



Section News

APRIL 28, 2021

Reflection

Notices

**the
connexion**

Superintendent's Thoughts

I AM THE VINE...

The word of the week is "abide".

It appears in both the New Testament readings set for this Sunday to describe the nature of God that is unending, unboundaried love and the "both and ..." nature of Jesus' ministry. It is too simplistic a view to hold that Jesus' ministry was all about action for there are many accounts in the gospels that speak of him withdrawing for times of prayer and silence. As one commentator puts it,

*"[Jesus'] ministry starts not as he stands up and speaks but as he wrestles alone in the desert."*¹

"Where you see love, there God is present" as the ancient chant of the church puts it.

"God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them."
(1 John 4:16)

The second undeniable quality of God is life and it is this characteristic that John expounds in this part of his gospel. There is a sense of urgency in the writing and subject matter that will be familiar to the gardeners amongst us. John sees the fact of the matter being that God is the only source of life. He explains this in horticultural terms. If you pick flowers they die; if you take people away from God they die.

"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." (John 15:4)

As Jane Williams writes:

"... only branches grafted into the true vine can live and bear fruit. That is why this choice between being and doing is a false one. You are either alive with the life of God, the life in which there is no distinction between what God is and what God does, or you are not alive at all."²



Sometimes it is comforting to know that we are grafted into the parent plant and that nourishment and nurture will flow into us as we "abide". Sometimes we need to recognise that growth and fruitfulness only occur when the necessary pruning has taken place and the vine has been reshaped that it may better fulfil its purpose and be nurtured to use the space it occupies to bring abundant new life.

Please do make use of your votes in the coming days!

¹ Williams, J. *Lectionary Reflections Year B*, SPCK 2005

² Ibid.

Notices

Dates for the Diary

Week beginning	2 nd May	9 th May	16 th May	23 rd May	Link
Sun 4.00 pm <i>Reflection</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84235746908
Mon 7:30 pm <i>Discussion Group</i>	Bank Holiday		✓		https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84961411119
Thu 7:30pm <i>Circuit Bible Study</i>				✓	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88651459988

If you would like to join in with any of these gatherings via telephone, please do ring me on 01256 895878 and I will give you the details to dial in via any telephone. I do hope you will join us, even if you haven't felt Zoom is for you up until now!!

"Vocation emerges from a dynamic relationship between The Caller and the called" (Walter Brueggemann)

This Sunday is marked as Vocations Sunday in the life of the Methodist Church...

- maybe there are promptings in your prayer life to pay attention to.
- maybe there are people around you encouraging you to explore some kind of new ministry or opportunity or role in your church or community.
- maybe you are wondering if you have the skills and gifting to join in with something in church, or to change something.

If you can say yes to one, two or all three of these, maybe God is calling you to something. Take a look here: <https://www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/vocations/> and see what is on offer... Or perhaps you could be the encourager someone else is looking for?



the connexion is a free magazine about the life and work of the Methodist Church, bringing together inspirational stories from Methodist people who are passionate about sharing God's love to change lives.

"God calls each person to embrace their Christian vocation and to express this calling without reservation. The stories and testimonies in issue 22 demonstrate the breath-taking breadth and depth of God's imagination as God calls people in so very many and various ways to follow Jesus."

Reproduced with permission from the connexion, the free magazine of the Methodist Church, www.methodist.org.uk
To receive a free copy, sign up at www.bit.ly/the-connexion

