



Johnsville United Methodist Church

Union Bridge, MD

Our mission is to nurture the members of the congregation in developing a personal relationship with God and to share His word and His love with the larger community.

PRAISE, WORSHIP AND CELEBRATION

Easter 5 – May 2, 2021

PRELUDE

“Spirit Song” (Wimber)

WELCOME

Opening Hymn

“Great Is the Lord”

TFWS 2022

Refrain

Great is the Lord,
he is holy and just;
by his power we trust
in his love.
Great is the Lord,
he is faithful and true;
by his mercy he proves
he is love.

1. Great is the Lord
and worthy of glory!
Great is the Lord
and worthy of praise.
Great is the Lord;
now lift up your voice,
now lift up your voice;
Great is the Lord!
Great is the Lord!

Refrain

2. Great is the Lord
and worthy of glory!
Great is the Lord
and worthy of praise.
Great is the Lord;
now lift up your voice,
now lift up your voice:
Great is the Lord!
Great is the Lord!

Refrain

Call to Worship: (John 15)

Leader: Come to the vineyard of God.

People: We seek Christ, the vine of great love.

Leader: Drink from the waters of life.

People: We live in the light of God's grace.

Leader: Come to the vineyard of God.

People: All are welcome here.

Opening Prayer (John 15)

God of love, plant us in the soil of your grace. Nurture us with the strength of Christ, the vine of everlasting life. Enlighten us with the wisdom of your Spirit, which flows through us today and all days. Abide in us, that we may abide in you and live in your love. In your holy name, we pray. Amen.

Special Music

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

O God, source of love and life, your glory knows no bounds. We yearn to set aside our fears, but we are often afraid. The past year or so we have been surrounded by various fears. We long to love our brothers and sisters, but we often feel alienated from them. We desire to abide in you as you abide in us, but there are days that we can't seem to figure out how. Show us once more how to love, for only love can cast out fear. Show us how to love one another well, for then can we truly know you. Show us how to abide in your vine, for only then can we bear the fruit that glorifies your name. Continue to bless our churches that we will connect with the surrounding community in new ways that all may come to know the name of your son, Jesus.

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.

Hymn

"Go, Make of All Disciples"

UMH 571

1. "Go, make of all disciples."

We hear the call, O Lord,
that comes from thee, our Father,
in thy eternal Word.

Inspire our ways of learning
through earnest, fervent prayer,
and let our daily living
reveal thee everywhere.

2. "Go, make of all disciples,"

baptizing in the name
of Father, son, and Spirit,
From age to age the same.

We call each new disciple
to follow thee, O Lord,
redeeming soul and body
By water and the Word.

3. "Go, make of all disciples."

We at thy feet would stay
until each life's vocation
accents thy holy way.

We cultivate the nature
God plants in every heart,

4. "Go, make of all disciples."

We welcome thy command.

"Lo, I am with you always."

We take thy guiding hand.
The task looms large before us;
we follow without fear;

revealing in our witness
the master teacher's art.

in heaven and earth thy power
Shall bring God's kingdom here.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Epistle Lesson: 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.

Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love.

God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him.

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.

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

No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.

By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.

we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world.

God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God.

So 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.

Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgement, because as he is, so are we in this world.

There 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.

We love because he first loved us.

Those 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.

The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.

Gospel Lesson: John 15:1-8

'I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine-grower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit.

Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit.

You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you.

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.

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.

Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned.

If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.

Response to Scriptures:

Leader: This is the word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God!

Sermon: "Abide in the Love of the Lord" Rev. Shari McCourt

This morning's epistle lesson from 1John, and gospel lesson from John15 go together nicely, and give depth to one another. The text from 1John 4 is a text that teaches, and sums up the source of all love, and our connection to that source. It is a profound prioritizing of God's love for us that makes it possible for us to love one another.

1 John 4:7 says, "Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God." I often listen with great intension when someone claims to love others, and claims that they have no belief in God. I wonder how that can be. Love is from God! It does not materialize out of thin air. Our creator God is the source of all love. This same Lord of all, created all living things. Our self-giving God, gave of God's self in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Love upon love and grace upon grace was freely given so that we might be born again, and know the fullness of God's love. Love has many facets, sides, dimensions and depth. Love is a verb!

