**May 2, 2021 Worship Service**

Welcome

Welcome to the First Congregational Church in Randolph. So whether you’re coming from down the street or sitting here in the sanctuary or joining us from somewhere across the globe, you are welcome here in this place which is a home for your spirit, where we seek to abide more deeply in the love of God and share that love with each other. No matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here into this home for your spirit.

I have a couple of quick announcements to share. I hope you noticed in the Facebook page, some of the members of our church have been part of the Stop the Stigma Walk that’s been going on all week long- a virtual race and a virtual walk. You can learn more about it online. Also, we had hoped to be planting the sunflowers today as part of our church school program. That’s being delayed by the weather, so please stay tuned. You’ll be hearing some more about that coming up. Also, this is Communion Sunday, so if you’re joining us from home we hope you’ll have with you at some point something you can drink and something you can eat. It’ll allow you to participate with us in our time of communion together. For now, will you join with me in a moment of prayer?

Cultivating God, we come as Your children to grow and learn because You are our divine grower. God, we desire for You to abide within us, for Your grace to be revealed anew daily. As Your branches, we ask You to nourish us for continued growth. May You transform our hearts and minds as we hear Your Word, sing Your praises, and engage in a holy dialogue with You through prayer. May You help us to bear good fruit in the vine of Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

Hymn: How Great Is Our God (performed by the Praise Band)

The splendor of the King, clothed in majesty.

Let all the Earth rejoice,

All the Earth rejoice.

He wraps himself in light,

And darkness tries to hide

And trembles at His voice,

Trembles at His voice.

How great is our God, sing with me

How great is our God, and all will see

How great, how great is our God!

And age to age He stands,

And time is in His hands,

Beginning and the end,

Beginning and the end.

The Godhead, Three in One:

Father, Spirit, Son,

The Lion and the Lamb,

The Lion and the Lamb.

How great is our God, sing with me

How great is our God, and all will see

How great, how great is our God!

Name above all names,

Worthy of our praise,

My heart will sing

How great is our God!

Name above all names,

Worthy of our praise,

My heart will sing

How great is our God!

How great is our God, sing with me

How great is our God, and all will see

How great, how great is our God!

How great is our God, sing with me

How great is our God, and all will see

How great, how great is our God!

All will see how great, how great is our God!

Offering

(inaudible)...Welcome you during the announcements to our online congregation, so in this (inaudible) I wanna welcome you again and beg your forgiveness. Today in our service you’re gonna be invited to dig yourself more deeply into the vine, deeply into Jesus Christ who is a part of our lives, to bear yourselves and bring yourselves more fully into the connection to God through which love becomes more manifest in your lives and reaches out beyond you into the world. As it is written in the wisdom book of Ecclesiastes, two are better than one, because if they fall, one will lift up the other; but for the one who is alone and falls, there is not another to lift that person up. So we invite you as part of that connection to the vine to make an offering to the church if you’d like, or wherever you’d like to make an offering. For those in the sanctuary, there’s a plate in the back on your way out. For those who are joining us online, you’re certainly welcome to make a donation through online on our webpage. But for now, once again, will you join with me in a moment of prayer?

Holy God, we do seek to stay connected to the vine which is You and to allow ourselves to bear the fruit that You call us to bear. So bless our lives, the gift that You have given us, and that which we return to You in time and in talent and in treasure, that through You our gifts, the gifts that You have given us, may become a blessing to others. We ask in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

I invite you now to be attentive to the word of God as it is shared with you.

Scripture Reading

Good morning. I am deaconess Carole Ward, and the scripture reading for this morning is John chapter 4, verses 7-21.

“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 in- to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we 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 Savior 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 judgment, 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.”

The second reading is also from John, chapter 15, verses 1 through 8.

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. 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.”

Thank you.

Anthem: Abide With Me (performed by the Praise Band)

I have a home, eternal home,

But for now I walk this broken world.

You walked it first, You know our pain,

But You show hope can rise up from the grave.

