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## Graphics and Audio Notes

- There **will** be a sermon starter video.
- There **will** be notes and / or scripture to show on screen during the sermon.
- We will say the Apostle's Creed responsively at both worship services as part of New Member Sunday



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## Key Questions

### What is this sermon about?

This sermon is about growing in our faith outside of worship both on our own through reading the Bible and praying and with other people as part of a small group.

### Why is this sermon important?

This sermon is important because staying connected with Jesus allows us to discover that the fruit of the Spirit is being produced in our lives.

### What is the context of this sermon?

This is the second week of Lessons from a Pumpkin Farm and New Member Sunday. We are using stories from Carroll and Becky Walters and their farm to help us learn about following Jesus. The videos are produced by Scott Olney of Olney Productions.

### What are the next action steps?

This week, take time with God – by yourself and with other people.

Stay connected with Jesus and bear the fruit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

### What is the good news? What is the bottom line?

Jesus tells us the good news, “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, then you will produce much fruit.”<sup>1</sup>

### What are other key takeaways?

#### *For social media*

- God keeps working on us – all the time.  
<https://vimeo.com/179923800>

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<sup>1</sup> John 15:5a, CEB.

15th Sunday after Pentecost  
Lessons from a Pumpkin Farm  
Stay Connected with the Vine: How Faith Grows  
First United Methodist Church of El Dorado  
Text Online at <http://bit.ly/2aXe6zb>

August 28, 2016  
John 15:1-8  
Preaching Target Word Count: 1,828  
Audio Online at <http://bit.ly/2bYImKr>

- Who are your supporters?  
Who are your cheerleaders?  
<https://vimeo.com/179923799>
  - Take time with God – by yourself and with other people.  
<https://vimeo.com/179923798>
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## Metadata

### Topics

- Grow

### Sermon Books of the Bible

- Galatians
- John
- Mark

### Tags

sermon, worship, church, Methodist, UnitedMethodist, UnitedMethodistChurch, FirstUnitedMethodistChurch, ElDorado, Kansas, GreatPlains, AnnualConference, GreatPlainsAnnualConference, PumpkinPatch, pumpkin, pumpkins, farm, farming, discipleship, faith, growth, life, spirituality, Bible, prayer, scripture, SmallGroup

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## John 15:1-8, CEB

<sup>1</sup>"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vineyard keeper. <sup>2</sup>He removes any of my branches that don't produce fruit, and he trims any branch that produces fruit so that it will produce even more fruit. <sup>3</sup>You are already trimmed because of the word I have spoken to you. <sup>4</sup>Remain in me, and I will remain in you. A branch can't produce fruit by itself, but must remain in the vine. Likewise, you can't produce 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, then you will produce much fruit. Without me, you can't do anything. <sup>6</sup>If you don't remain in me, you will be like a branch that is thrown out and dries up. Those branches are gathered up, thrown into a fire, and burned. <sup>7</sup>If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask for whatever you want and it will be done for you. <sup>8</sup>My Father is glorified when you produce much fruit and in this way prove that you are my disciples.

### Response to Scripture

One: The word of God for the people of God.

All: Thanks be to God.

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## Introduction

### Sermon Starter Video

Play sermon starter video.

### Listen for God's Word

I invite you to listen for God's word today.

#### *Place for Notes*

You can find a place in your bulletin to take notes or, if you prefer, in the event for this worship service in the Bible app on your mobile device

#### *Tool for Spiritual Growth*

When you learn something new, have a question, make a connection with your life or hear anything that will help you live as a disciple of Jesus Christ as you worship, grow, give, serve and share, write it down.

Then, use these notes as a tool to help you grow in your faith in the days ahead.

### Prayer

Will you pray with me?

O God, use these words to speak good news, so that, as individuals and as a congregation, we will fear nothing but sin, desire nothing but you, and live as part of your kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

## Opening Story

[Text here]

## Series Review

### *Discipleship Pathway*

During this worship series, we are focusing on our discipleship pathway, which is this:

We live as disciples of Jesus Christ as we worship, grow, give, serve and share.

These are expectations for our members and invitations to all people to experience life as a follower of Jesus Christ. There are many ways to live a faithful life. This is how we live as Christians here at First United Methodist Church.

### *Lessons from a Pumpkin Farm*

We will hear from Carroll and Becky Walters of Walters' Farm. They will be sharing stories on video about their life, pumpkins and the farm. We will be looking for lessons that a pumpkin farm can teach us about living as a follower of Jesus Christ.

### *Transition*

Today, we consider how to grow in our faith and produce fruit in God's kingdom.

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## Producing Fruit in God's Kingdom

In the scripture passage from John for today, Jesus describes a vine, its branches and the fruit that is produced.

