

St Martin of Tours
Epsom

St Stephen on the Downs
Langley Vale

The parish of
St Martin of Tours
with St Stephen-on-the-Downs

Weekly Newsletter
Registered Charity Number: 1134149

Sunday 2nd May 2021 – Fifth Sunday of Easter

Dear Friends,

'How can I understand if nobody explains it to me?' This is what the Ethiopian official asked the apostle in today's readings from Acts. A good question! So much in life elicits the same question from me – working the computer, using 'smart scan' in the supermarket, and sometimes just doing life. It's so tempting to ignore the technology, stick to what I know and let it all waft over me. Do you feel this about Church? The Bible readings, sermons, words of the service? Whether it's a new phone, or the Bible, we all need an apostle to help us understand; and the courage to admit we need help.

Nick Parish

THIS WEEK

- 9.30am - Morning Prayer at St Stephen's – led by Ruth Foxcroft
- 10.00am – Holy Communion at St Martin's, in Church and live streamed – led by Nick Parish
- 6.30pm – Evening Prayer in Church and live streamed – led by David Candlin.

Thursday 6th May

- 10.00am – Holy Communion, in Church and live streamed – led by Nick Parish

FUTURE SERVICES

Sunday 9th May – Sixth Sunday of Easter

- 9.30am – Holy Communion at St Stephen's – led by David Candlin
- 10.00am – Choral Matins at St Martin's, in Church and live streamed – led by Howard Bluett
- 6.30pm – Holy Communion in Church and live streamed – led by Nick Parish.

DISCIPLESHIP /STUDY/ WORSHIP MEETINGS

First Communion

Receiving Holy Communion for the first time is a significant step in a young person's journey of faith. We are running a preparation course for children who wish to receive Communion, meeting on three Sunday afternoons in May. All who participate in the classes – on 9th, 16th and 23rd May – will be invited to receive Holy Communion at the ten o'clock service on Sunday 13th June – our Patronal Festival. Please get in touch with me if you know someone who might like to take part.

David Candlin

Embracing The Shadow: A Journey to Love

Saturday, 15 May 2021, 10:00 am - 4:00 pm

Led by Julie Leger Dunstan via Zoom

Blending psychology, theology, poetry, reflection and prayer, this will be a day to explore the journey inwards to a greater experience of Love, via those things which we find most difficult to embrace.

Starts at 10am and ends at 4pm. Cost: £30

Longing for God: Weekday Individually Guided Retreat

Mon, 17 May 2021, 6:00 pm - Fri, 21 May 2021, 3:00 pm

Led by the House of Prayer Team, residentially and via Zoom

This retreat provides an opportunity to step aside from the busyness of everyday life and spend time in quiet prayer and reflection. A retreat guide will be available for daily individual meetings to accompany you through the retreat. Above all, this retreat is a time of listening to God who is present in the experiences of prayer and daily living.

There are two ways of participating in this retreat, from your own home or residentially at the House of Prayer. In both cases, all communal prayer meetings and spiritual direction will be online using the Zoom platform. If you wish to attend this retreat from the House of Prayer you will need to bring a laptop or device with you.

Arrive on Monday for supper at 6pm and leave on Friday after 3pm.

Retreat from home cost: £110

Residential retreat cost: £360

Retreats from the House of Prayer, May 2021.

House of Prayer

35 Seymour Road

East Molesey

Surrey KT8 0PB

Tel: 020 8941 2313

Charitable Incorporated Organisation 1174120

STEWARDSHIP

Giving to St Martin's and St Stephen on the Downs

For general and stewardship giving you can give online giving via the Charities Aid Foundation.

Donations can be either a one-off donation or a regular donation using direct debit.

To make a donation either:

1. Click on the following link:

<https://cafdonate.cafonline.org/13377>

OR

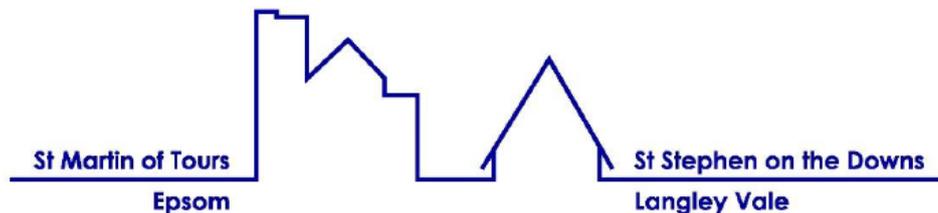
2. Use your Smart Phone and Scan the QR Code below



There is also a "Donate" button on our website.

