

Fifth Sunday of Easter
May 2, 2021

Prelude

Christopher A. McCroskey

Centering Words:

Christ is the vine. We are the branches. Abide in the vine, and you will abide in love.
From *The Abingdon Worship Annual 2020*. Copyright 2019 by Abingdon Press, Used by permission, 105.

Call To Worship:

Dan Greshel

God is Here Today
God is here today; as certain as the air I breathe,
as certain as the morning sun that rises,
as certain when I sing you'll hear my song.
From *The Faith We Sing* Copyright 2000 by Abingdon Press, 2049.

Opening Prayer:

O Lord, your wondrous birth means nothing unless we are born again, your death and sacrifice mean nothing unless we die to sin, your resurrection means nothing if you be risen alone. Raise and exalt us, O Savior, both now to the estate of grace and hereafter into the state of glory; where with the Father and the Holy Spirit you live and reign, God for ever and ever. This we ask in Christ's name who taught us to pray:

From *The United Methodist Book of Worship*. Copyright 1992 The United Methodist Publishing House. 392.

The Lord's Prayer:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Affirmation of Faith: The Apostles' Creed.

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of Heaven and Earth.

And in Jesus Christ His only Son, our Lord; Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; the third day He rose from the dead; He ascended into Heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick 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.

Prayer of Illumination:

Open our ears that we may hear and our hearts and minds that we may receive your word O Lord our rock and redeemer.

New Testament Reading Acts 8: 26-40

Psalm 22: 25-31

Epistle Reading 1 John 4:7-21

Special Music

Christopher A. McCroskey

Gospel Reading John 15: 1-8
Sermon *Abiding in the Vine*

John D. Jordan

Hymn:

Song of Hope

May the God of hope go with us every day,
filling all our lives with love and joy and peace.
May the God of justice speed us on our way,
bringing light and hope to every land and race.

Praying, let us work for peace;
singing, share our joy with all;
working for a world that's new,
faithful when we hear Christ's call.

From *The Faith We Sing* Copyright 2000 by Abingdon Press, 2186.

Benediction:

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God. Let us abide in Christ's love, for he is the vine and we are the branches. Let us care for one another, for the Spirit helps us abide in God's peace. Thus, we will glorify God in the lives we lead. Amen.

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Response:

God Be with You till We Meet Again

God be with you till we meet again;
by his counsels guide, uphold you,
with his sheep securely fold you;
God be with you till we meet again.

From *The United Methodist Hymnal* Copyright 1989, The United Methodist Publishing House, 673.

Leading in Worship Today

Pastor: John D. Jordan
Choir Director: Christopher A. McCroskey
Church Musician: [blank]
AV Assistant: K. C. Warble
Soloist: Dan Greshel
Time Together: Ruth Frady

“AS MEMBERS OF THIS CONGREGATION, WE WILL FAITHFULLY PARTICIPATE IN ITS MINISTRIES BY OUR PRAYERS...”

Tom Lloyd Oren Edwards Patsy Shuler Dean Frye Lynn Martin Kathy Aiello
Steve White Latson Lewis George Taylor Steve Aiello Kelsey Tolliver

Shut-Ins: Shirley Butler; Esther Carter; Carolyn Hardee; Francis & Gillett Hipp; June Hutto; Georgeann Pace; Shirley Padgett; Jean Raynor; Claudia Sineath; Wayne Tallon; Irvin Wells

