

THE PARISH OF DOWLAIS AND PENYDAR-

Fifth Sunday of Easter April 28th

Please remember in your prayers those who are unwell:
Glyndwr Wright, Connie Lewis, Peter Hagerty, Shannon Vincent, Mark Lewis, Deborah Stoddart, Anthony Evans, and Paula Jones.

Post Communion Prayer

Eternal God, whose Son Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life: grant us to walk in his way, to rejoice in his truth, and to share his risen life; who is alive and reigns, now and for ever.

Ministry Area Development Workshops

These will take place in different churches; the one planned for Monday 3rd June will take place in All Saints. All are welcome to any of these meetings.

Saturday 25th May 9:30-12:30 (bacon baps)
Wednesday 29th May 18:00-21:00 (cakes)
Monday 3rd June (soup lunch)



Thursday May 9th
at 7pm at All Saints

Wine, Women
& Song

A Concert starring
**Cantorion
Cyfarthfa**

With guest star
Ryan Crowley

Tickets £10, includes a glass
of wine and nibbles.



The Funeral of **Tina Beattie** took place in Christchurch on April 23rd.

May she rest in peace.

Weekly Service Times

Wednesday 10.30am Christchurch
- Holy Eucharist

Sunday 10am Christchurch -
Holy Eucharist
11am All Saints - Holy Eucharist
11am online Facebook and Youtube Service.



Saturday July
13th, 10am
- 12 noon
All Saints
Church Hall.
Free entry.

Stalls £5 - tables provided .

Parish Contact Details

Rev Caroline Owen	Home: 01685 558660
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Readings for April 28th – Easter 5

Collect

Almighty God, through your only-begotten Son Jesus Christ you have overcome death and opened to us the gate of everlasting life: grant that, as by your grace going before us you put into our minds good desires, so by your continual help we may bring them to good effect; through Jesus Christ our risen Lord, who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

FIRST READING Acts 8. 26-40

Then an angel of the Lord said to Philip, 'Get up and go towards the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.' (This is a wilderness road.)²⁷ So he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship²⁸ and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah.²⁹ Then the Spirit said to Philip, 'Go over to this chariot and join it.'³⁰ So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, 'Do you understand what you are reading?'³¹ He replied, 'How can I, unless someone guides me?' And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him.³² Now the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this: 'Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter, and like a lamb silent before its shearer, so he does not open his mouth.'³³ In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth.'³⁴ The eunuch asked Philip, 'About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?'³⁵ Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus.³⁶ As they were going along the road, they came to some water; and the eunuch said, 'Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?'³⁸ He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptized him.³⁹ When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing.⁴⁰ But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he was passing through the region, he proclaimed the good news to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

Psalm 22. 25-31

²⁵ From you comes my praise in the great congregation; my vows I will pay before those who fear him.

²⁶ The poor shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek him shall praise the LORD. May your hearts live for ever!

²⁷ All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD; and all the families of the nations shall worship before him.

²⁸ For dominion belongs to the LORD, and he rules over the nations.

²⁹ To him, indeed, shall all who sleep in the earth bow down; before him shall bow all who go down to the dust, and I shall live for him.

³⁰ Posterity will serve him; future generations will be told about the Lord,

³¹ and proclaim his deliverance to a people yet unborn, saying that he has done it.

SECOND READING 1 John 4. 7-21

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.⁸ Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love.⁹ God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him.¹⁰ In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins.¹¹ Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another.¹² No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.¹³ By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.¹⁴ And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Saviour of the world.¹⁵ God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God.¹⁶ So we have known and believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them.¹⁷ Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgement, because as he is, so are we in this world.¹⁸ There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love.¹⁹ We love because he first loved us.²⁰ Those who say, 'I love God', and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen.²¹ The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.

GOSPEL John 15. 1-8

'I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine-grower.² He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit.³ You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you.⁴ Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me.⁵ 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.⁶ Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned.⁷ If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.⁸ My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.

Thought for the Day

- 'I am the Vine.'

In St John's Gospel, Jesus describes himself seven times beginning with the words 'I am...':

'I am the bread of life'; 'I am the light of the world'; 'I am the good shepherd'; 'I am the door of the sheep'; 'I am the way, the truth and the life'; 'I am the resurrection and the life'; 'I am the true vine'.



In the Old Testament story of the burning bush, God identifies himself to Moses as 'I am who I am', and so by using those words 'I am', Jesus is making God present: he is speaking as God. Jesus is saying that he too is the God who is 'I am who I am.'

