



FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
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REV. DR. DEBRA J. HANSON

I AM
THE VINE
YOU ARE
THE BRANCHES.
JOHN 15:5

May 2, 2021

Welcome

Hymn: “Bind Us Together” (FWS #2226) - Twice

Scripture: John 15:5 (CEV)

I am the vine, and you are the branches. If you stay joined to me, and I stay joined to you, then you will produce lots of fruit. But you cannot do anything without me.

Message: “On the Vine”

I am the vine, and you are the branches. If you stay joined to me, and I stay joined to you, then you will produce lots of fruit. But you cannot do anything without me.

Setting: Church sanctuary

Props: vine and grapes

Opening scene:

Deb is holding onto a grape vine.

Kevin: (enters the picture) Hi, Deb! (looks at her quizzically) Um - may I ask what you are doing?

D: Oh, hi, Kevin! Sure! I'm just hanging around.

K: O-k-a-y . . . May I ask why?

D: Well, today's scripture is about Jesus being the vine, and how we are the branches. According to John 15 we can't do anything without Jesus. So, if he is the vine, we need to stay connected. I'm staying connected!

K: Yes, I understand that. We have to stay connected, but - well - like this? (gestured to the vine)

D: (letting go) No, of course not - at least not literally. It's just a good reminder to me that in order to produce fruit (picks up the grapes) we have to stay connected to the source of our faith.

K: Bearing fruit is a product of our relationship with Jesus.

D: Yes, it is. The vine may not really be a visible, tangible presence with

us - that could be a little strange (hangs onto vine briefly) - but it is a great image to remind us of how important it is for us to stay connected and find our strength in Jesus.

K: So we can keep on going.

D: Bearing fruit.

K: What does that mean for us, anyway?

D: There was a book written years ago called "What Would Jesus Do?" It was about a pastor who challenged his congregation one Sunday to live their lives through the lens of that question. Maybe a better question really is, "What would Jesus have me do?"

K: Or maybe: "How would my choice reflect my relationship with Jesus to the world."

D: Exactly! When we stay connected to the source of our lives, we stay centered on our calling as Jesus' disciples. When we abide or remain in Jesus, we remember his teachings and align our wills with his.

K: That helps us to stay connected and grow in faith, as well as live our lives so our faith is visible. And when we bring Christ to the world, we make a difference - bearing fruit.

D: Together, as the Body of Christ.

K: Right. These passages were never intended to be just for one person, but for all of us, together, as the Church.

D: Yes, and today we celebrate Communion, which seems to be really appropriate to this passage as we share the bread and the fruit of the vine.

K: The gifts of life and salvation from God through Jesus, the Christ.

D: The vine connects us to Jesus, but it also connects us to each other.

K: We bear fruit according to our gifts, and we are many people with different gifts sharing those gifts in the world to the best of our ability.

D: Like feeding the hungry.

K: Or helping those who need clean water.

D: Welcoming strangers - all of them regardless of their looks, race, sexual orientation, gender, age, or economic status.

K: Donating clothing to organizations that help others, and caring for the sick.

D: Visiting those who are in prison, whether it seems like a prison in their life's circumstances or someone who is incarcerated.

K: Caring for our children.

D: Caring for the lonely and for our elderly.

K: Reaching out to all ages to share God's love.

D: Right. All those things and so much more! We are connected to Christ and to one another. We bear fruit in the world because we are followers of Jesus who leads the way. (pause) Hey! Do you want to hang with me for a few minutes - sort of recharge your juices?

K: (chuckles) Okay.

Prayer:

Hey, Jesus! We're hanging on to you for dear life! Forgive us for those times when we try to let go and do things our own way. Help us to keep growing in faith by being the people you call us to be. Thank you for your love and forgiveness and for not giving up on us! Amen.

Lord's Prayer: (updated by Rev. Sarah Dylan Breuer)

Loving Creator we honor you, and we honor all that you have made. Renew the whole world in the image of your love. Give us what we need for today, and a hunger to see the whole world fed. Strengthen us for what lies ahead; heal us from the hurts of the past; give us courage to follow your call in this moment. For your love is the only power, the only home, the only honor we need, in this world and in the world to come. Amen.

Holy Communion

Hymn: "Take Our Bread" (UMH #640)

Sending Forth



WE LIFT UP IN PRAYER

Juliann
Joan Allen
Naomi
Erin Frane
Madeline
Charles Gilman
Josh Jones

Harry Junkins
Marilyn & Gil
Donna Smith
Sophia
Bobbie Noble
Dan Strange
Danny Westbrook

Christine & her parents
Jenn - Stebbins daughter-in-law
Those in nursing and assisted living care
Our Church family



WHO WE ARE

FUMC PORTSMOUTH A RECONCILING CONGREGATION

We, the congregation of the First United Methodist Church of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, are dedicated in worshipping, learning, and serving with all people as we embrace Jesus Christ's message of love and acceptance. As a United Methodist Church we stand fully behind the statement "Open Hearts, Open Minds, and Open Doors". We celebrate our diversity and invite all persons regardless of age, gender, racial or ethnic background, sexual orientation, marital or socioeconomic status, nationality, physical or mental ability into full membership and participation in the life of this community of faith.



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