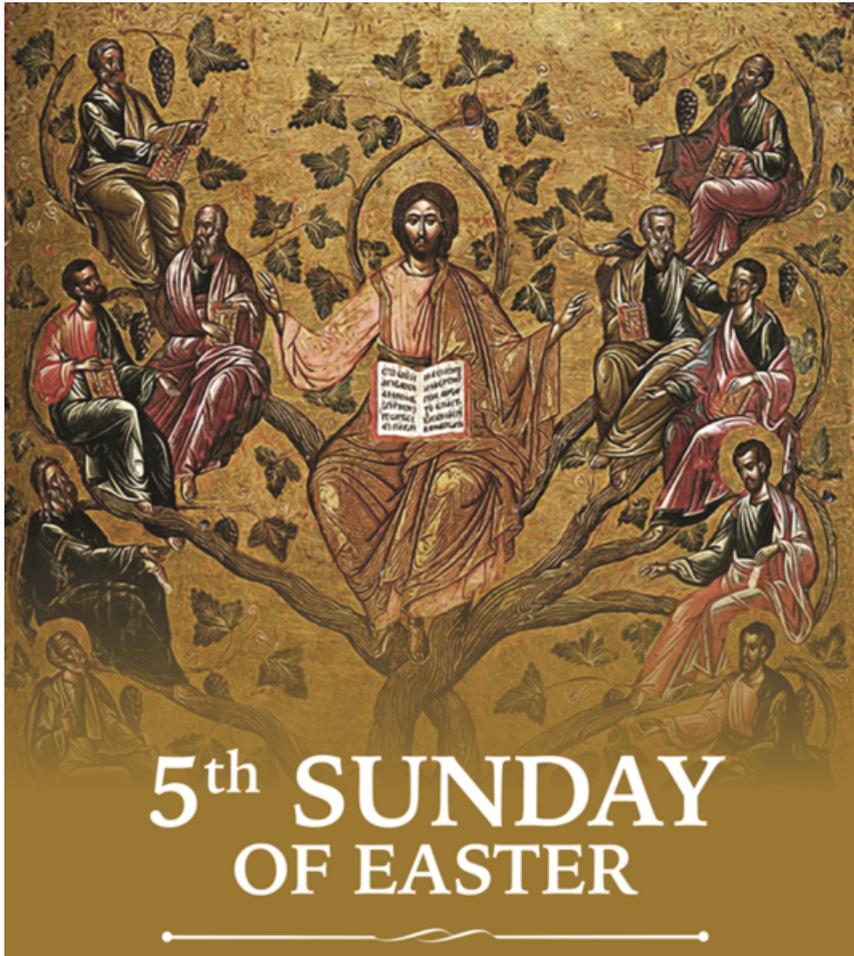


St Leonard's Church, Penwortham

2nd. May 2021



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

In the name of the Father,
the Son and the Holy Spirit.
Amen

The Lord be with you
And also with you

Hymn

Thou, whose almighty word Chaos and darkness heard,
And took their flight: Hear us, we humbly pray,
And where the Gospel-day Sheds not its glorious ray,
Let there be light

Spirit of truth and love, Life-giving, holy Dove,
Speed forth thy flight; Move on the water's face,
Bearing the lamp of grace, And in earth's darkest place
Let there be light

Holy and blessed Three, Glorious Trinity,
Wisdom, Love, Might; Boundless as ocean's tide
Rolling in fullest pride, Through the earth far and wide
Let there be light

Confession

In the glorious resurrection light let us offer ourselves confessing our weakness and unbelief.

Lord Jesus, you raise us to new life.

Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, you forgive us our sins

Christ, have mercy. **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, you feed us with the living bread

Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

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.

Gloria

Glory to God in the Highest, and peace to his people on earth.

Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father,

we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory.

Lord Jesus Christ, only son of the Father,

Lord God, Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world:

have mercy on us

you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer.

For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord,

you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit,

in the glory of God the Father.

