

Worship Resources

3rd Sunday of Easter, Year A,

26th April, 2020

Psalm 116 NRSV / Luke 24:13-35 NRSV

Intro / Prelude - *The Strife Is Over* - Translated by Francis Pott

performed by church pianist Annie Center

Welcoming/Announcements

Welcome to worship with Olympic View Community Church.

This morning, we continue to share our worship together online.

As we continue to explore this new format together, I hope that you find these services meaningful, and I am always open to, and would greatly welcome any feedback or suggestions you might have.

Since we can't greet each other in person to pass the peace of Christ, let's instead think of those we would like to offer peace, whether those in our church family, or others we can think of who would benefit from the sharing of peace today.

Feel free to say their names aloud, to pray for peace for them, or simply think a peaceful thought for them silently. Let's take a few moments to pass the peace to others from wherever we are, while Annie plays an interlude for us.

Interlude - *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross* - Isaac Watts,

performed by church pianist Annie Center

Let's take a deep breath, quiet our minds and hearts, as we light a candle to represent the Spirit among us. Let us call ourselves to worship.

Call to Worship

Easter is not an event that has occurred

it's an adventure that has begun
not a place that we have visited
but a path on which we stand

a story not complete, but unfolding
characters still breathing
stations still teeming
with the promise of new life

not just for you and me
but for all people, in all places

a cosmic crux
a turning point of time

Easter is the season
of wild hope
of dangerous intent
of potent promise

where the future flaps unfurled
in the spirit's breeze

where hopes bubble
with uncorked effervescence

where toes tap
to free-form rhythms

where rainbow hues
splash empty canvas

Today
we continue the journey
we re-enter the story
to explore our questions
to uncover our doubts
to face our nagging need

We walk the path
of two who traveled a dusty road
wrapped in confusion and despair
two who shared the company of a stranger
voicing their pain
airing their fears
and in the listening
heard words of hope and promise
and in the eating
received true bread of life

Today we re-enter the story
with expectation that Christ
will also reveal himself to us
in sights and sounds
in words and symbols
in bread and wine

Invocation

Join me in prayer.

Risen Christ
walk with us this day
be our companion and guide
be our teacher and friend
be our host and servant
bringing your gifts of faith, peace and hope
and deep joy
as always
Amen.

Our first scripture this morning is from the Psalms. As we listen to this rendition by Sons of Korah, let's pay attention to the words of the Psalm, which many of us can identify with in the days and circumstances in which we live.

Psalm of the Day - Psalm 116 NRSV

I love the Lord, because he has heard my voice and my supplications.

Because he inclined his ear to me, therefore I will call on him as long as I live.

The snares of death encompassed me; the pangs of Sheol laid hold on me; I suffered distress and anguish.

Then I called on the name of the Lord: "O Lord, I pray, save my life!"

Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; our God is merciful.

The Lord protects the simple; when I was brought low, he saved me.

Return, O my soul, to your rest, for the Lord has dealt bountifully with you.

For you have delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling.

I walk before the Lord in the land of the living.

I kept my faith, even when I said, "I am greatly afflicted";

I said in my consternation, "Everyone is a liar."

What shall I return to the Lord for all his bounty to me?

I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord,
I will pay my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people.
Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his faithful ones.
O Lord, I am your servant; I am your servant, the child of your serving girl.
You have loosed my bonds.
I will offer to you a thanksgiving sacrifice and call on the name of the Lord.
I will pay my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people,
in the courts of the house of the Lord, in your midst, O Jerusalem. Praise the Lord!

Scripture Video *Psalm 116 - Sons of Korah*, uploaded to YouTube by Ed Sullivan
<https://youtu.be/Q0XzalrxXo>

A Time of Prayer

So as we come to our normal time of sharing prayer together from a distance.
From my conversations with some of you,
I have included those concerns shared in our prayer today.
If you have items you would like lifted in prayer,
please leave a comment below, or email myself at vicarglenn@gmail.com,
and I will make sure to include them next week,
as well as send a prayer chain email, unless directed otherwise.

