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From the Pastor's Keyboard



Dear friends in this wonderful family of faith,

This year, among my other devotional and Bible readings each day, I am going through the book "Pray A Word A Day", published by the editors of Guideposts. I find that having a word a day foremost in my mind helps me in my spiritual walk. I highly recommend it to you, as well!

Although these words are not directly related to Lent, Holy Week, and Easter which fill our March calendar, there are two words which I would like to share, "though" and "metanoia", that may help us in our journey this month.

Terrie Todd writes about "though", highlighting Habakkuk 3:17-18: "Though the fig tree does not blossom and no fruit is on the vines; though the produce of the olive fails and the fields yield no food; though the flock is cut off from the fold and there is no herd in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the LORD; I will exult in the God of my salvation." Todd comments that watching our television or streamed news and reading the book of Habakkuk can feel eerily similar: ongoing corruption, rampant diseases, violent acts of nature, war, and disregard for goodness. She comments that Habakkuk, like many people today, are perplexed that God allows wickedness, strife, and oppression to run rampant and does nothing. He demands to know "Why?" and "How long?" God gives a surprising answer. And God's plan goes contrary to everything Habakkuk has believed to this point. But Habakkuk finally grows quiet and still. He listens, even *though* he doesn't understand. This biblical book ends with Habakkuk's decision to praise God even *though* nothing has changed. He doesn't need answers. He needs only to rejoice. Terrie Todd and I conclude by saying that we, too, need to take all our questions to God, knowing that some may not be answered in the time and way we'd like, and then rejoice, even *though*.

Isabella Campolattaro writes about "metanoia, which she reminds us is a Greek word rich with meaning and a precious revelation for the Christian life. *Metanoia* means a transformative change of heart born of sincere sorrow and regret. Campolattaro, and I, know this feeling! We both think that the longer we have been Christians, the more quickly we feel the discomfort of sin and knowing that we are out of sync with God's heart. Not faking it, but feeling it and responding. Campolattaro says that *metanoia* calls to mind Psalm 51:17: "The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise." God does not want sacrifices or offerings when we sin. God wants broken hearts. Does this sound cruel? It's really not. God knows that as we draw ever closer to God, we will feel the pain of destructive sin and turn away from it to embrace the heart of love for our own good. The searing pain of knowing how we've hurt ourselves,



others, or God's spirit is the catalyst for true *metanoia*, heart change. Campolattaro and I conclude that that is what the Lord wants for us because He loves us and because He wants us to be more like Him.

On second thought, don't the words "though" and "metanoia" go to the very heart of Lent and Holy Week and Easter? I urge you to look at the calendar for our regular Sunday, special services, and UCC York Association luncheons and worships (one of which will be held at our church) and to plan to join us as we celebrate this holy season.

On another short matter, thank you for the wonderful way that you are embracing our new shared ordained/lay ministry of Cindy Innerst-Axe and myself. We are both part-time, so we cannot do everything we would like to do in ministry. But we are complementing and enhancing each other's ministries as Cindy is stepping up and helping with groups, fellowship events, counseling, visiting, and worship. Our plan is to evaluate this team approach by mid-year. If it continues to work well, we will then complete our ministerial profile and look for a part-time pastor who is willing to come to Blymire's Church as part of a lay/ordained pastoral team. Other UCC churches in our area are looking at our new pastoral team as a possible model for other churches in the future.

March is chock full of Lenten, Holy Week, and Easter activities and worship opportunities, which I cordially invite you to. I conclude with two prayers that I am asking you, our wonderful church family, to pray with me during Lent up until Easter:

See you around in March. God bless, Pastor Rick

Lord Jesus Christ, I know that You have saved me and that I am born again. Thank You for that! I want to be sanctified, too – to totally identify with You and Your purposes. Help me to do that!

Help me to remember that You do not force me, but You quietly and passionately invite me to follow You. Help my heart to be open and receptive so, like Isaiah, I hear You and say, "Here am I. Lord. Send me."

In addition to my daily prayer life, Lord Jesus Christ, help me to commit from now until Easter to:

- 1. Put You, O God, first in my life.**
- 2. Seek to do what Jesus would do.**
- 3. Worship online or in person once a week.**
- 4. Pray for world peace and an end to senseless violence.**
- 5. Do some random acts of kindness.**

AMEN!

