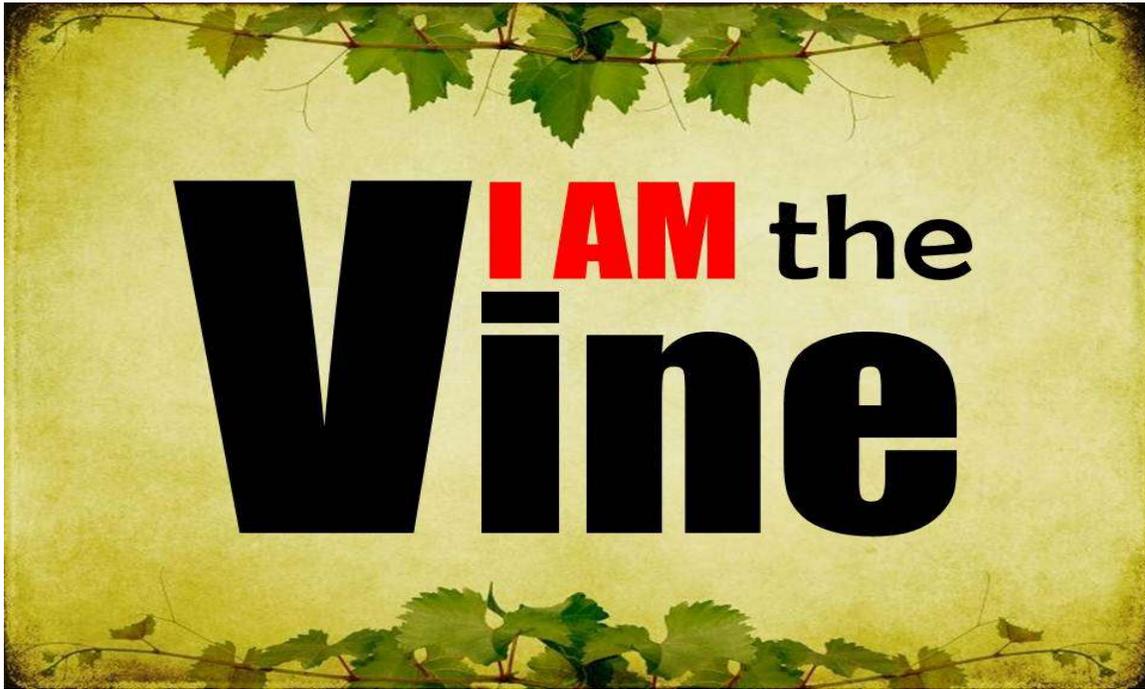


Grace Community Presbyterian Church
April 28, 2024



Thought for Meditation

"I am the true Vine. The general meaning of this comparison is, that we are, by nature, barren and dry, except in so far as we have been engrafted into Christ, and draw from him a power which is new, and which does not proceed from ourselves... First, let him remember the rule which ought to be observed in all parables; that we ought not to examine minutely every property of the vine, but only to take a general view of the object to which Christ applies that comparison. Now, there are three principal parts; first, that we have no power of doing good but what comes from himself; secondly, that we, having a root in him, are dressed, and pruned by the Father; thirdly, that he removes the unfruitful branches, that they may be thrown into the fire and burned." Calvin's Commentaries

— GATHERING —

Prelude Improvisation on “Beecher” L. Smith

Welcome and Announcements Rev. Owar Ojulu

Opening Prayer

Call To Worship Psalm 19:1-4 Barb Foust

L: We come to worship with joy, trusting God’s holy word will inspire us.

P: We lean into God for understanding, anticipating the Spirit’s blessing.

L: May God hear our praise! May we be counted among the great congregation.

P: May the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable to God. Amen

*** Hymn of Praise** Love Divine, All Loves Excelling (V1-3) #648

***Prayer of Confession** James 5:16

Therefore, confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. Grace Church, let us draw near to God in prayer.

O Christ, you are the true vine, and you have made us your branches.

In your grace, we find strength, and in your love, we are set free.

Forgive us, O God, when we do not live as people who have been freed, when we act as if the Easter story did not turn the world upside down.

Forgive us, O God, when we do not live as people who are your branches, when we forget that we are rooted in you and bound to one another by your spirit.

Forgive us, O Christ, our one true vine, and teach us to abide in you. Amen

Silent Prayer of Confession...

***Assurance of Forgiveness**

Now, when sins have once been forever forgiven and forgotten, there is no need to offer more sacrifices to get rid of them. Friends, believe this good news of the gospel.