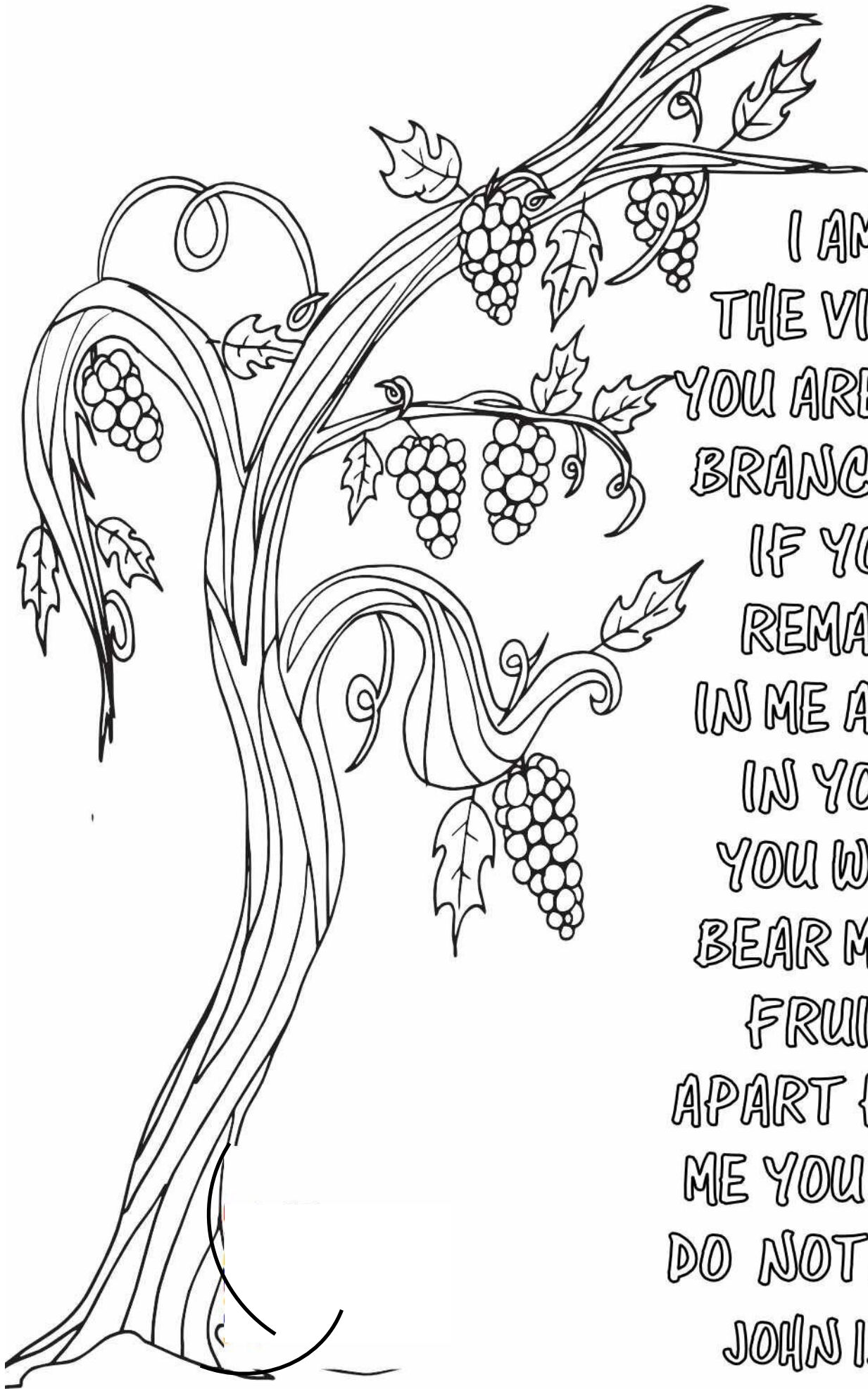
So, if we want bread that is spiritual food that lasts forever, we are to come to Jesus to be fed; if we want light to find our way in this dark world, then Jesus is that light; if we want to find the way to God, we come to Jesus who is the way to heaven and the gate at the end; if we want to rise to new life after death, then only Jesus can give us this gift; if we want care and protection along life's way, then Jesus offers this as the good shepherd, and, if we want to know the presence of God in our lives, we need to abide in Jesus the true vine.

In the Old Testament the people of God are often compared to a vine. The prophet Isaiah says 'for the vineyard of the Lord is the house of Israel'. The prophet Jeremiah has God saying to the Jews 'I planted you as a choice vine from the purest stock. So, when Jesus says 'I am the true vine' he is saying 'I am true Israel.' He is the vine, in the hands of God the vinegrower. He represents God to the world, and those who follow him will represent God to the world as the new people of God, the church.

Jesus makes it quite clear that he is the vine itself, the stem from which the branches come. The stem is rooted in the earth: when all the fruit has been picked and the leaves fall, the vinekeeper cuts away the branches. That way you get growth and fruit in the spring. The life of the vine does not depend on the branches, but on the stem, the vine itself: the branches are dependent on the vine, they can't grow or thrive without it, but the vine can exist without the branches. Jesus is the source of life and nourishment for the branches —for you and me.

Jesus compares his disciples to the branches, dependent on him for life and growth. Seven times in this passage Jesus speaks of his disciples 'abiding in him'. Living branches abide in the vine. To be a Christian, you must abide in Christ. *Abide* basically means "to remain," "to persevere," or "to dwell." The most important thing for a branch to do is to stay connected to the vine. Good branches may be cut back, but that way they bear much fruit: they find their life in the vine and become healthy branches, sharing a common purpose to bear fruit that will some day bring peace and justice to our world.

The vine and its branches are the Christian community. Thinking of ourselves as branches united to Christ, reminds us that the Christian life is not a solitary journey. Each of us is a branch, but not a solitary branch trying to exist on its own, we're supported by Jesus and by the branches around us. As we grow, others grow. We branches need each other, just as we need the Jesus, the vine.



I AM
THE VINE;
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JOHN 15:5