



# 35B EASTER 5B - ONLINE LITURGY

Stay connected

## Abstract

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## NEW TESTAMENT

### *1 John 4:7–21*

<sup>7</sup> Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. <sup>8</sup> Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. <sup>9</sup> This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup> This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. <sup>11</sup> Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. <sup>12</sup> No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

<sup>13</sup> This is how we know that we live in him and he in us: He has given us of his Spirit. <sup>14</sup> And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. <sup>15</sup> If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in them and they in God. <sup>16</sup> And so we know and rely on the love God has for us.

God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. <sup>17</sup> This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: In this world we are like Jesus. <sup>18</sup> There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

<sup>19</sup> We love because he first loved us. <sup>20</sup> Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. <sup>21</sup> And he has

given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister.

## GOSPEL

*John 15:1–8*

**15** “I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. <sup>4</sup> Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

<sup>5</sup> “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. <sup>6</sup> If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. <sup>7</sup> If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. <sup>8</sup> This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. <sup>i</sup>

## 35B Easter 5B - Online Liturgy

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SUNDAY, MAY 2, 2021 | EASTER | FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER | YEAR B

*First Reading* Acts 8:26–40  
*Psalm* Psalm 22:25–31  
*New Testament* 1 John 4:7–21  
*Gospel* John 15:1–8<sup>ii</sup>

Jesus says that he is ‘the true vine’. His Father is the vine-grower who removes fruitless branches and prunes those that are fruitful so that they might produce even more. The disciples are the branches; they are to remain part of the vine and expected to grow and bear good fruit.

How do we ‘remain’ in Jesus? How do we stay always connected to Jesus? The metaphor of a growing vine suggests something that is active – a way of living, rather than a passive ‘resting’. What does this look like in practice?

This week we explore remaining in the right place to grow.<sup>iii</sup>

	<b>Pre-Service</b>
	<b>Introit</b> New Wine - Hillsong
	<b>Greeting</b>  May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ The Love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all  <b>and also with us</b>
	<b>We Gather</b>  Come apart from your busyness. Leave your stresses at the door. Come and reconnect with God. Remain in him and grow. Grow closer, grow deeper. Grow and be fruitful. Come and glorify God!  <b>Acknowledgements</b>  <i>Let us pray</i> We gather here, O Lord, for you, the vine, to nourish us.

	<p>May we, the branches, draw our strength from you, and grow in harmony, unity and love. May we find nourishment through our rootedness in the life, teachings and love of Christ. Receive the fruits of our worship and be glorified. Amen.</p>
	<p><b>We say Sorry</b> <i>Let us pray...</i></p> <p>God who is love We know that you are the source of all life and to grow and flourish we need to stay connected.</p> <p>For those times when we have disconnected ourselves and tried to go it alone, we are sorry. <b>Lord have mercy</b> <i>brief silence</i></p> <p>For those times when we have tried to stop you from pruning and trimming and tried to do our own thing, we are sorry. <b>Christ have mercy</b> <i>brief silence</i></p> <p>For those times when we have not loved the way you have created us to love, we are sorry <b>Lord, have mercy</b> <i>brief silence<sup>iv</sup></i></p>
	<p><b>Words of Assurance</b> This is the good news for all those who trust in Christ We have been set free from all our sins, in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.</p> <p>Our sins are forgiven. <b>Thanks be to God!</b></p>
	<p><b>Hymn/song</b> TIS #685 – “Lord I come to you”</p>
	<p><b>Welcome</b></p> <p><b><u>Basil the Branch – Lost Sheep</u></b> <b>Before the Story</b></p> <p>“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.” (Galatians 5:22)</p> <p>“Which of these things do you find easy?” “OK, which bits of the fruit of the Spirit do you find hard to put into practice?” Do you think branches on grapevines ever find it hard to make their fruit.</p>

