

Notices & Welcome

Good morning and a very warm welcome to you all. Whether you are here in person, online or indeed a visitor, we hope you feel at home with us today.

This morning our service is being taken by our minister Michael Docker. Michael, we thank you very much for leading our worship today and look forward to sharing this time together.

Last Sunday, as you all know was Rachel's last Sunday with us, and we had a good send off for her after the service. The card for everyone to sign for her, is also available to sign today. If you were away last week, or did not get around to it, the card for Rachel is at the back of the church for you to sign. I will then make sure it makes its way to Rachel.

This coming week please note that there is no coffee shop on Tuesday here at church. The kind folk who run it every week, are having a week off and normal service will resume the week after.

Time at Tyndale on Wednesday is a film evening like no other. Bruce is in charge of the evening and has given it the title, 'That's all folks' super 8 film evening'. Do come along and enjoy what will no doubt be a fun evening. The doors open at 7.30pm for refreshments, and Bruce's film evening will start at 8pm.

Then on Thursday we have our usual online coffee shop at 11am, with the joining details on our website.

Thank you.

We continue to gather in this limbo period for Tyndale – post-Rachel; just ahead of a consideration of future ministry; not far ahead of the conclusion of the current one – mine; in an increasingly insecure world. The great 'I am' sayings of Jesus frame our worship in these weeks, bringing with them in their various ways the security of the presence, promises and faithfulness of God – the great 'I am' –

'Be still and know that I am God'

John Bell & Graham Maule

Call to worship

In the stillness of our hearts and the sure quietness of this place, we know – but only with the eyes of faith – the great 'I am' – God, who heals, holds and helps the world – God who calls us here and who we worship in Christ's name.

BPW 22 'Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness'

Opening Prayer

Lord our God in your light we gather to worship, and we march to the beat of a different drum than the world's sad tune – your endless love. Heavenly Father, in your power we come together, and we move to the rhythm of a different music than the world's harsh sounds – your boundless peace; Eternal One, in your life we meet to praise, and we live in the echo of a different harmony than the world's dischord – your perfect joy –

We do all this in Christ's name and by your grace to us in Him; the rhythm of salvation, the music of forgiveness, the harmony of wholeness in a broken world and empty lives; Lord, sound for us again the chords to draw our hearts out of their coldness into your warmth and light, and let us hear and see and feel the peaceful, rich music of your eternal Kingdom – touch us with your Spirit, and lift our hearts to worship and to serve -

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 forever. Amen

'Spirit of heaven' (Christ in me)

Readings [Micah 4:1-5](#); [John 15:1-17](#)

'Speak, O Lord'

Sermon: 'I am the vine'

Lord, we give you this time; may what is spoken ring with truth; may what is heard and understood be touched by your Spirit, & may what is decided lead us on towards your kingdom. amen

These last weeks have been a reminder, if one was needed, of how dangerous a place this world can be – that is, how dangerous human beings can make it

Never mind natural disasters for a moment, or even climate change – so much of it, it seems, human induced, but still some distance from the experience of most of us.

Let's just consider the military build-up near the Ukrainian border; macho-posturing, the 'will he, won't he?' analysis and diplomacy.

The mixed bravery and fear of the ordinary people of Ukraine – 70 year old women learning to shoot; young men signing up for the Ukrainian defence force

'they shall all sit under their own vines and under their own fig trees, and no one shall make them afraid;' – great words of peace from the Old Testament..

In Ukraine they *are* being made afraid by someone; how frightening it must be.. how insecure it must feel - the latest of many sources of man-made insecurity, fear & injustice around the world

Freezing and starvation in Afghanistan; continuing misery and destruction in Syria, the Yemen - ; the deep injustice meted out to all those sub-post masters and mistresses

Many things: long Covid still debilitating 1000s of lives; the anxiety of the immuno-compromised..

'they shall all sit under their own vines and under their own fig trees, and no one shall make them afraid;'

The vision of the human heart; what we all want; peace, security, prosperity; no fear -

'they shall all sit under their own vines and under their own fig trees, and no one shall make them afraid;'

The connection with this community; with the faith we proclaim here is, I think, the Vine...

One of those great 'I am' sayings of Jesus - *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.*

I am the Vine, says Jesus. The ancient OT dream of peace and justice; *'they shall all sit under their own vines and under their own fig trees, and no one shall make them afraid;'* - for us, maybe, all comes down to this:

The Vine....the vine is a powerful image in the Bible isn't it? Fruitfulness, wine, plenty, shade, growing things – but you don't need to be into the Bible; just about any vision of peace and fruitfulness from any religion or culture on earth will do

But this is unique to the Christian faith; 'I am the Vine'

How's that? *I am the Vine – Jesus Christ* the way to peace, justice, fruitfulness for the whole world -tell it to the world – Jesus, the Way, the Truth, the Life – the Vine...I am the Vine.

