

Wednesday Devotion – Abide

January 25, 2023

Scripture: John 15:5-8 (The Message)

“I am the Vine, you are the branches. When you’re joined with me and I with you, the relation intimate and organic, the harvest is sure to be abundant. Separated, you can’t produce a thing. Anyone who separates from me is deadwood, gathered up and thrown on the bonfire. But if you make yourselves at home with me and my words are at home in you, you can be sure that whatever you ask will be listened to and acted upon. This is how my Father shows who he is—when you produce grapes, when you mature as my disciples.

Bishop Robert Farr: “Growing a garden takes work, just like discipleship takes work.”

Reflection: During the Covid-19 shutdown, this scripture became a prayer for me. This version says stay joined with me in intimate relations, and the version I repeated says, “abide in me, and I will abide in you.” Bishop Farr reminded us Sunday that a vine cut from the roots quickly starts to wither and die. This was what my soul was crying out, saying, “stay connected, stay connected.”

Even though the pandemic has eased up some (I write that with tongue in cheek after just recently struggling with Covid-19), many life experiences can disconnect us from Christ and others. Overly busy schedules, illnesses, relationship struggles, financial hardships, anxiety over the future or the past, and/or our own self-centeredness. These are just naming a few; you likely have a few to add. It takes intention and work to stay connected to Christ and others.

For United Methodists abiding in the vine is essential to who we are and how we live. This life begins with being Christ-centered. This happens through a deeply rooted faith learned through scripture, bible study, worship, serving others, and spiritual disciplines. It means we are connected to the body of Christ, we are grace-filled, and we prioritize inclusively sharing the good news of salvation in Jesus with others. This is a beautiful life. I visualize such an abundant life that we look like a vine full to bursting with grapes.

Questions:

How are you staying connected with Jesus?

How are you staying connected with others in an intentional and Christ-like way?

Songs:

Traditional, Bind Us Together, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EXZSnagin00>

Contemporary, Abide by Music Meets Heaven,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BLDEt9KP2O0>

Prayer: Dear God, let us abide in you, and you abide in us. We long to be deeply connected to you and others. Give us the intention to do the work to be your disciples and to help your love abound in our lives. You are our source, and for this, we give you endless praise. Unite us, Lord, in your grace. In Christ's love, amen.