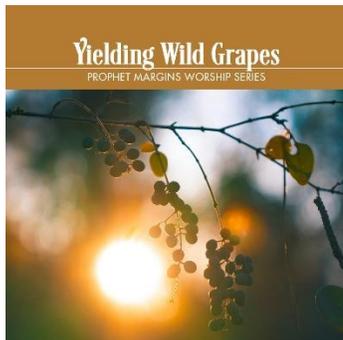


*As we unite in worship today, we extend a warm welcome to each one present.
May we together experience the presence of God*

+++++

We Gather to Prepare Our Hearts to Meet Our Lord



Prelude

Welcome

Announcements/Joys & Concerns

If we thought last week's part one of Isaiah was difficult, then today's words might seem near impossible. And the prophet calls this a love song. You see, Israel saw itself as the vineyard; later, the church began to see itself as the new vineyard. And the vineyard is tagged for destruction in today's Old Testament text. It's hard to find a positive spin to put on this. But let's hang with Isaiah for a while; let's see if there is a way we can hear his pronouncement in a productive way.

We love our churches; we expend a lot of effort to maintain the buildings and to fill them with ministries and events, fellowship, and service. We love our church, and we should!

Isaiah is asking us, however, if we sometimes lose perspective when it comes to the church, God's vineyard. The question for worship today might be, "What is the church for?"

Supporting the church is not supposed to be an end in itself. Our church mission statement is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Not disciples of the church. Not for the transformation of the church. The church is the means, not the end of what we do.

Wild grapes, according to Isaiah, means that the people of God were following no leadership but their own will and conscience. God wants us to be cultivated grapes, guided by the Word and tended by the Spirit, wherever we live and work.

To fulfill our Godly obligations, we must not stop our discipleship at the church doors but we must take what we have gained in Spirit each week as we worship together and bring our teachings out into everyday world in which we live. How we live in the world is the produce of cultivated fruit of the church at work in communities beyond these walls.

Isaiah 5:1-7

New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition

The Song of the Unfruitful Vineyard

5 I will sing for my beloved my love song concerning his vineyard:

My beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill.

2 He dug it and cleared it of stones and planted it with choice vines;
he built a watchtower in the midst of it and hewed out a wine vat in it;
he expected it to yield grapes, but it yielded rotten grapes.

3 And now, inhabitants of Jerusalem and people of Judah,
judge between me and my vineyard. 4 What more was there to do
for my vineyard that I have not done in it? When I expected it to yield grapes,
why did it yield rotten grapes?

5 And now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard.
I will remove its hedge, and it shall be devoured;
I will break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down.
6 I will make it a wasteland; it shall not be pruned or hoed,
and it shall be overgrown with briars and thorns;
I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.

7 For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel,
and the people of Judah are his cherished garden;
he expected justice but saw bloodshed;
righteousness but heard a cry!

CALL TO WORSHIP

(adapted from Psalm 80: 14-19)

We cry out–

Restore us, O God!

We petition–

God, may your face shine upon us!

We lift our voices–

We turn toward you, O God and call on your name!

GENERAL PRAYER

Holy God, You offer such goodness to us. You give so much to us, blessing us with resources that many go without. Despite your goodness, humanity has collectively responded selfishly, taking what we can get, using it for our own gain, and not thinking of the consequences. Forgive us for producing rotten fruit when you've given us everything we need so that ALL people can thrive. May we learn to be more like you, bringing forth goodness and care so that good fruit may come to the world. Amen.

***HYMN OF PRAISE UMH #558 "We Are the Church" (4 verses)**

Author: Richard K. Avery (1972)

Author: Donald S. March (1972)

Publication Date: 1989

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Tune Information

Name: PORT JERVIS

Composer: Richard K. Avery (1972)

Composer: Donald S. Marsh (1972)

Copyright: © 1972 Hope Publishing Co.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=nXcfezt93jg

[Refrain:]

I am the church! You are the church!

We are the church together!

All who follow Jesus, all around the world!

Yes, we're the church together!

**1 The church is not a building,
the church is not a steeple,
the church is not a resting place,
the church is a people.**

(Refrain)

**2 We're many kinds of people,
with many kinds of faces,
all colors and all ages, too,**

from all times and places.

(Refrain)

**3 Sometimes the church is marching,
sometimes it's bravely burning,
sometimes it's riding, sometimes
hiding,
always it's learning.**

(Refrain)

**4 And when the people gather,
there's singing and there's praying,
there's laughing and there's crying
sometimes, all of it saying:**

(Refrain)

We Hear God's Word

Gospel Reading..... Luke 12:49-56

New Revised Standard Version

Jesus the Cause of Division

49 "I have come to cast fire upon the earth, and how I wish it were already ablaze! 50 I have a baptism with which to be baptized, and what constraint I am under until it is completed! 51 Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division! 52 From now on five in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three; 53 they will be divided:

*father against son
and son against father,
mother against daughter
and daughter against mother,
mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law
and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law."*

Interpreting the Time

54 He also said to the crowds, "When you see a cloud rising in the west, you immediately say, 'It is going to rain,' and so it happens. 55 And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, 'There will be scorching heat,' and it happens. 56 You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?"

