

May the words of my mouth and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O Lord our Rock and our Redeemer. Amen

If you have ever attended a 9:30 worship service,
you know that I am more than a “little” technologically-challenged.

It is a rare occasion when everything runs smoothly.

It seems that there is always something with my powerpoint presentations.

The wrong words, the wrong order,

Or with the powerpoint machine;

Whether the colors are off, or they’re too dark, or the machine is cutting off half the words.

Or it’s with my computer;

Whether my renewal notice for the anti-virus pops up in the middle of a song
Or my internet receives messages,

It’s always something.

In fact, one of our members usually jokes with me after the services...

“I see it was another well-orchestrated worship today, pastor!”

And sometimes, even when I think I have covered all my bases,
I get caught off guard.

Like the morning that everything was going fine,

The powerpoint machine was working.

The computer was working.

Until suddenly in the middle of my sermon,

The computer just shut itself off.

With no warning; we were left with just a blank screen.

the computer needing to be re-booted.

And I was thinking as usual.....

“stupid computer...NOW what’s wrong with it!?”

And it wasn’t until after the worship service, that I learned that

I had turned the computer on, but never plugged it into the powerstrip.

The cord was there, dangling, but it wasn’t plugged into the power source.

My computer had been running on the battery pack the whole time,

And I didn’t realize it,

Because it looked the same.

And it was working the same..... at least for a while.

But then the battery ran out, and there was nothing.

It seems our lives can be like my computer.

Sometimes we get disconnected from the source, and we don’t even know it.

I mean, how often do we just run around from one thing to another, one task after another, until we collapse at the end of the day?,

How often we do get up in the morning and just go, without taking the time to be sure we are connected to our Power-source?

How often do we muddle through our days without even thinking about God, let alone suring-up the connection between us?

It's interesting to me, that in this time in history we are the most "plugged in, connected people to ever live"

Facebook, twitter, texting, Youtube....

We are the most technologically-connected people who ever lived,

Yet, that doesn't seem to automatically mean that we are connected in our spiritual life.

With all these other sources to "plug into" each day, do we get distracted and forget to plug into the true source?

Probably more than we would like to admit.

But the question is whether these other sources of connecting have any staying-power.

What is the purpose of all our techno-connecting, if it is not to live out our real purpose?

Can these sources of connection actually sustain us or are they imitations of the real thing?

Eventually, all this "connecting" will come to nothing, if we are not connected on a deeper level...if we are not connected to God.

Oh, like my computer, we will live and work and function for a while....

Until we look up one day and realize that we can't do it anymore.

Realize that we are emotionally and spiritually drained.

Realize that our battery packs have run dry;

And we have nothing left to keep us going.

No strength to draw on.

But in our Gospel lesson for today, Jesus assures us that we do still have access to that strength;

Strength and power that comes not from ourselves, but from HIM.

We do not generate this power and energy on our own;

Whatever is within us, comes from God alone.

Jesus says: I AM THE VINE AND YOU ARE THE BRANCHES

Without me you can do nothing.

Jesus uses this metaphor to help us understand that our very lives are dependent on God.

We need God to live and grow.

We need God's power to do anything good.

Without God and God's life-force, we cannot live out our purpose in the world.

And what is our purpose according to Jesus?

Our purpose is to glorify God by bearing fruit.

Jesus says “no branch can bear fruit by itself, it must remain in the vine-neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. Apart from me you can do nothing”

Apart from God...we can do;
Nothing that is good.
Nothing that is significant.
Nothing that is lasting

In order to bear the fruit of the kingdom, we need to “abide”
Which means remain
We need remain connected to God.

Now let's be clear here about the disconnect...
God never disconnects from us.

That's the promise we received in our baptism.
We are connected forever to our Lord Jesus.
What did Paul in his letter to the Romans?

There is nothing that can separate us from the love of God that is in Jesus Christ our Lord.

So when we get disconnected, we have done this, not God.
We have gotten too busy.
We have gotten too distracted
We have gotten too proud
We have gotten too self-reliant

But you know the good news is that it doesn't change who we are.
And it doesn't change who God is.

No matter how many times we find ourselves dangling on our own; disconnected,
The power source is still there...still flowing...just waiting for us to
Be plugged back in.

Jesus is the True Vine.
The one who loves us completely.
And the one who gives us everything we need to live and grow and thrive.
Everything we need to bear fruit.
fruit worthy of the kingdom.

So what does that fruit look like?

How will others see God's kingdom through us?

And could it even be that all our technology could help us to bear this fruit?

At synod assembly this weekend, we learned that there has been this really interesting conversation going on through facebook...

Giving people an opportunity to think out of the box about Jesus and his mission.

Giving people at chance to think about Jesus, people who might never have stepped into a church, but you are yearning to know the love of Christ.

Whatever form our “connecting takes, whether it is the old face to face conversations or cyber-talk, may we “remain” connected to our True Source and bear fruit worthy of God’s kingdom. Amen