



Worship-at-home—Fifth Sunday of Easter  
May 2, 2021

*God's love for us is never ending!*

**Prelude**

Thank you Keith Haan

Welcome to worship-at-home on this Fifth Sunday in Easter. In today's gospel we hear what Jesus taught his disciples on the night of his arrest about the relationship they would have with him. He told them that those who abide in his word and love bear fruit, for apart from him, they can do nothing.

Happy Birthday to Mary Lou Kelley, Char Engstrom, and Jan Berndt who celebrate this week.

Activity is beginning in Zion's Food Pantry. This week volunteers inventoried food and cleaned the pantry as we continue to consider how and when to re-open. If you are interested in participating in this ministry, please contact Deacon Janine.

If you experience a need for pastoral care at any time, please don't hesitate to call Deacon Janine Johnson directly or through the Zion office. Deacon Janine's phone number and email address can be found in the Zion directory.

Thank you for your faithful support to Zion's ministry.

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

**Thanksgiving for Baptism**  
**Kyrie** (ELW p. 213)

Deacon Janine Johnson  
Thank you Doug Kalkwarf

**Song of Praise** (ELW p. 213-215)

**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.**

**Children's Message**

Thank you Rosie Bates

Today's second lesson is from the First Letter of John, the fourth chapter, beginning with the seventh verse. In my Bible this section has been given the title "God Is Love." These words are familiar to us; we have heard them often. God loved us so much that he sent his Son Jesus. In 1 John, verse 16 tells us that "God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them." But what does abide in love mean? Acting in a loving way? Putting love at the center of all we do? You could say that it's as simple as loving one another as God has loved us. But sometimes loving one another isn't so simple. How do you love the bully who calls you names at school? How do you love the sister who wears your new shirt without even asking and then spills all over it? How do you love the person on the other soccer team that pushes you and makes you lose the ball? Not so simple. But because God's love lives in us, we have been given the command – and also the power through his Spirit – to love one another, our brothers and sisters, the ones we know and the ones we do not. And we do our best to act in loving ways, even when our brother's snoring keeps us up all night!

Let's pray.

Dear God,

Thank you for loving us. Help us to love one another as you have loved us.

Amen.

**Readings** Psalm 22:25-31  
1 John 4:7-21

Thank you Carol Feeney

**Gospel** John 15:1-8

## Reflection

Deacon Janine Johnson

The past couple weeks I have been wandering around my yard, taken a couple walks along Lake Superior and walked around my mom's yard enjoying the new growth and life springing from God's good creation. As I walked around, I found dead branches from bushes that Dennis had pruned back in the fall, which are now showing green buds, the lilacs have begun to show flowers and Lake Superior was depositing driftwood along the shoreline. It's amazing to see how what we might think is dead God brings back to life, a life that is nourished and connected to what God has created and makes new all the time.

Today as we hear about vines and branches and abiding in Jesus, I thought I would bring in a living thing and a not so living thing. One is a pine knot that long ago was separated from its source of nourishment and life. I'm not sure how long this branch had been laying on the ground in the Boundary Waters of northern Minnesota before I found it while on a canoe trip many years ago, but clearly long enough that there was no life left in it then or now. I could put it in a bucket of water, or I could put it in the ground, but it is not coming back to life. It has been separated from that which would nourish it and keep it growing and producing fruit and in the case of this branch the fruit would have been pine needles. It can no longer live as it has no life source. It has been separated for decades from its nourishment and foundation the trunk and its roots.

I also brought in a kalanchoe plant. It's similar to a plant I had a few years ago, which I had cut back and left outside through the winter. Dennis found it, brought it in, put it a sunny spot and started to water it. I was sure this plant was dead, but over time with some care my kalanchoe started to show new life. It's amazing to see how what we might think is dead God brings back to life; a life that is connected to what God creates and makes new all the time. This kalanchoe unlike my pine knot will stay connected to its roots; connected to the soil and roots that will provide it the nourishment and food it will need to grow and produce fruit.

