

About the Fifth Sunday of Easter

Theme: Branches in the Vine
+ *highlighting the Scriptures for the week* +

The Gospel reaches far beyond the boundaries of Israel. (Acts) Even the servant of the Queen of Ethiopia is called, gathered, enlightened, and sanctified by the Spirit of God working through His Word and the washing of Holy Baptism. At the same time, the faithful are exhorted to “test the spirits” so that they are not deceived by false teachers. (1 John) The only way by which the children of God can demonstrate true love is by the love of God the Father. The Father is the gardener of His vineyard, but His Son is the true Vine; we are only branches. (John) Branches produce what is given them through the Vine. So we remain in the Word that we might be full of the Life which comes from the Father through His Son in the power and presence of His Spirit.

Use the schedule below in your personal devotion. The first three readings are the lessons read today; the last three will be read next Sunday. The Wednesday reading is the psalmody for the week. Each day you may want to pray that Psalm or the prayer printed in our service folder today, followed by the suggested reading and your personal requests and Thanksgivings to our Heavenly Father.

- Sunday** Acts 8:26-40 What question did the Ethiopian ask Philip? What was the answer? Where does Holy Baptism fit into the good news about Jesus? Whom do you know who needs to hear the good news about Jesus? Will you bring them so they can hear?
- Monday** 1 John 4:1-11 What is the litmus test in discerning the real Spirit from false ones? Why is pure doctrine therefore ever crucial to the life of the church? What response should we expect from those who are driven by the world’s agenda? What does this say about the church’s relationship with the culture in our day? What is the litmus test in discerning real Christians from false ones? How did God show His love among us? How is God’s love disclosed to people who can’t see Him? What does this mean?
- Tuesday** John 15:1-8 Identify these four components in Jesus’ Word picture: Vine, branches, fruit, Gardener. Where do branches derive the nutrients to produce fruit? Why does the Gardener prune productive branches? What does He do with unproductive branches? What does the heavenly Father use to make us clean (productive)? Who is the source of our spiritual life? Who, therefore, actually does our works of Christian love in and through us? How may we be and remain productive Christians? How is this done?
- Wednesday** Psalm 150 The last of the psalms is a psalm of praise. Make a list of how we are encouraged to praise the LORD. How can “everything that has breath praise the LORD”? What does this mean?
- Thursday** Acts 10:34-48 Once Peter was finally convinced by the Holy Spirit to enter the house of a non-Jew, what was his message to that household? What happened? What drastic thing occurred (totally out of the ordinary order of things) that proved the Gentiles (non-Jews) are included in God’s plan of salvation? What does this mean for us today?
- Friday** 1 John 5:1-8 How is the love of God demonstrated in the life of a believer? Who overcomes the world? How? What are the three witnesses to Jesus as the Son of God? What is the meaning of each? What does this mean for us today?
- Saturday** John 15:9-17 Where did Jesus get His love? To whom does He give it? How is such love maintained and nourished? What is the measure of deepest love? What is the difference between a servant and a friend? How does Jesus continue to teach His church among us? What is His continuing legacy among us? How is this done?