But it's not as simple as that is it? At least we can't leave it there. John doesn't have Jesus say 'I am the Vine' through some kind of 1st century version of the internet for all to hear –

He has him say it to a little group of fearful, vulnerable people in an upper room as they cowered from the authorities and wondered about what would happen next -

And we know what happened next – Jesus, after his long farewell, begins his fateful final journey to the Cross – the journey that we follow through Lent..

It's said in darkness; in fear; in insecurity – and not just 'I am the Vine'...' but 'I am the Vine and you are the branches – abide in me....'

See – that’s how it is for us, in today’s world – the way to peace and justice and fruitfulness is not just by being groupies for Jesus like he was some kind of rockstar;

It’s by being *part of the community of those who identify with Jesus*; the company of the fearful and vulnerable in any age, the little flock who have thrown their lot in with this Jesus,

believing that his Way, his Truth, his Life, is the way to God; the way to peace and justice; the way to all the visions and dreams that ever rose in the human heart.

And like those fearful disciples and the Lord they followed, the way is a way of suffering and sacrifice and dying to oneself

‘I am the Vine’, we say & believe in the world of Ukraine, pandemics & post-office injustices; ‘we are the branches’ – we live & believe in such a world *so that the world may see*.

But the truth is that however firm a grasp on the things of God we have, or however lightly we sit to it all, the Vine & branches is an image of the faithful, ‘interweavingness’ of God.

He is holding on to his community in Christ, as firmly and as fruitfully as any vine ever held on to its branches and produced good fruit

And please God they’ll see it here, in coffee shops and services and churches sharing with one another – for a long time yet, if God has got anything to do with it.

Ministries come and go; ways of service begin and end, but the mission of the ‘Vine and branches’ – the mission of God – continues...

And please God they will see it in Ukraine – I’m sure some of the ‘branches of the Vine’ there are wondering if they will soon find out what the suffering way of Jesus really means..

and please God they will see it in Russia, Syria, Afghanistan, the Yemen – anywhere where the ‘branches of the Vine’ are taking the way of Jesus seriously – the way of suffering love

Anywhere where the followers of Jesus are taking his words seriously, *‘I am the Vine and you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing.*

And though little can be done, please God the ancient vision will emerge afresh amongst the insecurities, fears and injustices of today’s world –

‘they shall all sit under their own vines and under their own fig trees, and no one shall make them afraid;’

Offering prayer

Lord we come to you; be our faith strong or weak, long-standing or new; whether we’re seeking for the first time or craving further vision and reassurance; we carry the universal dream of peace and freedom from fear in our hearts - and we glimpse the vision of the Vine and branches – and we give of ourselves, in these and all our gifts; for we are determined to abide in Christ - and to serve the cause of his Kingdom.

The grace

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us evermore, Amen

[‘I am the vine and you are the branches’](#) –

John Michael Talbot

Prayers

The Vine and branches is a powerful image of Christ and His Church, but it is also a reminder of the interconnectedness of the whole world – so we pray

For the people of Ukraine – determination; fear; hope for the best; confusion as to the best way forward; friends and family here and elsewhere; people in churches;

That there might be peace; security; a clear way to a better future.

Christ the Vine

We pray in your name.

For the people of Russia – probably not supportive of a war, but who knows? Sharing common humanity; friends and family here, in Ukraine and elsewhere; people in churches;

That there might be voices of truth and moderation and acts of service.

Christ the Vine

We pray in your name.

For the people of Afghanistan, Syria, Yemen – dire circumstances of cold, hunger, poverty; desperate for help; friends and family here and elsewhere; people in churches;

That there might be food, money, all manner of help and an end to destruction.

Christ the Vine

We pray in your name.

For people all over, unjustly treated, doing their best; dreaming as we dream; friends and family who-knows-where; people in churches; mosques, gurdwaras; temples..

That there might be justice, freedom and the power to turn dreams into reality

Christ the Vine

We pray in your name.

For this church; as it considers its future ministry and makes its way into the future.

That there might be a clear sense of God's call; that its people – and Sam - will be enabled to live by faith

Christ the Vine

We pray in your name.

BPW 583 'We are called to be God's people'

Blessing

The blessing of God almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be with us and remain with us always, Amen.

Thanks to all who have made this service possible. May everyone know the blessing of God in the coming days.