	<p><b>Tell the Story</b></p> <p><b>After the Story</b>  Ask, “What was the secret for Basil bearing fruit?”  “Jesus said, ‘I am the vine, you are the branches.’”  “So, what do you think is the secret for us bearing ‘fruit’?”</p> <p><i>Let us pray</i></p> <p>Eternal God,  we come as one and we come together,  to draw from the source of your life-giving love,  to reconnect with one another and with you,  to listen to your word,  to meet you in prayer and praise,  and to learn and grow as your faithful disciples –  in Jesus’ name.  Amen.</p>
	<p><b>Readings</b></p> <p>1 John 4:7–21  John 15:1–8</p> <p><i>respond</i>  For the word of the Lord</p> <p><b>Thanks be to God</b></p>
	<p><b>Hymn/Song</b>  TIS #609 – “May the mind of Christ”</p>

## Response

In October 2013,  
a boat carrying over 500 refugees fleeing from persecution in Eritrea and Somalia  
sank off the Italian island of Lampedusa, near Tunisia.  
Francesco Tuccio, a carpenter living on the island,  
met some of the survivors in church  
and made each of them a cross out of the wreckage from their boat.  
Pope Francis asked Francesco  
to make him a cross to carry at a memorial service.  
He also made one for the British Museum.  
Francesco saw his crosses as symbols of hope and love.  
A community that stays connected to Christ is like Jesus’ true vine,  
held by love strong enough to embrace the world.

A week into 2020’s coronavirus lockdown,  
a pack arrived through the letterbox of every house in the street.  
It included a pair of red and green ‘Community Lookout’ cards  
for displaying in front windows: ‘green’ where no help was needed; ‘red’ for help  
with shopping, collecting prescriptions or dog walking.

The pack came from a local group  
that formed to help the neighbourhood stay strong.  
a spokesperson said, 'We hope that if any good comes out of this troubling period,  
then we'll all get to know each other a little better.'  
Everyday support helps a neighbourhood stay connected in trying times,  
like the flesh and blood love of Christ sustaining his vine.

There was a child,  
and the family had a farm.  
They had some fruit trees including a peach tree in the garden.  
This tree wasn't overly large,  
but it was there for many years.  
It produced fruit in abundance every year.  
One year, as the fruit was developing,  
a combination of a well laden branch and some strong winds split the tree.  
A branch was threatening to fall off.  
If it did, the fruit would be lost.  
It would not survive if it became completely disconnected from the tree.

Using a combination of ropes, stakes and even some old pantyhose,  
the father managed to tie the split branch back to the rest of the tree.  
He did it well enough that the branch stayed connected,  
and the split even began to heal.  
The fruit was able to reach maturity and they enjoyed another crop of juicy, delicious peaches.  
In fact, the ropes held the tree together so well,  
the tree lived and produced fruit for many more years.  
I'm sure that I'm not alone when I say I remember similar stories in my own life.

Like the branch of the peach tree that would have lost its fruit and died  
if it was separated from the tree,  
if we are separated from Christ,  
we could not live the life God has created and called us to live.  
We cannot produce abundant fruit for God.  
We need to stay connected to Jesus.  
We need to stay connected to the vine.  
We need to let God prune and trim our lives  
so that we bear more fruit,  
in the same way fruit growers prune and tend their vines  
to make them grow in a particular way,  
and to produce more fruit.

We need to keep building our relationship with Christ.  
We do this through prayer, through Scripture, in our worship,  
and as we share with other Christians.  
In doing this, we stay connected to The Vine.

John's letter (1 John 4:17-21)  
reminds us that God is love,  
and this love has been revealed in and through Christ.

When we stay connected to The Vine,  
we are living in the love of God in and through Christ.  
It is in this relationship with God, and connection with Christ,  
that we will grow and flourish  
as the people God has called and created us to be;  
and as growing, flourishing disciples,  
we will bear much fruit, bringing glory to God.

Are you staying connected?

Imagine it is a long weekend and you've decided to take the family to Melbourne.  
It means several days of busyness and traffic jams!  
For some it will be the shops, the sales,  
maybe a trip to Ikea, or a project under way.  
You'll rush off for a quick holiday  
which, thanks to Coronavirus,  
is more likely than previously  
to be somewhere more exotic.

