We hear today, two stories of vineyards being built and how the tenants are called to tend the vineyard and to bear fruit for the Master. As the House of Israel is like a vineyard, so too is our community of St. Andrew like the Lord’s vineyard. Even a newcomer can see that it was through great effort that this community was built – those who built it had to first, prepare the ground, erect the walls, plant the choice vines of ministry. The bell tower was erected to call the assembly so that this place would be filled and bear fruit. Now we are engaged in a renovation of our worship space and with great care, we are making something that was very good even better.

**PREPARATION:**
As the community is built and renewed so too is the edifice of our celebration today, the celebration that we call the Mass. The Mass liturgy is the central act of worship in the life of a Catholic, and through the Ecumenical Council of Vatican II, the Mass was also renewed. The renewed liturgy is literally "the work of the people," and as such Mass is not something we watch, for entertainment, rather it is something that calls forth our full, active, and conscious, participation.

Even before Mass begins, liturgy requires our careful preparation. Our liturgists, clergy, lectors, Eucharistic ministers, ushers, and musicians spend time every week preparing for our celebration. But for this celebration to be all it should be requires that every one of us to
prepare. You might ask, "How can I, a person in the pew, contribute to the preparation for our Mass?" One important way is to read the scriptures for the Sunday ahead of time and to spend some time reflecting on them. Then when at Mass we carefully listen to the lectors, because it is in the proclamation of the word that it comes alive. Another way is to commit ourselves to acts of service during the week as a part of the offering we make during the Mass. This includes the work we do in parish ministry or the acts of kindness we do during our daily routine. Our lives of service are what we can celebrate on Sunday.

**PRESENCE:**
Once we arrive at church we cheerfully greet each other with love and joy. This is the first way that we can experience Christ's presence at the church on Sunday, by being present to each other. If we can be truly present to each other, perhaps we can more deeply experience Christ's presence in the Eucharist. I once heard that one possible reason that people struggle with the Real Presence in the Eucharist is that we have not practiced being really present to each other. The sacred space we are creating in the Mass is a safe place, a container if you will, to hold everything that we bring together as a community. We are building a strong container that will hold all our joys and sorrows, our successes and our failures, all our hopes, and dreams.

**PARTICIPATION:**
Full, active, conscious, participation. That means active listening, praying, and singing. You may believe that you don't have a good singing voice – If our voices are a gift of God – the least we can do is to share it back to God. If we have spent time reflecting on the scriptures during the week then we will be better prepared to engage in the scriptures proclaimed and the prayers prayed.

**PROCLAMATION:**
The second way we experience the presence of Christ in the Mass is in the Word of God proclaimed. This is why it is important to carefully listen to the words proclaimed by the lectors and Gospel readers. Carefully listen to the Word of God and think about what in this reading is speaking to you in the moment, how it may challenge, comfort, or correct. What about this word moves you, or attracts you, or troubles you? Why? Or, why am I not interested? What about my life do these words invite me to change? We need to fight the temptation to think about what the text might mean for other people and thus avoid applying it to our own life.

**EUCARIST:**
Then there is the central act of the Mass – the sharing of the Holy Communion. In this act, we share in the Body and Blood of Christ as the Body of Christ. By this, we are fed and joined together as the community of faith thankful for the grace we receive and strengthened by grace to carry out our mission. Our mission, the good fruit we are to bear, is that of bringing His Body to the world in need of healing and reconciliation. Will we be faithful tenants who will produce this good fruit in the vineyard of the world?

The name ‘Mass' comes from the final blessing said by the priest in Latin ‘Ite missa es' which means, "to send out." Just as Jesus Christ sent his disciples out, so too are we sent to take his message of healing and reconciliation to the world, so too should we be disciples of his love. When you leave Mass today go into the World and share what you have received here. ‘Ite missa es'