



**Welcome to St Andrew's Stewton Church Community Post 63.**

In our gospel reading today Jesus describes himself as a vine, and God, his loving Father the vine-grower. Imagine a vine, growing strongly, abundantly leafy, drooping with bunches of grapes, perhaps one you have seen growing in a warm climate, or in a hothouse. In what way is this a good image to describe how Jesus wants us to grow in him? Is this image of the vine one that speaks to you? Do you feel part of a caring community, cared for, protected, gently pruned, as a vine cherished by the vine-grower? Close to each other? Close to Jesus? We each have a part to play as members of this local and worldwide community; therefore we have a responsibility towards our brothers and sisters where ever they are including the people of India in their terrible suffering and elsewhere in the world.

We are assured of forgiveness for the times we isolate ourselves from God and from each other. May we try to live out our lives with a renewed awareness of our connectedness.

For the times we have been tempted to go our own way, on a different vine.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For the times we have sown seeds of division.

**Christ, have mercy.**

For the times we have failed to bear the fruit of your love.

**Lord, have mercy.**

**This week's readings from Scripture:**

**Acts 8:26-end** Philip demonstrates his obedience and trust in God, reaching out to the Ethiopian man and spreading God's love.

**1 John 4:7-end** God is love. If we love one another, God lives in us. By loving each other we show our love for God and share the good news.

**John 15:1-8** We are nurtured and cared for by the Father and show our love for God by following the teaching of Jesus, the true vine.

## This week's reflection:

When our daughter Victoria and I walked the Camino to Santiago a while ago, we walked for a time, through an area called Rioja which is a well-known wine growing area in Spain. I suppose that it's easy to have a romantic picture of hosts of happy people with baskets picking the grapes at harvest time. Well, it was harvest time. but forget those crowds of happy people picking them because it was mostly automated with huge machines straddling the rows and working at high speed. Then the grapes were being transported by tractors and trailers to the bodegas where they were converted into wine, just as we see trailer loads of grain being taken at harvest time into the barns in our country.



But grapes and grape vines are one of those images which have continued through history and would have been well known in our Lord's Day.

And so Jesus uses the analogy of him being the true vine and God, his Father, being the vine grower. Once again, Jesus is using something which his disciples would know about. It's no good speaking in such a way using deep theological language that your listeners just cannot relate to. There were vineyards all over the place, not huge ones like those in Spain, but small local ones and so to see people tending the vines would be a common sight.

And Jesus points out an obvious fact too, if a branch gets knocked off the main trunk, then that branch and any grapes growing on it will wither and die. And then of course in an attempt to keep the vineyard tidy, all the fallen wood is picked up and thrown onto the bonfire.

There's a lot of talk about 'abiding' in the Gospel reading this week but it's really about sticking to Jesus's message, no matter how difficult things are at the time. And once again Jesus relays his message in simple terms but how often do we fail to really understand.

Sadly, no one could have failed to see the terrible sights of the situation in India at the moment, a country with close links to our own. It just shows that it's easy to get complacent and also the truth in the theory that this Covid virus will not be beaten until everyone, everywhere receives the vaccine, not just this country. The irony is that some of the vaccine for us was being manufactured in Poona in India. And yet millions of Indian citizens went without the injection.

So, while we should hold all our friends and families in our thoughts and prayers at this time, we should also hold that population of India and all the other countries going through awful circumstances as they too work to defeat this terrible virus.

But until that day, God bless you all and stay safe until we can meet together again.

*Robert*



Trusting in God's abundant love, and in Christ the only true vine, we bring our prayers before God with confidence.

We pray for those who lead the nations of the world, that they may be given wisdom compassion and integrity, choosing to graft themselves to the true vine, Christ Jesus. For the UK government as we steadily emerge from this pandemic safely. For guidance as we elect new Police and Crime Commissioners and LCC members this week. For world governments, especially in India, as they continue to fight Covid-19 remembering that none of us are safe until all are safe.

Let us pray for all who profess the faith of Christ, especially those who are persecuted for their faith. In our prayers for the church throughout the world today we are asked to pray for Christians in Jerusalem and the Middle East.

We ask God to make us firmer in our active discipleship and generous with the fruits of our love and resources and for love to grow strong, fruitful in the life of the Church. We remember our Bishop Christopher who announced his retirement this week and for Bishops David and Nicholas as they continue their work sustaining and maintaining the life of the Lincoln Diocese.

For the Revd Cameron Watt announced this week as the interim priest in charge at St James' Louth from June onwards

We bring before God those commended to the prayers of our community this week: : *Joyce Terrett, David Barker, Ed Cox, Paul Clifford, Phyllis Clifford, Denise and Caroline, Mary, Lisa*. And among those who have recently died we remember *Pete Edwards*.