All: In Christ Jesus, we are forgiven, renewed, and sent. Amen!

*** Passing of the Peace**

L: Since we have been united with him in his death and resurrection and gave us peace, let us share peace between each other. May the peace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

P: And also, with you.

Please pass the peace of Christ to your neighbors in the pews and introduce yourself to those you do not know.

*** Glory to God** #815

Praise God from whom all blessings flow.

Praise Him, all creatures here below.

Praise Him above, ye heav’nly host.

Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.

Scripture Reading Isaiah 5:1-7 (Page 589)

Anthem O Be Joyful in the Lord! Chancel Choir

O be joyful in the Lord! Sing before him, all the earth! Praise him with a glad accord and with lives of noblest worth. You of every land, humbly now before him stand! Raise your voice and rejoice in the bounty of his hand.

Know ye that the Lord is King! All his works his wisdom prove! By his might the heavens ring; in his love we live and move. By him we are made, so we trust him unafraid. Standing fast to the last, by his hand our lives are stayed.

Enter now his holy gate; let our burdened hearts be still; in the sacred silence wait, as we seek to know his will. Let our lives express our abundant thankfulness; all our days, all our ways, shall our Father's love confess.

For the Lord our God is kind, and his love shall constant be; in his will our peace we find; in his service, liberty. Yea, his law is sure; in his light we walk secure; evermore as of yore, shall his changeless truth endure. Amen.

(words: Curtis Beach, based on Ps. 100; music: Carlton T. Russell)

— THE WORD —

Scripture John 15:1–8 (Page 939)

Sermon “I am the True Vine...”

***Responding Hymn** Abide With Me (V1-3) #642

***Affirmation of Faith** *Adopted from the Confession of 1967, 9.22*

New life in Christ takes shape in a community in which people know that God loves and accepts them in spite of what they are. They therefore accept themselves and love others, knowing that no one has any ground on which to stand, except God's grace. Amen

Prayers of the People and Lord's Prayer (debts & debtors)

Call for Tithes and Offerings Numbers 18:26

“When you take from the people of Israel the tithe that I have given you from them for your inheritance, then you shall present a contribution from it to the Lord, a tithe of the tithe.” Grace Church, let us offer to the Lord our lives and our tithes for God's glory.

Offertory O We Have Found a Lovely Vine Young

*** Doxology** O Bless the Gifts #817

O bless the gifts our hands have brought;
And bless the work our hearts have planned.
Ours is the faith, the will, the thought;
The rest, O God, is in Your hand.

*** Prayer of Dedication**

— SENDING —

- * **Hymn of Dedication** We Are One in the Spirit (V1-2) #429
- * **Charge and Benediction** 1 Peter 2:9
You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of Him Who called you out of darkness, into his wonderful light.
Glory to His name! Amen!
- * **Congregational Response** We Are One in the Spirit (refrain) #429
And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love, yes, they'll know we are Christians by our love.
- * **Postlude** Toccata on "Forest Green" Westenkuehler

* PLEASE STAND IF YOU ARE ABLE

Welcome to Grace Community Presbyterian Church

We extend a warm welcome to all worshipping with us today and hope you will return. Gary & Jackie Chickerella and Beulah Brown will be your greeters today. Please join us for Coffee Fellowship in Cana Hall right after worship today. The Johnson's will be your hosts.



April 02 Jackie Chickerella
April 04 Rich Artman
April 05 BeenyJwok Ojulu
April 08 Grant Claypool

April 09 Joe Bieranoski
April 22 Michele Claypool
April 25 Terri Ludwig



May 02 Darlene Artman
May 03 Luke Ludwig
May 04 Alma Woodhall
May 14 Owar Ojulu
May 17 Lily Householder



May 03 Jack & Shirley Trinclisti
May 10 Elsie & Bill Deem
May 24 Marcia & Richard Sacket 55

If your name does not appear, or if the listed information is incorrect, please contact the church office so that the records can be updated.



Help fill shoeboxes all year long! The Operation Christmas Child items for the month of May are arts & craft supplies (colored pencils, crayons, watercolors, drawing paper and sidewalk chalk). Donations may be placed in the OCC box in the Narthex. Thank you.



We are collecting items for the next spring rummage sale (Date TBD). Please help by bringing in your unwanted items for the next sale. Your items can be placed inside the upper-level door by the old sanctuary.

