

# St Nicholas Church, Sighthill 2nd May 2021

Leader: Dear friends, we gather in the name of the God of love, we gather in the presence of the God of love.

**All: So let us worship the God of love.**

Leader: Dear friends, we gather as children of the God of love, we gather as sisters and brothers.

**All: So let us learn to love one another.**

**Song: You are Vine, We are the branches**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=301PIhiRNx8>

## Opening Prayer

As we focus our minds, it is easy for our minds to shoot off in so many directions. We find it hard to slow down, to remove all the clutter and concentrate on You, Lord. In the stillness of this place, this time, take from us the strain and stress as we feel ourselves rest in Your eternal love, in the everlasting arms.

Then quietly, the small beginnings of praise well up as we remember what we have in Jesus Christ. That we have one who is with us, who guides and strengthens us. Who holds us through every storm of life who leads us to everlasting life.

We confess that sometimes the storms we endure are of our own making. A foolish word, a thoughtless comment, a misguided action, a quick judgement. Then we have to live with the consequences, and the guilt. Take all that stress from us too and replace it with Your forgiveness and peace.

Heavenly Father, in Your hands we are safe and secure – we rejoice in Your eternal love and all sufficient grace. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

## The Lord's Prayer

*Our Father which art in heaven,  
Hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come,  
Thy will be done in earth,  
as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our debts,  
as we forgive our debtors.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil:  
For thine is the kingdom,  
and the power, and the glory,  
for ever. Amen.*

## Bible Reading: John 15: 1-8

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

"I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

## Poem – 'I am the Vine'

How might it feel to be part of the vine?  
Not just to see the vineyard from afar  
Or even pluck the clusters, press the wine,  
But to be grafted in, to feel the stir  
Of inward sap that rises from our root  
Himself deep planted in the ground of Love,  
To feel a leaf unfold a tender shoot,  
As tendrils curled unfurl, as branches give  
A little to the swelling of the grape,

In gradual perfection, round and full,  
To bear within oneself the joy and hope  
Of God's good vintage, till it's ripe and whole.  
What might it mean to bide and to abide  
In such rich love as makes the poor heart glad?

Malcolm Guite is a poet, singer-songwriter, Anglican priest, and academic.

## A brief Reflection - "I am the wine"

A priest whose first language was not English seemingly and repeatedly misread the word 'vine' as 'wine'. He said, 'I am the true wine... I am the wine.' The congregation smiled and tried without much success to teach the difference between 'vine' and 'wine'. It's an interesting difference because the vine becomes wine and, in turn, a symbol of the blood of Christ at the Lord's table.



Wine is also often used as a symbol for the New covenant or the New Testament. Some argue that when Jesus turned water into wine, He, in effect, turned the 'water of the Old Testament' into the 'wine of the New'. Furthermore, Jesus referred to the cup of wine He shared with His friends during His last supper as His own blood, His life's energy given for us.

The wine, so beautiful in meaning, came from the simple grape on a vine. The ordinary and the extraordinary, the human and the divine, are intimately linked in Jesus Himself and in the way He speaks for us. The Incarnation leads to the resurrection, all linked to the body. Everything human is a way to God for us.

Love mingles earth and heaven, for all love is of God. Our moods and feelings, desires and joys, sorrows and griefs, hurts and shame, all lead us to God. During eucharist (*aka* the Holy Communion), our friends in the Roman Catholic Church 'mingle' water and wine at Mass as a touching reminder that 'Christ the Son of God humbled Himself to share in our humanity'. Again, the ordinary and extraordinary are linked together.

As vine and branches draw life from each other, we draw life from the body of Christ in order to share His love among others and to bear much fruit. Maybe priest's mispronunciation was not completely in error!

Thankful for thoughts, on today's Bible reading, of Donal Neary, editor of the Sacred Heart Messenger Magazine

## Prayers for others

Jesus Christ, the true vine, in our need we come to You, in weakness, needing Your strength for we too easily become dry and lifeless without Your life-giving spirit.

Jesus Christ, the true vine, teach us to remain in You and so to find Your life flowing in us giving strength and vigour to our discipleship. And as we come closer to You our lives are drawn closer to others. Our minds turn to images of violence we have seen on the news in places of fear and terror, to where people are at loggerheads, over race, religion, land, power. Our thoughts turn to Christians living with persecution who face danger, simply for being linked to You.

Father, prune back all that stands in the way of peace. Our thoughts turn to people in leadership and power – who have decisions to make over the economy and people whose jobs and livelihood will be affected. We pray for our nation, and its leaders. May changes and choices be shaped by the values of the kingdom.

On our hearts are people in need in our church and community. Wherever hearts are breaking ... bodies are failing ... minds are confused ... families are ruptured ... Lord, come with Your help and healing.

Here, too, as Your church gathered today, we give thanks for the saints of the past and the fruit they have borne in our community and beyond. Like them, help us to remain in You that we may be fruitful and bring glory to Your name. Through Jesus Christ, the true vine. Amen

## Closing Hymn: Christ triumphant ever reigning // Jubilate

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=insbOCH6S1Y>

## Sending

Beyond hearts and roses, let us go into the world with a love that moves us into life, into justice, into grace, and to love others before they love us, for this is of God.



*Alison and  
Charles  
Baillie*