We pray, Lord, that the new shoots of faith, released through pruning the old branches, grow strong and healthy. Hear our prayers and draw near and help us. This we pray in Jesus' name.

Almighty God,  
who through your only begotten Son Jesus Christ  
have overcome death and opened to us  
the gate of everlasting life:  
grant that, as by your grace going before us  
you put into our minds good desires,  
so by your continual help  
we may bring them to good effect;  
through Jesus Christ our risen Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

Eternal God,  
whose Son Jesus Christ is the way,  
the truth, and the life:  
grant us to walk in his way,  
to rejoice in his truth,  
and to share his risen life;  
who is alive and reigns, now and for  
ever.

With our families and friends and church community we rejoice in the knowledge that we are rooted in God and God rooted in us.

As we go into this coming week,  
may the God of all goodness and nurture be with us.  
May we grow in faith  
and awareness of each other  
and God's presence with us  
always and everywhere.  
Amen.



Lord Jesus, you are the Bread of Life,  
may we always hunger for your word,  
for your presence in our lives,  
for the peace you alone can give,  
and for the courage and confidence you inspire  
without which in these times  
we cannot live as your disciples in the world.  
May we never forget you,  
never walk away from you,  
but always trust in you and remain close by you,  
and may we be united with you for ever. Amen.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy  
Spirit as it was in the beginning, is now and shall be for  
ever. Amen.

**Goodbye April. Hello May!**  
**Please be a good month,**  
**help us heal, keep us safe.**  
**Fill our hearts with joy.**  
**Summer is on the way!**

Kelly's Treehouse



## Hedgehog

BY PAUL MULDOON

The snail moves like a  
Hovercraft, held up by a  
Rubber cushion of itself,  
Sharing its secret

With the hedgehog. The hedgehog  
Shares its secret with no one.  
We say, Hedgehog, come out  
Of yourself and we will love you.

We mean no harm. We want  
Only to listen to what  
You have to say. We want  
Your answers to our questions.

The hedgehog gives nothing  
Away, keeping itself to itself.  
We wonder what a hedgehog  
Has to hide, why it so distrusts.

We forget the God  
Under this crown of thorns.  
We forget that never again  
Will a God trust in the world.

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**NEXT SUNDAY'S READINGS**

**May 9<sup>th</sup> 2021**

**6<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter**

**Acts 10:44-end**

**1 John 5:1-6**

**John 15:9-17**





I cannot believe that it is now over a year since my first post! I remember sending you a picture of the linseed coming through last year, and here we are again. As you will see the first drilled field is now poking it's little head up, even though the land is as dry as it is. We are still waiting for a good shower to help it on it's way.

We have been trying out different techniques with drilling, as last year the spring was so wet, and this year it is so dry, trying to do the best job for the crop can be very difficult and also very expensive. But we try!!

Also a picture for you of the two visiting greylag come to have a swim. The act of nurturing and growing remains a wonderful occupation that we are thankful for every day. You cannot beat working with nature, even when it is not always working with you!



*Jane x*

**Brené Brown**

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We will not go back to normal. **Normal never was.** Our pre-corona existence was not normal other than we normalized greed, inequity, exhaustion, depletion, extraction, disconnection, confusion, rage, hoarding, hate and lack. We should not long to return, my friends. We are being given the opportunity to **stitch** a new garment. One that fits all of humanity and nature.



**From Paula and Chris Hunt:**

On the 19<sup>th</sup> April, one day later than last year, the swallows arrived back from Africa and did their aerial display over our garden then straight onto the beams in the summerhouse for a rest. More than ever, they fill me with amazement. I hope the cold spell hasn't affected their supply of insects.

Our hedgehog family is on the move and although we haven't seen any yet, they are emptying the water bowls during the night.

Chris has put up venetian blinds at each end of the veranda to block the east (and west) wind so we have been able to do some outdoor entertaining. It was lovely to see our friend who had a cancer operation last year, as she put it 'just what you need in the middle of a pandemic'. She is the only person I really wanted to hug but couldn't: Chris made us a blueberry cake!

*Paula and Chris*



**Witnessed totally disgusting behaviour at the beach today. A man and woman arguing in front of a load of kids then she smacked him on on the head and it all kicked off between them. The police turned up and the policeman ended up using his baton on the bloke but the man actually managed to get the baton off the copper and started hitting the copper and the woman with it. Then a crocodile turned up and stole all the sausages as the man shouted 'That's the way to do it' 🤣🤣🤣**