Abide with me, abide with me.

Don't let me fall, and don't let go.

Walk with me and never leave.

Ever close, God abide with me.

There in the night, Gethsemane,

Before the cross, before the nails,

Overwhelmed, alone You prayed.

You met us in our suffering and bore our shame.

Abide with me, abide with me.

Don't let me fall, and don't let go.

Walk with me and never leave.

Ever close, God abide with me.

Oh love that will not ever let me go,

Love that will not ever let me go,

You never let me go.

Love that will not ever let me go,

Oh, oh, You never let me go.

And up ahead, eternity;

We'll weep no more, we'll sing for joy, abide with me.

Sermon

Will you join with me in prayer? Grant, O gracious God, that the words of my mouth and the meditations within our hearts may not simply be acceptable to You, but might be blessed by the wisdom and the whisper of Your holy spirit. We ask in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

So for some of you this may be an obscure memory test; for others it may be a very obscure history test. I want you to see if you can complete this lyric:

“My grandfather's clock was too large for the shelf

So it stood ninety years on the floor.

It was taller by half than the old man himself

Though it weighed not a pennyweight more.

“It was bought on the morn of the day that he was born

And was always his treasure and pride

But it stopped, short never to go again-

When the old man died.”

When I was a child, a grandchild, I remember this song. It was sung by Johnny Cash. Its melody and its story have stuck with me all these years. It was a grandchild’s story, and now, as a grandfather, it takes on a different sense of meaning.

The clock was purchased on the day of the birth of the grandfather. It has worked perfectly for ninety years, asking only to be wound once a week. Yet the clock seemed to eerily know some of the significant good and bad events of the grandfather’s life. It rings twenty-four chimes on the day that he and his bride come home to live in the house. And near his death, it rings an eerie alarm, which the family recognizes to mean that they must gather by his bedside. And it stops short, never to go again, when the old man dies.

About forty years ago my wife and I were traveling out to the West Coast to visit family, and I came across a yard sale out there while we were touring around. I think they call it a “tag sale” out there. And at this yard sale there was this beautiful mantel clock, one of those bell-shaped ones. So we bought it for the phenomenal price of $25 and shipped it back home so we didn’t have to carry it on the plane, costing us more to ship it than it was to buy it. We brought it home, wound it up, and it ker-plunked for about one day before it stopped. And for thirty years it sat on the mantel collecting dust.

A couple years ago, I thought this might be a really interesting birthday gift for my wife to see if I can’t find a clocksmith who will repair the old clock. So I found one down the street. About a week before her birthday, I took it to him, and I said “Can ya fix it?”

He said, “Sure, I’ll have it back to you in about six weeks.”

So the birthday gift became sort of an anniversary gift, knocking off two birds with one stone, and we bought the clock for $350 to repair it plus all the money I spent to ship it. And I thought, “Well, that’s a bit pricey, but it’s a nice clock, it’s an old clock. It’s gotta be worth something.” So I asked him, “Once you get this fixed, how much do you think the clock will be worth?”

He said, “It is an old antique clock, but I’m guessing about $150.” And then he said something to me that stuck with me. He said, “It would have been worth a lot more, but the younger generations aren’t interested in the old stuff.”

If you’ve ever heard me teach or preach, which I’ve been doing for about thirty years in the area of church growth and evangelism, you will know these statistics. Back in the 1960s, Willa Herberg did a study of worship and of religion in this country and asked a couple of questions:

 -Do you believe in God?

 -Do you have a regular prayer life?

 -And do you attend church?

Now, back in the 1960s, about 95, 96% of the people said, yeah, we believe in God. And about 95 or 96% of the people said, yeah, we pray regularly, about once a week. And nearly every one of them had an affiliation with a church and attended pretty regularly.