Please also pray each day for a random person, a stranger to you, who you may see that day – such as a person walking past your house, a fellow car driver or passenger on the road, someone you pass in the store, someone you may see on TV or on a video that you've downloaded on your phone, or any other person. Even though you may not know the needs of that person, lift that person up to God. Jesus knows their needs and never gives up on anybody!

ANGELS! Now thru March 24, Pastor Curt will be teaching a Sunday school class on "ANGELS." He will primarily be using three study guides: Angels by Vinita Hampton Wright, In the Company of Angels by Andrew Bandstra, and Angels by Billy Graham. These studies will explore the numerous Bible passages that reveal the services they perform and how they differ from other beings in God's created order.



The lessons will also cover the following topics: Who and what they are? Where did they come from and what is their purpose? What is their relationship to us as human beings? Angels as messengers and guides, in the life of Jesus, in judgment, as protectors and warriors, in the Gospel, angelic organization, Fallen angels, and angels in our lives today. In addition, we will read stories of people who have seen angels, and, we will attempt to answer the following questions: How should I respond to angels? Will I ever see an angel? Is there a benefit to believing in angels?

If you are interested in knowing more about ANGELS, come join us this Lenten season during Sunday school time, 10:30 AM to 11:30 AM.

MONTH OF SUNDAYS WORSHIP SERVICES FOR MARCH 2024

MARCH 3, 2024 – THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT –UCC AMISTAD SUNDAY, UCC WOMEN’S WEEK - RECEPTION OF NEW MEMBERS

Message Scripture: John 2:12-25 Centering Scripture: 1 Corinthians 1:18, 25

Message: “Is there good anger?” Theme: Christ’s example tells us when Christians ought to get angry, when is the time for action, and when unresolved anger is a spiritual problem

Sunday School: Pastor Curt on angels.

MARCH 10, 2024 – FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT – ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING OFFERING – DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME BEGINS

Message Scripture: John 3:1-21 Centering Scripture: Ephesians 2:8-10

Message: “When it’s all said and done, what really matters?” Theme: What counts is relationships: those closest to us, the whole human family, God

Sunday School: Pastor Rick on angels.

MARCH 17, 2024 – FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT – ST. PATIRCK’S DAY

Message: Cindy Innerst-Axe, preaching

Sunday School: Pastor Curt on angels.

MARCH 24, 2024 – SIXTH SUNDAY IN LENT–PALM/PASSION SUNDAY

Message Scripture: Mark 11:1-11 Centering Scripture: Psalm 118:26-28

Message: “Do we still need to shout ‘Hosanna’?” Theme: In Jesus’ day, hosannas resulted in misguided expectations. In our day, they are a reminder that God is with us even when we can’t see God, and it’s our job to make God visible to the world.

Sunday School: Pastor Curt on angels.

MARCH 28, 2024 – MAUNDY THURSDAY SERVICE WITH TABLE COMMUNION IN THE GATHERING PLACE -- 7:00 PM

Message Scripture: John 13:1-17, 31-35 Centering Scripture: Exodus 12:13-14

Message: “The Eleventh Commandment” Theme: When Jesus wanted us to understand the cross, He washed feet and gave us a meal.

MARCH 31, 2024 – EASTER SUNDAY --SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION

Message Scripture: John 20:1-18 Centering Scripture: Psalm 118:23-24

Message: “How do we prepare for a resurrection?” Theme: Jesus’ followers were enshrouded in hopelessness. They, and us, need to know that help is closer than we think. The victory of Easter is a gift available to anyone who will receive it.

No Sunday School on Easter

March/Lent/Easter Humor

Lent is the best time of the year to run a marathon. Because that’s when you fast.

I was going to give up lunch meat for Lent...But I just couldn’t quit cold turkey.

One Easter, a father was teaching his son to drive when out of nowhere a rabbit jumped on the road. Slamming on the brakes, the son said, "I nearly ruined Easter! I almost ran over the Easter Bunny." His father replied, "It's okay son—you missed it by a hare."

Therapist: What's been up lately?

Chocolate bunny: I don't know Doc, I just feel so hollow inside.

