

2nd May 2021

We come to you, O Lord, for you, the vine, to nourish us.
May we, the branches, draw our strength from you,
and grow in harmony, unity and love.
May we find nourishment through our rootedness
in the life, teachings and love of Christ.



Receive the fruits of our worship and be glorified. **Amen.**

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Now the green blade rises from the buried grain,
wheat that in the dark earth many days has lain;
Love lives again, that with the dead has been:

Love is come again, like wheat that springs up green.

In the grave they laid him, Love who had been slain,
thinking that he never would awake again,
laid in the earth like grain that sleeps unseen:

Forth he came at Easter, like the risen grain,
he that for the three days in the grave had lain,
quick from the dead my risen Lord is seen:

When our hearts are wintry, grieving, or in pain,
then your touch can call us back to life again,
fields of our hearts that dead and bare have been:

John Macleod Campbell Crum (1872–1958) (alt.) . CCCL: 88203

[Laura Wright - Now The Green Blade Rises - YouTube](#)

True God, true vine, strength of all our being,
giver of all good gifts, healer of all that is broken:
we worship you; we glorify you; we rejoice in you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

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John 15:1-10

What do you do if a fruit tree doesn't bear fruit?

- Dig it up
- Wait
- Tend it
- Compost it
- Burn it

What do you do if it does bear fruit?

- Harvest it
- Share the produce
- Prune it
- Feed it
- Value it

The metaphor of gardener may be applied to the relationship between God, Jesus, you and me. By the grace of God, we are rooted and grounded in love. We are all part of the glorious creation of God and, if we are in Christ, we are inextricably linked to him, to one another and to God. By him we are nurtured, nourished, tended, appreciated. We live in and through him. Without him we struggle.

But, what does it mean for a person to be fruitful? For some it means to have many children, maybe succeeding generations whom we have loved, taught, nurtured and nourished. But that isn't necessarily so.

Bert was a very small man with severe stammer. He was single, lived alone and had no children. He was easily overlooked and ignored. A faithful Christian and a Scout leader, he saw a need within his community amongst homeless people. He spoke up, despite his stammer and urged people to do something about it. One winter, inspired by him, Christians from many churches in the town he lived in were inspired to offer their premises and their time to set up a night shelter. The need for provision for rough sleepers, previously deemed unnecessary, was proved and the local Council subsequently gave grants.



A permanent night shelter now exists as well as a day centre, involving several agencies, with many paid and voluntary staff. Later Bert sought to help some of the homeless people he met find accommodation and, seeing that one of the obstacles was finding the deposit often required by landlords, set up another scheme called Rent Aid. People were loaned the deposit. Some paid it back. Some didn't. Some years ago, when Bert died, I had the privilege of speaking at his funeral. The church was packed to overflowing with many people who this small man with the stammer had influenced and inspired in some way. Hundreds of people have been nurtured, nourished and tended, through the organisations he set up and continue to be so many years later. This childless man was one of the most fruitful people I have had the privilege of knowing.

At various point during the coronavirus pandemic we have been encouraged, urged, and for some periods required, to stay at home. How do we 'stay home' (abide, remain) with God? The purpose during the pandemic was, to quote the UK government's well repeated slogan, to 'protect the NHS' and 'save lives'. Jesus' aim is that we might grow and 'bear fruit', and he says this is not possible unless we remain connected with him and each other, like branches on a vine. During lockdown, people found new ways to stay connected to one another (e.g. by using technology in new ways). Churches found new ways to be and to worship together, new ways to 'stay home' with God.

What have we learnt from those experiences that endures? Are there yet more new ways of connecting to explore? In what ways are you fruitful?

May we abide with God, grafted and rooted and pruned.
Lord, help us to stay connected to one another and to you,
bearing fruit wherever your love takes us. **Amen.**

*You are the Vine,
we are the branches,
keep us abiding in you.
You are the Vine,
we are the branches,
keep us abiding in you.*

Then we'll grow in your love,
and we'll go in your name,
that the world will surely know
that you have power to heal and to
save.

Refrain

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[You are The Vine We Are The Branches Danny Daniels OLPS OCDC 2018 - YouTube](#)

To all those in need of love:
let the love of God be known.

To a world in need of love:
let the love of God be shown.

To those in need of food:
let the love of God be shared.

By those in need of healing:
let the love of God be experienced.

By those in need of peace:
let the love of God be felt.

By those in need of hope: **let the love of God be seen.**



To those in need of joy: **let the love of God be sung.**

By those in need of justice: **let the love of God be heard.**

By all those in need of love: **let the love of God be known. Amen.**

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The Grace ...

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
And the love of God,
And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
Be with us all,
Now and forever more.
Amen