We’ve noticed a bit of a shift since 1960s. So the studies have been repeated again, asking those same three questions: Do you believe in God? Do you pray regularly? And do you attend church? Now, back in 1960, about 95% of the people said they believed in God. What percent of the people do you think believe in God today? About 95%, depending on what they think you’re asking when you say, “Do you believe in God?” Their definition may have changed, but their belief in something out there has not. Back in 1960, between 85 and 95% of the people prayed regularly. What percentage of people today have a regular spiritual practice? It’s about the same number- 85 to 90. Back in 1960, about 95% of the people affiliated with a church and most of them came regularly. On any given weekend, what percent of the population do you think is gonna be in a worship experience in our country today? Any guesses? Between 8 and 17%.

Now, those numbers are pre-pandemic, and something has shifted a bit in the pandemic. Some studies have come out recently that said that sometimes during this pandemic, there has been an unprecedented, significant number of people who have begun a spiritual practice. I suppose when you’re anxious about the world during a pandemic you’re gonna turn to prayer, and also when you’re spending all your time locked up at home because you don’t wanna go out with a mask on, you have nothing else to do, and so you turn to a spiritual practice. But I also think it’s something about the shifting in our world that reminded people of their longing to be part of something more than themselves.

But also in this last year, a study was done by the Gallup poll people. They’ve been doing the same study every year since 1937, and they have indicated that for the first time in the entire history of their study, the number of people with membership in a church or synagogue or mosque has dropped below 50%. A couple years ago, in 1999- not even a couple years ago- it was 70%. That’s a significant change.

And this change is not in any one particular demographic. It is happening everywhere, whether it be the East Coast, the West Coast, the north or the south, whether it be men or women, Republicans or Democrats, well-educated, less-educated, black, white, Hispanic, theologically conservative or theologically liberal, all across the spectrum, the decline has happened. In fact, pre-pandemic, between ten and twenty churches closed their doors every day. Post-pandemic, I suspect it will be more. The clock may stop, never to go again, when the old ones die.

Now, that may sound depressing. I can almost feel some of the energy evaporating in the room here. But I wanna tell you, I am not depressed. I am not anxious about this, because the Holy Spirit and the body of Christ are in no danger of passing away. In fact, I think there’s something happening in our world where the spirit is moving among people and waking them up to a deeper relationship to God, to something beyond themselves and a deeper investment in changing the world for the better. But not every institutional church will survive, particularly those primarily concerned with their own organizational survival. So I have been working for the last thirty, almost forty years now, in that area of church growth and vitality and vibrancy. I’ve also had a fascination with the same for human beings and human souls and human hearts: their own emotional growth, their own spiritual vitality. And there’s something very similar in the studies between the evaporation of life in people and the evaporation of life in churches.

These are the indicators that churches will be fading or a church will be fading: When the church understands or perceives or gives off the sense that they see the clergy, the staff as performers, the congregation as the audience coming to be satisfied, and God as the prompter guiding the words of the preacher or the songs of the musicians. That’s a declining church.

When I encounter a church where people come more having bibs on than aprons on, and by that I mean they come expecting to be fed and nourished as opposed to coming to expect to work or make a difference, that’s a declining church.

When I encounter churches that are more concerned as members with their rights and the goods and services they get and how their opinion is heard and understood, I’ve encountered a declining church.

When I encounter a church that says, “Can you give us the magic formula or the way that we can get more people in the pews and pledges in the plates? How do we attract more people into our sanctuary?”, that’s a marker of a declining church.

When I encounter a church where most of the conversation in the church is, “How do we take care of our building? How do we maintain our budget? And how do we make sure the bylaws are followed properly so everybody has their voice and opinion heard?”, that’s a declining church.

When I encounter a church that has more memories than imagination, it’s a declining church. When they’re looking back to the heyday of the church in 1960 instead of looking forwards to what the church needs to be in 2060, it’s a declining church.

One of the folks who’s helping our church here as a mentor and friend of mine, Paul Nickerson, has a phrase that “If 1960 ever comes back again, we are so ready for it as a church!”

