

Abide in **LOVE** Live with **PURPOSE**

STEWARDSHIP 2025 | WEEKLY REFLECTION FROM OUR MEMBERS



ABIDE IN LOVE | LIVE WITH PURPOSE

BY FR. PAUL

"Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."

I am so excited about this year's stewardship campaign theme, 'Abide in Love...Live with Purpose'. It is short and simple, yet profound. It summarizes so much of our scripture. I believe some complexity rests in the word 'abide.' It is common in scripture and hymnody but much less common in everyday language.

The word abide points to a long-term deliberate existence. God abides with us. God is ever-present, always there. God is love. Jesus also calls us to be known by our love for God and one another. So, abiding in love is to exist in love and emulate the presence of Christ.

Abiding in love is a fantastic first step. We cannot stop there. It might be tempting to think abiding in love, challenging as that can be, is enough. What about where and when we are challenged not to be loving? We could use this high-calling of abiding in love to disengage. The letter to the Ephesians reminds us that it is okay to "be angry", indeed, sometimes this is an appropriate response; it also reminds us to "not sin," it's right there, "be angry but do not sin".

SUNDAY, AUGUST 11 READING

EPHESIANS 4:25 - 5:2

Putting away falsehood, let all of us speak the truth to our neighbors, for we are members of one another. Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not make room for the devil. Thieves must give up stealing; rather let them labor and work honestly with their own hands, so as to have something to share with the needy. Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with which you were marked with a seal for the day of redemption. Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you. Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

So, we exist in love. The second half of our theme directs our action to live with purpose. This also calls us to be deliberate. Purpose should guide and direct our day-to-day actions. What actions do we take to care for others or the community at large? These actions give our life purpose beyond caring for ourselves. And, these two aspects, abiding in love and living with purpose bring us closer to God and align our lives with the kingdom of God.

I hope that this and the remaining reflections and offerings of this campaign help each of you embrace this theme in your life. May the Spirit of God rise up within us, uniting us in God's abiding love so that we may fulfill God's purpose for us.

Blessings,



Fr. Paul



Fr. Paul is the Rector at Ascension. He is a life-long Episcopalian, and is married with two children. He has served in a variety of settings including Alaska and Hawaii. God and family are his top priorities in life, but he also really enjoys cycling and tacos.