Thank you for your continued giving directly and via online giving.

The Parish of
St Martin of Tours, Epsom
with St Stephen-on-the-Downs



Registered Charity Number: 1134149

27 April 2021

Dear All,

Stewardship Giving – 6 April 2020 to 5 April 2021

I am writing on behalf of the Stewardship Committee to thank you for your regular giving to St Martin's finances through our Stewardship Scheme. Also, for those of you who use the Gift Aid Scheme we recover a further 25% of your gifts from the Inland Revenue, an extremely valuable addition to your donations. The day to day costs of running the Parish are considerable, and financial support, such as you willing give, helps so much.

The last year, has been one where we have sought to reduce expenditure wherever possible and ensure that every penny spent has been on essential costs. It has been heartening that despite the problems of the pandemic you have continued to give generously to the parish and where necessary have switched your giving from weekly envelopes to banker's orders, online and other digital forms of giving. So despite the fact that there are no physical collections in Church, your continued generosity has seen our total stewardship income increase.

Your have also enabled us to maintain our support to a variety of home and overseas missions, including donations to the Epsom Refugee Network. Now, more than ever, our help for the Epsom and Ewell Food Bank and other local charities is supporting those disadvantaged by the pandemic and we shall continue to do our best to help those in need, here and overseas. All this would be impossible were it not for your generosity and commitment.

Should you wish to know the actual amount of your donations for the tax year ended 5 April 2021, would like to know more about our schemes for regular giving or details of how to leave a legacy, please contact the Parish Office via email at smartinsepsom@btconnect.com.

Once again, very many thanks for your support which is greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

David Eggett

David Eggett
Churchwarden
On behalf of the Stewardship Committee

OTHER NOTICES

Mission For May

HOME

Young Carers in Epsom and Ewell

Young Carers, are often the forgotten people as they are not obvious in society. They can be anyone, from a very young age who supports someone in their own family in multiple roles. In their isolated situations they need support in order to cope.

My Time for Young Carers is a charity relying on enough volunteers to provide activities outside of the home, to mix with others and take part in fun activities. It is for young Carers between the ages of 7—16, who live locally. Their needs have increased especially in the Covid time.

Jill Chapman

ABROAD

The Barnabus fund works to provide hope and aid for the persecuted church from Christians, to Christians, through Christians. The main ministry of the Barnabus Fund is to send financial support to projects which help Christians who, as a consequence of their faith, suffer discrimination, oppression and persecution. In 2021 we as a church have contributed financially to the Christians in Tigray , Ethiopia.

Meg Topley

Can you please hold these Mission areas in your Prayers – Thank you

Electoral Roll Revision

The Electoral Roll is due to be revised on 7th May 2021 and a notice to this effect will be displayed outside both our churches from 19th March 2021. If you are unsure please check that your name is entered in the current Roll (at the back of St Martins) or with me by email (aronson_john@hotmail.com), also if there have been changes to your address or contact details please inform me or the Parish Office. Your full details can be checked in the office. We always want new people to join so if you are not yet on the Roll and would like to join please complete an application form and hand it in to the Parish Office. The Roll will be closed for any new entries from 6 May 2021 until after the Parish AGM on 23 May 2021.

John Aronson, Electoral Roll Officer.

Eco Church at Epsom Farmers Market

Epsom Methodist Church Eco Church will be taking a stand at the Farmers Market each month starting on Sunday 2nd May.

This is a new venture and our aim is to encourage people in the community to become more active in protecting God's Creation. There will be information and a craft activity for children and adults!

Please support this new venture and hold us in your prayers. Come and visit us at the market between **9:30am and 1:30pm on Sunday 2nd May.**

Singing new songs.

There are some topics that are to the fore in the life of our family, neighbourhood, country, world; topics that we might discuss, and might be moved to pray about, but which aren't greatly represented in what we sing in church. Can we - should we - integrate this more?

