

Order of Worship for May 2, 2021 – 5th Sunday of Easter

Watch the livestream at 10:00 am here <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC-aWw0Tc165vh6Epdr-XBxw>

WE APPROACH OUR GRACIOUS GOD

PRELUDE

WELCOME

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TREATY

The land where we live and work is ours to use for a moment in time. This land has been home to many before us and will be home to many after us. Here in Grande Prairie, we live and work on land shared under Treaty #8. It is the homeland of the Beaver and the Cree. Now we live together as treaty peoples.

LIFE & WORK OF THE CONGREGATION

CALL TO WORSHIP

May the Peace of Christ be with you

And also with you

We gather as branches growing from the vine.

We gather as people who seek to bear spiritual fruit.

Holding tight to Christ, the True Vine, who helps us grow strong.

God who gives the growth has called us here for renewal, let us worship together.

LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE

In this Season of new growth, new life, new hope,

We light a candle to remind us of the Light which could not be put out, the light that shines from the Empty Tomb.

Let us centre ourselves for worship....

OPENING PRAYER

God of Love, God revealed in Jesus, the True Vine we are works in progress:

water us and feed our hungry souls, so that we would be productive branches.

Bring us the light we need to bear fruit.

We are branches of the one vine, of Jesus.

Bend us, shape us, and prune us, for we would wither without you.

Make us stronger in our faithfulness for the Son has taught us how to love

and shaped us by this love, a love that is warm and true.

We thank You for your gift of presence that is intertwined in our faithfulness,

the faithfulness of disciples of the True Vine, Jesus. Amen.

(written by Roxanne Williams *Gathering:Lent/Easter 2021* p.45, adapted)

Gathering Hymn: 395 VU Come In Come In and Sit Down 1L

WE SHARE AS GOD'S CHILDREN THE BIBLE'S STORY IN WORD AND IN SONG:

A TIME FOR THE YOUNG AT HEART *The Many-Branched Vine*

PRAYER FOR AND ASSURANCE OF GRACE

Source of life, you offer us roots that will feed and sustain us.

Sometimes we cling to those roots.

Sometimes we insist on relying on our own roots, our own strength, our own sources of sustenance.

In Jesus, the True Vine you invite us to remain connected to You and to each other, spreading as branches of the tree of Love, spreading Love and hope into the corners and crevices of life.

Sometimes we feel disconnected, cut off from the vine, isolated from those things that sustain us.

Sometimes we decide we don't need the vine, and then wonder why our leaves droop and we start to wither.

God of life in abundance, God who calls us to be fruitful branches, when we cut ourselves away from the vine, when we insist on doing things on our own, when we resist your attempts to prune and guide us for better growth: **forgive our headstrong natures, show us how to reconnect, renew our lives to help us bloom.**

...time of silent prayer...

Our faith story begins and ends in a garden. The God who creates and re-creates us is a gardener, watering and weeding and pruning to give growth. This same God calls us to be connected and rooted in the soil of love so that we can grow and be fruitful. In Christ God forgives us and helps our branches renew our connection to the vine. God helps us grow to full flower, rooted in God's love. This is Good News!

Thanks be to God! Hallelujah!

SCRIPTURE LESSONS

John 15:1-11

A MOMENT OF REFLECTION

~ trusting that God is at work in our midst we allow the words we have heard to settle and stir in our souls

SERMON *Roots and Connections Keep Us Healthy*

Hymn: Abide With ME –

(Gathering p23) Written By Elaine Bidgood Sweet, *Gathering:Lent/Easter 2021* Used With Permission

WE EXPRESS OUR GRATITUDE TO GOD AND PREPARE FOR MINISTRY IN THE WORLD

THE OFFERING

Mission Minute *Women Work for Change in Zambia*

<https://united-church.ca/stories/women-work-change-zambia>

The Invitation:

WE GREET EACH OTHER WITH THE PEACE OF CHRIST

~ you are invited to use the chat box on YouTube to share words of Peace with each other

Sharing of Celebrations and Concerns

Celebration of Communion

INVITATION

Here at this table we join in a ritual that stretches through time and space.

