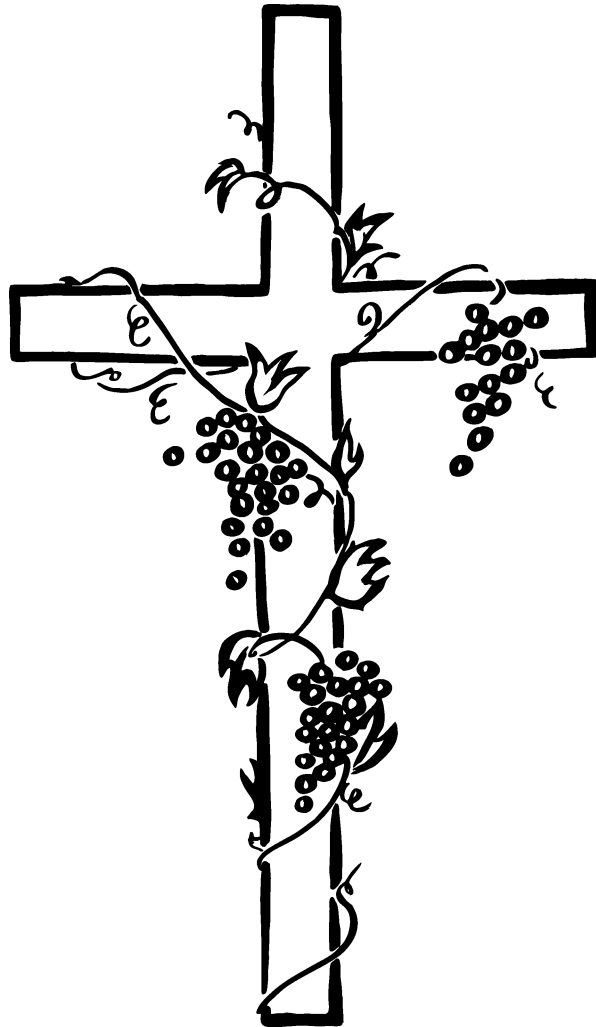


Dennison & Vang Lutheran Parish

5th Sunday of Easter

Sunday, May 2, 2021



GATHERING

Welcome

Mission Moment – Brian Koester (*Vang Council and Stewardship Team member*)

Call to Worship – “God is Love” (*from 1 John 4*)

Let us love one another, because love is from God.

For God is love

Everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.

For God is love.

God’s love was shown to us in this way: God send his Son into the world so that we might live through him

For God is love.

No one has ever seen God, but if we love one another, God lives in us.

For God is love.

Gathering Song – 641 – “All Are Welcome” (vs. 1-4)

Greeting

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

Prayer of the Day

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray...

Gracious God, you are the vine, and we are the branches. Nourish our lives in your grace, that we may bear the fruits of love and peace and reconciliation, and know the fullness of your joy. In your name we pray.

Amen.

WORD

Children’s Message

Sacrament of Holy Baptism – Kathleen McGinnis

Passing of the Peace

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

And also with you.

FIRST READING: Acts 8:26-40

A reading from Acts.

²⁶An angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Get up and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." (This is a wilderness road.) ²⁷So he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship ²⁸and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. ²⁹Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over to this chariot and join it." ³⁰So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" ³¹He replied, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. ³²Now the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this:

"Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter,
and like a lamb silent before its shearer,
so he does not open his mouth.

³³In his humiliation justice was denied him.

Who can describe his generation?

For his life is taken away from the earth."

³⁴The eunuch asked Philip, "About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?" ³⁵Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus.

³⁶As they were going along the road, they came to some water; and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?" ³⁸He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. ³⁹When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. ⁴⁰But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he was passing through the region, he proclaimed the good news to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 22:25-31

²⁵From you comes my praise in the great assembly;

I will perform my vows in the sight of those who fear the LORD.

²⁶**The poor shall eat and be satisfied,**

Let those who seek the LORD give praise! May your hearts live forever!

²⁷All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD;

all the families of nations shall bow before God.

²⁸**For dominion belongs to the LORD,**

who rules over the nations.

²⁹Indeed, all who sleep in the earth shall bow down in worship;

all who go down to the dust, though they be dead, shall kneel before the LORD.

³⁰**Their descendants shall serve the LORD,**

whom they shall proclaim to generations to come.

³¹They shall proclaim God's deliverance to a people yet unborn,

saying to them, "The LORD has acted!"