The Word of God for the People of God, **Thanks be to God!**

CHILDREN'S SERMON

FAITH HYMN UMH #541 "See How Great a Flame Aspires"

Author: Charles Wesley (1749)

Publication Date: 1989

Tune Information

Name: ARFON (MAJOR)

Harmonizer: Carlton R. Young (1963, alt.)

Copyright: Harm. © 1964 Abingdon Press

www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Q05P24rROI

**1 See how great a flame aspires,
kindled by a spark of grace.
Jesus' love the nations fires,
sets the kingdoms on a blaze.
To bring fire on earth he came,
kindled in some hearts it is;
O that all might catch the flame,
all partake the glorious bliss!**

**2 When he first the work begun,
small and feeble was his day;
now the Word doth swiftly run,
now it wins its widening way;
more and more it spreads and grows,
ever mighty to prevail;
sin's strongholds it now o'erthrows,
shakes the trembling gates of hell.**

**3 Saints of God, your Savior praise,
who the door hath opened wide;
he hath given the word of grace,
Jesus' word is glorified;
Jesus mighty to redeem,
who alone the work hath wrought;
worthy is the work of him,
him who spake a world from naught.**

**4 Saw ye not the cloud arise,
little as a human hand?
Now it spreads along the skies,
hangs o'er all the thirsty land.
Lo! the promise of a shower
drops already from above;
but the Lord will shortly pour
all the spirit of his love.**

"Message"

PRAYER OF LAMENT

We approach you today with a lot of questions. Bad things happen far too often, and we can't understand why. God, why does it feel like more and more people face death, unemployment, injustice, and sickness every day? Why do tragedies occur, leaving us at a loss for words? Families are torn apart, becoming foes to those who were friends. Humanity is facing more global distress than we can navigate. Our news feeds are overwhelmed with articles about natural disasters, fires, war, mental illness, racial violence, disparity in gender and sexuality; and the list goes on . . . and on . . . and on. Why do these things happen, God? We try to do the right thing, yet bad things still happen. We try to nurture the seeds you have planted, hoping for an abundant harvest. Yet, the harvest seems bleak.

There are no easy answers to these questions. All we know is that we are called to continue the work, so that what is rotten may become fertilizer for something new. God, remind us that you are with us in all things. You are a God of seasons, of beginnings and endings. Despite the changes all around us, you are steadfast. Thank you, God, for letting us lift these concerns to you. Thank you for holding space for us to share our grievances. Even though tragedy continues, we are grateful for the peace we know in your presence. As we have gathered in your name today let us join our voices together, praying for the coming of your kingdom, using the words that Jesus taught us. Our Father...

Offertory & Doxology (UM Hymnal 95)

(Wykoff only)

Offertory Prayer

Creator God, who brought forth the world as your vineyard, provided every needed resource, and asked only that we bear good fruit: As we give our offerings, remind us again of the fruit you desire -- justice and righteousness are the ones your prophet Isaiah suggests. Forgive us for the times when our offerings have fallen short and when the only fruit you've received is our own self-centeredness. Help us bear the fruit that brings you joy. In the name of your son, our teacher and savior, we pray. Amen. (Isaiah 5:1-7)

Departing Hymn UMH #664 "Sent Forth by God's Blessing"

Author: Omer Westendorf (1964)

Publication Date: 1989

Copyright: Words © 1964 World Library Publications, Inc.

Tune Information

Harmonizer: Leland Sateren (1972)

Copyright: Harm. © 1972 Contemporary Worship 4: Hymns for Baptism and Holy Communion

<http://www.gbod3.org/sorter/audio/133.mp3>

**1 Sent forth by God's blessing,
our true faith confessing,
the people of God from this dwelling take leave.
The service is ended.
Oh, now be extended
the fruits of our worship in all who believe.
The seed of Christ's teaching,
receptive souls reaching,
shall blossom in action for God and for all.
God's grace did invite us,
and love shall unite us
to work for God's kingdom and answer the call.**

**2 With praise and thanksgiving
to God ever-living,
the tasks of our ev'ryday life we will face—
our faith ever sharing,
in love ever caring,
embracing God's children, of each tribe and race.
With your grace you feed us,
with your light now lead us;
unite us as one in this life that we share.
Then may all the living
with praise and thanksgiving
give honor to Christ and his name that we bear.**

Benediction

For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations. May the Lord bless you and keep you, may the Lord make his face shine upon you, and be gracious to you, the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace. Amen.

*POSTLUDE