Sources: laffgaff.com and Southern Living websites

MARCH
BIRTHDAYS



2. Sarah Smith
Lexus Luckenbaugh
7. Matthew John
9. Madison Nugent
10. Patrick Michaels
12. Joel Frey
16. Lillie Eberly
19. Nicki Barley
20. Erin Michaels
22. Joyce Raver
24. David Morton
Jamison Rost
28. Maya Ness
Peter Busch
Diane Ness
29. Wayne Althoff
31. Marshall Geesey

May God Bless You
On Your
Birthday

CELEBRATING MARCH ANNIVERSARIES

March 29 - Terry and Frances Doll - 60 years

FINANCIAL REPORT

Undesignated General Fund

Red Brick Chapel

Cemetery

Month-2024	Income	Expense	Income	Expense	Income	Expense
January	\$10,102.00	\$9,943.43	\$600.89	\$319.16	\$784.93	\$0.00
February						
March						
April						
May						
June						
July						
August						
September						
October						
November						
December						
Total	\$10,102.00	\$9,943.43	\$600.89	\$319.16	\$784.93	\$0.00

Balance of Undesignated General Fund @ February 1, 2024

\$7,476.14

Balance of Red Brick Chapel Fund @ February 1, 2024
(Includes \$55,169.25 Endowment)

\$63,432.25

Balance of Cemetery Fund @ February 1, 2024
(Includes \$798,180.71 CD's, Trusts, UCC Foundation)

\$875,478.89

Financial Assistance Given through Hand of Hope Fund - 2024

	#	Total	Monthly	Available
	Families	\$\$\$	Donations	Balance
Beginning				\$ 956.17
January	1	\$25.00	\$ 48.00	\$ 979.17
February				
March				
April				
May				
June				
July				
August				
September				
October				
November				
December				
Total	1	\$25.00	\$ 48.00	

REMEMBER OUR SHUT-INS and those in need of PRAYER

Terry & Fran Doll

Room 346
Residence @ Fitz Farm
2200 Springwood Rd.
York, PA 17403
Terry's cell (717) 968-2454
Fran's cell (717) 968-8754

Peggy Luckenbaugh

Room 704B
Colonial Manor Nursing Home
970 Colonial Avenue
York, PA 17403



Linda Trone

Room 604
Colonial Manor Nursing Home
970 Colonial Avenue
York, PA 17403

Keeping in our prayers

Cindie McKinsey

**Friends battling cancer
Covid 19 patients**



**Remember
and pray for
Our Members
in the
Military**

A1C Ness, Brandon

6907 S. Camino de la Humanidad
Tucson, AZ 85756

God, Rid Me of God

Matt Laney is the Senior Pastor of Virginia Highland Church UCC in Atlanta, GA and the author of *Pride Wars*, a fantasy series published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt for Young Readers. The first two books, *The Spinner Prince* and *The Four Guardians* are available now.

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God say, 'You shall not eat from any tree in the garden'?" - Genesis 3:1 (NRSV)

Occasionally, someone will come to me and sheepishly confess, "I'm not sure I believe in God anymore." My response often comes as a surprise: "You're not sure you believe in God anymore? That's great!"

Letting go of one view of God doesn't mean letting go of God. At least, it doesn't have to. It might simply mean we are ready for a more expansive understanding of God. "I'm not sure I believe in God anymore" means we've outgrown one set of theological clothes and we are ready for another. Even serpents have to shed their skin every now and then.

Meister Eckhart, the 13th century Christian mystic often prayed, "God, rid me of God" – that is, to rid him of limited ideas, images and concepts about God which constrained his understanding of divine reality. Theologically, Eckhart sought to outgrow wherever he happened to be.

We are not meant to sit under a palm tree in paradise and not question, not struggle, not grow, not mature. Growth is the challenge of the Bible, which is why the Garden of Eden story, for me, is not a tale of paradise lost, but of paradise outgrown.

Prayer

Holy Gardener, while I can't return to Eden as I once knew it, I can keep growing into a bigger heaven and into a more expansive earth.



KNITTERS and CROCHETERS:

Memorial White Rose Hospice is asking for donations of handmade scarves and blankets. If you would like to participate in this ongoing project, there is a box in the Gathering Room for you to put your donations. They are especially in need of items for men.



Would you like to try out some new dishes during this Lenten season? Buy one of our new church cookbooks containing mouth-watering recipes from current and past members of our congregation. Check them out on the table in the Gathering Room. The cost is only \$18.00.



