As the vine brings food to the branches, Christ feeds us at his table. We are sent out to bear fruit for the life of the world.

Thanksgiving For Baptism

Alleluia! Christ is risen.
Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Refreshed by the resurrection life we share in Christ, let us give thanks for the gift of baptism.

We thank you, risen Christ,
for these waters where you make us new,
leading us from death to life, from tears to joy.
We bless you, risen Christ,
that your Spirit comes to us
in the grace-filled waters of rebirth,
like rains to our thirsting earth,
like streams that revive our souls,
like cups of cool water shared with strangers.

Breathe your peace on your church
when we hide in fear.
Clothe us with your mercy and forgiveness.
Send us companions on our journey
as we share your life.
Make us one, risen Christ.
Cleanse our hearts.
Shower us with life.
To you be given all praise,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God,
now and forever.
Amen.

Prayer of the Day

O God, you give us your Son as the vine apart from whom we cannot live. Nourish our life in his resurrection, that we may bear the fruit of love and know the fullness of your joy, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
Amen.

Lesson – 1 John 4:7-21

⁷Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. ⁸Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. ⁹God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. ¹⁰In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. ¹¹Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. ¹²No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.

¹³By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. ¹⁴And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world. ¹⁵God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. ¹⁶So we have known and believe the love that God has for us.

God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. ¹⁷Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world. ¹⁸There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and

whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. ¹⁹We love because he first loved us. ²⁰Those who say, “I love God,” and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. ²¹The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.

Gospel – John 15:1-8

[Jesus said:] ¹“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. ²He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. ³You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. ⁴Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. ⁵I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. ⁷If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.”

Message

People of God, grace to you and peace from God, and from our risen Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. AMEN.

On the cover it seems as though Jesus is speaking to us in an “or else” kind of way. In the repetition of abide abide abide abide is the perceived threat of what will happen if you don’t.

And, understandably so.

Part of that is our human condition. Even eternal optimists will hear this text and think that there is a bit of doom and gloom threat behind it.

And, maybe there is.

But, I like to think of our God as a gracious God. I hope we’d all agree. I don’t much subscribe to the understanding of God as one who is about condemnation and judgment. Even when it seems that way there is always more room for grace – you’ve just got to look for it.

What if, instead of looking at this text as God’s “or else” for us, we look at this text as God’s desire for us?

Instead of hearing Jesus repetitive “abide in me and I will abide in you” as an “or else” statement, perhaps the repetition is because that is what Jesus wants for us! And, he is going to do everything he can to make sure we hear it!

After all, isn’t that the cross? God had done everything God could do to show God’s people that they are loved, and it still wasn’t enough, so God sent Jesus, God’s Son, to die for us.

Whew. It’s heavy stuff.

In John 15, the word abide appears 11 times. 8 of those 11 times are in the first 8 verses, our selected verses for today.

To abide is to make a home, a dwelling, or to remain. John 15 1-8, and the few verses after, is God in Jesus Christ pleading with all who would hear to make a dwelling in the love that is Jesus Christ.

And, if that is done, as far as being one of the pruned goes, we should have nothing to worry about.

Easier said than done sometimes.

But this is God's command for us. But with this understanding of John 15, it's no longer a threat but a promise. This becomes God's promise for us! Be the living breathing presence of God's love in the world and God will make a dwelling place in you.

That is where we find our worth. That is how we define our status.

Here's the grace.

God does not want us to be pruned from the vine. The ones who are pruned are the ones who don't think they need the rest of the vine. "Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, neither can you unless you abide in me."

To not be pruned, or at risk of pruning, is to have God at the center of all that we do. How we live our lives and how we treat others.

For his Baptism, Owen's sponsor gave him a sign that no rests on the shelf in Owen's bedroom. The sign reads, **"Be brave because you are a child of God, be kind because everyone else is, too."**

People of God, let us have that as our guide. Not how long we have or have not been a baptized member of God's family, not how long we've been worshiping here, not our money, not our perceived power or status, but the mark that we all share as God's children – the cross on our forehead.

AND, let us be reminded in our baptism we were handed a candle as we were urged to "let our light so shine before others, that they would see our good works and glorify our GOD who is in heaven."

All that we do is by God, for God, and through God.

Thanks be to God. AMEN

Apostle's Creed – in worship we celebrate the Sacrament of Holy Baptism for Brinley Elizabeth Carden

Prayers

Alive in the risen Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit, we bring our prayers before God who promises to hear us and answer in steadfast love.

God of all fruitfulness, you abide in your church and your church abides in you. Cleanse us by your word and give yourself to the whole church on earth so that it bears fruit and witnesses to your love. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You have created the heavens and the earth. As we wonder at the beauty of creation, may we seek vital connections among all that depends on the earth for life. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You rule the nations with justice and love. Give the leaders of the earth assurance of your abiding presence, that they lead not by fear but with love for those they are called to serve. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You have loved us so that we can love others. We pray for all in need of your love: those who are poor, lowly, outcast, weak, or fearful. Provide for the needs of all we name now silently or aloud. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You gather us with all the saints by the power of your Spirit. With them, may our hearts live forever in your keeping. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

In the hope of new life in Christ, we raise our prayers to you, trusting in your never-ending goodness and mercy; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Offering

Offertory Prayer

God of love,
you call us beloved children and welcome us to your table.
Receive our lives and the gifts we offer.
Abide with us and send us in service to a suffering world;
for the sake of your beloved Child, Jesus Christ.
Amen.

Words of Institution – We invite you to find bread and wine or juice and partake in this Holy Meal.

(Holding the bread) In the night in which we was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread and broke it, gave thanks and gave it for all to eat saying, “This is my body broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

(Holding the cup) Again after supper he took the cup, and after giving thanks he gave it for all to drink saying, “this cup is the new covenant in my blood shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sins. So often as you do this, remember me.”

Once you’ve taken the elements say, “Wellspring of joy, through this meal you have put gladness in our hearts. Satisfy the hunger still around us, and send us as joyful witnesses, that your love may bring joy to the hearts of all people, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**”

Lord’s Prayer

Blessing

May our glorious God grant you a spirit of wisdom
to know and to love the risen Lord Jesus.
The God of life,
Father, ✝ Son, and Holy Spirit,
bless you now and forever.
Amen.

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Go in peace. Share the good news. Alleluia!

Thanks be to God. Alleluia!

ANNOUNCEMENTS! ANNOUNCEMENTS! ANNOUNCEMENTS!

Please sign up to attend in-person worship!

For the month of May, in-person worship services will be held at 9 and 10:30. If you would like to attend, please call DeAnne in the office to get signed up!

Re-Connect Opportunities

We hope you will join us for any, or all, of these Re-Connect Opportunities throughout the week!

Stop in for coffee and conversation at 9 am on Mondays

TUESDAYS be sure to stop by for Bible Study starting at 11, followed by Lunch and Laughter at noon.

Wednesdays will continue to be our Faith Formation Days

Thursdays we will have the sanctuary open for prayer for 8 am to 3 pm.