An organisation called 'Multitude of Voyces' (MoV) - www.multitudeofvoyces.co.uk - is planning a selection of 30-40 hymns and tunes, some historical, some newly commissioned, intended for traditional worship, to address this/fill in some gaps. Louise at MoV has asked Nigel and me to find out what you would like included; maybe also what you would find challenging. Areas such as bereavement, climate, mental health, disability, ethnicity and inter-faith issues are examples. I'd love to have a chat with people about this - please contact me (via the office if you don't have contact details for me) and we can meet (really or virtually), individually or in small groups, as you prefer.

Helen Williams

Plants 2020

Geraniums

Petunias double and single

Lobelia

Cosmos pink, white, yellow, red

Nicotiana

Dahlias (in single pots)

Bedding chrysanthemums

Tomatoes, cucumbers and courgettes



Most are in trays of approx. 24plants £4.00

12 Plants £2.00

All proceeds for Church funds

Please return the empty trays before the end of the year

Maureen Suatt

01372 723675 or maureensuatt@virginmedia.com

Latest message from Chris Short at Food Bank

Can you please help us this week, with any of the following?

Tinned tuna

Tinned soup

Biscuits

Tomato ketchup

Powdered Milk (semi or full fat only, thank you)

Custard

Long life sponge puddings

Baby wipes

Adult and children's toothbrushes, age 6+ only please

You can donate at the usual supermarket points, or bring donations to our car park (please wear a mask);

Epsom & Ewell Foodbank

Generation Resource Centre

(Behind West Ewell Primary School)

Ruxley Lane

Ewell

KT19 0JG



Donation Drop Off Times: Monday to Friday 9am – 2pm

* PLEASE MAKE SURE ALL DONATIONS ARE SEALED, IN DATE AND DO NOT CONTAIN ALCOHOL*

Can't get to the shops? You could text to make a small donation, send us a supermarket delivery to the address above, or contact us about sponsoring some fresh fruit & veg!

You can help by texting 70450 to donate:

Text **FOODBANKGIFT2** to donate £2

Text **FOODBANKGIFT5** to donate £5

Text **FOODBANKGIFT15** to donate £15

Text **FOODBANKGIFT3** to donate £3

Text **FOODBANKGIFT10** to donate £10

Text **FOODBANKGIFT20** to donate £20

Kind regards, Chris Shortt

CONTACT US

Parish Office:

Church House, Church Street, Epsom,

KT17 4PX Phone: 01372 722567

E-mail: smartinsepsom@btconnect.com

Website: www.stmartinsepsom.org

The Revd Nick Parish, Vicar – 01372 743336

Email: vicar@stmartinsepsom.org

The Revd David Candlin – Curate - 07723 849 477

Email: revcandlin@gmail.com

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.

FIRST READING

(Alternative readings)

The reading from Acts must be read as either the First or Second Reading.

Either **Acts 8:26-end**

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

An angel of the Lord said to Philip,
 "Get up and go toward the south to the
 road that goes down from Jerusalem
 to Gaza." (This is a wilderness road.)
 So he got up and went. Now there was
 an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of
 the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians,
 in charge of her entire treasury. He had
 come to Jerusalem to worship and was
 returning home; seated in his chariot,
 he was reading the prophet Isaiah. Then
 the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over to this
 chariot and join it." So Philip ran up to
 it and heard him reading the prophet
 Isaiah. He asked, "Do you understand
 what you are reading?" He replied, "How
 can I, unless someone guides me?" And
 he invited Philip to get in and sit beside
 him. Now the passage of the scripture
 that he was reading was this: "Like a
 sheep he was led to the slaughter, and
 like a lamb silent before its shearer,
 so he does not open his mouth. In his
 humiliation justice was denied him. Who
 can describe his generation? For his
 life is taken away from the earth." The
 eunuch asked Philip, "About whom, may
 I ask you, does the prophet say this,
 about himself or about someone else?"
 Then Philip began to speak, and starting
 with this scripture, he proclaimed to him
 the good news about Jesus. As they
 were going along the road, they came to
 some water; and the eunuch said, "Look,
 here is water! What is to prevent me
 from being baptized?" He commanded
 the chariot to stop, and both of them,
 Philip and the eunuch, went down into
 the water, and Philip baptized him. When
 they came up out of the water, the Spirit

of the Lord snatched Philip away; the
 eunuch saw him no more, and went on
 his way rejoicing. But Philip found himself
 at Azotus, and as he was passing through
 the region, he proclaimed the good
 news to all the towns until he came to
 Caesarea.