Imagine, instead of being frustrated,  
you find a creative and prayerful way to use the time spent in a traffic jam.  
Imagine praying for the people in the vehicles on either side  
that they are as relaxed as you.

The point is,  
Jesus urged us to remain connected to him – part of the vine  
and we do that through prayer.  
But not just prayer for ourselves and our concerns  
as that would be selfish, inward-looking.  
Remain connected, he said,  
so that you 'bear much fruit' and become his disciples.  
Following his command and his example,  
we are to be interested in the cares and concerns of others,  
spreading the good news by word and by example.  
Praying for those we meet and those we simply pass by,  
for those who welcome us and those who reject us.  
And what better time to do that than in the middle of the busyness and traffic jams  
of our daily lives.  
Amen

## Response 2

### Tarzan He Was Not

Passage: John 15 : 1-8

Some people have more interesting lives than we do.

A true story

There was a 66-year-old man who wanted to join his friends for a night of drinking,



but his wife told him he couldn't.  
So, he climbed out of the bedroom window and grabbed a tree vine.  
He tried to swing to swing down but he missed his mark,  
breaking an arm, a leg, and the other ankle.  
The old man said later "It was more difficult than it looked in the Tarzan movies,"  
"I forgot to take into account that Tarzan was a lot younger." [or maybe the vines thicker]

Our lesson today from John's Gospel is not about a vine suitable for swinging.  
It is about a vine that is essential for our spiritual life.

Throughout Jesus' ministry he used many parables, or metaphors, to illustrate his teachings.  
His lessons were tailored to suit his audience.

Vineyards are still plentiful in Palestine.  
So you can almost imagine Jesus holding a grapevine as he says  
"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener.  
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."

Look ... beautiful illustration, but what is he saying to us?  
It seems quite straightforward; I've heard this one preached before.  
Jesus is the vine, God is the gardener.  
And we, the Christians, are the branches.  
Our task is to bear fruit.  
And sometimes, God prunes us to make us more fruitful.

I used to work in a trauma hospital and this idea of pruning  
sounds like a painful, brutal process.  
But there is another way to interpret this passage.  
Bible scholars tell us that the Greek phrase for "He prunes,"  
also means "He cleans."

By putting the two sentences together,  
it is obvious that this is the meaning that Christ intended:  
"Every branch that does bear fruit he cleans  
so that it will be even more fruitful."  
Now, what does this mean he cleans?

Athalie and Luigi Bazanni are friends.  
They owned Warrenmang Winery in the Pyrenees.  
Their best vines they use in their Estate and Puma bottlings are over 30 years old.

As a grower, I can imagine the long hours Luigi spends walking the vineyards,  
tending the grapes, watching the fruit develop,  
waiting for the perfect day to begin the harvest.

Now, new branches have a natural tendency to trail down and grow along the ground,

But they don't bear fruit down there.  
When branches grow along the ground, the leaves get coated in dust.  
When it rains, they get muddy and mildewed  
and the branch becomes sick and useless."

But every branch is much too valuable to be pruned and thrown away.  
Luigi would go through the vineyard with a bucket of water  
looking for those branches [growing along the ground].  
He will lift them up and wash them off . . .  
Then tie them up.  
Pretty soon they'd be thriving [again]."

This is what Jesus is talking about.  
He is the vine, we are the branches.  
But sometimes we are like those low lying branches trailing along the ground,  
our leaves coated with dirt.  
When it rains we get coated with mud and mildew.  
Then we're incapable of bearing fruit.  
So what does the owner of the vineyard do with us?  
Does he cut us off and throw us in the fire?  
No, we are too valuable to him for that.  
Instead, he tenderly washes us off  
and lifts us up with his gentle, nail-scarred hands  
and places us up higher where we can thrive again.

So, how does this happen?  
Let's read on, "Remain in me, as I also remain in you.  
No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain with the vine.  
Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain with me."

Our task is to bear fruit, but how?  
We can only be what Christ has called us to be  
by remaining in constant fellowship with him.  
"No branch can bear fruit by itself;  
it must remain with the vine."  
That is to say that, if we quit bearing fruit,  
it is because we have allowed ourselves to become detached from him.