Jesus says, "I am the true vine and my Father is the vine grower." Like the vine that brings the nutrients from the earth and the water that nurtures and nourishes the branches as they grow and produce fruit Jesus is the source of our nourishment and water, so that we may grow and produce fruit. Jesus says that the Father, the vine grower will prune away what is not producing fruit so that the vine will be able to bring forth more. I must admit I'm not much of a gardener, but this lesson about the vine and the branches really connects for me, especially when we listen further to these words that are spoken. Jesus' words of comfort, "Abide in me as I abide in you." Here Jesus tells the disciples and us to live and trust in him as he is already living in them and in us. Jesus is the source of all we need for life; all that we need to grow and produce fruit, all that we need to sustain life our life with him.

How are we nourished by the vine? How do we abide in Jesus and how do we let him abide in us? The way this happens is by our staying connected to the community of faith by not separating ourselves from that which brings and sustains our life in the living Christ. The vine keeps us connected and in relationship with our living loving and nurturing God through our sisters and brothers in faith, who are branches just like us. When we participate in the daily life of the community through worship, in Bible study, through prayer, and in being nourished by the bread and wine, the vine brings new growth and produces fruit in each one of us. In community we are the branches that are connected to the vine of Jesus and as we are connected, we are able to share with the world, our neighbors, and the stranger the gracious love and compassion of God. We become like my kalanchoe, which grows and flourishes through the nourishment and nurturing that is provided by this community of faith.

But how do we make sure the fruit that God produces in us and that we see within the four walls of Zion Lutheran Church gets shared outside these walls? How does the God who abides and lives in each one of us move from this building? How is God, who is the vine grower, get reflected in the rest of our lives. It is reflected when we respond to the needs of a hungry family; when we reach out with phone calls and cards to those who have been isolated as the result of COVID or when we share a smile with a stranger. Jesus who abides in us shines through to the community when they see us work together in love and understanding to find compromises and consensus on challenging issues both within our four walls and out in the world. As the branches and the fruit produced from the vine, we become the reflection of the nurturing loving care that the vine grower shows the vine and the branches a love that abides and lives within each and every one of us.

In the good times, in the challenging times and in those times, we feel separated from the love of God we trust that God will be there. God is found in the community that is the body of Christ. In the living ever growing vine. Unlike my pine knot that has been separated from the tree that had provided it with the nourishment to continue to grow and produce leaves we are like the kalanchoe that continues to grow and thrive, because it continues to be connected to the soil and roots, it's foundation which brings it the food necessary to grow and produce fruit and produce it abundantly. For us as followers of Christ that nourishment that life giving food is the good news of the forgiveness of sins and life eternal received in Jesus' resurrection. As branches connected to the living vine that is Jesus Christ we are continually nourished and fed through participation in worship, hearing the word of God, remembering our baptism, sharing in the bread and wine and living in community where we are supported by one another. So as the branches connected to the true vine may the fruit, we produce reflect God's love and compassion for the world and for one another, may we remember that to flourish and grow we need to abide in Jesus just as he abides in us. Go in peace knowing that the vine that is Jesus wraps his love around you the branches.

**Song** ELW 826 *Thine the Amen*

Thank you Doug Kalkwarf

**Prayers of the People:** 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. 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.**

### **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**

**COMMUNION SERVICE**—Communion is available this Wednesday, 5/05 at 12 noon and 12:30pm. Please call the church office or email your request to reserve a space. 563-322-3533 or [office@ziondavenport.org](mailto:office@ziondavenport.org)

**SUNDAY WORSHIP TIMES**—We will continue to offer In-Person worship on Sundays at 9:00am and 10:30am using the reservation process through May 23rd, The Day of Pentecost. Pastor Clark arrives Monday, May 17th as Zion's pastor and his input will be included in deciding the future worship time.

*This assumes that there are no significant changes in the community's healthcare capacity due to Covid-19 infections that cause us to move from Phase II to Phase I of re-opening.*