MEN'S GROUP

Our Men's Group will hold their next meeting on Tuesday, March 12,

at 7:00 PM at the church. Our guest speaker will be Krista Olewiler-Miller, who will talk about the real life experience of adopting a child. Hear the goods and bads of raising an adopted child and what challenges she and her husband had to face. Everyone is welcome to attend.



BLANKET MAKING

On Sunday, March 3, at 2:00 PM we invite you to join us to help make fleece blankets for White Rose Hospice. No sewing talent is required for this project. We will be cutting strips around the edge of the fabric and then tying knots. The fabric will be provided, but you are asked to bring a pair of sharp scissors with you. Come enjoy the fellowship while making a warm blanket for someone in need.

GUIDED MEDITATION AND DRUM CIRCLE

Meditation and Music are very good ways to deepen your personal spiritual practice. Relax, let go of worldly thoughts, and sink into your soul. You are invited to join us on Saturday, March 16, at 10:00 AM for Guided Meditation, followed by Drum Circle, with a variety of instruments available.



W.O.W (women's discussion and support group)

Good news! The Women's Group has begun meeting again at 11:00 AM in the Gathering Room on the 4th Saturday of each month. Our next meeting will be March 23.

Our time together will include learning to sign the Lord's Prayer and informal discussions of things we've read, heard about, or have questions about. We will also share joys and concerns. Lunch afterwards is optional. Everyone is welcome. Questions, text or call Ginny (202) 549-4358.

You are invited to join us on Sunday, March 17, at 5:00 PM for a potluck dinner, followed by a movie "The Father and the Bear." If you look closely, you will see our own John and Kathi Sterling as extras in the movie. If you plan to attend, please sign up on the sheet in the Gathering Room, indicating what you will be bringing. Hope to see you there!



WHAT IS MESSY CHURCH?

It's church, but not as you know it! Messy Church is a form of family church for children and adults. It involves creativity, celebration and hospitality! It's church for people of any age and at all stages of their faith journey. If traditional church is no longer a part of your life, come try out Messy Church!

Our next Messy Church gathering will be held from 6:00-8:00 PM on Friday, March 15. As always, a meal will be provided. PLEASE INVITE YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS.

B - I - N - G - O

No, it's not the farmer's dog!!! Homewood Auxiliary is playing Bingo year-round with the skilled care and assisted-living patients. Bingo is played 5 times per week, according to the Director of volunteer services. Homewood is seeking your help: They are looking for Bingo prizes to give to the skilled-care patients and assisted-living residents who have outlived their resources. The auxiliary supplements those residents.

There is a box in the Social Hall for those Bingo prizes- you might have seen it—"BINGO" is on it, along with ideas for those Bingo prizes. The idea list is also in the hallway outside the Social hall, alongside the soaker pad dimensions and laundry bag dimensions. Any questions, please don't hesitate to ask!!!! Thank you very much!!!! Steph Frey, Homewood Auxiliary rep- 717-244-5012



CARD and GAME CLUB



We have started a group to play card and board games here at the church. Everyone is welcome, and if you don't know how to play certain games, there will be someone who can teach you. You can bring lunch or order in.

We meet the second Wednesday of each month starting at 11:00 AM and playing until people are ready to stop. Our next gathering will be held on March 13.



**MARCH
2024**

Anger is a punishment we give ourselves
for somebody else's mistake.

Gautama Buddha



*"When you let someone else win an argument,
often you both end up winners."*

Richard Carlson

I've actually learned to do this much more often
as I grow older. It no longer matters to me
whether or not my logic is stronger than some-
one else's, whether my perspective makes more
sense than someone else's, whether my memory
of a certain thing is more accurate than someone
else's. I've found that in most cases, arguments
that I have are simply a waste of time; time spent
in conflict that I could be spending having a
pleasant conversation with someone I care for.

When we think in more of a big-picture sort of
way, it's easy to see that 5 years from now--heck,
even 2 hours from now--it's not going to matter
one bit who won this argument. But in allowing
the other person to win it, without saying
anything about doing so, I can give something
intangible to that person, a feeling of
accomplishment, even of worth. And while I
know that feelings of self-worth shouldn't be
tied up in whether or not we win arguments,
I also know that sometimes they are, and it's
something that I can give very easily.

