**Hillside UMC Sermon Prep Sheet**

***Susan Carey***

**Date: Sunday, March 4, 2018 – The Fifth Sunday of Lent**

**Sermon Title: I Am: I Am the Vine**

**Scripture: Exodus 3:14-15 (NIV)** 14God said to Moses, “I am who I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I am has sent me to you.’” 15God also said to Moses, “Say to the Israelites, ‘The Lord, the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob—has sent me to you.’ “This is my name forever, the name you shall call me from generation to generation.

**John 15:1-17 (NIV)** “I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. **2**He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. **3**You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. **4**Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

**5**“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. **6**If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned.**7**If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. **8**This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

**9**“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. **10**If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commands and remain in his love. **11**I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. **12**My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.**13**Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. **14**You are my friends if you do what I command. **15**I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. **16**You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. **17**This is my command: Love each other.

**Revelation 1:8 (NIV)** 8“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.”

**Call to Worship: (8:30 only) *faithandworship,com***

**Lord, grant us simplicity of faith
and a generosity of service
that gives without counting cost.
A life overflowing with Grace
poured out from the One
who gave everything,
that we might show
the power of love
to a broken world,
and share the truth
from a living Word.
Lord, grant us simplicity of faith,
and a yearning to share it.**

**Basic Theme:** **Lent is “season” in our faith that leads us to Easter. The purpose of Lent is to be a season of fasting, self-denial, Christian growth, penitence, conversion, and simplicity. Lent, which comes from the Teutonic (Germanic) word for springtime, can be viewed as a spiritual spring cleaning: a time for taking spiritual inventory and then cleaning out those things which hinder our corporate and personal relationships with Jesus Christ and our service to him. Lent is a time to acknowledge who God is and who we are in Jesus Christ. The “I Am” is our reason for being.**

**Sermon Snapshot:When Jesus Christ said to the disciples, “I am the vine, you are the branches,” he was communicating that he is the true source of life and our connection to the Father. We will know we are in communion with the Father when we bear fruit out of a pure motivation to love. Jesus was always motivated by love and as disciples we are to do the same.**

**So What? Does the fruit of your life bear witness to the Father? Are your actions motivated by love or by responsibility? What do you need to do in order to deepen you connection with God through the Jesus Christ?**