

Sunday, May 2, 2021 – Easter Hill United Methodist Church

**Bible Study – John 15:1-8
“Abide in Me”**

Open with a word of prayer

Gathering Time (5-10 minutes) In pairs or groups of three, play “Would You Rather.” Have participants choose one of each of the opposing pairs of questions: “Would you rather sit still for thirty minutes or run constantly for thirty minutes?” “Would you rather read for thirty minutes or do chores for thirty minutes?” “Would you rather watch television for thirty minutes or walk for thirty minutes?”

Context John 15:1-8: This week’s reading is part of Jesus’ last conversation he had with his disciples the evening before he was crucified, a kind of “last will and testament” in which he shares his thoughts and prayers and final words of advice. In these verses Jesus uses the figure of the vine and the branches to describe his relationship with his disciples; the fruitfulness that Jesus talks about is the love that true disciples live out.

Read John 15:1-8

What touches your heart, what do you hear in the scripture, what questions do you have, or what doesn’t make sense to you in the story?

Write down your thoughts or share your thoughts with the person or group you are with.

Read John 15:1-8 again.

Some reflection questions – Write down your thoughts or share your thoughts with the person or group you are with.

- How does the image of Jesus as “true vine” illuminate who Jesus is?
- This image is both comforting and convicting. Jesus notes that pruning takes place (v. 2). Since the vine was an often-used metaphor for the people of Israel in the Old Testament, we know that Jesus’ words are both for individuals and for the community. To truly abide, we all need pruning. Pruning is necessary for growth. Ask someone who is familiar with pruning to give insight into why and how pruning helps foster growth.
- How might your church practice pruning? What ministries need to be pruned so that the church’s focus can be on fruitfulness to the community at this time?
- What activities might God be asking you to prune? Even during this time, we have many options clamoring for our attention – news, social media, entertainment, people, and so on. How might we prune some good things for the better activity of abiding in Christ?

- How can this group help you abide in Christ?
- What is a practice you'd be willing to try this week to help you abide in Christ? (Being still, silence, meditation, listening to inspiring music, practicing attentiveness, reading Scripture, prayer, journaling, fasting, or something else.)

Closing Reflection Question

How is this scripture calling you to change, to see, to be or what might it be calling you to do?

Prayer (10 minutes). Each person prays sharing their answer the following statements:

I ask God for....

I thank God for.....

Sending Forth (2 minutes). After all, have shared, pray the closing prayer. Ask for a volunteer to lead the group or read the following prayer in unison:

Covenant-keeping God, we are thankful that you are faithful, even when we are faithless. We confess that we are easily distracted, and like sheep, we wander due to our limited gaze. Give us your vision to see new, abundant fields of opportunity and new life that you are calling us toward. Empower us to let go of all that would hinder our growth. **Amen.**

And now we pray The Lord's Prayer....

Our Father who art in Heaven

hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,

on earth as it is in Heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Lead us not into temptation

but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power

and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.