Here God invites us to share in the banquet of life.

This is God's table, and God invites all who seek to follow the Way of Jesus Christ to eat and drink from it.

Come and taste the grace eternal, come and see that God is good.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

May the Peace of Christ, the love of God, and the Power of the Holy Spirit be with you.

And also with you

God of life, in the beginning of our story you decided to do a new thing. You spoke and creation came into being.

And we join with millions who have gone before us to share words of praise and thanksgiving for this universe you spoke into being.

Then after a while you decided again to do a new thing.

You called Abram and Sarai into a new life, promising that through them the world would be blessed.

The new thing continued through the lives of their children and grandchildren through many generations.

Then the people were enslaved and you once again did a new thing.

Calling Moses and Aaron and Miriam to lead the people to freedom,

giving them a set of rules to guide how they lived with you and with each other, covenanting to be with them always.

Over time the people would forget their part of the covenant, they would wander from the path.

And you would send messengers to call them back, men and women filled with your Spirit.

Remembering all these gifts, all these new things, all these ways you attempted to renew and mend the world we join in the old songs of praise and thanksgiving.

THE STORY IS TOLD

Eventually, looking at the world, you again decided to do a new thing.

You chose to become one of us, Word-made-Flesh, to share the joys and sorrows, the slings and arrows of our lives.

In Jesus of Nazareth, child of Mary you walked among your people

Jesus revealed a new way of being, Jesus revealed what it would look like to live a life based on love for all he met, Jesus challenged his peers and challenges us to live as though the Kingdom of God was really present in our midst.

But the world was not ready for Jesus' message, for his challenge, for the Kingdom.

And so he was arrested, tried, convicted, executed.

But then you once again did a new thing!

You raised Jesus from death, shattering the bondage of the grave.

Here at this table we remember a meal Jesus shared with his closest friends.

During that meal he took bread, blessed it, broke it and passed it to them saying:

Take, Eat, this is my body broken by the world. Whenever you eat this loaf remember me.

Then he took a cup of wine, blessed it and passed it to them saying:

Take, Drink, this is the cup of the new covenant, sealed in my blood. Whenever you drink from it remember me.

Joining with the community of Christian faith across the miles and the centuries we continue to eat and drink and remember.

As we share this bread and this cup send your Spirit upon and among us. In the eating and the drinking may our commitment to living as people of The Way be strengthened.

Fill us with hope for the present and the future so that as people of hope we are ready to give of our selves so that your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

As we gather at this table, unite our hearts and souls with our brothers and sisters in faith across the country and around the globe.

We pray in the name and memory of Jesus, the man from Nazareth; whom we call Christ and Messiah, and who encourages us to pray together saying:

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 that trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil:

for thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever.

Amen

BREAKING, POURING, SHARING

The Bread we share is the Bread of Life.

The Cup we share is the Cup of Love

Gifts from God for the people of God.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

God who invites us to the table,

We have eaten, we have drunk, we have tasted your goodness.

May the meal we share here today awaken our hunger for the Banquet of Life.

May the company of these brothers and sisters renew our commitment to live as people of the Kingdom of Love.

God who regularly does a new thing,

As we go out from this meal may we be refreshed and renewed.

When the next new thing comes along may we have:

the wisdom to discern if it is from you,

the courage to embrace what you offer,

and the energy to journey with you on the road.

We pray in the name of Jesus, our Teacher and Guide, our Rock and Redeemer. **Amen.**

Hymn: 481 VU Sent Forth by God's Blessing 1L

COMMISSIONING:

Jesus Christ, the True Vine, reaches out around the world.

As branches grafted to, and growing from, the vine we grow vibrant and bear fruit.

As branches from the vine may we spread the promise of life and love into every corner of our world

And at the same time remain connected to the Source, rooted in the power and love of God.

Go with God: the Creator and Parent, the Risen Christ, the Spirit filling our lungs.

Blessed be God who gives us Growth. Hallelujah! Amen.

SUNG BENEDICTION: Let Our Earth Be Peaceful (1L)

POSTLUDE