When I encounter a church that is afraid of change and loss and not willing to engage the world beyond its walls, for them, the clock will stop, never to go again, when the old ones die.

But others are making adaptations. They are listening and networking beyond their walls. They are learning about the people in their community. They are delving into a deeper sense of spiritual intimacy with God. They are becoming a healing and a safe community for people to come and discover who they are and discover what their faith is. They are becoming a place where they are coming together to make a difference in their community and their world. These are the churches that are coming alive. They’ve always been the churches that are coming alive.

Before the pandemic, I would always say to folks that we are traveling in uncharted territory; we have been for the past several decades. The road ahead will not look like the world behind. And this pandemic has made that road ahead even less clear and less certain. I talked last week a bit about the brain fog and the covid fog and the grief that’s been accumulated through this pandemic, but there’s another side to that story. I talked with a pastoral colleague here in town this past week, and he said that we would be fools if we are not paying attention to what we have learned in this pandemic. And we’ve learned a lot about what is life-giving to us, what is essential to us. We have discovered something in this pandemic that gives us a chance to reset ourselves for a different and a new future.

And that story is tied into the scriptures this morning. The scriptures that speak not only to the church as a whole, but to each person in it, and to each person out in the world. If you are looking to be alive, if you are looking to have life and joy and peace and hope within you, if you’re looking to make a difference in the world, the first thing you need to do is abide in the vine. Abide in God.

The Gospel this morning says, “abide in me, as I abide in you. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me.” And then that same John who wrote the Gospel also wrote letters. And in 1st John, he writes, “beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God. Everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. God is love. And those who abide in love abide in God. And God abides in them.” Now, abide’s an interesting word. It means, in the old language - the Greek, and the language of the people of the Bible - it means to remain, to stay, to wait. We recognize that. It’s the equivalent of saying, “I’m not going to be apart. I’m choosing not to leave. I’m choosing to stay present with you.” But there’s a deeper meaning behind that that connects to the concept of the vine. People abide because they’ve encountered something that has changed them permanently. Something has been shifted inside their souls, and they always want that power to stay with them, so they choose to abide with it. “Abide with me,” says Jesus.

Abide with the God who is love- and I love the word *love* in this particular version. You may be well familiar that in Greek there are several words for love. There was a word, *eros*, that speaks about intimate and physical love. There’s a word *philos*, that speaks about love we have for friends and for family. But the love used here is intentionally the word *agape*. Agape is a selfless, sacrificial, and unconditional love. It’s a love that gives expecting nothing in return. It’s not transactional - *I’ll love you if you love me*; it’s not conditional - *I’ll love you as long as you’re loving me*; it’s not sentimental, some warm and fuzzy feeling; it is a love that is chosen, not simply felt.

In this pandemic, we have been pulled more deeply and more rawly into a place in our lives where all of the vulnerability in us is exposed. And in that we can learn something about the very depth of what it is that brings our spirits alive and brings our churches alive. The source of life and joy will come to those who abide in the agape love of God.

I don’t know if you know M. Night Shyamalan. He’s controversial - people either love his movies or don’t like his movies. I like M. Night Shyamalan’s movies. And there was one movie called “The Village.” It’s about a group of people who have been so wounded by the world that they choose to leave it all behind, fence themselves off into a lovely woodland enclosure, going back to a time about 50 to 100 years ago when they could live more simply and more safely just with themselves, ignoring the world outside. In fact, they are forbidden to talk about or leave the world that they’re in, particularly so that the new generation being born will have no idea that there’s a world beyond the forest and beyond their walls.

