

Remaining In God

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[0 : 0 0] Welcome to Pendleton Center and First United Methodist Churches. We are so glad that you are here worshiping with us. The Lord be with you. And also with you. I'd like to invite you to our call to worship.

This is the day that the Lord has made. This is the day.

This is the day. That the Lord has made. That the Lord has made. Let us rejoice. Let us rejoice.

And be glad in it. And be glad in it. This is the day. That the Lord has made. Let us rejoice.

And be glad in it. This is the day. This is the day. That the Lord has made.

[0 : 5 9] Let us pray. Lord, you are our redeemer and sustainer. The giver of life and love. We worship you.

Praising you for who you are and what you have done. What you are doing. And what you have promised to continue to do. Fill us, Lord, with your presence. Reveal to us your will.

And strengthen us to live and love boldly through you. Amen. And now I'd like to invite you all to stand if you're able as we sing together.

Oh, how I love Jesus. There is a name I love to hear.

I love to sing its word. It sounds like music in my ear. The sweetest name on earth.

[2 : 0 0] Oh, how I love Jesus. Oh, how I love Jesus. Oh, how I love Jesus.

Because he first loved me. It tells me of a Savior's love who died to set me free.

It tells me of his precious love, the sinner's perfect plea. Oh, how I love Jesus.

Oh, how I love Jesus. Oh, how I love Jesus. Because he first loved me.

It tells of one whose loving heart can feel my deepest love. Who in each sorrow wears a part that no one can be known.

[3 : 0 0] Oh, how I love Jesus. Oh, how I love Jesus. Oh, how I love Jesus. Oh, how I love Jesus.

Oh, how I love Jesus. Because he first loved me. Oh, how I love Jesus. Good morning again, friends. And welcome to worship at the Pendleton Center in Niagara Falls First United Methodist Churches.

It is a joy to be with you this morning. And we ask that you take a moment, fill out the friendship card that you can see online. It asks you for some basic contact information. And it also lets us know if you have a blessing or a concern that you'd like to lift up.

We can be in prayer with you. You'll also find a children's activity sheet, which allows some young people who may be worshiping with you to find different ways they can engage the service this morning.

We also want to invite you to take a moment and consider joining our Facebook group, PCUMC, the PCUMC Fellowship Group online.

[4 : 02] There you can have different conversations with members of our congregations to find out about our ministries, find out about different prayer concerns, also participate in the life of the congregation. We also are very excited to small group ministries will be getting underway pretty soon.

And if you are interested in exploring that, please contact the church, because these will be great opportunities for people to explore discipleship a little more deeply, to bond a little more closely with members of the church, as well as grow in their personal walk with Christ.

Friends, as we come to our time of giving, we want to remind you that you can support our ministries here at the church by an automatic transfer from your bank account. You can also give online, electronically.

You can also send a check to the church, and we will be grateful to receive whatever it is you feel compelled to give. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

[5 : 07] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[7 : 22] Thank you.

Thank you.

Amen.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[10 : 54] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. He's the answer. He's the light and he'll light the way. His name is Jesus and he came to save us.

He is the light, light, light, light of the world and he shines, shines, shines all over the earth, shining bright, bright, bright. He is the light of the world.

[12 : 12] He is the light, light, light, light of the world and he shines, shines, shines all over the earth, shining bright, bright, bright. He is the light of the world.

The world is searching for an answer, a ray of hope in a hopeless world. Who can we turn to? Where is our rescue?

There is someone. He's the answer. He's the light and he'll light the way. His name is Jesus and he came to save us.

He is the light, light, light, light of the world and he shines, shines, shines all over the earth, shining bright, bright, bright. He is the light of the world.

He is the light, light, light, light, light of the world and he shines, shines, shines all over the earth, shining bright, bright, bright. He is the light of the world.

[13 : 41] Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa. Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa.

He is the light, light, light, light of the world and he shines, shines, shines all over the earth, shining bright, bright, bright, bright.

He is the light of the world. Friends, would you pray with me?

Lord, in these different days for many of us, we would seek to abide with you in a new way, to remain connected as strongly as our hearts will allow.

Lord, we know that you are with us, but sometimes the ways in which the world moves around us diverts our focus. So Lord, we hear your voice.

[14 : 53] Abide in me. So Lord, we reach out with all that we are and from the very pit of our souls to be close to you. Lord God, we need that unique way you move in our lives to sustain us.

Sustain us as we face challenges in our bodies, whether there are injuries, whether there are illnesses, or whether there are new conditions that emerge. There are so many who are suffering and need your healing touch, Lord.

