

LISBON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
May 2, 2021 Fifth Sunday of the Easter Season  
“At Home Worship”

**Call to Worship**

*As the sun rises in the morning,*  
**let all creation worship God!**  
*From the highest mountains to the deepest seas,*  
**let all creation lift high the name of the Lord,**  
**for God alone is worthy to be praised.**

**Opening Prayer** Loving God, we pray for your presence among us this day. Where there is fear, let us know your comfort. Where there is doubt, let us know your confidence. Where there is joy, let us know your pleasure. Fill this place with your Holy Spirit, and may this same Spirit fill our lives in this time of holy worship. Amen.

**Scripture Reading** *“he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus.”* Read Acts 8.26-40

**Prayer of Confession** Triune God, you call us to trust you in every circumstance of our lives, yet far too often, we do not. In times of oppression and strife, we lose hope in our future. When enduring disasters, suffering, or illness, we often grow bitter and forget your love. Absorbed by our wants and desires, we are blind to those around us who need our care. Forgive us, O God. Turn our hearts to you, that we may taste fullness of life and trust your promised salvation. Amen.

**Time of Silent Confession** *Offer the confessions of your heart to God in these quiet moments.*

**Words of Assurance** God’s loving presence never abandons us, not even when we abandon God. God delivers those who seek

and love the Lord, who come before God with repentant hearts. Thanks be to God.

**Scripture Reading** *“Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God.”* Read I John 4.7-21

**Remembering our Joys and Concerns in Prayer** *Please spend a few moments remembering those who are on our prayer list and the joys and concerns you bring to God today.*

**An Easter Season Prayer** Patient and loving God, we come before you in a spirit of prayer this morning. Strengthen our faith, we ask, so that we may live as people who wait with hope and expectation. Help us be people who trust your promise shared with us in Jesus Christ, the One who is our Vine. Set our hearts and minds on you that we may know your constant presence and everlasting love. Hear us now as we pray the prayer that Jesus taught us...  
**The Lord’s Prayer**

**Scripture Reading** *“I am the vine, you are the branches....”*  
Read John 15.1-8

**Meditation\*\*** Jesus’ disciples were always being surprised, delighted, and humbled. Every turn, every new day with Jesus was a holy adventure. Jesus called them, they followed; he taught, they listened; he guided, and they stumbled along behind and beside him, sometimes faithful, sometimes clueless. As they journeyed together, he would call them aside to share something of himself with his closest friends, something that would help them along their way.

One day Jesus gathered his followers around him and began to teach them the words in our gospel reading today, reminding them, *“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.”* In other words, Jesus was telling his friends (of all

generations) that he is the first fruit of a renewed creation, the source of life and healing for all. All who come to him, abide in him, and make their life in him will find the fullness of life. As long as remain attached to him through prayer, worship, study, fellowship, and service, we will grow and thrive and bear much fruit for the Kingdom of God. However, if we seek our own way, if we follow our own individual agendas, or if we attach ourselves to anything or anyone other than the true vine, we will be like deadwood which is cut off and used for kindling.

With Jesus as the source of our life together as the church, God is healing the sick, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, sheltering the homeless, reclaiming the lost, offering hope to the hopeless, making peace, and proclaiming resurrection. It is not that God cannot do these things apart from us, but that for some reason, God has chosen to work through our lives as the church. What an honor and privilege!

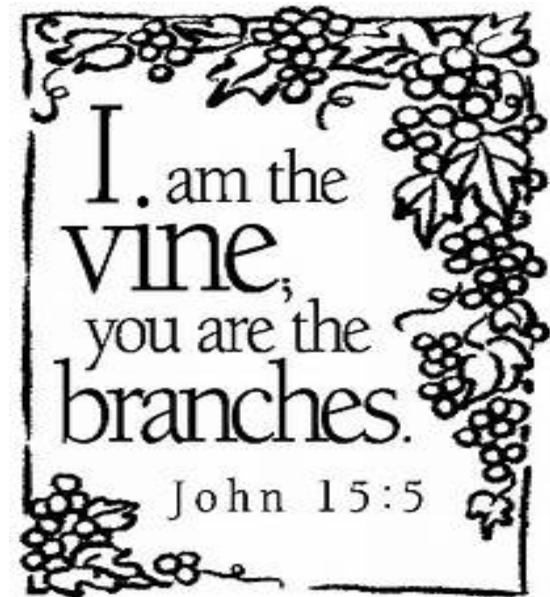
However, if we find that our lives are not producing the kind of fruit that we would like, then we need to look with whom we are abiding. To whom are we devoting our time and attention? To whom have we given our hearts?

The good news for us in this Easter season is that Christ has come to each of us, made his home with us, and offers us life on the vine, an opportunity to share in the life-giving fellowship that exists at the very heart of God. *"I am the vine; you are the branches."* Thanks be to God for this indescribable gift!

\*\*This meditation is adapted from a commentary written by David Hockett and entitled, *Abide in Christ*.

### **The Sacrament of Holy Communion** (insert)

**Words of Benediction** Holy God, whose presence surrounds and comforts me, accept the worship I offer you today. Fill me with your peace and create within me a heart full of your love and grace. Lift my eyes to you, O Lord, knowing that you who sent Jesus Christ for the salvation of the world, keeps my going out and my coming in forevermore. Amen.



Lisbon United Methodist Church  
welcomes, nurtures, and serves  
all people  
with the love of Christ.