Of course, there are arguments which don't
apply. When someone is arguing that we
should compromise our morals and principles,
we should not give in. When someone is arguing
for intolerance or racism or hatred or ignorance,
we're not doing anyone any good by giving in
(though we're probably not doing much good
when we argue, either; it's best just to back
out). But sometimes we can create a positive
outcome by allowing someone to win an
argument, and if it's wholly within our power to
do so, then why not make two winners in the
situation instead of trying to be the only one?

Tom Walsh

*"Happiness cannot be traveled to, owned,
earned, worn or consumed. Happiness is
the spiritual experience of living every
minute with love, grace and gratitude."*

Denis Watley

Trouble getting out of bed in the morning? This is for you...
GOOD MORNING, GOD!

Even though I clutch my blanket and growl when the alarm
rings, Thank you, Lord, that I can hear..
There are many who are deaf.

Even though I keep my eyes closed against the morning
light as long as possible, Thank you, Lord, that I can see.
Many are blind.

Even though I huddle in my bed and put off rising,
Thank you, Lord, that I have the strength to rise.
There are many who are bedridden.

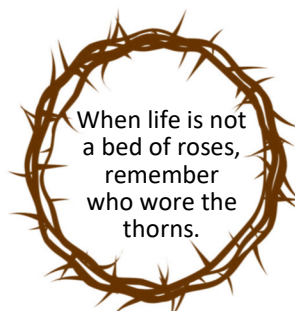
Even though the first hour of my day is hectic, when
socks are lost, toast is burned, tempers are short, and
my children are so loud, Thank you, Lord, for my family.
There are many who are lonely.

Even though our breakfast table never looks like the
picture in magazines and the menu is at times
unbalanced, Thank you, Lord, for the food we have.
There are many who are hungry.

Even though the routine of my job often is monotonous,
Thank you, Lord, for the opportunity to work.
There are many who have no job.

Even though I grumble and bemoan my fate from day
to day and wish my circumstances were not so modest,
Thank you, Lord, for life.

Source Unknown



SITTING WITH GOD

What if sitting with God
Was like sitting with an old friend
Who knows you so well,
There's no need to say anything.

Just to sit in silence
Within their presence,
Grateful for being here,
All through your life.
No need to impress.

Nothing to hide,
Fully accepted as you are,
Embraced by love.

You have arrived home,
Experiencing the fullness of being,
In a simple moment of stillness
Beyond this time and place,
You know there's more to life
Than this body and mind.

You have touched your soul
Thanks to this old friend
Who has been and always will be,
Here for you,
Waiting in the stillness,
For you to come.

Alex Thomson



Come with me to the hill of Calvary. Watch as the soldiers press a knee against a forearm and a spike against a hand. As the soldier lifts the hammer to strike it, think about the hand that received the nail. The fist doesn't clench—the moment isn't aborted. A mallet drove a nail into

the hand, not just of a carpenter, but into the hand of God. Fingers that formed Adam out of clay and furrowed truth into tablets felt the pain of crucifixion. The same hand that stilled the seas stilled your guilt. And as the hands of Jesus opened for the nail, the doors of heaven opened for you.



As Jesus stands before the religious leaders and the Roman governor, the authority and power of God himself is on trial. And at the end of this trial God in Jesus Christ stands condemned of being useless as the kind of hero that the world wants him to be.

The world laughs at Jesus. The Romans think Jesus is the one who needs a hero. The world thinks the “weapons” of Jesus—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness—are a joke with no lasting value for a life that's here today, gone tomorrow.

But here's something that the world—as seen in Pilate, the Sanhedrin, and the Roman soldiers—has missed: Jesus' power might not always seem as grand and glorious as the powers of this world, but the joke is on them. Pilate felt sorry for Jesus, thinking he was no real threat to the Roman Empire. But Jesus felt the same way about him. Jesus didn't threaten the Roman Empire because *it was no real threat to Jesus*. Nor were the religious leaders. Nor was the crowd. Nor was the cross. Nor is cancer. Nor are your finances. Nor are broken relationships. Nor are any of the pains and troubles we face in this world. If Jesus doesn't seem to get as anxious as we do about our problems, it's only because he knows they don't win in the end.

Scott DeVries

“Sometimes the littlest things in
life are the hardest to take. You
can sit on a mountain more
comfortably than on a tack.