Or **Baruch 3:9-15. 32 – 4:4**
 or **Genesis 22:1-18**

PSALM Psalm 22:25-31

R *All the ends of the earth shall turn to
 you, O Lord.*

My praise is of him in the great assembly,
 I will perform my vows
 in the presence of those who worship
 him.

The poor shall eat and be satisfied,
 and those who seek the Lord shall praise
 him:

"May your heart live for ever!" **R**

All the ends of the earth
 shall remember and turn to the Lord,
 and all the families of the nations
 shall bow before him.

For kingship belongs to the Lord;
 he rules over the nations. **R**

To him alone all who sleep in the earth
 bow down in worship;
 all who go down to the dust fall before
 him.

My soul shall live for him;
 my descendants shall serve him;
 they shall be known as the Lord's for ever.
 They shall come and make known to a
 people yet unborn
 the saving deeds that he has done. **R**

SECOND READING

(Alternative readings)

Either **1 John 4:7-end**

A reading from the first letter of John.

Beloved, let us love one another, because
 love is from God; everyone who loves is
 born of God and knows God. Whoever
 does not love does not know God, for
 God is love. God's love was revealed
 among us in this way: God sent his only
 Son into the world so that we might live
 through him. In this is love, not that we
 loved God but that he loved us and sent
 his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for
 our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so
 much, we also ought to love one another.
 No one has ever seen God; if we love one
 another, God lives in us, and his love is
 perfected in us. By this we know that we
 abide in him and he in us, because he has
 given us of his Spirit. And we have seen

and do testify that the Father has sent
 his Son as the Saviour of the world. God
 abides in those who confess that Jesus is
 the Son of God, and they abide in God.
 So we have known and believe the love
 that God has for us. God is love, and
 those who abide in love abide in God,
 and God abides in them. Love has been
 perfected among us in this: that we may
 have boldness on the day of judgement,
 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. Those who say,
 "I love God," and hate their brothers or
 sisters, are liars; for those who do not love
 a brother or sister whom they have seen,
 cannot love God whom they have not
 seen. The commandment we have from
 him is this: those who love God must love
 their brothers and sisters also.

Or **Acts 8:26-end**

GOSPEL John 15:1-8

*Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
 according to John.*

Jesus said to his disciples: "I am the true
 vine, and my Father is the vine-grower.
 He removes every branch in me that
 bears no fruit. Every branch that bears
 fruit he prunes to make it bear more
 fruit. You have already been cleansed
 by the word that I have spoken to you.
 Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the
 branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it
 abides in the vine, neither can you unless
 you abide in me. I am the vine, you are
 the branches. Those who abide in me
 and I in them bear much fruit, because
 apart from me you can do nothing.
 Whoever does not abide in me is thrown
 away like a branch and withers; such
 branches are gathered, thrown into the
 fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and
 my words abide in you, ask for whatever
 you wish, and it will be done for you. My
 Father is glorified by this, that you bear
 much fruit and become my disciples."

POST COMMUNION

Eternal God,
 whose Son Jesus Christ is the way, the
 truth, and the life:
 grant us to walk in his way,
 to rejoice in his truth,
 and to share his risen life;
 who is alive and reigns, now and for ever.

Sunday Homily

FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

2 MAY 2021

YEAR B

“My Father is glorified by this,
that you bear much fruit
and become my disciples.”

John 15:8

Illustration

God wants us to be happy, in spite of what many people who are outside of the Christian community believe about us. “You are a Christian!” they may say. When challenged on what they mean, people often quote the tired old stereotypes of rigid thought, suffering for the sake of it (one view of Jesus), religion as a “crutch” and the fear of a God who looms over us like a fantasy magazine monster. They sometimes find it hard to understand the extent of the love which we experience. In our dislocated Western world, where individuality rules, unity is often regarded as inhibiting, and the duties of relationships may be seen as claustrophobic. Reliance on God is, at best, foolish and, at worst, dangerous.

