

# “We Stem from the Great Tree of Life”

## Eastertide Season: Mother’s Day

LaPorte New Church Swedenborgian

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### Scriptures

Psalm 1

John 15:1-12

### Hymns/Songs

“A Mother’s Love” anthem, by Jim Brickman

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XJ\\_I5N6QUK8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XJ_I5N6QUK8)

“Faith of Our Mothers”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UMEJBLsDksw&t=19s>

“Spirit of Gentleness”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9q0ydibNHcs>

Postlude: “Healer of My Soul”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K5PLdnz5UdU>

### **Psalm 1**

#### ***The Way of the Righteous and the Wicked***

**1** Blessed is the man

who walks not in the counsel of the wicked,  
nor stands in the way of sinners,  
nor sits in the seat of scoffers;

**2** but his delight is in the law<sup>[b]</sup> of the LORD,  
and on his law he meditates day and night.

**3** He is like a tree  
planted by streams of water  
that yields its fruit in its season,  
and its leaf does not wither.

In all that he does, he prospers.

**4** The wicked are not so,  
but are like chaff that the wind drives away.

**5** Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,  
nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;

**6** for the LORD knows the way of the righteous,  
but the way of the wicked will perish.

### **John 15:1-12**

## ***I Am the True Vine***

**15** “I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. **2** Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. **3** Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. **4** Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. **5** I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. **6** If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. **7** If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. **8** By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. **9** As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. **10** If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. **11** These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

**12** “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.”

### **Insight for Worship**

*Revelation Explained* n. 710.6

[6] In David:

“For thou art He that took me out of the womb, giving me trust from my mother’s breasts; I was cast upon Thee; Thou art my God from my mother’s belly.” (Ps. 22:9, 10)

This also describes the regeneration of the spiritual person by such things as belong to the natural generation from the mother; therefore “Thou art He that took me out of the womb” signifies that one is spiritually developed by the Lord and made into a truly *human being* built up by the church. “Thou dost give me trust from my mother’s breasts” signifies that one is afterwards led and spiritually educated by God through the church. “Breastfeeding” symbolizes spiritual nourishment in such things as belong to the church, the truth we need to grow and become strong in God’s love. The Lord does all things from the good of love by means of spiritual truths.

**SERMON:** “We Stem from The Great Tree of Life”

I'd like to begin my message for you today on this Mother's Day by asking us together to create a very strong image in our hearts and minds as we celebrate this special day honoring our mothers, grandmothers, step-mothers and motherly helpers in our lives. Are you ready?

First, I invite you to get as comfortable as possible and then close your eyes for a few moments. Imagine in your mind the **TREE OF LIFE**—with a strong trunk rooted firmly in the ground. Its branches are fully outstretched reaching upward, richly dressed with green leaves and lots of fruit in its season. Bright sun beams shine brilliantly through its branches. The birds of the air perch here, for rest and shade. And you are warmed, nurtured and fed by this tree....this God-given, "Tree of Life." [PAUSE]

**This is the Tree of Life mentioned three times in *Genesis* and four times in the *Book of Revelation*.** The Holy Bible begins and ends with the Tree of Life, being planted, growing and producing fruit and, according to Jewish mysticism found in their ancient book the Kabbalah, this beautiful Tree of Life reflects the attributes of God: deep roots that grow underground, the patterns of growth, the way life perpetuates, shade given and fruit that feeds. In fact, the Kabbalah refers to the Tree of Life as **SACRED GEOMETRY**.

According to Jewish Mythology, in the Garden of Eden there is a Tree of Life, or as the Kabbalah calls it, the **TREE OF SOULS**, which blossoms and produces new souls! Here, we are getting images of never-ending creation. Emanuel Swedenborg invites us to consider that the trees of Eden represent knowledge of many kinds. Trees that are "good for food" or fruit trees correspond to knowledge about **HOW TO DO USEFUL WORKS**. Trees that are "pleasant to the sight" refer to perceptions that are delightful to the mind. (A.E. 739; AC 98-106)

So, we are all born to grow like the Tree of Life, acquiring and passing on knowledge that is both useful and pleasant. New seeds are born of what once was – just as new insights and useful deeds emerge from knowledge suggested and passed along from generations before. [PAUSE]

On this Mother's Day, let us consider this question: **WHAT DOES THE BEST OF MOTHERING CREATE?**

It creates vibrant, loving souls! It creates people who soak up and receive love and wisdom, and then give it back, even more, in ways that the world needs and can use—not just in one generation of human beings, but in many generations of us. Can

you see the branches of the great-magnificent Tree of Life, leafing out, feeding and healing the nations?

My friends, we are talking about **MOTHER-ACTION** really, which can emanate from both genders because we are infinitely unique creations of the One God of both qualities of love and wisdom. Wow, what a wonderful design this is! We can use this image and meaning of the Tree of Life as we strive for healing, both personally and for our world, which is in such massive need of healing and growth.

**The key, really, is our interconnectedness with the Divine.** All of life is interconnected. Christ said, “I AM the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit.” He said (and listen to this very closely), “Apart from me...you can do nothing.” Nothing!

What do you think happens when we fall short of “mothering one another as the Divine Mother loves us?” The soul, or the tree, withers...doesn’t it? In one of the few instances in scripture where God is given female characteristics, Jesus laments over Jerusalem. In part He says, “How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing.” (Mtt. 23:37b) We can hear the Lord’s voice today, lamenting in wartime and in mass suffering. We must be mindful about the influx of our Divine Mother (which is God in Her very wisely, loving ways caring for and educating us in what is good and true in life). God’s motherly Spirit nurtures, cares for us and feeds us with love and truth. Her Spirit yields love, wisdom, grounded presence and eternal solace and comfort.

We must let this Divine Mother, Holy Spirit, in...and we must be willing to feed and nurture the souls of tomorrow, our children and grandchildren. Otherwise, the grand interconnection of the **Divine Gardener with us** becomes severed, and we wilt on the vine, and our branches wither and die. So today, we can celebrate the profound and basic truth that God, our Divine Mother, birthed us and continues to nourish us, to the degree we remain joined with our Lord. Today, we can also give praise for our earthly mothers, grandmothers, role models and ancestors who feed us and tend to our bodies and souls, who help to grow us tall and deep, like a healthy tree.

May we live the best of the mothering qualities of the Divine-Holy One, so that we see ourselves and others as a tree growing toward the Golden-Bright Light of Heaven! May we always remember who we are, and **WHOSE** we are, as well as the

grand interconnection of all things to the Source. God bless mothers...for the infinite ways they are given to create, nourish, protect and beautify life. Amen.

PASTORAL PRAYER

Offering Reminder