Family and Friends: Lisa Baghdady (a friend of Edwa Meek); Chip Hooker (Wayne Hooker's father); Robert Bradley (Business Associate of Simon Ross); Dave Burrell (Business Associate of Tommy Gleaton); Gene Odom (grandfather of Mark Branham); Gary Becton (friend of Mark Branham); Audrey Cassady (sister-in-law of Mary Louise Robinson); Rusty Browning (friend of Erin Derrick); Monnie Tiller, Mrs. Miles (friends of Chris Derrick); Donna Walker (coworker of Jack Stevens); Paul Kidney (son-in-law of Charles & Jackie McNeill); Ruby Pennington (friend of Laurie Knapp); Rick Baldwin (nephew of Tommy Johnson); Judy Bauer (cousin of Marty Johnson); Iris Turlington (aunt of John Zeigler); Betty Jean Newton (sister-in-law of Mary Kamoroff); Linda Hargett (stepmom of Christopher McCroskey); Brenlee Carnes; Danielle Spotts (co-worker of Kathy White); Vickie Edwards (neighbor of Kathy White); George Duke, Brenda Grier (friends of Lynn Martin); Heather Stevens, Ty Moore, George Dorn (friends of Kay Jordan); Teddy Derrick (uncle of Arvan Derrick); Haidee Baehr (friends of Ruth Frady); Dianne Schmotzer (sister-in-law of Gale Frady); Dan Connor, Denise Paul (cousin of Gale Frady); Billy Johnson, Max Johnson (friends of Gale Frady); Ray Culbreth's Group House; Nellie Gantt (mother of friend of Ray Culbreth); Amelia Zinski (great-niece of Linda Maloch); Wayne Blair (son of Dot Johnson); Xavier Crane (grandnephew of John Ballentine); Janet Beck (friend of Jo Ann Heiting); Michael Carter (son of Esther Carter); Adam Lavender (son of Phil Lavender)

If you have a friend or family member on the Prayer List, we ask you to please keep us updated. If no word is received, we will trust that our prayers have been answered and remove the name. To update us, please call the office or e-mail us at trinityumcwc@sc.rr.com.

OUR PRESENCE ...

In-Person Attendance 04/25 Worship: 18

OUR GIFTS ...

General Fund 04/25 \$ \$ 3,370.00

OUR SERVICE ...

OUR WITNESS.”



Ministers
Pastor
Resident Bishop
District Superintendent
The Congregation
John D. Jordan
Jonathan Holston
Rev. Dr. Cathy Jamieson

Our mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Our vision is to Connect, Nurture, Inspire and Transform



John 15:4, NKJV

1201 Mohawk Drive
West Columbia, SC 29169

Telephone: 803.794.7777

E-mail: trinityumcwc@sc.rr.com

Website: www.trinityumcwc.org

John 15: 1-8

In this, the final discourse to the disciples, Jesus makes this wonderful metaphor of the vine. Of course, he would have in mind a grape vine, a vine that is cultivated to bear fruit. This is the image we have from this passage, a grape vineyard.

What is the purpose of a grape vineyard? A grape vineyard is cultivated to grow grapes. Grapes that can be eaten. Grapes that can be dried into raisins. Grapes that can be made into wine. The more grapes the vineyard produces the better. But it is not just the quantity of grapes produced but also the quality of grapes produced. A vineyard that produces a lot of grapes that are dry and sour, not good to eat, make into raisins, or to make wine is not a good vineyard. It is better to have fewer good, sweet, juicy grapes than a lot of dry, sour grapes.

Now the main vine itself does not bear fruit but the branches bear fruit. So as Jesus tells the disciples, and subsequently us, that they are the branches then they, and us, are to be the ones bearing the fruit. So the disciples, including us, are to bear fruit.

To bear fruit, the branch must be connected to the vine. The Greek word that the writer of John uses for the connection of the branch to the vine is *meno*. *Meno* is a word that has multiple meanings in English. In the NRSV and King James it is translated as abide. Other translations may say remain (NIV and CEB) or dwell (NEB). All of these different translations are correct, but to get the full meaning of *meno* we need to add “and” as in, “Remain, dwell, and abide in me as I remain, dwell, and abide in you.” (v.4) So, to get the full meaning let’s look at the meaning of each of these words and put them together.

Remain means to stay, not go away from. Jesus stays in us as we stay in Jesus. Jesus does not go away from us though we may go away from Jesus. This says that the presence of Jesus stays with us. We bear fruit as we stay with Jesus,

Dwell means to live in. Kay and I dwell at 1512 Cardinal Drive, West Columbia, SC. You dwell in the house, apartment, or condo where you cook your meals, watch television, read, and sleep. So, Jesus lives in us and we live in Jesus. Jesus is a part of our everyday lives as we participate, that is, reflect the life of Jesus. We bear fruit as Jesus lives in us and we reflect the life of Jesus.

