

St Nicholas Church, Sighthill
24th January 2021

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2021 – Ecumenical celebration

'Abide in my love and you shall bear much fruit'
(John 15:5-9)

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Song: Holy Spirit We Welcome You

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-5_eGsD3gj0

Opening Prayer (inspired by John 15:1-8)

Jesus Christ, the true vine, in our need we come to You, in weakness, we come needing Your strength, for we too easily become dry and lifeless without Your life-giving spirit.

Jesus Christ, the true vine, teach us to remain in You and so to find Your abundant life flowing in us, giving strength to our discipleship. Help us to love you, as you have loved us. May we bear the fruit that you would long to see in our lives. Amen

Litany of praise

All: You, who calls us to be praise in the midst of the earth: glory to You!

Leader: Almighty God, we sing Your praise in the midst of the world and among all peoples. We sing your praise in the midst of creation and among all creatures.

All: You, who calls us to be praise in the midst of the earth: glory to You!

Reader: Caring and Compassionate One, we sing Your praise among suffering and tears. We sing Your praise among promises and achievements.

All: You, who calls us to be praise in the midst of the earth: glory to You!

Leader: Creator of all, we sing Your praise in the places of conflict and misunderstanding. We sing Your praise in the places of encounter and reconciliation.

All: You who call us to be praise in the midst of the earth: glory to you!

Reader: Loving Father of all, we sing your praise in the midst of rifts and divisions. We sing your praise in the midst of life and death, the birth of a new heaven and a new earth.

All: You, who calls us to be praise in the midst of the earth: glory to you!

The Lord's Prayer

*Our Father which art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done in earth,
as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil:
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever. Amen.*

**Bible Reading: Love one another as I loved you
(John 15:9-17)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LVJatUjTDY>

*Love one another
as I have Loved you*

Song: By Our Love (Christy Nockels)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S5XaeyA3TYc>

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in 2021 has been prepared by the Monastic Community of Grandchamp in Switzerland. The theme that was chosen, **"Abide in my love and you shall bear much fruit"**, is based on John 15:1-17 and expresses Grandchamp Community's vocation to prayer, reconciliation and unity in the Church and the human family.

Today the community has fifty sisters, all women from different generations, Church traditions, countries and continents. In their diversity the sisters are a living parable of communion. They remain faithful to a life of prayer, life in community and the welcoming of guests. The sisters share the grace of their monastic life with visitors and volunteers who go to Grandchamp for a time of retreat, silence, healing or in search of meaning.

For 2021, the sisters are inviting churches across the world to enter into their tradition of prayer and silence that is rooted in the ancient traditions of the Church catholic.

"Abide in my love and you shall bear much fruit".

It is the great desire of God, expressed by Jesus, that we might come to Him and abide in Him. He waits for us tirelessly, hoping that, united to Him in love, we will bear fruit that will bring life to all. Faced with our differences, we risk withdrawing into ourselves and seeing only that which separates us. But let us listen to how Christ calls us to abide in His love, and so bear much fruit.

In the moment of prayer that follows, we remember the call of Christ; we turn to His love, to Him who is the centre of our life. For the path of unity begins in our intimate relationship with God. Abiding in God's love strengthens the desire to seek unity and reconciliation with others. God opens us up to those who are different from us. This is an important fruit, a gift of healing for the divisions within us, between us, and in the world.

In peace, let us pray. Lord, You are the vinedresser who cares for us with love. You call on us to see the beauty of each branch united to the vine, the beauty of each person. And yet, too often the differences in others make us afraid. We withdraw into ourselves. Our trust in you is forsaken. Enmity develops between us. Come and direct our hearts toward You once again. Grant us to live from Your forgiveness so that we may be together and praise your name. Amen.

Prayers of thanksgiving and intercession

Leader: God of love, through Christ You said to us: "You did not choose me but I chose you." You seek us, you invite us to receive your friendship and abide in it. Teach us to respond more deeply to this invitation, and grow in a life that is ever more complete.

All: The joy of our heart is in God.

Leader: God of life, You call us to be praise in the midst of the world and to welcome one another as a gift of Your grace. May Your loving gaze, which rests upon each person, open us to receive each other just as we are.

All: The joy of our heart is in God.

Leader: God, You who gathers, You knit us together as one vine in Your Son Jesus. May Your loving Spirit abide in us at local church and community meetings and ecumenical gatherings. Grant that together we celebrate You with joy.

All: The joy of our heart is in God.

Leader: God of the one vineyard, You call us to abide in your love in all we do and say. Touched by Your goodness, grant us to be a reflection of that love in our homes and workplaces. May we bridge rivalries and overcome tensions.

All: The joy of our heart is in God.

Action: A time of silence

Leader: Very often we think of prayer as something we do, an activity of our own. In this short time we are invited to an interior silence, and to turn aside from all the noise and concerns of our lives and thoughts. In this silence the action belongs to God. We are simply called to abide and rest in God's love.

Silence

Hymn: Go forth and tell

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QkDD4GiqUEM>

Go forth and tell!
O church of God, awake!
God's saving news
To all the nations take;
Proclaim Christ Jesus,
Saviour, Lord, and King,
That all the world
His worthy praise may sing.

Final blessings

Christ sends us forth saying -
Keep my commandments,
abide in my love.

We go forth in peace and justice!
We go forth in love!
We go forth as friends,
Rejoicing and witnessing
to our community and world,
that God is love, that we are One
and that Christ is alive! Amen

