



Part of the Vine

Acknowledgement of Country

Opening meditation

Life for slaves is about orders, compulsion, harsh treatment, little choice.

Life for friends is about respect, mutuality, closeness, honesty.

Jesus says, "I no longer call you slaves, but friends."

Let us embrace our friendship with Jesus.

Let us remove the barriers we erect between us and God.

Let us appreciate the mystical unity that Jesus offers us with the Divine.

Hymn 217 Love divine

Love Divine, all loves excelling,
joy of heaven, to earth come down,
fix in us thy humble dwelling,
all thy faithful mercies crown:
Jesus, thou art all compassion,
pure unbounded love thou art;
visit us with thy salvation,
enter every trembling heart.

Come, almighty to deliver,
let us all thy life receive;
suddenly return, and never,
never more thy temples leave:
thee we would be always blessing,
serve thee as thy hosts above,
pray, and praise thee, without ceasing,
glory in thy perfect love.

Finish then thy new creation,
pure and spotless let us be,
let us see thy great salvation,
perfectly restored in thee:
changed from glory into glory,
till in heaven we take our place,
till we cast our crowns before thee,
lost in wonder, love and praise.

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Opening prayer

Loving God,
we imagine ourselves as a tree
and you as the earth in which we grow...
and the river that gives us life.
You both steady our roots
and draw us to seek the living waters...

You are like the sunlight enticing us taller and stronger
and like the breeze rustling our leaves...

You are with us through hard seasons of summer heat,
and in the nights when winter's frost ice the landscape
your love warms and sustains us.

O Lord, you are everything to us.

So let our gratitude be large,
let our praise be plentiful,
let our worship be full of wonder
and let our silence speak volumes of love.

Through Christ Jesus your ever-living Son.

Confession

Lord Jesus,
as we hear again the image of the vine and branches
you tell us that we are part of you.
And as we reflect on that beautiful image,
we realise that perhaps our greatest sin, our greatest error,
is the thought that we humans are autonomous,
able to live life without reference to you,
forgetting that we draw our life from you,
and that we are intimately connected with all of life around us.

Of course, we can exist by ourselves,
but the life you call us to is far deeper than existence –
it is the abundant life you speak of,
rich in relationships, community, meaning and purpose.

So bring us back, as individuals and as a society,
to the idea that we belong together –
that you knit us together: in families, in workplaces, in friendship groups,
in churches,
in the streets and neighbourhoods, and wherever you have placed us to
grow.

Let us be thankful for the communities in which we live.

Through Christ our Lord. Amen

Declaration

From our epistle reading for today:

In 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. ¹¹ Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another.

Hear then Christ's word of grace, 'Your sins are forgiven.'

Thanks be to God.

Welcome

Announcements

Bible reading 1 John 4: 7-21

Beloved, 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 abides 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 a brother or sister 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.

Song Love canon

Love Love Love
The gospel in a word is love
Love thy neighbour as thy brother
Love Love Love

Anon pd
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John 15: 1-17

"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.⁹As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love.¹⁰If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love.¹¹I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

¹²"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.¹³No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends.¹⁴You are my friends if you do what I command you.¹⁵I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father.¹⁶You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name.¹⁷I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.

Reflection:

Hymn *104 While morning still is breaking (tune 361)*

**While morning still is breaking,
and day replaces night,
beneath God's care awaking
we thank him for new light.
We thank him that he calls us
to life and health anew;
whatever now befalls us
his care will still be true.**

**O Israel's guardian, hear us,
Watch o'er us this day;
in all we do be near us.
For others, too, we pray;
to you we would commend them,
our Church, our youth, our land;
direct them and defend them
when dangers are at hand.**

**O grant us peace and gladness,
give us our daily bread,
shield us from grief and sadness,
on us your blessings shed.
Grant that our whole behaviour
in truth and righteousness
may praise you, Lord, our Saviour,
whose holy name we bless.**

**You are our vine: O nourish
your branches, so that we
may grow in you and flourish
and ever fruitful be;
your Spirit pour within us,
and let the gifts of grace
to those good actions win us
that best may show your praise.**

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Offering

Prayers for others

In these final days of the Easter season,
we continue to reflect on what resurrection means.
We can relate to the women who fled the tomb with terror and amazement.
We understand Thomas and his need for proof that would come
only by touching the wounds and seeing the nail marks.
We appreciate the fear and confusion
that kept the disciples behind closed doors.

We also keep company with the travellers on the Emmaus road
who felt the strange burning of the truth, hope and love
woven into the sadness that consumed them on their walk.
We find ourselves in the eternal movement
between fear and faith, doubt and conviction, worry and wonder,
and we know that you are present with us, O God.

We trust that like the early disciples we will be able to stand
and tell the whole message that Easter points to, that:
Love is stronger than hate
Life has the final word over death
Beyond what we can see with our eyes,
there is a bond of humanness that draws and keeps us together.

Continue to strengthen the voices of reason and peace
in our world of foolishness and conflict.
Perhaps those voices speak in whispers, but they speak nonetheless.
May those whispers rise to shouts
that proclaim the way forward with words and not weapons
in Gaza, Israel, Iran, in Ukraine, and so many other parts of our world.