NO ELECTRONICS OR LARGE FURNITRE

Rev. Dr. Ojulu is available anytime if you have any concerns, want to schedule a meeting, or if you need a prayer. You can contact him at the office @ 724-339-9661 or his cell 507-304-5958.

TODAY'S MUSIC: "Improvisation on Beecher" - *Beecher* is the name of the hymn tune commonly associated with the Wesley hymn "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling." John Zundel was a gifted musician, but he is best known as the composer of *Beecher*. Born in Germany, he spent about 30 years in the U.S. For some of those years he served as organist of Plymouth Church in Brooklyn where Henry Ward Beecher was the pastor. Zundel named this hymn in his honor.

"Love Divine, All Loves Excelling" is one of Wesley's most beloved hymns, found in a wide range of denominational hymnals. This popularity and diversity is more amazing considering the theological controversy over Wesley's theme of Christian perfectionism in the hymn. That problem has been avoided by omitting the offending 2nd stanza or by altering words (as in our hymnal). The hymn is really a prayer. It invites Jesus to make his dwelling in us, to visit us with his salvation, to enter our hearts. It invites him to take away our love of sinning so that we might be pure and spotless -- perfectly restored -- ready for heaven.

As with many Wesley hymns, "Love Divine" is filled with Scriptural allusions: "Alpha and Omega" (from Rev. 21), the casting of crowns before God's throne (Rev. 4), the promise that Christians shall be "changed from glory into glory" (2 Cor. 3), as well as others.

Early New England sacred music frequently used agrarian themes. Harvest metaphors and imagery of trees, birds, and farm animals abound. These all speak to the close ties between the earthly and spiritual realms that formed the backbone of the world view of early Yankee farmers.

We can easily see this in songs such as "Lovely Vine," composed by Jeremiah Ingalls, using a text by Joshua Smith, extolling the Creator for the beauty around us: *"Behold a lovely vine,... The blossoms shoot and promise fruit..., Ye trees, which lofty stand, And stars with sparkling light, Ye Christians hear both far and near, 'Tis joy to see the sight... Shall feeble nature sing, And man not join the [song]?... Glory to God on high, For his redeeming grace..."*

The Shaker song, "**O, We Have Found a Lovely Vine**," has an elusive history, but seems to be an adaptation of Smith's poetry, if not Ingalls' music. This would have been in keeping with a common Shaker practice of using, and sometimes altering, popular tunes for settings of their texts.

This Week's Calendar

April 28 - May 4

Today	Sunday School	9:00am
	Worship	10:00am
Monday	Session Meeting	6:30pm
Tuesday	Bible Study	1:00pm
Wednesday	Choir Rehearsal	7:00pm
	<i>CrossCurrents will be mailed out. To put anything in CrossCurrents, please get it to the office by Monday morning. You can leave a copy on Wendy's desk or send it to her by</i>	
	<i>email:secretary@gracecommunitypresbyterian.org</i>	
Thursday	Cub Scouts Den Meeting	6:00pm
	Ladies Club	6:30pm

Looking Ahead

May 5 - 11

May 5	Sunday School	9:00am
	Worship/Communion	10:00am
	Youth Group	6:00pm
May 7	Bible Study	1:00pm
May 8	Choir Rehearsal	7:00pm
May 9	CE Meeting	3:00pm
	Cub Scouts Den Meeting	6:00pm

CALENDAR SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Grace Community Presbyterian Church
2751 Grant Street, Lower Burrell, PA 15068
(724) 339-9661

Website: www.gracecommunitypresbyterian.org

Worship Service is at 10:00am

Church Staff:

Pastor: Rev. Dr. Owar O. Ojulu
pastorowar@gracecommunitypresbyterian.org
Secretary: Wendy Stein Clark
secretary@gracecommunitypresbyterian.org
Christian Ed: Bill Ludwig
Organist: Kenneth McGeary
Treasurer: Ray Zerjav
Custodian: John Baron and Paul Zunich

Elders

Reitha Bieranoski
Cathy Brady
Dave Briscoe
Michael Cochenour (clerk)
Dan Howard
Henry Kedzierski
Cheryl Landis
Val Lester
Glenn Nordmark
Sharon Rupert
Jack Trinclisti

Deacons

Gary Barbiaux
Judy Barbiaux
Margie Bistline
Beulah Brown
Elsie Deem
Lisa Edwards
Cindy Irvin (moderator)
Terri Ludwig
Lavonne Pelisari
Debbie Roskey
Marcia Sackett
Rich Sackett
Dee Shaffer
Shirley Wilson