There was an Anglican missionary in Africa who had a small generator  
to supply power for his church and rectory.  
There was no other source of power in the rural area where he served.

One evening some tribesmen came to visit this missionary.  
They noticed an electric light hanging from the ceiling of his living room.  
They watched wide-eyed as he turned the little switch and the light went on.  
One of the visitors asked if he could have a similar bulb.  
And the missionary, thinking he wanted it for a sort of trinket, gave the man one.

Sometime later the missionary stopped at the tribesman's hut.

Imagine his surprise when he saw the bulb  
hanging in the centre of the man's hut from an ordinary piece of string.  
The missionary patiently explained to the man  
that it needed to have electricity and a wire to make it to glow.<sup>vi</sup>

No electricity, no light.  
No vine, no fruit.  
No Christ, no Holy Spirit no life-giving power for the believer.  
We cannot bear fruit apart from him.

There is a story of the child flying the kite so high that the clouds hid it.  
"How do you know that your kite is still there?" someone asked him.  
"I can still feel a tug on the string," the child answered.

Who among us does not need to feel that tug from time to time?

It is fine to say that God is out there somewhere,  
but most of us need to know that He is here close within our heart.

That, of course, is the purpose of prayer.  
Prayer keeps us connected to our source of life,  
it's our source of power.

There is a story about a child who went to a contest  
for homemade racing cars sponsored by the scouts.  
Each contestant was supposed to do their own work  
but most of the fathers of course helped too much.

The child with no dad showed up with a racer he had obviously made himself.  
Somehow this one kid's funny-looking car won again and again,  
Until he was in the finals against another scout with a slick-looking, well-made racer.

Before the championship race,  
the child with the funny-looking car  
asked the director to wait a moment so he could pray.  
The crowd, stood in silence, loving the boy even more  
and secretly praying with him that he might win;  
he seemed so deserving.

The boy did win the race and was given a trophy,  
and after the director said, "Well, I guess it is a good thing you prayed, so you could win."

"Oh, no!" the boy protested, horrified to have been misunderstood.  
"I didn't pray to win. That would have been wrong.

I just prayed that God would help me keep from crying if I lost."<sup>vii</sup>

That young boy had a better understanding of prayer than many adults.

Prayer is not about asking God to fulfil our desires.

Prayer exists for the purpose of nourishing our relationship with God.

Prayer is about keeping the lines of communication open

In Christ's metaphor of the grapevine,

it is allowing God to give us spiritual nourishment so we can bear fruit.

The last question is of course, what exactly is this fruit that we are to bear?

Well in Galatians 5 Paul gives us a partial list

which he calls the fruits of the spirit.

These fruit are love, joy, peace, patience,

kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (22-23).

We might like to add other fruits

like generosity and acceptance, etc

If you want to be a better spouse or a better parent or a better person,

then you need to keep spiritual nourishment flowing into your life

from your connection with Christ.

Time spent in his presence can only make you

more loving, more joyful, more peaceful and more patient.

All of this and more is what Christ was saying to us in the example of the vine.

He is the vine; we are the branches.

Without him we can bear no fruit.

It is important that we maintain our relationship with Christ

so that when we have fallen, he can clean us and lift us up again.

Amen

	<p><b>Hymn/song</b></p> <p><b>The Summons</b></p>
	<p><b>Offering</b></p> <p>OFFERTORY SENTENCE</p> <p>Our waking and sleeping, our stillness and busyness,  our living and dying are found within the life of the One named Love.  As we give our offering, let us be thankful for all of life's gifts.</p> <p>OFFERTORY PRAYER</p> <p>God of Love,  take these gifts and our lives  that we might be used to share your love in the world.  Remind us always that we are gifts to one another,  abiding vessels of the love which flows from you.  In Jesus' name we pray.  Amen.</p>

**Notices**

India, Myanmar, climate  
 COVID 150M cases, 3.2M deaths

**Prayers for all people**

God of comfort,  
     as India faces the ravages of corona virus  
         we pray for some relief for their suffering.  
 May those in this world who have an excess of medicine and oxygen  
     be moved to generosity  
     and may those who face great anguish find some measure of comfort.  
 Even as our situation with the virus changes  
     we pray for everyone struggling with the pain of loss.