Yet we are surrounded by people who feel insecure, who turn to external means to satisfy their need to feel relevant, confident and able to compete with others whom they admire. For those with the means, life becomes bigger and better than that which went before, but so too does the emptiness inside them which alienates them from their true selves and which no amount of goods can fill or satisfy. But still they remain suspicious of our unity with God, which seems to give us something which money cannot buy. One of our tools for explaining our delight in God is given to us by Jesus in today’s Gospel.

Gospel Teaching

Jesus wants us to be happy. In this beautiful Gospel passage Jesus is “owning” us, making us a part of him, allowing us access to that which God gives him. He will love us and value us, respect us and never let us go. In him we shall find our authenticity, our confidence and our relevance to God and to the rest of our world.

A vine is a remarkable plant. As it grows, a vine develops a very thick, winding stem from which the branches emerge. They can grow such that it can be hard to determine which is the original branch and which are the developed branches. When Jesus says, “I am” (God’s own name, given to Moses) in relation to the vine we know that he speaks from his divine nature. He, Jesus-as-God, is the vine. The vine, and the wine which comes from it, are symbols of love, his love in the form of his blood poured out for us and given to us as the sacramental wine

at Communion. He is the visible source of love in his ministry on earth and he invites us to become a part of that vine, a part of that love.

But it is important for us to remember that even though vine branches at first glance look alike, no two are exactly the same. They may weave and curl in similar ways, they may produce similar fruit after the same pattern, but each is unique. And this is symbolic of Jesus' call to each of us. He calls to us in our uniqueness to become joined with him in a similar purpose, that of spreading the love of God wherever we are. We produce the same fruit from our individual branch; we are integrally united with the original stem. Whether or not we are fruitful vines depends upon us. And there is a cost, of course, just as Jesus' life had a cost.

Application

The Holy Spirit wants us to be happy. Holy Wisdom which comes from God's right hand is God's special gift which strengthens and inspires us to hold fast, and to remain faithful and fruitful, both when we are challenged by the world and in our personal hardships – indeed, when we are “pruned”.

But the wider our experience, good and bad, the deeper our understanding; sometimes, even, the more we suffer, the greater is our appreciation of life as a precious gift. And so the better we see others through Jesus' eyes and the greater value we place on them. Our little branch becomes an active extension of Jesus. From this grows a greater love for God and each other and the expansion of love throughout our world. The result of this love is joy which Jesus wants to lavish upon us. To let his joy permeate our lives, to be expressed in our daily doings, may in unexpected ways attract others to explore our cause for joy and discover how easy (and inexpensive) it is to acquire.

MONDAY

3 MAY

Acts 14:5-18

Psalm 118:1-3.14-15

John 14:21-26

TUESDAY

4 MAY

Acts 14:19-end

Psalm 145:10-end

John 14:27-end

WEDNESDAY

5 MAY

Acts 15:1-6

Psalm 122:1-5

John 15:1-8

THURSDAY

6 MAY

Acts 15:7-21

Psalm 96:1-3. 7-10

John 15:9-11

FRIDAY

7 MAY

Acts 15:22-31

Psalm 57:8-end

John 15:12-17

SATURDAY

8 MAY

Acts 16:1-10

Psalm 100

John 15:18-21

REFLECTION

My peace I give to you"; "I have loved you; abide in my love";
"I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you."

Jesus speaks these words of promise to his disciples at a time of confusion and fear about what's just happened and an unknown future. Their last meal together has been overshadowed by talk of betrayal, denial and the disconcerting washing of their feet by their Lord and master. Jesus has told them they will face persecution by those who cannot understand God's word revealed in Jesus. And now they set out into the darkness of a garden that was once a safe place for them. They face further betrayal and their own denial of Jesus. They will see the injustice and cruelty of Good Friday, as the darkness seems to overcome the light of the world. As this horror unfolds will those promises of peace, love and joy seem hollow, empty, worthless?

And in those times when we too walk in the valley of shadowy death, can we remember and hang on to those same promises of Jesus: to give us his peace, to abide with us in love and to bring joy into our hearts, even in our darkness?



