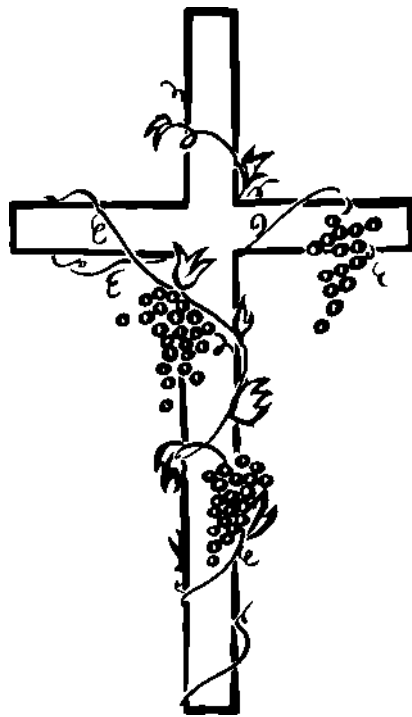


*5th Sunday of Easter*  
*Adaptive Worship Service*

*May 2, 2021*



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Ministers: The People of Grace Lutheran Church

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Welcome! 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.

This is a special bulletin for Grace Lutheran Church. This bulletin is designed to be used at home by anyone who is baptized serving as the Worship Leader. If you use this bulletin for worship, either by itself or alongside our service on YouTube, please fill out the Attendance Record Form on our website: [GraceCLW.com](http://GraceCLW.com)

## ADAPTIVE SERVICE OF THE WORD

### GREETING

Worship Leader: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**Congregation: And also with you.**

### PRAYER OF THE DAY

Worship Leader: 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.

**Congregation: Amen.**

### FIRST READING

#### 1 John 4:7-21

Introduction to the lesson: *We love God and others because God first loved us. We cannot say we love God, whom we have not seen, while hating fellow Christians, whom we regularly see. Love toward God is to be matched by love toward others because the essence of God is love.*

Reader: 7 Dear friends, let us love one another, because love comes from God. Whoever loves is a child of God and knows God. 8 Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. 9 And God showed his love for us by sending his only Son into the world, so that we might have life through him. 10 This is what love is: it is not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the means by which our sins are forgiven.

11 Dear friends, if this is how God loved us, then we should love one another. 12 No one has ever seen God, but if we love one another, God lives in union with us, and his love is made perfect in us.

13 We are sure that we live in union with God and that he lives in union with us, because he has given us his Spirit. 14 And we have seen and tell others that the Father sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. 15 If we declare that Jesus is the Son of God, we live in union with God and God lives in union with us. 16 And we ourselves know and believe the love which God has for us.

God is love, and those who live in love live in union with God and God lives in union with them. 17 Love is made perfect in us in order that we may have courage on the Judgment Day; and we will have it because our life in this world is the same as Christ's. 18 There is no fear in love; perfect love drives out all fear. So then, love has not been made perfect in anyone who is afraid, because fear has to do with punishment.

19 We love because God first loved us. 20 If we say we love God, but hate others, we are liars. For we cannot love God, whom we have not seen, if we do not love others, whom we have seen. 21 The command that Christ has given us is this: whoever loves God must love others also.

*.After the reading...*

Reader: The word of the Lord.

**Congregation: Thanks be to God.**

## **GOSPEL LESSON**

### **John 15:1-8**

Introduction to the Gospel: *On the night of his arrest, Jesus taught his disciples about the relationship they would have with him. Those who abide in his word and love bear fruit, for apart from him, they can do nothing.*

Worship Leader: The Holy Gospel according to John in the 15th chapter.

**Congregation: Glory to you, O Lord.**

Worship Leader: “I am the real vine, and my Father is the gardener. 2 He breaks off every branch in me that does not bear fruit, and he prunes every branch that does bear fruit, so that it will be clean and bear more fruit. 3 You have been made clean already by the teaching I have given you. 4 Remain united to me, and I will remain united to you. A branch cannot bear fruit by itself; it can do so only if it remains in the vine. In the same way you cannot bear fruit unless you remain in me.

5 “I am the vine, and you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will bear much fruit; for you can do nothing without me. 6 Those who do not remain in me are thrown out like a branch and dry up; such branches are gathered up and thrown into the fire, where they are burned. 7 If you remain in me and my words remain in you, then you will ask for anything you wish, and you shall have it. 8 My Father's glory is shown by your bearing much fruit; and in this way you become my disciples.

