

Cultivating Love



St Aidan's Uniting Church
28th April 2024
Easter 5

Call to Worship

We are called
to be grafted onto the vine that is God,
and as we gather
we seek to strengthen that grafting.

Let us connect to our Vine:
Let us worship God.

Prayers

Graft us into your being,
God, our sprawling vine,
that grows and stretches
putting out fresh shoots,
new roots,
and in the fullness of time
buds,
then flowers,
and slowly, gradually,
in the fullness of time,
bears fruit.

Graft us into your being,
God, who is Love incarnate,
the Holy Love
through whom we experience love
and through that experience
we share it,
and slowly, gradually,
in the fullness of time,
that love bears fruit.

**Forgive us when we resist being grafted
or when we keep your nurture
for our own growth,
for the times we fail to love
as you love us.
Amen.**

Words of Assurance

Hear the words to an ancient community:
Love has been perfected among us in this:

that we may have boldness on the day of judgment,
because as he is, so are we in this world.

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.

We love because he first loved us.

Do not fear: know that you are forgiven.

Thanks be to God.

Prayer of Intercession

God, the gardener,

who feeds and waters the plants,

cares for their growth,

and protects them from pests

that would eat the tender shoots,

we pray for all those in our world

who at this time need that extra care:

people overseas who face war,

or drought,

or whose work is dangerous,

people across the world, including here,

who do not have enough to eat

or know where they will sleep tonight.

Be a tender gardener to them

protecting and caring,

sheltering and feeding them

so they may experience your love.

God, the gardener,

who prunes plants

to help them grow strong

and bear much fruit,

we pray for all those in our world

who are being pruned:

those who have to give up old hurts

or reflect on the misdeeds they have done,

or those who have to change their ways.

Be a tender gardener to them

supporting them to find new growth.

God, the gardener,
who pulls up weeds
that threaten to strangle the plants
or steal the goodness from the soil,
we pray for those in our world
who are living as weeds,
change them into plants
that have much to offer your whole garden.

God, the gardener,
whether we are vines,
or being pruned,
or are weeds,
help us to love as you love us
and graft us more firmly into your being.
Amen.

Benediction & Blessing

God has grafted you firmly
on to the Vine that is Christ,
and through that vine
you are watered and fed
in order to bear much fruit for the world.

So go out from here
into the world that God loves
to share that love
because you know that you are loved.

And as you go, always know you are blessed:
blessed by God who nurtures and sustains you,
blessed by Christ, into whom you are grafted,
and blessed by the Spirit that blows through your life.
Amen.