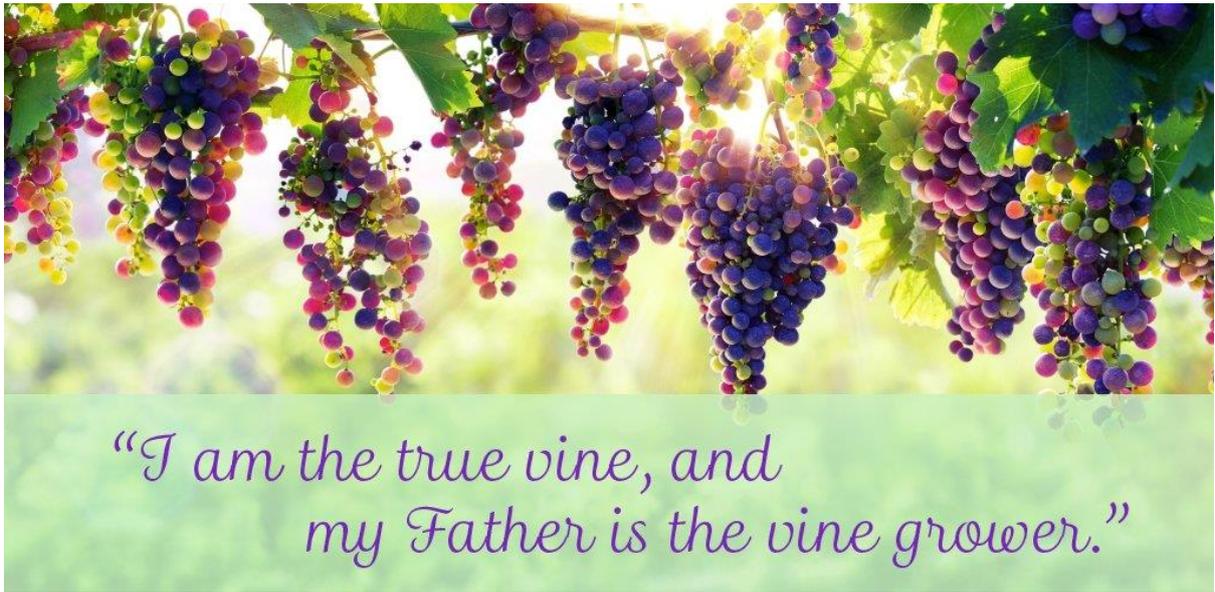


THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER 2021
ALL SAINTS WITLEY: LITURGY OF THE WORD



The Lord be with you
and also with you.

Alleluia. Christ is risen.
He is risen indeed. Alleluia.

SONG sung by the Band

Speak, O Lord, as we come to you
to receive the food of your holy word.
Take your truth, plant it deep in us;
shape and fashion us in your likeness,
that the light of Christ might be seen today
in our acts of love and our deeds of faith.
Speak, O Lord, and fulfill in us
all your purposes, for your glory.

Teach us Lord full obedience,
holy reverence, true humility.
Test our thoughts and our attitudes
in the radiance of your purity.
Cause our faith to rise, cause our eyes to see
Your majestic love and authority.
Words of power that can never fail;
let their truth prevail over unbelief.

Speak, O Lord, and renew our minds;
help us grasp the heights of your plans for us.
Truths unchanged from the dawn of time,
that will echo down through eternity.
And by grace we'll stand on your promises;
and by faith we'll walk as you walk with us.
Speak, O Lord, 'til your church is built
and the earth is filled with your glory.

COLLECT

Risen Christ, your wounds declare your love for the world and the wonder of your risen life: give us compassion and courage to risk ourselves for those we serve, to the glory of God the Father. **Amen.**

CONFESSION

Let us confess our sins.

May your loving mercy come to me, O Lord, and salvation according to your word.
Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Your word is a lantern to my feet and a light to my path.

Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

O let your mercy come to me that I may live, for your law is my delight.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

ABSOLUTION

May the God of love and power forgive you and free you from your sins, heal and strengthen you by his Spirit, and raise you to new life in Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

New Testament Reading: Acts 8. 26 – 40

Then an angel of the Lord said to Philip, 'Get up and go towards the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.' (This is a wilderness road.) So 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 and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. Then the Spirit said to Philip, 'Go over to this chariot and join it.' So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, 'Do you understand what you are reading?' He replied, 'How can I, unless someone guides me?' And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. Now 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.

In his humiliation justice was denied him.

Who can describe his generation?

For his life is taken away from the earth.'

The eunuch asked Philip, 'About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?' Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. As 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?' He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. When 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. But 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.

Gospel: 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.

SERMON AST Team

HYMN sung by the Junior Choir

Now the green blade riseth from the buried grain,
wheat that in dark earth many days has lain;
love lives again, that with the dead has been:
Love is come again, like wheat that springeth green.

In the grave they laid him, Love whom men had slain,
thinking that never he would wake again,
laid in the earth like grain that sleeps unseen:
Love is come again, like wheat that springeth green.

Forth he came at Easter, like the risen grain,
he that for three days in the grave had lain,
quick from the dead my risen Lord is seen:
Love is come again, like wheat that springeth green.

When our hearts are wintry, grieving, or in pain,
thy touch can call us back to life again,
fields of our hearts that dead and bare have been:
Love is come again, like wheat that springeth green.

PRAYERS

Let us pray for constancy and purity in the service of God.

Grant that the Church may hold fast to her Lord, so that all her branches may grow together in faith and service. Cleanse her from all that hinders her mission, and purify her to bring forth the good fruit of the Gospel.

Lord, in your mercy

hear our prayer.

Root out with your compassionate might the corruption of the world; where there is abuse of power, where there is exploitation of the weak, where there is hostility between nations, bring healing and a new spirit so that all may live in harmony.

Lord, in your mercy

hear our prayer.

We pray that we may abide in Christ, and his words may abide in us, so that we and all in our community shall be united in him. Let us in our work and in our recreation use well the gifts we have been given.

Lord, in your mercy

hear our prayer.

We appeal for the outcasts of the world, those who have been cut off from their families, those who have been rejected by society and lost hope. Restore them to the full dignity of their humanity, and let them grow into new life.

Lord, in your mercy

hear our prayer.

Receive the souls of those who, having borne their fruit in this world, have died. May their joy be made perfect in the fellowship of all who have drawn their lives from the eternal vine.

Lord, in your mercy

hear our prayer.

May our prayers be accepted in the name of Christ, the true vine. **Amen.**

THE PEACE

Christ is our peace. He has reconciled us to God in one Body by the cross. We meet in his name and share his peace.

The Peace of the risen Christ be always with you
and also with you. Alleluia.

LORD'S PRAYER

**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.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.**

HYMN

Alleluia! Alleluia!
Hearts to heaven and voices raise;
sing to God a hymn of gladness,
sing to God a hymn of praise:
he who on the cross a victim
for the world's salvation bled,
Jesus Christ, the King of glory,
now is risen from the dead.

Christ is risen, Christ the first-fruits
of the holy harvest field,
which will all its full abundance
at his second coming yield;
then the golden ears of harvest
will their heads before him wave,
ripened by his glorious sunshine,
from the furrows of the grave.

Christ is risen, we are risen;
shed upon us heavenly grace,
rain, and dew, and gleams of glory
from the brightness of thy face;
that we, with our hearts in heaven,
here on earth may fruitful be,
and by angel-hands be gathered,
and be ever, Lord, with thee.

Alleluia! Alleluia!
Glory be to God on high;
Alleluia to the Saviour,
who has gained the victory;
Alleluia to the Spirit,
fount of love and sanctity;
Alleluia! Alleluia!
to the Triune Majesty.

NOTICES

BLESSING

May Christ,
who out of defeat brings new hope and a new future,
fill you with his new life;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

DISMISSAL

With the risen life of Christ within you,
go in the peace of Christ. Alleluia, alleluia.
Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia.

Piano Voluntary