We commit them to you knowing that your will for us is perfect and trusting that you will work in us according to that love, grace, and your great plan.

Lord, we pray for those who are suffering financially or economically as a result of the pandemic we're facing. So many are facing hard times in their business.

Some have lost jobs. Some are just having a really difficult time making ends meet. We, your people, are in front of you, and we commit those who are struggling to your perfect care.

[16 : 00] But Lord, also we reach out to you, say, use us. We, your people, are ready. And we hear your command to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to visit the sick, to visit those who are in prison.

So, Lord, we are indeed ready to serve however you call. Lord God, as we come today, we are also mindful of ways in which we can indeed lift up the state of our world.

Lord, we are facing so many challenges, so many that are more than what any of us have seen. So, as we deal with COVID, as we deal with this economic crisis, as we deal with the ongoing work to instill justice and equality in our nation, Lord, we need you to move and work in all of our hearts and souls.

Let your people indeed be a light. Let your people indeed be vessels through which the truth can come. Let your people move and work in real ways in the lives of the broken and the hurting.

We hear your voice calling us, but we need to abide in you so that we can go into the world and bear fruit as you have taught and commanded.

[17 : 24] Lord, as we come today, we offer a special prayer for little Charlie. As he continues his journey of healing, we want to pray for Pastor Kathy, for her husband, for her daughter-in-law and her son, for her entire family as they surround Charlie with love, and for all of the stress that they may be feeling, and for the physical needs that Charlie has.

Lord, we commit them to you, knowing that you are already at work, but you will guide us through, no matter how deep the valley feels.

All of this we ask in the name of Jesus. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Thank you.

Good morning. Today's scripture reading is from John chapter 15, verses 1 through 17. I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. 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.

[19 : 23] You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. 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. 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.

If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers. Such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire, and burned.

If you remain in me and my word remains in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in His love.

[20 : 36] I have told you this, so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this, love each other as I have loved you.

Greater love has no one than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command.

I no longer call you servants because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I called you friends for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.

You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit, fruit that will last.

And so that whatever you ask in my Father's name, He will give you. This is my command. We love each other.

[21 : 38] This is the word of our Lord. Thanks be to God. We're continuing with a sermon series called A Future with Hope. And in this story, the disciples are going to need hope.

But they don't know it yet. They're with Jesus, and as far as they know, everything's going well. They have everything they need. Life is good. And they have no idea what's about to happen.

They have no idea the dark times that are coming. But Jesus knew. Jesus knew they were heading into dark times and that they would be hungering for what to do, not knowing how to move forward.

And they would make painful mistakes along the way. See, Jesus and His disciples were in the upper room. This is during Holy Week, the night in which He was betrayed, the night before He goes to the cross.

In that room, Jesus went and got down on His knees and washed the disciples' feet. It's the time and place where He gave bread and wine and said, This is my body, this is my blood given for you for the forgiveness of sins.

[22 : 51] And they didn't understand. Jesus even said that someone there was going to betray Him, and Judas left. And they still didn't understand.

And these words that Jesus gave were on the way to the Garden of Gethsemane. And they had no idea the pain they were going to face.

No idea that they were going into some dark times. Now, I think back to February. February. Do you remember February?

I mean, I know February wasn't perfect. I mean, really, it's Buffalo in February. The weather's not so great. Everybody has issues all the time of some kind. But, you know, when I think about February now, I think, Oh, it was perfect.

Can we go back there? I want that so badly. I want to just go back. We had no idea in February about the dark times we were going to be heading into.

[23 : 52] Had no idea that we would be seeking and hungering after some normalcy. Hungry for understanding. Hungry for comfort. Hungry for support. Hungry for love.

Hungry for our families and our friends. The people around us. Just hungry. We had no idea. We became hungry for hope.

A hope that can only come from Jesus. And so today we're talking about sustaining. Sustaining our faith. Sustaining our hope. Sustaining our love for God and for others in all times.

In good times and in bad times. See, Jesus said, I am the vine and you are the branches. And that we should remain in him as he also remains in us.

Now, I remembered it as abide. I was taught that the term in the scripture was abide. Abide in me. Remain in me. What Jesus is saying is to remain.

[24 : 56] To abide. To dwell with. To stay connected to. Hang on to Jesus at all times. At all times. In the good times and the bad times.

Because Jesus knows that circumstances can be difficult. But he's saying, I love you. So remain in me. Depend upon me.