PRAYER

Loving God, in times of pain and grief,
give us the comfort of your Holy Spirit
and the gifts of peace, love and joy,
that your son Jesus promised to us.

May we know always that we are held safe in your love.

PART I – WHY DO WE MAKE MUSIC IN CHURCH?

Why do we use music in our liturgy? What is the purpose of standing together to sing acclamations, hymns, antiphons and psalms? Why do we play voluntaries on the organ, or – if we do – bring guitars and other instruments to church?

Early in my musical education I was given a copy of Dom Gregory Murray's setting of the Mass, and I can remember playing it on the piano. The music helped me pause over the words, and some of the harmonies and chord progressions seemed to fuse with the intensity of the words, enhancing their meaning and connecting with my soul in a way that they didn't when I simply heard them read.

I'm sure the opposite can be true – for some people music gets in the way. Harmony and descants distract rather than enhance. But I've always loved music, and none more than church music – from medieval plainsong to renaissance polyphony, Methodist hymns, Anglican psalm chants, modern Catholic parish mass music, Eastern Orthodox music and evangelical praise songs.

Music is a vehicle for bypassing my intellect and communicating with my heart and soul. It moves me to tears when a beautiful melody is crafted skilfully to combine with the words it sets, helping me to feel deep within me that God knows and loves me. The words from the hymn *"My Song Is Love Unknown"*, written by Samuel Crossman and set to music *"over lunch"* by the British composer John Ireland, spring to mind. It never fail to move me: *"This is my friend, in whose sweet praise / I all my days could gladly spend."*

Music can be beautiful, but it is not there simply to decorate or prettify, nor to provide a commercial break after the sermon. Music is there to enhance our liturgies, edify us and glorify God. So if we want to know why we sing, a deeper understanding of why we have liturgy in the first place is essential. Over the next few weeks, I'd like us to explore these questions together.

Andrew is a church musician and publisher.

Find him online @andyhodderfaith

LIVE theWORD

SUSTAINING YOU
THROUGH THE WEEK

Edited by
Caroline Hodgson
and
Heather Smith



Fifth week of Easter

Monday 3 May to
Saturday 8 May
2021

WEEK

The pick of the crop

Jeni Parsons *reflects on* Acts 8:26-end

Please let me be picked for the team this time." That was my childhood prayer at school during games. It wasn't that I liked games but the shame of once again being the last one chosen was painful to that small foreign-sounding seven-year-old. Being included was really important. I'd travelled twelve thousand miles and had a broad Australian accent and it was long before *Neighbours* was popular on the telly. That childhood experience is one that lots of people can identify with because they somehow didn't fit as a child.

The Ethiopian eunuch was different from those around him. As an important person (though

still a servant) he had a chariot all of his own; he could read; he is likely to have had a different skin colour from Philip and he was unable to have children of his own. Here is a mixture of prestige and loss. He is reading from the book of Isaiah and there he reads of a servant of God who, rather than receiving good treatment, had to bear a weight of misery which seemed to include being destroyed, maybe without descendants to mourn him. The Eunuch can identify with this. Philip's response is to show him within this passage how God has granted adoption to all through being baptised into God's family so that no one is left unchosen, or un-choosable. 🍏

God of the Ethiopian eunuch, and all who are different for whatever reason, hear our longing to be chosen by you as your own loved one. In our baptism may we know the joy of adoption by you. Amen.

Fruits of the Spirit – a meditation on Galatians 5:22-23

Love is like an apple

by Caroline Hodgson

In his letter to the Galatians (5:22-23) St Paul lists nine qualities which are known as the Fruits of the Spirit.

To love one another is Jesus' most fundamental command – a staple, nourishing rule to live by. And it's true that a dose of love every day – like an apple – keeps us in good spiritual, emotional and physical health. Just as an apple tree can grow in an inhospitable

environment, love can flourish in the hardest of hearts. The love in a marriage can be likened to apple blossom – a beautiful flower that ripens into something satisfying and fulfilling. Family love lies at our very core – as in Proverbs 7:2, when the father tells his son to "keep my teachings as the apple of your eye". If we read the story of creation in Genesis we find that the apple, like love, has a forbidden side. By contrast, Christian love is pure and unconditional, and extends to all people. 🍏



World Laughter Day *Today is World Laughter Day.*

Lisa Tulfer joins in the merriment.