Now abide also has the archaic meaning to dwell or live in but its more modern usage is to act in accordance with. We act in accordance with Jesus as we abide in Jesus. Our actions become Jesus’ actions as Jesus abides in us.

As we are connected to the vine, Jesus, we remain in Jesus as Jesus remains in us. Jesus dwells in us as we dwell in Jesus. And we act in accordance with Jesus as he dwells and remains in us. As we remain, dwell and act in accordance with Jesus we bear fruit.

Now it is important that we notice what preposition is used. The Greek preposition is one that designates location which is in, or inside. Jesus does not say to abide with me but abide *in* me. To abide with me carries a connotation of next to or beside, Jesus walking along next to us. But abide in us carries the connotation of Jesus

being inside us not beside us. Jesus remains and dwells inside us, so we act in accordance with the will of Jesus. A branch that is beside the vine but is not in the vine can not bear fruit. The branch must be in the vine to bear fruit. So, Jesus must be in us for us to bear fruit for the vine grower.

The vine grower is God, the Father. God as the vine grower wants us to bear much good quality fruit. Therefore, God planted the true vine, Jesus, in the vineyard of the creation in order that the human creatures, us, may bear much good fruit.

We bear much good fruit so that the father is glorified. How can we glorify God? We glorify God by revealing God to the world as Jesus revealed God to the world. We reveal the essence of God to the world since we are created in the image of God. The essence of God is love. We are created to love God and to love each other. So, we glorify God by bearing the fruits of love.

God wants us to bear an abundance of love, an abundance of good, sweet, juicy fruit for God. In order for the grape vine to bear an abundance of good, sweet, juicy fruit the vine grower must at times prune the vine. The vine grower may cut off branches that are dead and not bearing fruit. The vine grower may cut off branches that are broken and not well connected to the vine. The vine grower may cut off some branches, thinning so the vine may receive more sunlight and produce more fruit. The vine grower removes branches that are dead, broken, and that keep the vine from getting optimal sunlight. The vine grower cuts off all that interferes with the vine producing an abundance of good fruit.

Likewise, God prunes from us all that keeps us from bearing abundant fruit, so we may glorify God. We glorify God by revealing God's love to the world. Therefore, God prunes and cleanses us from all that keeps us from loving. God cuts away all in our lives- emotions, perceptions, self-images, to name a few- that keep us from loving God, loving neighbor, and loving ourselves.

We are to abide in Jesus, for apart from him we can do nothing. Through Jesus we can bear abundant fruit for God and glorify God. We reveal God's love to the world, love for all that God made in the divine image.

But, if being connected to the vine means that we remain, dwell, and abide in Jesus, how does that happen? Is it like the movie *Freaky Friday* where the daughter and mother exchange bodies? Does Jesus' body enter us, and we enter Jesus' body? That seems kind of creepy.

No, that is not how we abide in Jesus and Jesus abides in us. We remain, dwell, and abide in the essence of Jesus, which is also the essence of God, which is love. We remain, dwell and abide in divine love. We live our lives in accordance with divine love. How do we do this? How do we live our lives in accordance with divine love?

We do this by John Wesley's third rule for Methodists which reads "By attending upon all the ordinances of God." Bishop Rueben P. Job interprets this in his book, *Three Simple Rules*, as "Stay in love with God." Bishop Job notes that what ordinances meant to Wesley were practices that keeps the relationship between God and humans vital, alive, and growing. These practices are communal worship, Holy Communion, private and family devotional and prayer time daily, Bible study and

fasting to name a few.¹ While we each may have our individual practices, it is basically those practices that draw us closer to God and in which we experience divine love. These are the things that keep our relationship with God vital, alive and growing.

We remain, dwell, and abide in Jesus and Jesus remains, dwells, and abides in us as we maintain practices every day that keep us in divine love. So be attuned to that which draws you closer to God. Do what brings you more closely in love with God every day. Remain, dwell, and abide in God's love through Jesus so we may reveal God's love to the world.

¹ Reuben P. Job, *Three Simple Rules: A Wesleyan Way of Living*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007) 53.