### *Example: Pumpkin Vine, Flowers, Leaves and Pumpkins*

You might imagine a pumpkin plant as it spreads across a field. It puts out blooms that will later turn into pumpkins. If you break off one of the flowers - disconnect it from the vine - it will never turn into a pumpkin. If you break the vine, everything that is past the break - leaves, branches and flowers - will stop growing. It will die.

The connection is essential for growth to occur.

## Stay Connected with Jesus

The same thing is true in our life of faith. In this passage of scripture, Jesus identifies himself as the vine and his Father as the Vineyard keeper. Those of who hear or read these words are identified as the branches on the vine. These branches are where the fruit is produced.

Just like with the pumpkin plant, connection is essential for growth to occur. We need to stay connected with Jesus for our souls to be well and to produce fruit in God's Kingdom.

## What is fruit in God's Kingdom?

Of course, as we consider our faith, we aren't growing pumpkins, fruits or vegetables of any kind. Producing fruit in God's kingdom means that:

- We honor and glorify God.
- We love God and love our neighbor.

**Key Scripture: Galatians 5:22-23**

We find this idea of fruit in God’s kingdom described in Galatians 5:22-23:

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against things like this.”<sup>2</sup>

Did you hear those?

Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. That’s the kind of life that I want to live.

That is the kind of life we can live when we stay connected with Jesus.

**Our Discipleship Pathway**

So, how do we stay connected with Jesus?

Here at First United Methodist Church we believe that the spiritual practices of our discipleship pathway open us to God’s grace so that we can stay connected to the vine – we can stay connected with Jesus.

**Series Review and Transition to Grow.**

As we considered last week, worship helps us stay connected with Jesus.

We also have the opportunity to grow in our faith outside of worship, both on our own and with other people. We can engage in practices that open our souls for God to be at work - that help us stay connected.

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**Keep Working on Us**

**Introduction to Video**

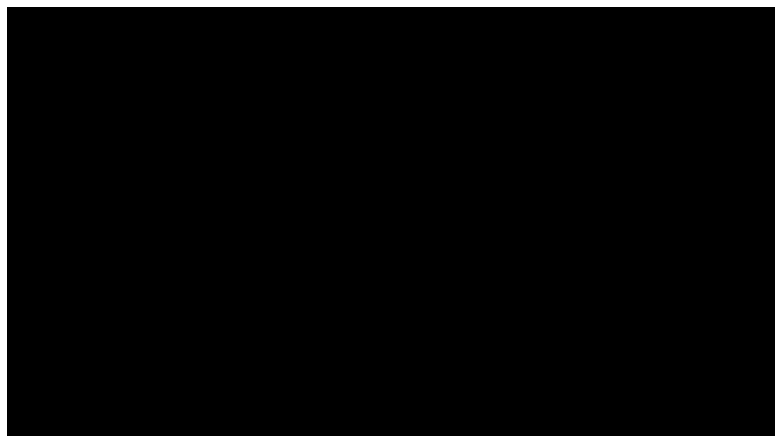
In this video, Carroll and Becky talk about the difference between the prairies and the bottom ground where they farm.

Let’s take a look...

[Play 2016-08-28 Grow - Keep Working on Us]<sup>3</sup>

**Video Transcript**

Carroll: [I] just relate better to the prairies, ... the



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<sup>2</sup> Galatians 5:22-23, CEB.

<sup>3</sup> This video clip is 32 seconds.

bluestem grass, that part of the farm, more than the bottom ground - where we farm.  
You have to... The farm ground, you have to keep doing something to it all the time.

Becky: [laughing] That's the way the good Lord feels about us. He keeps having to work on us all the time.

Carroll: Kind of hits us on the head once in a while, too...

Becky: I know it, I know it... [laughing]

## **Response to Video**

God keeps working on us – all the time.

## **God's Grace Works on Us**

As United Methodist Christians, we talk about God's love and willingness to forgive as grace. It is this grace - God's grace - that works on us. God's grace is available to all people, at all times of life and we are all in different places in our spiritual life.

### ***Prevenient Grace***

God is at work in our life before we are aware of it.

No matter who you are, what you have done or what your life is like right now, God loves you and wants to be in relationship with you.

God freely offers us love and forgiveness, even though we don't deserve it.

### ***Justifying Grace***

For people who follow Jesus, there is a single moment in time or a realization over months or years when you recognize God's grace at work in your life and on your soul.

You consciously make a decision to respond to God's love.

We confess our sins, receive forgiveness, trust in God and seek to follow Jesus.

We are justified, or made right, with God.

This is a milestone in our life of faith, but it is not the end of the way that God's grace is at work in our souls.

