

## Laude Abbey November 21 Bible readings and reflection

### Opening worship: John 15:1-5 (NIV)

15 “I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. <sup>2</sup> He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. <sup>3</sup> You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. <sup>4</sup> Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. <sup>5</sup> “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

The point of the vine is to produce fruit.

If it doesn't, the branch is cut off and throw away.

If it does, the branch is pruned.

So either way, there are hard times ahead for the branches!

But the good news is that the fruit comes without effort. The vine doesn't get stressed out, working til 2am every night, saying “I must produce fruit, I must produce fruit...”. Fruit just comes.

This is God's work, not ours. Remain in him and he will bring forth the fruit.

### Closing worship: John 10:7-11 (NIV)

<sup>7</sup> Therefore Jesus said again, “Very truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. <sup>8</sup> All who have come before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep have not listened to them. <sup>9</sup> I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture. <sup>10</sup> The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. <sup>11</sup> “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

Whoever goes through the gate will be saved.

- They can come in: there is safety
- They can go out: there is freedom
- They have pasture: there is nourishment.
- They have life to the full: there is great joy.

Some say the DNA of the Bible is the double Helix of Covenant and Kingdom. This is a Kingdom passage that resonates with the words of Isaiah.

- There is safety: the wolf will dwell with the lamb; a little child will lead them. So we can be bold in what we do.
- There is freedom: The deaf will hear, the blind will see, the prisoner will be set free. We are unconstrained by worldly conventions and limitations.
- There is nourishment: come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. Or to turn back to a different metaphor, if we remain in the vine we remain nourished.
- There is great joy: everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.

Let's pray: we pray Lord that

- we will know safety and security in you
- that we will know freedom, to be the people you have called us to be
- that we will not forget to be nourished by spending time with you
- and that we will know joy in you and in the knowledge of the coming Kingdom.