SECOND READING: 1 John 4:7-21

A reading from 1 John.

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.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation – 172 - "Halle, Halle, Hallelujah"

Halle, halle, halle-lu-jah

Halle, halle, halle-lu-jah

Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

GOSPEL: John 15:1-8

The holy gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

[Jesus said:] ¹"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."

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon

Song of the Day – 581 – “You Are Mine”

Council Blessing and Installation

Prayers of the People

Lord in your mercy...
Hear our prayer.

MEAL

Offering

Offertory – “Create in Me a Clean Heart”

*Create in me a clean heart, O God,
And renew a right spirit within me.
Cast me not away from your presence,
and take not your holy spirit from me.
Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and uphold me with your free spirit.*

Offering Prayer

Eucharistic Prayer

Lord’s Prayer – pg. 145

Distribution of Communion

(All are welcome at the Lord’s table. Gluten free bread and grape juice is available at the serving area on the left hand side of the sanctuary.)

Prayer after Communion

SENDING

Blessing

Sending Song – 365 – “Jesus Christ is Risen Today”

Alleluia! Go in Peace to love and serve the Lord!

Thanks be to God!

Announcements

“Growing Connections” Garden

It is almost time to get into the garden! We will need lots more help this year with this ministry. Planting day will be Sunday, May 16th with a back up plan date of May 23rd. To find out how you can help, contact Larry Enfield or Nicole Monroe.

Hospitality Forum with Pastoral Intern Lucas

Lucas is hosting forums in May on what welcome looks like. What is Christian hospitality? How do we go about putting that into practice? What does that mean for how we relate to God?

Sunday, May 2 at 10:00 AM at Vang

Wednesday, May 5 at 7:00 PM at Holden

All are welcome to join in on any of those three dates.

Worship Schedule

May 9th– Vang 9 am Reader: Denise Olson Acolyte: Claire Berndt

May 16th-Dennison 11 am Reader: Jane Curren

 Vang 9 am Reader: Kelly Graham Acolyte: Emma Wood

Faith Growth Opportunity – Contemplative Prayer

Contemplative practices provide the time and space to experience God’s immediate and loving presence in a first-hand kind of way. If your daily life is running a little low on feelings of well-being, love, joy, peace, and hope – or if you’re just generally feeling a bit disconnected in your relationship with the Divine – then contemplative practices may be of help on your journey.

The first session will be April 20 and the special guest will be Julie Stevens, the Director of Contemplative Prayer practices at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in Rochester. The group will meet weekly for 5 sessions. Group sessions will be in person, on zoom, or a hybrid of both, based on the preferences of the group.

Special Prayers for: Liala Hedstrom, Danny Brockton, Bob Mitchell, Nick Iverson, Norma Sands, Lowell Anderson Larry Buchta, Marianne King, Dorothy Vesledahl, Tim Larson, LuAnn Lervik, Chuck Wells, all of our homebound people, service members and their families, and for all those in need of healing and strength.

GOSPEL MESSAGE

We Are the Branches

To encourage flowering and fruit production in vines, trees, and shrubs, most of us know that pruning is necessary. This isn't the easiest of work, nor does it make the pruned plant look all that great for a while afterward. Yet often what results after pruning is a plant that is more abundant, beautiful, and healthy than it would have been otherwise.

In our reading today, Jesus makes it very clear that he is the vine, his Father is the vine grower, and we, his disciples, are the branches on which fruit grows. Without the vine and the vine grower, the branches do not exist. Yet, often in our spiritual lives it seems as though we get these roles mixed up. We are wooed by the sense of accomplishment and value that comes from producing results of one kind or another, and we fail to acknowledge the source that makes that "fruit" possible.

However, in today's gospel, Jesus reminds us that our job isn't to produce results; it's to stay connected. "Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing," Jesus says (John 15:5). Jesus is our source and strength; it is only by our connection to Jesus the vine that we the branches bear fruit that will last, such as love, compassion, forgiveness, hope, service, kindness, and patience.

To grow this kind of fruit, Jesus relates how necessary it is for us to be pruned occasionally. In other words, those things that are not of God in our lives have to be rooted out from time to time. The process of pruning isn't always the most enjoyable and can even include a good deal of pain, but it leads to lives that are whole and abundant. As we abide in Jesus, we are given the strength we need to endure the pruning process. We also experience the peace that comes from knowing that the fruit that will follow is for the glory of God.