

Our Service of Worship for May 2, 2021

THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Westwood First Presbyterian Church

Cincinnati, OH

Welcome and Announcements

Prelude: “God Is Love, Let Heaven Adore Him”—arr. Carolyn Hamlin

During the Prelude, you are invited to take a moment to prepare for worship.

Call to Worship and Opening Prayer

Hymn: “Love Divine, All Loves Excelling” *

A Time of Confession

Prayer for Illumination

Scripture Readings: *1 John 4:7-21 and John 15:1-17* *

Sermon: “*Abide In Love*”

A Time of Offering

Solo: “Sometimes a Light Surprises”—Craig Vourtney
Noelle Scheper, soprano

Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper

Invitation to the Lord’s Table

The Prayer of Thanksgiving and the Words of Institution/Sharing of the Elements

The Pastoral Prayer After Communion/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 debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Hymn: “Though I May Speak” *

ABIDE

Charge and Benediction

Postlude: “Prelude and Fugue in C Major”—J. S. Bach

* The words to the hymns and readings are included with the order of worship.

Rev. Dr. Jeff Colarossi
Pastor

Heather MacPhail
Organist/Director of Music Ministries

Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

1. 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.
2. Breathe, O breathe thy loving Spirit, into every troubled breast!
Let us all in Thee inherit, let us find the promised rest.
Take away the love of sinning; Alpha and Omega be.
End of faith, as its beginning, set our hearts at liberty.
3. Come, Almighty, to deliver, let us all Thy life receive.
Suddenly return, and never, nevermore 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.

Though I May Speak

1. Though I may speak with bravest fire, and have the gift to all inspire,
And have not love, my words are vain, as sounding brass, and hopeless gain.
2. Though I may give all I possess, and striving so my love profess,
But not be given by love within, the profit soon turns strangely thin.
3. Come, Spirit, come, our hearts control, our spirits long to be made whole.
Let inward love guide every deed; by this we worship and are freed.

First Reading: 1 John 4:7-21—God Is Love



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 Reading: John 15:1-17—Jesus the True Vine

¹ “I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower. ² He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. ³ You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. ⁴ Abide 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. ⁵ I 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.

⁶ Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. ⁷ If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸ My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples. ⁹ As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. ¹⁰ If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love. ¹¹ I 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. ¹³ No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. ¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command you. ¹⁵ I 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. ¹⁶ You 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. ¹⁷ I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.

Moment for Meditation—Abiding

Abiding with Jesus (staying close to Him and following His lead) equips us to bear the fruit of the Spirit, the foundation of the faithful life. That’s why our devotional life is indispensable; it is the one choice we need to make each day. If walking with Him is not our main concern, then Jesus warns us that anything we do apart from Him will result in nothing—nothing of eternal value that will bring glory to God.

A branch bears fruit by simply abiding. Christians, though, must be wholeheartedly committed to abiding—to concentrate our thoughts and affections on Christ. My definition of abiding is consistently sitting at the feet of Jesus, listening to His Word with a heart to obey. Twentieth-century pastor R. A. Torrey challenged, “If we are to obtain from God all that we ask from Him, Christ’s words must abide or continue in us. We must study His words, fairly devour His words, let them sink into our thought and into our heart, keep them in our memory, obey them constantly in our life, let them shape and mold our daily life and our every act. This is really the method of abiding in Christ.”

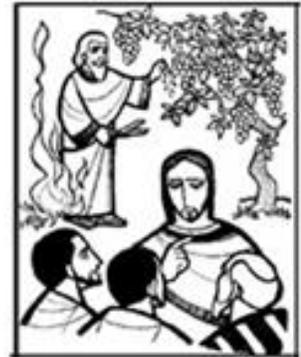
I cannot imagine attempting to live faithfully without the blessing of abiding. Being still before God allows the Lord to speak to us through His Word, which is alive and active and exposes our innermost thoughts and desires. It is in this quiet time that we are less engaged with the world and more receptive to hear from God and seek His guidance for the faithful way. It is the one thing worth being concerned about if we desire to be faithful.

~ Cynthia Heald, from *The Faithful Way*

I Am the Vine

"I am the vine: you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." John 15:5 (NIV)

The puzzle is based on John 15:1-8



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| FIRE | THROWN | WORDS | PRUNES | CLEAN |
| TRUE | FRUIT | REMAIN | VINE | BEAR |