Unknown

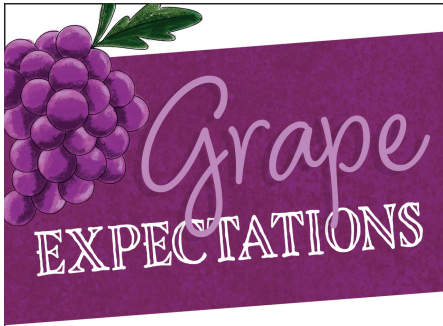
When you go thru hard times remember you already have
all you need inside of you to bloom again. Trees grow their
buds for spring before winter even arrives so that when
the long nights and cold days of winter do arrive, they don't
need to do anything except rest. People are like that too.

When you're going through your own season of winter,
know that you already have everything you need to bloom
within you, just hang on a little more for longer days and
warmer nights. Your spring is right around the corner,
friend, And the bloom that's coming? It's going to be more
beautiful than ever.”

Nikki Banas



May God grant you always
A sunbeam to warm you,
A moonbeam to charm you,
A sheltering angel, so nothing
can harm you
May brooks and trees
and singing hills.
Join in the chorus too,
And every gentle wind that blows
Send happiness to you!



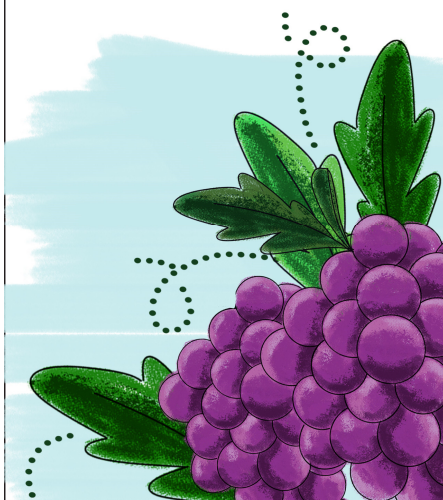
Try this chilly new
take on a healthy snack.

What you need:

- 30 grapes, washed and dried
- ½ cup vanilla yogurt
- 4 graham crackers, crushed
- Toothpicks
- Parchment paper

What you do:

1. On a baking sheet lined with parchment paper, arrange grapes in a single layer. Freeze for two hours.
2. Insert a toothpick into each grape.
3. Dip each grape into the yogurt, coating half of it.
4. Roll each dipped grape in the crushed crackers. Place back on the parchment.
5. Freeze for two more hours. Enjoy!



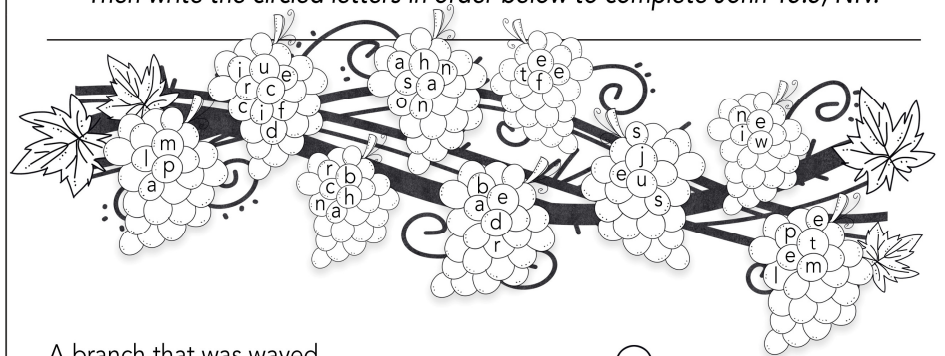
PUZZLE



A LASTING LESSON

Before dying on the cross, Jesus teaches the disciples an important lesson.

Directions: Use the clues to unscramble the letters in each grape cluster. Then write the circled letters in order below to complete John 15:5, NIV.



A branch that was waved

— — — — —

How Jesus was put to death

— — — — —

A stick attached to the vine

— — — — —

People shouted this to Jesus

— — — — —

Jesus washed these



— — — — —

This was broken and eaten

— — — — —

The Messiah

— — — — —

A drink from grapes

— — — — —

Jesus drove the money changers from here

— — — — —



"I am the vine; you are the branches.

If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear _____ ;
apart from me you can do nothing." John 15:5, NIV

Answer: palm, crucified, branch, hosanna, feet, bread, Jesus, wine, temple, much fruit