The passage that comes right before this one, talks about all that Christ has done for us centering himself in the midst of our love for one another, as community. It assures us that we are guided by His Spirit, and warns us against false prophets. When we stay connected to our Lord, we remain safe in the love of the Lord. Our connections with one another are to be pure, as God's love for us is unconditional and pure. We are to abide in Jesus Love. The word "abide" according to *The New interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, volume 1, page 9; says it means:

“to stay, tarry, or dwell, to aside from a journey, to remain in a place or to seek shelter. Metaphorically, *abide* refers to being in God’s care: “Let me abide in your tent forever” (Ps 61:4). Abiding in God’s tent requires that one honor the LORD and do what is right (Ps 15:1-5).*Abiding* is an important concept for Johannine literature. The disciples who *abide* in Jesus also abide in God’s love (1John 4:13-16).

The word *abide* leads us into our gospel text from John 15:1-4, “I am the true vine, and my Father is the Vinegrower. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. 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.” The vine is the life source for a plant. The roots offer stability, strength to support growth and provide nutrients –the food for life.

When a branch is cut off of the vine, it is cut off from its life source, and it dies. A branch cannot live by its self. It withers and dies. When a branch is pruned it bleeds, and pulls energy from the life source of the vine to grow stronger, and produce more fruit. When we look back over our lives most of us can think about times in our lives when have been pruned back, and how much it hurt. But then, when the wound scabbed over, and form a scar there was strength in us that had never been present before. For some of us we can now see where the Gardener, our God, pruned us to make us stronger, and guide us in a new way that has led to the life we have.

Recently, I was talking with someone who was trying so hard to be helpful, and expressed a real desire to “fix” a dispute within a family situation. This person’s intention was very good. Relying on good intention alone, without a prayer for guidance, discernment from the Holy Spirit, or the prevenient grace of God preparing the way, the “good intentioned person” created a huge stink storm within their family. Many of us have done the same thing! Scripture contains such wisdom for us all in every stage of life. Jesus made it clear that if we are to be fruitful, then we must remain connected to him. We must *abide* in him. We can do nothing of any good without him. Our good intentions are not enough, without him we are a branch that will wither and die.

These texts help us to look at our own lives to see where we are missing opportunities to connect with Jesus, and his love. We can look at the places that our own “ego” of good intention, has caused us to separate from the branch and Source of All Life. We are to talk with him, worship him, read scripture, the Lord’s word, and do his work. All of these things help us to better trust in Jesus and keep our connection. We also need to ask the Holy Spirit to live in us daily, and throughout the day!

The True Vine Grower is calling us to be the branches that reach out into the community bringing people home to God to abide with the Lord. Let us prayerfully plan to extend the branches of God’s love into this community!

OFFERING OF OUR GIFTS TO GOD

Many thanks for your faithfulness in supporting the ministries of the church.

As an act of worship, please consider keeping current in your tithes and offerings. Even though the church building is closed, we still have financial obligations we need to meet. The mailbox will be checked daily. The address is: St. Paul United Methodist Church, P.O. Box 250, New Windsor, MD 21776

OFFERTORY

DOXOLOGY

“Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow”

UMH 94

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below:
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Praise God, the source of all our gifts!
Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts!
Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Offering Prayer

(1 John 4, John 15)

Beloved Generous God, abide not only in us, but in the gifts we now return to you. Let your abundant love flow through these offerings, that others may know and experience your constant, abiding love. In Christ’s name, we pray. Amen.

Closing Hymn

“They’ll Know We Are Christian by Our Love”

TFWS 2223

1. We are one in the Spirit,
we are one in the Lord,
we are one in the Spirit,
we are one in the Lord,
and we pray that all unity
may one day be restored:

Refrain

And they’ll know
we are Christians
by our love, by our love;
yes, they’ll know
we are Christians by our love.

2. We will walk with each other,
we will walk hand in hand,
we will walk with each other,
we will walk hand in hand,
and together we’ll spread the news
that God is in our land:

Refrain

3. We will work with each other,
we will work side by side,
we will work with each other,
we will work side by side,
and we’ll guard human dignity
and save human pride:

Refrain

4. All praise to the Father,
from whom all things come,
and all praise to Christ Jesus,
God’s only Son,
and all praise to the Spirit,
who makes us one:

Refrain

BENEDICTION

Beloved, let us love one another for love is from God. Let us be reborn into His love each day. Let us rededicate ourselves to growing as His disciples so that we may be His vine reaching out into the world making disciples in His name. Amen.

POSTLUDE

“Let Us Break Bread” (Afro-American spiritual)