The blind daughter of the village leader wants to leave this self-isolated village because she wants to find medicine for a friend of hers who will die without that medicine. It is a moment of struggle for the leader of this village, who helped to found it and helped to form it, who gives her permission, as a blind daughter, to find her way out through the forest, and out into a world she’s never been into before, in order to find the medicine that will heal. And he is challenged by the other elders after she has left. Mrs. Clark says to him, “how could you have sent her? She is blind!” Edward Walker, the founder, says, in response, “she is more capable than most in this village. And she is led by love. The world moves for love. It kneels before it in awe. It is that love that will bring life to us as individuals. It’s that love that will bring life for the church into the future. It is our work to kneel before that love, in the awe: the awe of God, the awe of possibility, the awe of the power of love, the love that is selfless, sacrificial, and unconditional, the love that will shape and change us, and shape our world. If we cannot find that love among us and between us and God, then the clock will stop, never to go again, when the old ones die. Will you join with me in prayer?

*Gracious God, as we come to his table of communion, we are coming to the very source of your love. In bread broken, and cup poured out, we are coming before you. Help us, lord, within our souls, within our hearts, within our minds, to recognize that the world moves for love; it kneels before it in awe. Let us find that place in our souls that actually longs to abide in your agape love and to kneel before it in awe. We ask in Jesus’ name. Amen.*

Communion

So, I invite you to come to this table, because this is the table of love. It is one of the amazing things about our God, and a way that describes God in a way that I know that no other faith seems to describe God - a God who chooses to enter into the world in complete vulnerability, and express love in the power of sacrifice, sacrificing God’s very self, in order to reveal love to the world. This table is that table of love. And you are invited to come to this table no matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey. You don’t need to be a part of our church, part of our faith. You just need to be one who seeks to kneel before love in awe. So come to this table to receive these gifts because these are the gifts of God for the people of God. Please join with me in prayer.

*Holy God, you are the God of agape love. You have given yourself to us in ways that are selfless, sacrificial, and unconditional, and invited us to step into that love, to abide in that love, that we can bring it into the world. Your love rests upon this table, and upon this moment. Pour your spirit upon the bread and upon the cup, that as we drink of the cup and eat of the food, that we might know what it is to have union with you and communion with each other, through the power of this holy spirit, through the power of the risen Christ. We ask this in that name. Amen.*

It is a story that reconnects us with that deep love. It is a story that helps us abide in that deep love. So remember the story with me. On the night when Jesus was betrayed, when he was deserted by all those who had walked so closely with him, when he was hunted and arrested by the very powers of the world, still, Jesus stood at that table, knowing all that was around him and in front of him, and he took the bread, he broke it, he gave thanks to God, and he gave it to them, saying, “this is my body, which is broken for you. As often as you eat of the bread, do so remembering me.” So, ministering to you in the name of Jesus Christ, the giver of love, take and eat.

In the same way, when the supper was ended, he took the cup, he gave thanks, he poured it out, and he gave it to them, saying, “this cup is the new covenant in my blood. As often as you drink of the cup, do so remembering me.” And so, ministering to you in the name of Jesus Christ, we offer to you the cup. Take and drink.

I’d like to invite our Deacon Henry to come up and offer us the prayer of thanksgiving.

*Oh Holy one, thank you for these gifts of your grace and your love for us. May we incorporate these gifts into our hearts and bodies, for we are in your heart and soul and mind and hands. Send us forth into the world, to spread the good news, to share the love, to bring light and love and justice into a world that sorely needs it - in the workplace, in the school place, in the marketplace. For God knows, we need to do your work, both this day and every day. Amen.*

Pastoral Prayer

As we come into a time of prayer, I want to invite you and remind you again of some of the prayer concerns that are shared on our Facebook page; also the prayer concerns that we have shared here in the sanctuary, and those that are known within our hearts, and have not yet been shared in the world; perhaps they are even too personal to do that.

I also invite you to think back over the course of this past week to those place where you have experienced that awe-inspiring love of God, or that movement of the Holy Spirit in the world, or in your life, and to lift that up to God in a moment of thanksgiving, as we gather our hearts and our souls together in a time of prayer. Will you join with me in prayer?

