



Talk summary:

Love looks like a well-watered garden [John 15: 1-11]

1. God is the Gardener, Jesus is the vine, we are the branches [John 15: 1-11]

Jesus used a lot of imagery from the natural world in his teachings. This passage highlights the need for us to stay connected to God and his love in order to bear good fruit.
2. We are stewards, not owners of God's garden, the earth [Genesis 1]
 - God made all of creation, and gave mankind an abundant earth to live in and manage, but instead of working for it, we have used it to serve our own desires. We have acted like owners rather than stewards.
 - 'Greenness' in nature, according to Hildegard of Bingen, is evidence of God's Holy Spirit at work in the world. Caring for the earth is an important part of understanding and loving ourselves, one another and God.
2. We are called to true worship and to be restorers [Isaiah 58: 11-12]
 - Isaiah uses the image of a well-watered garden to describe how God nourishes us when we don't just go through the motions of religion, but work with him to bring about the justice that God desires
 - God calls us to connect with Him through creation and work for justice in a more whole-hearted way than just with compartmentalized acts like recycling. What might it look and feel like to be more connected with God's creation?
 - The well-watered garden is an image in Carmelite spirituality, describing different forms or stages of prayer given by God - from hard, laboured prayer, like drawing from a well, to spirit filled prayer that is like rain. Does this way of thinking about prayer help you to pray?

Questions:

Conversation Starter

What might a church that is like a well-watered garden look like? How might we encourage one another to live in a way that is more caring for creation?

What might God be saying to me about this theme/situation?

What have I learnt that I want to hold on to?

How am I going to put it into practice?