### ***Sanctifying Grace***

God's grace continues to be at work in our lives and in our souls. We talk about as an experience of being made perfect in love. We continue to grow in our faith throughout our lives.

## **Grow on Our Own**

God brings spiritual growth in our lives, but there are things that we can do on our own to make ourselves more receptive to the work of God's grace in our soul. Two of these practices to read the Bible and pray.

### ***Read the Bible***

Reading the bible can be a powerful way for us to grow in our faith. The Bible gives us the clearest picture of Jesus and in Jesus we see the clearest picture of God.

- Pick up a Bible from the church
- Visit [bible.com/app](http://bible.com/app) on your phone



- Use the bulletin as a guide
- Read the book of Mark

Here are some ways that you can get started reading the Bible:

- If you need one, **we will give you a Bible** for free. Stop by the office afterward and you can take one from the shelf
- If you have a mobile device, **download the Bible app**. Use a reading plan or take notes during worship using events.
- **Use the bulletin** to be a tool for you to grow in your faith. Each week you can read the scripture for next Sunday to prepare for worship. This is just one of the many ways you can engage in the Bible.
- If you want to engage more, **read the gospel according to Mark**. You can find it in the table of contents. It is one of the books that tells the story of Jesus. It is short, action packed, and reading it could change your life.

### **Pray**

Another simple and powerful way to grow in your faith is to pray and spend time with God. Take time to listen and speak. Relationships are built when you spend time with someone and share a conversation.

- Pray when you wake up
- Pray before meals
- Pray at bedtime
- Church, Community, Country, World

Here are some ways that you can get started praying:

- When you **wake up**, “God, thank you for waking me up this morning. Help me to live for you today.”
- Before meals, “O God, bless this food we are about to eat. Help it nourish our bodies so that we might follow after you.”
- At bedtime, we say this prayer with our children,  
“Now I lay me down to sleep,  
I pray the Lord my soul to keep.  
Guide me through the starry night  
and wake me when the sun shines bright.”
- Change club to church in the last line of the 4-H pledge and pray for my church, my community, my country and my world.

### **Next Step**

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*God’s grace works on us throughout our lives.  
Reading the Bible and praying make us receptive to God’s grace at work on our soul.*

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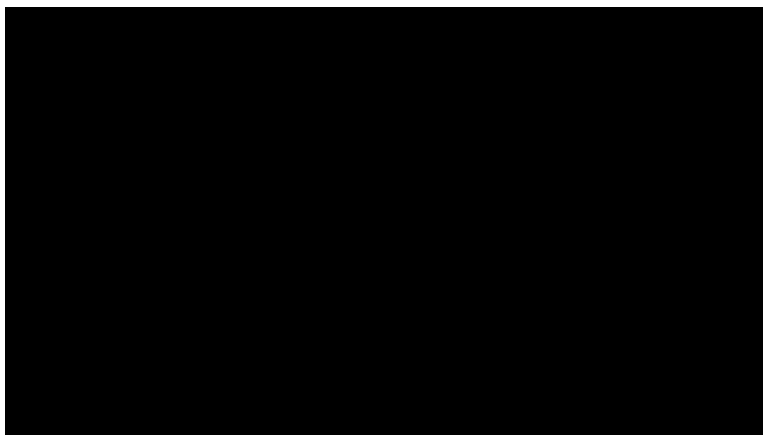
## Our Biggest Cheerleader

### Introduction to Video

In this video, Carroll and Becky talk about a great supporter and cheerleader and the difference it makes in hard times.

Let's take a look...

[Play 2016-08-28 Grow - Our Biggest Cheerleader]<sup>4</sup>



### Video Transcript

Carroll: My mother was probably our biggest supporter and when I seen how excited she was for what we were doing, it was okay. ... That's how it started.

Becky: And Carroll mentioned his mom, she was our biggest cheerleader. She was so excited that we had found our niche and a way to make a living off of this farm. Cause we definitely tried to go broke back in the '80s when everybody else was going under. ... Carroll decided that he wasn't going to farm anymore and got that city job and I already had a city job. ... It just... The community has embraced what we do. We have found a niche that we can, you know, make the farm pay.

### Response to Video

Who are your supporters?

Who are your cheerleaders?

Who are you going to call in the middle of the night when the wheels have come off your life?

### Stretcher Bearers

#### Key Scripture: Mark 2:1-5

One of the stories of Jesus helps us understand the power of supporters in our life. We find it in Mark 2 and it goes like this:

"After a few days, Jesus went back to Capernaum, and people heard that he was at home. So many gathered that there was no longer space, not even near the door. Jesus was speaking the word to them.