*We are so deeply grateful, God, for your love. For that marvelous and amazing invitation to kneel before it in awe, but to feel it within our hearts and our souls. To know that you are not a God who lives in some far-off throne, in some far-off section of the universe, but you are here as close to us as the breath that comes in and out of our lungs, as the very beating of our hearts. You are that close to us. So we know that before we have even lifted it to you, you are aware of the concerns of our hearts. For those who are recovering from surgery at home, for those who have surgery yet facing them in the days and the weeks ahead. For those who have recently heard diagnoses with that word “cancer,” or some other illness that has come upon them or upon those whom we love. You know the concerns of our hearts before we even speak them; as we wrestle to try to find our way in the midst of this ever-changing pandemic world. Even as mask requirements are lifted outdoors, and yet the uncertainty indoors remains with us. You know all the concerns of our hearts.*

*You know, as well, the joys. You know those places, God, where you have reached out and touched us. Sometimes we have seen and recognize it; sometimes it is gone by unnoticed, but you know that. And we lift up our gratitude, our joys, before you. The moments in our lives that have warmed our hearts or brought smiles to our faces.*

*We also look beyond our own lives and lift up to you the world, where again there have been mass shootings in this past week. Where a sudden surge of covid is having a deep impact on countries around the world and cities around our countries. Where there is unrest and uncertainty. Where people are trying to recover from economic impacts upon themselves, their businesses, and their livelihoods. Where there are storms that inundate homes with wind and water, or fire. We have seen these images, we have heard the stories, and we bring them before you, God, because we trust you. We trust you to be at work in each life and each place. We trust you to be at work in leadership around the country, to help and hear your voice of love and justice, and we trust you to be at work in our lives, that we would not only bring the concerns in prayer, but that we might be moved by your spirit, in love, to change the world. So, God of grace and God of compassion, all of this we bring to you. We let our words be still - the ones that are spoken aloud, the ones that are rumbling around inside our heads - for one moment we pause in stillness, just to rest our hearts, just to abide our hearts in your unconditional love.*

*God of love, mercy, compassion, and justice, hear the prayers that we bring before you, in the name of Jesus Christ, who taught us, when we pray, to say,*

*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 debts,*

*as we forgive our debtors.*

*And lead us not into temptation,*

*but deliver us from evil.*

*For thine is the kingdom,*

*the power, and the glory,*

*For ever,*

*Amen.*

I Will Follow (Performed by the Praise Band)

Where You go, I'll go

Where You stay, I'll stay

When You move, I'll move

I will follow

All Your ways are good

All Your ways are sure

I will trust in You alone

Higher than my side

High above my life

I will trust in You alone

Where You go, I'll go

Where You stay, I'll stay

When You move, I'll move

I will follow You

Who You love, I'll love

How You serve I'll serve

If this life I lose, I will follow You

I will follow You

Light unto the world

Light unto my life

I will live for You alone

You're the one I seek

Knowing I will find

All I need in You alone, in You alone

Where You go, I'll go

Where You stay, I'll stay

When You move, I'll move

I will follow You

Who You love, I'll love

How You serve I'll serve

If this life I lose, I will follow You

I will follow You, yeah

In You there's life everlasting

In You there's freedom for my soul

In You there's joy, unending joy

And I will follow

Where You go, I'll go

Where You stay, I'll stay

When You move, I'll move

I will follow

Who You love, I'll love

How You serve I'll serve

If this life I lose, I will follow

Where You go, I'll go

Where You stay, I'll stay

When You move, I'll move

I will follow You

Who You love, I'll love

How You serve I'll serve

If this life I lose, I will follow You, yeah

I will follow You, yeah

I will follow You, yeah

I will follow You, yeah

Benediction

Our service here comes to an end, but our service in the world just begins. Our service in the world that is moved by love and kneels before it in awe. You know this, because you abide in the vine, you abide in Jesus Christ. So bring what you know out into the world that so desperately longs to understand that unconditional love that comes from God. And may that love of God, the grace of Jesus Christ, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you now and always. Amen. Go in peace.