*After the reading...*

Worship Leader: The gospel of the Lord.

**Congregation: Praise to you, O Christ.**

## **GOSPEL MESSAGE—From Sundays and Seasons**

### **We Are the Branches**

To encourage flowering and fruit production in vines, trees, and shrubs, most of us know that pruning is necessary. This isn't the easiest of work, nor does it make the pruned plant look all that great for a while afterward. Yet often what results after pruning is a plant that is more abundant, beautiful, and healthy than it would have been otherwise.

In our reading today, Jesus makes it very clear that he is the vine, his Father is the vine grower, and we, his disciples, are the branches on which fruit grows. Without the vine and the vine grower, the branches do not exist. Yet, often in our spiritual lives it seems as though we get these roles mixed up. We are wooed by the sense of accomplishment and value that comes from producing results of one kind or another, and we fail to acknowledge the source that makes that "fruit" possible.

However, in today's gospel, Jesus reminds us that our job isn't to produce results; it's to stay connected. "Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing," Jesus says (John 15:5). Jesus is our source and strength; it is only by our connection to Jesus the vine that we the branches bear fruit that will last, such as love, compassion, forgiveness, hope, service, kindness, and patience.

To grow this kind of fruit, Jesus relates how necessary it is for us to be pruned occasionally. In other words, those things that are not of God in our lives have to be rooted out from time to time. The process of pruning isn't always the most enjoyable and can even include a good deal of pain, but it leads to lives that are whole and abundant. As we abide in Jesus, we are given the strength we need to endure the pruning process. We also experience the peace that comes from knowing that the fruit that will follow is for the glory of God.

## **SERMON**

### **HYMN OF THE DAY**

*Awake, O Sleeper, Rise from Death*

*vs. 1 & 2*



- 1 A - wake, O sleep - er, rise from death, and Christ shall give you light;
- 2 To us on earth he came to bring from sin and fear re - lease,
- 3 There is one bod - y and one hope, one Spir - it and one call,
- 4 Then walk in love as Christ has loved, who died that he might save;
- 5 For us Christ lived, for us he died, and con - quered in the strife.



so learn his love, its length and breadth, its full - ness, depth, and height.  
to give the Spir - it's u - ni - ty, the ver - y bond of peace.  
one Lord, one faith, and one bap - tism, one God who made us all.  
with kind and gen - tle hearts for - give as God in Christ for - gave.  
A - wake, a - rise, go forth in faith, and Christ shall give you life.

Text: F. Bland Tucker, 1895–1984

Music: AZMON, Carl G. Gläser, 1784–1829

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## PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Worship Leader: 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.

Prayer Leader: 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. Lord, in your mercy,

**Congregation: hear our prayer.**

Prayer Leader: 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. Lord, in your mercy,

**Congregation: hear our prayer.**

Prayer Leader: 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 (especially Marc Calhoun, Linda Almond, Barbara Haseley, Duke Tieman, Betty Biddle, Cathi Adams, Michael Morales, Wade Buehler, Gloria Holtzclaw, Betty Daege, Dianne William, Rosemarie & George Smith, Gary Neal, Karen Bates, Rev. Lydia Villanueva and family, Don Eunis, Lorraine Reinhard, Bonnie Redler, Kathy Leotta, Brytt Mathis, Joseph Valentin, Rita Burneik, Bobby Schlegel, Hilda Taylor, George Clark, Jill Grote, Larry Timmons, Carl Stone, Neftali Garcia & family, Susan Gunn, Roy Pruitt, Iris Valentin, Deacon Connie Puls, Joan Keeton, Steve Davis, Rose Marie Piff, Gary Mostrum, Vicki Kennedy, Gail Elder, Valerie Smutko, Jason Meadows, Lisa & Ty Hauschild, Bishop Pedro Suarez, Pastor Courtney Erzkus and family, Ralph Burson, Ellen Duncan, Luanne Sekel, Lorraine Chavez, Pat Fredell, Skylar Favos, Audrey Fisher, the family and friends of Kelly Sullivan, and all those suffering from natural

disasters [including all those impacted by COVID-19 and other natural disasters], violence, & terror, and the family & friends of the 550,000+ people in the US & the 2.8 million+ people worldwide who have died from COVID-19). Lord, in your mercy,

**Congregation: hear our prayer.**

Worship Leader: Receive these prayers, O God, and those too deep for words; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Congregation: Amen.**