Collect

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 forever. **Amen**

NT Reading Acts 8: 26-40

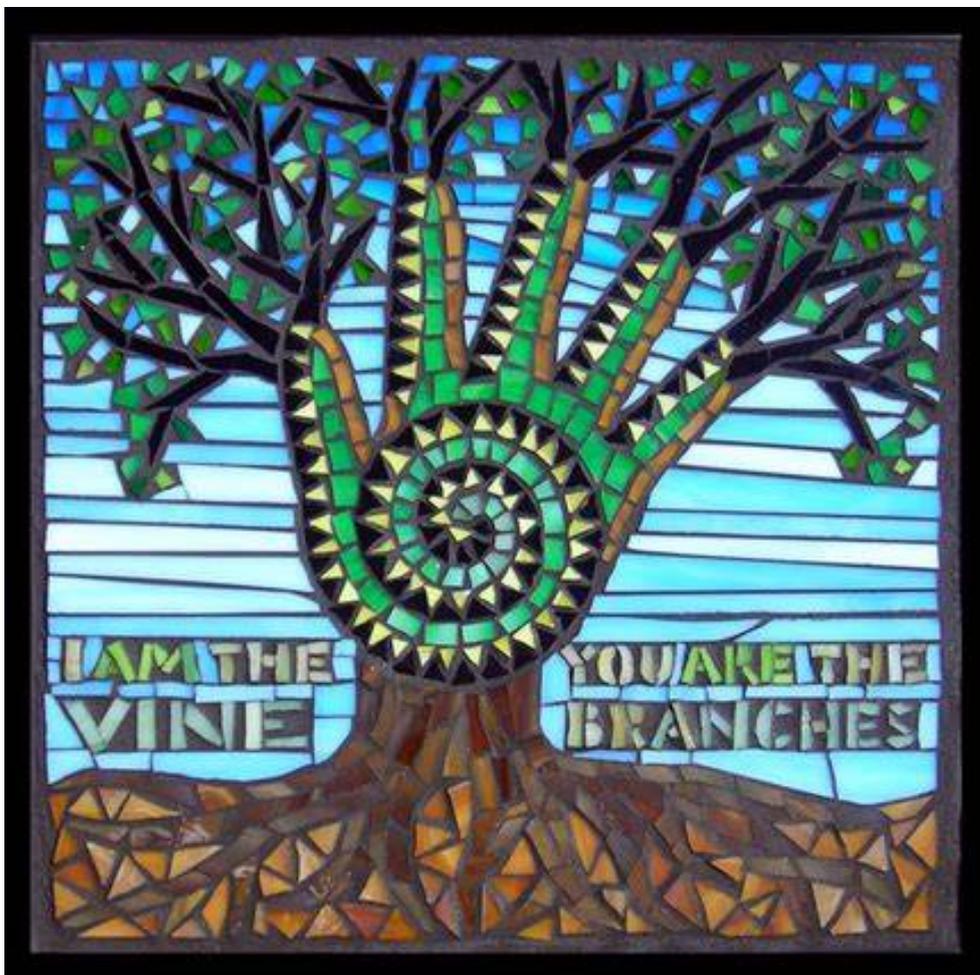
Then an angel of the Lord said to Philip, 'Get up and go towards the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.' (This is a wilderness road.) So he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. 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.

At the end: This is the Word of the Lord **Thanks be to God**



The Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John (15: 1-8)

Glory to you O Lord

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.

At the end: This is the Gospel of the Lord: **Praise to you O Christ**

Reflection:

Jesus' words "Abide in me" remind me of the beautiful, but rather funereal hymn! Perhaps a more helpful translation for today might be "make your home with me" or even "stick with me".

I am the vine is one of seven "I am" sayings in John's Gospel. The vine is an image that appears fairly regularly in the Bible, something that people would have been familiar with - the planting, care and pruning, and the important harvesting. In the Old Testament it is used a symbol of God's chosen people, Jesus personalizes it, he is the vine, we are the branches, we belong together, without the vine the branches are useless, not even good for fire wood!

In the same way that the branches need the vine, we need Christ. We can subscribe to important Christian values, but without a relationship with Christ it's all too easy to lose our way. It's that abiding in him, making our home with him, sticking with him that feeds us and allows us to bear fruit - the fruit we squeeze into wine for joy and celebration, the fruit we traditionally brought to sick people as a symbol of healing and health.

Fruit that is shown in Acts, when Philip was in the right place, at the right time to speak with the Ethiopian official to great effect. Timing that may be considered coincidence by some, Godincidence by others. He was prompted by the Spirit and was able to respond because he was available - free from fear, distraction, busyness or concern about his own abilities, free to simply speak the truth as he knew it in his life, to bear witness to Christ as he knew him.

A freedom born of being a branch of the true vine, able to bear fruit.

How can we, alone and together, be more like Philip, part of the vine and willing to

respond to the nudging of the Spirit?

Prayers:

Loving, Lord God, help each of us to abide in you and produce fruit, not any old fruit, but the best fruit we can. Prune us back, remove those areas of our lives that get in the way of each other and help us to concentrate on the things you have truly called us to do. Help us to realise the gifts you have given us and how best to use them for your Kingdom.

Loving, Lord God may your Church be a window to you, that the world may see your love for all people in action. Bring an end to bickering, nit-picking and in-fighting. Unite your Church, give it a voice to challenge injustice and act with kindness. Make it a safe space, where people can reach their potential and work together. Help it to grow in love and produce rich fruit in abundance.

Loving, Lord God, we bring our world and local communities to you. So much conflict, hurt and suffering. We think of those mourning loved ones, those who feel isolated and cut off from family and friends due to the pandemic, those who live in fear for whatever reason. Bring the fruit of healing and peace to their place of need and instill in us a desire to be the answer to that prayer today. Amen.

Hymn

We have a gospel to proclaim,
Good news for men in all the earth;
The gospel of a Saviour's name:
We sing his glory, tell his worth.

Tell of that glorious Easter morn:
Empty the tomb, for he was free.
He broke the power of death and hell
That we might share his victory.