As the machines of greed, war and over-consumption
trample the world and its peoples,
we remember that there are seeds of justice and love and goodness and
grace
that are planted and watered every moment of every day.
We give thanks for those who:

- rise early in the morning to prepare and distribute food for the hungry,
even in this building
- listen, help and search for housing for the homeless;
- keep watch alongside the sick and dying;
- love and comfort those with difficult diagnoses
- boldly advocate for justice for the voiceless
- speak words of compassion in the face of hate.

It is a complicated and frightening world.
Strengthen us as we engage it
with love and passion inspired by Christ Jesus,
in whose name we pray. Amen.

Hymn *518 For the bread and for the wine*

**For the bread and for the wine,
For the pledge that seals Him mine,
For the words of love divine,
We give Thee thanks, O Lord.**

**Only bread and only wine,
Yet to faith, the solemn sign
Of the heav'nly and divine!
We give Thee thanks, O Lord.**

**For the words that turn our eye
To the cross of Calvary,
Bidding us in faith draw nigh,
We give Thee thanks, O Lord.**

**For the words that fragrance breathe
These plain symbols underneath,**

**Words that His own peace bequeath,
We give Thee thanks, O Lord.**

**For Thy words in Spirit, shown,
For Thy will to us made known,
“Do ye this until I come,”
We give Thee thanks, O Lord.**

**Till He come we take the bread,
Type of Him on whom we feed,
Him who liveth and was dead!
We give Thee thanks, O Lord.**

**Till He come we take the cup;
As we at His table sup,
Eye and heart are lifted up!
We give Thee thanks, O Lord.**

**For that coming, here foreshown,
For that day to man unknown,
For the glory and the throne,
We give Thee thanks, O Lord.**

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Holy Communion

INVITATION

Friends, come to the banquet, prepared lovingly for you.
Don't miss the grace;
don't misunderstand the invitation;
but don't imagine you can choose who will be your table companions,
for the invitation is open and broad
and all at the table become our sisters and brothers.

Let us pray

GREAT PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

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.

It is right and our great joy,
gracious Father,
always and everywhere to give you thanks.

In the beginning
your Spirit swept across the face of the waters,
bringing order and beauty out of chaos.
You formed us in your own image
and breathed into us the breath of life.
Though we turned away from you,
your love remained steadfast.
You called people,
like Abraham and Sarah,
to leave comfortable places and migrate to new horizons,
trusting you for each step.
When the time was right,
you sent your only Son Jesus Christ
to reveal in greater depth your loving ways.

In the power of the Spirit
he was sent to preach good news to the poor,
to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,
and to announce that the time had come
when you would save your people.

Sharing our human nature,
he died on the cross.
Raised again in glory,
he lives for ever to pray for us.
By the gift of the Spirit,
whom you have sent in his name,
you bring to completion the work of your Son,
leading us into all truth,
making us a people for your praise
and giving us power to proclaim the Gospel
in all the world.

And so, with all the faithful of every time and place,
we join with choirs of angels in the eternal hymn:
Holy, holy, holy Lord,

**God of power and might.
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

On the night before he died,
the Lord Jesus took bread and gave you thanks.
He broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying,
'Take, eat. This is my body given for you.
Do this in remembrance of me'.

After supper, he took the cup of wine.
He gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying,
'Drink from this, all of you.
This is my blood of the new covenant,
poured out for all people
for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this in remembrance of me'.

And so,
in remembrance of all his mighty acts,
we offer you these gifts,
and ourselves to be used in your service.
You send forth your Spirit.
You bind us in love.
You renew the face of the earth.

Pour out your Holy Spirit
that these gifts of bread and wine
may be for us the body and blood of Christ.
Unite us with him and with one another
in mission to all the world;
and bring us with the whole creation
to your heavenly kingdom.
Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all blessing and honour and glory and power
be yours for ever and ever. Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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 for ever. Amen

BREAKING OF THE BREAD

DISTRIBUTION

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Lord, we have come at your bidding and eaten at your table of grace.
May this meal transform us from the inside out;
living in love, serving in peace
and seeing anew our role as your people.
In the holy name of Christ we pray.

Hymn *531 Sent forth by God's blessing*

**Sent forth by God's blessing, our true faith confessing,
the people of God from his table take leave.
The supper is ended: may now be extended
the fruits of his service in all who believe.
The seed of his teaching, our hungry souls reaching,
shall blossom in action for all humankind.
His grace shall incite us, his love shall unite us
to work for his kingdom, his purpose to find.**

**With praise and thanksgiving to God ever-living
the task of our everyday life we will face,
our faith ever sharing, in love ever caring,
embracing as neighbours all those of each race.
One feast that has fed us, one light that has led us,
unite us as one in his life that we share.
Then may all the living, with praise and thanksgiving,
give honour to Christ and his name that we bear.**

Sending forth and blessing

Friends, go forth to be fruitful branches in the garden
in which you've been placed.

And in the tender love of God,
may you find your rest.

In the living vine of Christ,
may you uncover your purpose.

And in the gentle breath of the Spirit,
may you discover your refreshment.