God of comfort,  
**listen to our prayer.**

God of justice,  
     it is with dismay that we read of political prisoners  
         facing years in imprisonment.

Thank you for those who are working for justice.

    We pray for their families and supporters.

We ask for your mercy, peace and love to surround and support them.

God of justice,  
**listen to our prayer.**

God of truth,  
     the recent tension in parliament  
         and the complications around truth and safety  
         can be difficult for us to process.

We pray for a spirit of openness and fairness for those elected to govern us.

God of truth,  
**listen to our prayer.**

God of community,  
     we acknowledge the wide variety of feelings within our local communities.

May we find understanding and empathy for one another.

Give us all the ability to think in terms of the whole community

    and help us to keep our eyes wide open to truly see

        how those around us are coping as things change.

God of community,  
**listen to our prayer.**

God of hope,  
     as the autumn days bring new hopefulness  
         may we not forget those for whom this past year  
         has been particularly devastating.

Thank you for the work the church has undertaken

    in order to feed, comfort and intercede for those in need,

but give us the patience and endurance needed to continue the work.

	<p>God of hope, <b>listen to our prayer.</b></p> <p>God of compassion, with children enjoying being back in school we are particularly mindful of those in year 11 and year 12. Many are facing multiple tests and assessments after a mixed up last year. Bring calmness to this final part of the school days and some sense of closure as many of them transition to new stages of life and learning. We are equally conscious of the university students continuing to learn many remotely. Please guard their mental health. Guard them against disappointment and despair and help the institutions they are part of.</p> <p>God of compassion, <b>listen to our prayer.</b></p> <p>God of love, thank you that we are all connected to you our true vine. When we feel disconnected from our communities, families or even ourselves help us to picture this image of the vine and feel rooted in you and your comfort, justice, truth, community, hope and compassion. God of love, <b>listen to our prayer.</b> <b>Amen.</b></p>
	<p><b>Lord's Prayer</b> Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever. AMEN <sup>viii</sup></p>
	<p><b>Hymn/song</b> TIS #152 – "Joyful, joyful we adore you"<sup>ix</sup></p>
	<p><b>We are sent out</b></p>

	<p>As we leave this place,              may we stand with God,                  grafted and rooted and pruned.          Lord, help us to stay connected to one another and to you,              bearing fruit wherever your love takes us.          Amen.</p> <p>May the Lord bless us              and keep us          May His face shine upon us              and be gracious to us          May he lift up His countenance upon us              and give us peace. Amen</p>
	<p><b>Thank you</b></p>

<sup>i</sup> [Revised Common Lectionary](#). (2009). Bellingham, WA: Faithlife.

<sup>ii</sup> [Revised Common Lectionary](#). (2009). Bellingham, WA: Faithlife.

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<sup>iv</sup> Rev Leanne Davis, © 2020 MediaCom Education Incorporated South Australia

<sup>v</sup> David Patterson, [http://family-friends-others.blogspot.com/2011\\_08\\_01\\_archive.html](http://family-friends-others.blogspot.com/2011_08_01_archive.html)

<sup>vi</sup> Jeffrey Smead, <http://www.sermoncentral.com/illustrations/stories-about-branch-vine.asp>.

<sup>vii</sup> [http://www.episcopalchurch.org/sermons\\_that\\_work\\_101684\\_ENG\\_HTM.htm](http://www.episcopalchurch.org/sermons_that_work_101684_ENG_HTM.htm). Dynamic Preaching Sermons Second Quarter 2015, King Duncan, ChristianGlobe Networks, Inc., 2015, 0-000-0000-20  
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<sup>viii</sup> English Language Liturgical Consultation, 1988

<sup>ix</sup> Hymn suggestions David MacGregor's Together to Celebrate and others sources  
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