Dear friend
I am pleased to enclose this week's service, prepared by Judith. She has suggested the hymn 'How sweet the name of Jesus sounds'. Here it is, in a rather canned version, but with the words to sing to:
https://youtu.be/NoPlwPUYWaw

The text from John's gospel is the basis of the song 'You are the vine', we are the branches, sung by Matt Beckingham, again with words to join in.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=301PlhiRNx8

Here is the only version I can find of John Bell's 'I am the vine' (Iona community), from Rosedale Presbyterian church, again with lyrics:
https://youtu.be/WSU8NewORig

Reading today's psalm, I was reminded of 'He hath filled the hungry with good things' (Esurientes implevit) from the Magnificat; here it is in Bach's setting with a starring role for two treble recorders with Bogna Bartosz, alto and the Amsterdam baroque soloists directed by Ton Koopman:
https://youtu.be/uMk_PqnHkPw

Reading a little further on in the text from John's gospel, and reflecting the theme from 1 John, the wonderful setting of 'If ye love me' by Thomas Tallis, sung in lockdown by the King's singers:
https://youtu.be/Y1WwNSfCom8

Finally, an upbeat version of 'Our God is love' by Hillsong worship
https://youtu.be/K0KtmB5ltSg

Enjoy!
Chris



Service for 2nd May
5th Sunday of Easter

'I am the Vine'

(Pruned vines in the Lot valley, France)

'I am the vine and you the branches, pruned and prepared for all to see; chosen to bear the fruit of heaven if you remain and trust in me'. *(John Bell)*

CONFESSION

Have mercy on us; please do not lose patience or sever us from the true vine. Rather heal our diseases, train our wandering tendrils, prune our unfruitful branches and cut away those that are diseased. May we remain in Christ and he in us, through all the changing seasons of life. *(John Birch)*

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (CW)

COLLECT Almighty God, who through your only-begotten Son Jesus Christ 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, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen

READINGS Acts 8: 26-end; Psalm22: 25-end; 1 John 4: 7-end; John 15: 1-8.

REFLECTION When grapes hang ripe and ready for harvesting, they reflect the long and radical work which has gone into their cultivation. Jesus chooses the familiar image of the vine as one of his 'I am' declarations. *I am* – the name for God known to the Jews from ancient times, as was the image of Israel as a vineyard. However, the end product of the vineyard, seen, or tasted, doesn't immediately reflect the hours, days and weeks of work which those who live beside the vines witness throughout the year. Vines are pruned severely, tied into their supports and trimmed to a single twig. Pests and weather are under constant scrutiny, in the hopes of a good harvest. God is equally firm with us; as the 'vine-grower' he gives 'continual help', (to quote today's Collect). Jesus explains the need to pare away all that separates us from God's purpose for our lives Our right relationship with him will be the fruitful outcome.

PRAYERS *Lord Jesus Christ, I call upon your name, for you are with me. I am never alone, never without help, never without a friend, for I dwell in you, and you in me. (*David Adam*)*
We pray for the church and for the world. Heal those places where disease, war, poverty and hunger make it hard for people to witness to their faith. Strengthen all who are persecuted because of their love for you.
We pray for the sick and suffering, bringing before you the people of India and all others who suffer, whether from Covid 19 or other causes. We bring before you those whose needs are in our own minds at this time……
Lord, we thank you for all those who have taken the time to explain the scriptures to us and opened our eyes to your purpose for our lives. Shape us; prepare us to be fruitful and to do your will.

We say **THE LORD'S PRAYER**
We share **THE GRACE**

FINAL PRAYER God of love, plant us in the soil of your grace. Nurture us with the strength of Christ, the vine of everlasting life. Enlighten us with the wisdom of your Spirit, flowing through us each day. Abide in us that we may abide in you and live in your love, now and for ever, Amen. *(Abingdon Worship).*