Some people arrived, and four of them were bringing to him a man who was paralyzed. They couldn't carry him through the crowd, so they tore off part of the roof

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<sup>4</sup> This video clip is 54 seconds.

above where Jesus was. When they had made an opening, they lowered the mat on which the paralyzed man was lying.

When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Child, your sins are forgiven!”<sup>5</sup>

### ***Imagine the Story***

Can you imagine this story?

People had gathered in such large numbers to hear Jesus that there was no room left, not even at the door.

Four men come, carrying a paralyzed man. They couldn’t get to Jesus because of the crowd, so they “tore off part of the roof above where Jesus was. ... and lowered the mat on which the paralyzed man was lying.”

It was most likely a thatched roof, so this would have been possible, but messy. These four men literally dug through the roof for their friend.

His sins are forgiven and when people question, that, Jesus says, ‘Get up, take your mat, and go home.’ He does.

This man is healed because his four friends cared enough to bring him to Jesus.

### **Grow with Others**

We can grow in our faith outside of worship on our own by reading the Bible and praying and there is something more when we grow in our faith with others.

We want to create as many opportunities as we can for you to be part of a group where people not only know your name, what you care about, what your fears are, where you struggle in your faith. These are people that you can ask, “How is it with your soul?” and you can really tell them.

Accountability, encouragement, care - all these things open our life to God’s grace in deep ways and help us love God... and love each other. Being part of a small group focused on spiritual formation is a powerful way to stay connected with Jesus and allow your faith to grow.

### **Next Step**

.....  
*Growing in your faith with others helps us stay connected with Jesus.*  
.....

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## **Time to Commune**

### **Introduction to Video**

In this video, Becky describes a powerful time of connection.  
Let’s take a look...

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<sup>5</sup> Mark 2:1-5, CEB.

[Play 2016-08-28 Grow -  
Time to Commune]<sup>6</sup>

### **Video Transcript**

Becky: There are times when things can get so stressful. And I wish I did this more often – “Let’s go to the pasture.” And we just get in a buggy and we drive. ... This land is very deep, it’s not very wide, but it’s very deep, so you can drive quite a ways before you get to the back fence. ...

It’s a time for Carroll and I to commune, for us to talk, share thoughts - our stresses, and we need to do it more often. You know, you get caught up in the time and “I have to do this...” and “I have to do that...” and “He has to do this...” and “He has to do that...” And, it’s just very, it reassures you why you are here and what you are doing - what you are supposed to be doing.

### **Connection to Life / Response to Video**

This description of time together gives me a picture of what it is like to stay connected with God. Time with God on our own or with other people is a chance to commune, share your thoughts and stresses.

God’s grace can bring an assurance which we can find nowhere else.

### **Next Step**

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*Take time with God – by yourself and with other people.*  
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### **Conclusion**

#### **Good News**

Jesus tells us the good news, “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, then you will produce much fruit.”<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> This video clip is 48 seconds.

<sup>7</sup> John 15:5a, CEB.

## Call to Action

This week, take time with God – by yourself and with other people.  
Stay connected with Jesus and bear the fruit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

## Invitation

You may find yourself saying, I think I want a life like that.  
I want to see the fruit of the Spirit in my life.  
I want to follow Jesus and experience the power of staying connected with him.

You can.  
All you have to do is ask.

### ***I'm sorry. Thank you. Please.***

It's a very simple thing to pray – I am sorry. Thank you. Please.  
Turning away from the things that we know are wrong, saying "I am sorry".  
Thanking Jesus for dying and being raised for us; putting our faith in him.  
And finally asking, 'Please come and fill me with your Spirit.'

### ***Not ready to pray***

You may not be sure if you want to pray a prayer like that and that's okay. If you are curious about Jesus and being part of a Christian community, then I invite you to get connected here at First United Methodist Church. We would to help you find out more.

### ***Ready to pray***

And, if you would like to pray, then:  
it may be the very first time in your life to pray something like this,  
it may be the first time for you in a long time, or  
it may be a prayer that you have prayed every day for a long time.

### ***Logistics***

You do not have to pray it out loud, but just quietly under your breath.  
You can repeat after me.  
I'm sorry, thank you, please.

### ***Closing***

You can bear the fruit of the Spirit in your life  
You can stay connected with Jesus.  
Today. And everyday.  
Will you pray with me?

## Closing Prayer

Jesus, I am sorry for all the times in my life when I mess up.

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*And if anything comes to mind, ask God's forgiveness.*  
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Forgive me of my sin and all that I know is wrong.  
Thank you that you died on the cross and rose for me.  
I trust you with my life.  
Help me receive your forgiveness.  
Please fill me with your Spirit and help me to follow you.  
In your holy name, Amen.