## **OFFERING**

*Offerings to the mission and ministry of Grace can be made online at [GraceCLW.com](http://GraceCLW.com) (look for the “Donate” button), or (for now) by mailing a check to Grace Lutheran Church, 1812 N. Highland Ave. Clearwater FL 33755. Thank you for your continued financial support during these uncertain times. You can fill out your attendance form on our website as well.*

## **OFFERING PRAYER**

Prayer Leader: Blessed are you, O God, maker of all things. Through your goodness you have blessed us with these gifts: our selves, our time, and our possessions. Use us, and what we have gathered, in feeding the world with your love, through the one who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Congregation: Amen.**

## **THANKSGIVING FOR THE WORD**

Worship Leader: Let us pray. O God of justice and love, we give thanks to you that you illumine our way through life with the words of your Son. Give us the light we need, awaken us to the needs of others, and at the end bring all the world to your feast; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory forever.

**Congregation: Amen.**

## **LORD’S PRAYER**

Worship Leader: Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray in the language closest to our hearts.

**Congregation: 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 and ever. Amen.**

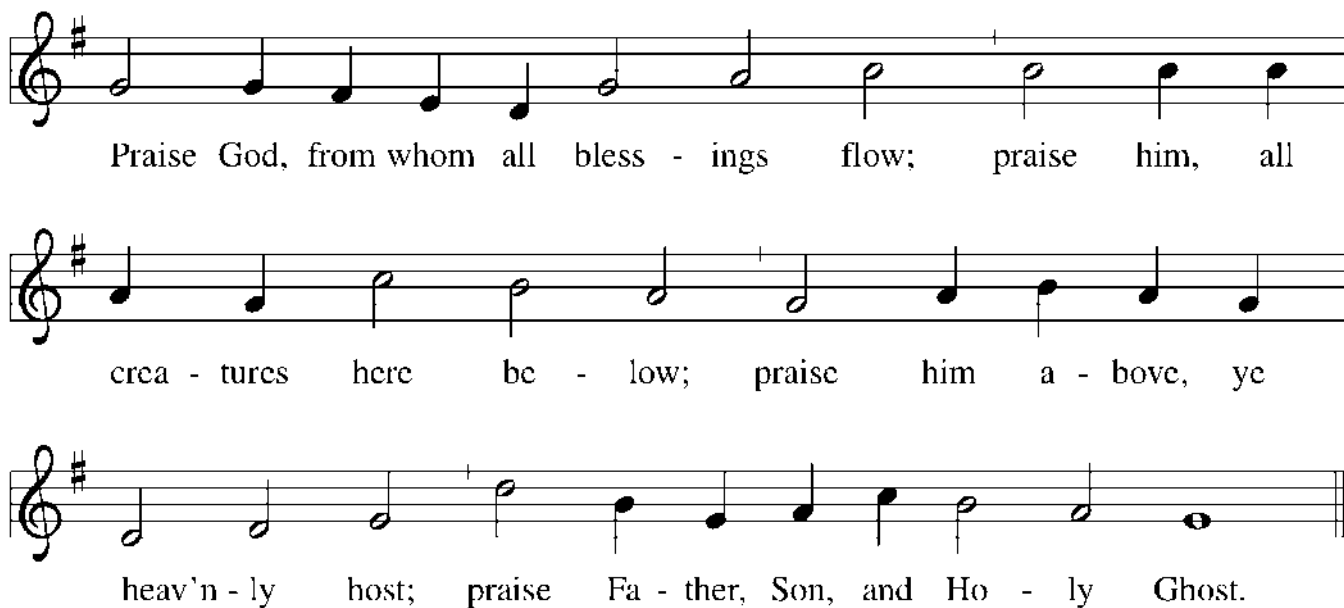
## BLESSING

Worship Leader: The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy. The Lord look upon you with favor and + give you peace .

**Congregation: Amen.**

## SENDING SONG

### *The Doxology*



Praise God, from whom all bless - ings flow; praise him, all  
crea - tures here be - low; praise him a - bove, ye  
heav'n - ly host; praise Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost.

Text: Thomas Ken, 1637–1711

Music: OLD HUNDREDTH, Louis Bourgeois, 1510–1561

## DISMISSAL

Pastor: Together we have heard God's Word and joined in prayer, we have given and have been forgiven. Now our service of worship has ended, and our service to the world begins! Go in peace. Be the light of Christ.

**Congregation: Thanks be to God!**

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