In fourth-century Egypt a monk called Evagrius Ponticus developed the idea of Christian vices (which would later evolve into the Seven Deadly Sins) and virtues. One of the vices was sadness, the failure to respond joyfully to God's love, and the corresponding virtue was *hilaritas*, or Christian joy.

Humans express joy through smiling and laughter, so you

may want to take part in World Laughter Day today. Started in Mumbai in 1998 by Dr Madan Kataria, the annual event raises awareness about laughter and its benefits – it is believed to increase people's well-being, including through the release of endorphins. The logo of Dr Kataria's international movement has the tagline "World Peace through Laughter", and the day seeks to unite humanity through the shared language of laughter. In Copenhagen in 2000, almost ten thousand people gathered for a "Happydemic". In 2020, events used Zoom and Skype to connect people laughing around the world.

Laughter is contagious. Can you do something today to spread a bit of laughter? 🍏

“Our mouths were filled with laughter,
our tongues with songs of joy.”

Psalm 126:2



Sunday 2 May 2021

John 15:1-8

5th Sunday of Easter

My name is _____

IN THE GOSPEL TODAY

Jesus tells the people that he is like a vine. Father, God in heaven, is like the gardener who looks after the vine, and we are like the branches that the grapes grow on.

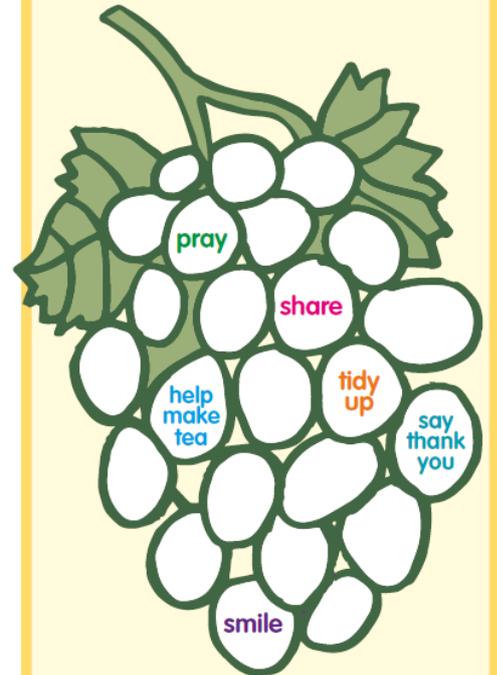
GROWING GOOD FRUIT!

Can you fit the fruit into the grid?

apple
banana
grape
lemon
orange

Bearing good fruit

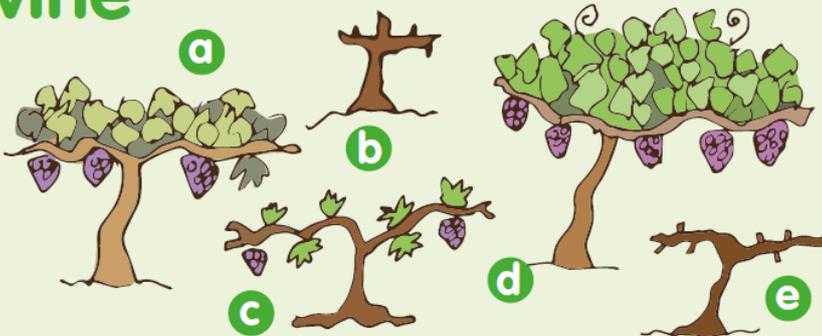
The good things we do are "good fruit". How will you share God's love and grow good fruit this week? Add some of your own ideas.



Colour in the grape when you complete the mission.

Growing vine

Can you put these vines in size order, starting with the smallest?



Which fruit?

Here is a vine, a tree and a bush. Which fruit grows on which plant?



Draw a line to match each fruit to the right plant.



A PRAYER TO SAY

Dear Jesus, thank you for giving me everything I need to grow. Please help me to grow in your love and bear good fruit. Amen.

Answers: 1.Banana, 2.Apple, 3.Grape, 4.Lemon, 5.Orange. Size order is b, e, c, a, d.