Tell of his reign at God's right hand,
By all creation glorified.
He sends his Spirit on his Church
To live for him the Lamb who died.

Now we rejoice to name him King:
Jesus is Lord of all the earth.
This gospel-message we proclaim:
We sing his glory, tell his worth.

Eucharistic Prayer

Lord of life, with unbounded joy we offer you our sacrifice of praise.
As we are fed with the bread of heaven may we know your resurrection power;
through Christ our risen Lord. Amen.

The Lord is here.

His Spirit is with us.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give thanks and praise.

It is right to praise you, Father, Lord of all creation;
in your love you made us for yourself.

When we turned away you did not reject us,
but came to meet us in your Son.

**You embraced us as your children
and welcomed us to sit and eat with you.**

In Christ you shared our life that we might live in him and he in us.

**He opened his arms of love upon the cross
and made for all the perfect sacrifice for sin.**

On the night he was betrayed, at supper with his friends
he took bread, and gave you thanks;
he broke it and gave it to them, saying:
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.

**Father, we do this in remembrance of him:
his body is the bread of life.**

At the end of supper, taking the cup of wine,
he gave you thanks, and said:

Drink this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant,
which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins;
do this in remembrance of me.

Father, we do this in remembrance of him: his blood is shed for all.

As we proclaim his death and celebrate his rising in glory,
send your Holy Spirit that this bread and this wine
may be to us the body and blood of your dear Son.

**As we eat and drink these holy gifts
make us one in Christ, our risen Lord.**

With your whole Church throughout the world
we offer you this sacrifice of praise
and lift our voice to join the eternal song of heaven:
**Holy, holy, holy Lord God of power and light
heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

The Lord's Prayer

**As our Saviour taught us, so we pray
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 who 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 of the Bread

**Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.
Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia.**

Post Communion Prayers

**Father of all, we give you thanks and praise,
that when we were still far off
you met us in your Son and brought us home.
Dying and living, he declared your love,
gave us grace, and opened the gate of glory.
May we who share Christ's body live his risen life;
we who drink his cup bring life to others,
we whom the Spirit lights give light to the world.
Keep us firm in the hope you have set before us
so we and all your children shall be free,
and the whole earth live to praise your name;
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

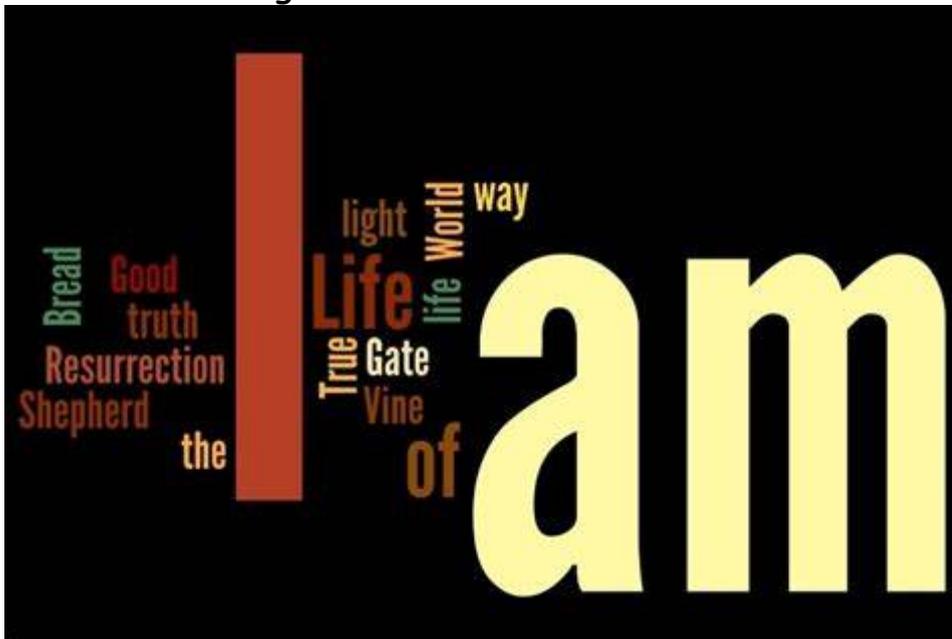
Hymn

Guide me. O thou great Redeemer,
Pilgrim through this barren land;
I am weak, but thou art mighty;
Hold me with thy powerful hand:
Bread of heaven,
Feed me now and evermore.

Open now the crystal fountain
Whence the healing stream doth flow;
Let the fiery cloudy pillar
Lead me all my journey through:
Strong deliverer,
Be thou still my strength and shield.

When I tread the verge of Jordan,
Bid my anxious fears subside;
Death of death, and hell's destruction,
Land me safe of Canaan's side:
Songs and praises
I will ever give to thee.

God the Father, by whose love Christ was raised from
the dead, open to you who believe the gates of everlasting life.
God the Son, who in bursting from the grave has won a glorious victory,
give you joy as you share the Easter faith.
God the Holy Spirit, who filled the disciples with the life
of the risen Lord, empower you and fill you with Christ's peace.
And the blessing ...



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