And let me give you what you need to make it through. And as we dwell with Jesus, we become filled with Jesus. Becoming more and more like Jesus.

Which requires us to be pruned by Jesus. A lot like what I need to do in my garden. A couple of weeks ago, I shared with you about my zucchini plants.

And they were growing so big and so strong. And bearing lots and lots and lots of zucchini. Which is really exciting. But I came out the other day and I noticed something very disturbing. I noticed all of this white powdery stuff all over it.

[25 : 59] And I found out that I was supposed to have actually pruned this plant. I was supposed to have cut it back. And the reason is because the light wasn't able to get into it.

Because the air wasn't able to circulate around it. And the water was falling on the leaves and not getting to the roots. And so in the process of not having the air and the water and the light shining on it the way it's supposed to, it actually got diseased.

Because I didn't prune it back. And so now I'm going to have to do some very serious pruning. Because each one of these leaves that has this disease on it has to be cut off.

It has to be cut off and thrown out. Thrown out. I can't even put it in the compost pile. In fact, they say that if I don't cut this all back, it's going to kill my entire zucchini plant.

And beyond that, it could even spread to kill everything in my garden. And so I'm going to take the time and the effort and do something really painful.

[27 : 04] And I'm going to cut back my zucchini plant. Everything that's diseased, everything that's not the way it's supposed to be, I'm getting it out of here. So Jesus is the vine and we are the branches, a plant that needs air, the breath of the Holy Spirit moving in our lives.

We need the living water to quench our spiritual thirst. And we need the light of Christ to shine into our lives, showing us which way to go, giving power, strength, direction, purpose, forgiveness, and love.

If we don't stay connected to Jesus, we are just like that zucchini plant, without light, without air, without water. And we can get diseased, broken from sin.

Pruning can hurt, but not pruning can hurt even more. That sin can cause so much harm. It can spread throughout our entire life, creating sickness and decay, and to the point where we are unable to bear fruit.

So what happens when a plant can no longer bear physical fruit? Well, there's a lack. There's no food. And people go hungry.

[28 : 21] And what happens if that continues? That there's a lack of food, that becomes a need for food, that becomes, if it spreads far enough, a famine. A famine can be described as scarcity, lack, a dearth, an insufficiency.

And without Jesus, there is a spiritual famine in our lives that lives out in different ways. A spiritual famine in our daily living, in our finances, our job, our school, our ministry.

And when we don't have the direction, we're lacking in fulfillment. We're living in scarcity, fear, and confusion, instead of abundance, trust, and purpose. A famine within ourselves, with our confidence, our assurance of who we are in Christ.

A spiritual famine that chooses sin over glory, and that leads to hurting. It hurts God, it hurts ourselves, and it hurts others. Famine in our faith.

Famine in our hope. Famine in our love. A spiritual famine in our relationships, with brokenness instead of healing. Brokenness instead of forgiveness.

[29 : 33] With people in general. With people hurling insults and raging against one another, instead of lifting one another up and sharing God's love. A spiritual famine within ourselves leads to a spiritual famine with others.

With others around us. And I believe we are seeing the effects of a spiritual famine in our nation. As we see hatred, violence, inequality, discrimination, injustice across our land.

A spiritual famine in the richest country of the world, that is felt around the world, as people go hungry, and thirsting, and needing the basics to survive.

A spiritual famine that is experienced in our environment, that is just groaning to be made whole. And in the midst of a spiritual famine, we need to ask ourselves, where are we?

And what is our part? Are we living a life that is a testimony to the presence of Jesus with us? A testimony to the presence of Jesus' love living out through us?

[30 : 48] Have we been so pruned that people can see Jesus within us? And are we bearing fruit into the spiritual famine to help feed that hungry?

Or are we experiencing a famine ourselves? We've all got some growing, some pruning, and some bearing to do. And so I invite you to a prayer of confession along with me.

Lord, I have sinned. Hear the silent cry of my heart. I repent and turn to you.

Forgive me, Lord. Prune me to be more like you. And lead me to love others. As you have loved me.

That you may receive glory, honor, and praise. Amen. So hear the good news.

[31 : 59] Jesus loves us. And his fruit is good. His fruit is very good. And he fills us up. And by bearing fruit through him, we can step in with love to feed the hunger in others.

We can step in with love to bring healing, forgiveness, and grace. We can step in with love to feed whatever hunger there may be. Spiritually, emotionally, relationally, physically.

In whatever way Jesus leads us. Waiting on the movement of the Spirit. Waiting for Jesus to call us into action. Leaning on Jesus as we go.

And following no matter where he says we're going. Jesus is the vine and we are the branches. And he said, abide in me.

Jesus with us and us with Jesus. It's an invitation to surrender. To be completely dependent upon Jesus always.

[33 : 04] Because life and love can be hard. And without Jesus, we can't do it. Jesus said, you can do nothing. Without me.

And yet Paul notes in Philippians, I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. And so we're called to develop an intimate relationship with Jesus.

To stay with Jesus no matter what. In the good times and the bad. No matter what the circumstances are. We stay. We stay. We abide. We remain in Jesus.

Living in Jesus. Having the words of Jesus written on our hearts. Knowing the voice of Jesus. Having the mind of Jesus. Obeying Jesus. Having the heart of Jesus.

The love of Jesus. Staying filled. So we always have the life and love of Jesus. Flowing in us and through us.

[34 : 03] Jesus said, I am the vine. And you are the branches. And he wants us to bear much fruit. Fruit that transforms us. And fruit that transforms the world.

Spiritual fruit that will last. Spiritual fruit that glorifies God. Spiritual fruit that will enable us to do what Jesus commanded.

To bear in love. Loving one another. And so we abide. We remain. We dwell. We stay connected to Jesus.

Who feeds our own hunger. With spiritual food. And it takes time. It takes intentionality. It takes love. It's a love that only comes from gratitude.

Our love for Jesus. Because Jesus first loved us. Gratitude for what Jesus has done for us. When I was going through my personal Bible studies at home.

[35 : 07] I came across this story. And I was like, that's it. And it was the woman who came to Jesus. He was at a dinner party. And it said that she was a sinful woman.

And the Pharisee's house where he was. The Pharisee there. His name was Simon. And he said, oh, you know, he's allowing this woman to be near him.

And this woman. This woman came in. Carrying an alabaster jar. Something of value. Something that she was sacrificing. And she got down on her knees.

Down on her knees. And she's washing his feet. And she's crying. And she's wiping the tears off of his feet with her hair. And she's anointing his feet and kissing his feet.

Because of Jesus' love for her. And this Pharisee saying to him. This woman is sinful. He actually didn't say it out loud.

[36 : 04] Jesus just knew. And Jesus called him out on it. And said, you know, Simon. And why are you thinking this way? This is kind of the way it's supposed to be.

Well, he didn't say it that way. He said, her sins, which were many, have been forgiven. And hence, she has shown great love.

But the one whom little is forgiven loves little. You see, this woman, she knew. She knew the greatness of Jesus' love.

The greatness of Jesus' forgiveness. And when we experience that, that grows out of us in love. All that pruning, it not only cleans us.

But it reveals to us just how much we have been forgiven. Just how much we should be grateful. So here are the good news.

[37 : 02] Christ died for us while we were yet sinners. And this proves God's love for you and for me. In the name of Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven.

Glory to God. Amen. And as we are forgiven, we also show great love with gratitude for who Jesus is. For what Jesus has done.

And choosing to remain in Jesus in the good times and bad. The circumstances of the disciples did not change. Jesus still died on the cross.

But Jesus rose again. Our circumstances may not change. But Jesus rose again. And through him, we endure. In him, we stand strong.

With him, we experience God's glory of an abundant harvest. And because of him, we can be filled with a divine love that brings the love of Christ to others through us.

[38 : 11] Jesus asks us to abide in him. There may be a spiritual famine in some area of your life. Or you may be just feeling a bit hungry.

But Jesus invites us all to feast in his love. Hungry I come to you for I know you're satisfied.

I am empty but I know your love does not run dry.

So I'll wait for you. So I'll wait for you. I'm falling on my knees.

Offering all of me. Jesus through all his heart is living for.

[39 : 28] Oh, when I run to you for your arms are open wide.

I am weary but I know your life restores my life. So I'm waiting for you.

So I'm waiting for you. So I'm waiting for you. I'm falling on my knees.

Offering all of me. Jesus through all his heart is living for.

I'm falling on my knees. I'm falling on my knees. Offering all of me.

[40 : 38] Jesus through all his heart is living for. Oh, oh, oh.

Oh, oh, oh.

Worthy of every song we could ever sing Worthy of all the praise we could ever bring
Worthy of every breath we could ever bring We live for you Jesus, the name above every
other name Jesus, the only one who could ever sing Worthy of every breath we could ever
bring We live for you We live for you Holy, there is no one like you

There is none beside you Open up my eyes in wonder Show me who you are and fill me
with your heart And leave me Give your love to those around me Worthy of every song we
could ever sing Worthy of all the praise we could ever bring Worthy of every breath we
could ever bring We live for you Jesus, the name above every other name

Jesus, the only one who could ever sing Worthy of every breath we could ever bring We
live for you We live for you We live for you Holy, there is no one like you There is none
beside you Open up my eyes in wonder Show me who you are and fill me with your heart
and dearly In your love to those around me I will build my life upon your love

[44 : 26] I will build my life upon your love In his other foundation I will build my life upon your love I
will build my life upon your love In his other foundation I will put my trust in you alone And I
will be shaken I will build my life upon your love I will build my life upon your love It is of a
foundation I will build my life upon your love I will build my life upon your love I will build
my life upon your love And I will not be shaken Holy, there is no one like you

There is none beside you Open up my eyes in wonder Show me who you are and fill me
with your heart and lead me In your love to those around me conocetic Tonnon appeal
trader liqu stalna■ One day when heaven was filled with his praises

One day when sin was as black as could be Jesus came forth to be born of a virgin Who
dwells among men, my example is me The wood being flashed, the light shined among us
His glory revealed, living he loved me Dying he saved me, buried he carried My sins far
away, rising he justified Freely forever, one day he's coming Oh glorious day, oh glorious
day One day they led him up Calvary's mountain

He saved me, buried he carried One day he'd come, oh glorious day, oh glorious day One day he's coming, oh glorious day Oh glorious day One day the faith would conceal him no longer One day the storm broke away from the door And he arose over death he had pondered Now he's ascended, my Lord evermore Death could not hold him, the grave could not keep him Rising again, rising he loved me

Dying he saved me, dying he saved me Married he carried, my sins far away Rising he justified, freely forever One day he's coming, oh glorious day One day he's coming, oh glorious day Oh glorious day Oh glorious day Glorious day One day we're going, oh glorious day One day I'll be looking, oh glorious day One day the sun will shine One day the sun will shine One day the sun will shine One day the day I will look and breathe My Savior Jesus is mine My Savior Jesus is mine Living He loved me Dying He saved me

[50 : 17] Buried He carried My sins far away Rising He justifies Breathing forever One day He's coming A glorious day A glorious day Glorious day Glorious day Glorious day When Methodism was first started, John Wesley was forming Methodist societies And he gave them three rules We call them the general rules Helping them to live out their faith in the real world And the first one is Do no harm Do no harm Avoid every evil thing It's kind of like being pruned

The second is Do good Do good So of every possible sort As far as possible To everyone To all people Bearing fruit Loving others And the third Is practice The ordinances Of God So it's to engage In all the practices That draw us closer to Jesus Not Because we need to earn Jesus' love Because we can't even describe The height The depth The depth Of the breadth Of Jesus' love for us Not because we're going to earn Any sort of salvation It's offered freely But because we have a desire To draw closer with Jesus And so we practice these things Like fasting And praying And reading the Bible And worshiping We do these things The ordinances of God And in recent years They've actually changed it To make it a little more contemporary

And a little bit easier To understand And they said The third rule Let's just call it Stay in love With God Stay in love With God Abide Remain Dwell Stay connected to God Which takes Intentionality And we went through this entire service Without these candles being lit And I had every intention Of lighting them But now that I know I'm going to light them Now that I know I'm going to be intentional I'm going to make sure That that flame is lit Within myself And is shown throughout Bringing Jesus' light Into the world Into the darkness Jesus said Love the Lord your God With all of your heart All of your soul All of your mind And all of your strength

And Love your neighbor As yourself And so we're going to love And live in Jesus And so I invite you to pray As Jesus taught us Our Father Who art in heaven Our Father Who art in heaven Hallowed be thy name Thy kingdom come Thy will be done On earth as it is in heaven Give us this day Our daily bread And forgive us our trespasses As we forgive those Who trespass against us And lead us not into temptation And to temptation But deliver us from evil For thine is the kingdom And the power And the glory Forever and ever Amen Amen Lord who's come through humble service O'er the weight of human need Who upon the cross forsaken Offered mercy's perfection O'er the weight of human need Who upon the cross forsaken

Amen. Amen.

[55 : 25] Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Sharing in the love of Jesus together in worship.

Amen. Now we go, we go in that life, go in that love, abiding with Jesus, remaining in him, staying connected to him, dwelling with him, so that every moment, every moment, good moments, bad moments, any moments, are filled with the life and love of Jesus.

So go in that love. Amen. Amen.

[58:19] Amen.