Joys and Concerns

Please pray for the family who runs Card Exchange, which runs tournaments for collectable card games like Magic the Gathering and Yu-Gi-Oh. Their son Connor died last week of COVID-19. Connor was always there, helping kids learn how to play cards - a beautiful soul. He was in his early twenties.

Also, please continue to keep Goldie Barnes' sister Shirley in your prayers, as she will be beginning chemotherapy to treat her stage 4 lung cancer. In addition, Shirley's young great-grandchildren are now ill with the Coronavirus.

We also share the joy of others appreciating our efforts. Myrna was treated to such appreciation this week by the community where she lives.

In these times, many are also seeking solace in the beauty of God's creation. I've been blessed to be able to experience the springtime beauty of far away Hirsoshima, through the gorgeous pictures shared by Roger and Kathy on their daily walks.

Finally, let's remember those younger among us who struggle with not being able to go to school, and socialize with their friends. Isolation takes its toll on all of us, but it's particularly hard on those in their youth whose lives revolve around their social interactions.

Pastoral Prayer

Join me in prayer.

Faithful God,

In these early days after the resurrection, we wonder what it all means.
We can relate to the women who fled the tomb with terror and amazement.
We understand Thomas and his need for proof that would come only by touching the wounds and seeing the nail marks.
We understand the fear and confusion that kept the disciples in the shadow cast by closed doors.

We also keep company with the travelers on the Emmaus road who felt the strange burning of the truth and hope and love weaving into the sadness that consumed them on their walk.
We find ourselves in the eternal movement between fear and faith, doubt and conviction, wonder and worry, and we trust that you are present with us, O God. We trust that like the disciples we will be able to stand and tell the whole message about this life that: Love is stronger than hate. Life has the final word over death
Beyond what we can see with our eyes,
there is a bond of humanness that draws and keeps us together.

Loving God,

It is a complicated and frightening world in which we live
If we are ill, strengthen us.
If we are tired, fortify our spirits.
If we are anxious, help us to consider the lilies of the field and the birds of the air.

Help us not to stockpile treasures from supermarkets in the barns of our larders.
Don't let fear cause us to overlook the needs of others more vulnerable than ourselves.
Fix our eyes on your story and our hearts on your grace.

Help us always to hold fast to the good,
See the good in others,
And remember there is just one world, one hope,
One everlasting love, with baskets of bread for everyone.

In Jesus we make our prayer,
The one who suffered, died and was raised to new life,
In whom we trust these days and all days,
Amen.

Our gospel reading this morning tells of the story of two of Jesus' followers and their encounter on the road to Emmaus. Let's watch Abby Guinness relay this as a story, in more contemporary language.

Gospel Reading - Luke 24:13-35 NRSV

Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus,
about seven miles from Jerusalem,
and talking with each other about all these things that had happened.

While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them,
but their eyes were kept from recognizing him.

And he said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?"
They stood still, looking sad.

Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only stranger
in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?"

He asked them, "What things?" They replied, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth,
who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people,
and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death
and crucified him.

But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this,
it is now the third day since these things took place.

Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this
morning,

and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they

had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive.

Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him."

Then he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared!

Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?"

Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on.

But they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over." So he went in to stay with them.

When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them.

Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight.

They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?"

That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together.

They were saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!"

Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Gospel Video - *The Road to Emmaus, Luke 24:13-35*

Abby Guinness, posted to YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OhFUIXv5RVk>

Message – Lost and Found

I think we all know what it's like to feel lost. That sense of being disoriented, of not knowing which way to turn. Certainly that feeling is pronounced when we are physically lost, in unfamiliar terrain and not knowing what the right path is, that will lead us back to the familiar. But more often, I think we are familiar with the sense of feeling lost when our expectations are not met, when things don't turn out at all like we anticipated. There's a sense of "what now?" "Where do I go from here?" Often when we encounter such disappointment and bewilderment, we fall back into our regular routine, that same-old, same-old day-to-day grind. While we often find little hope in that monotony, there is a sense of security to be found there. Our expectations, such as they are, are met in the daily routine. Rarely does something happen that disrupts going to work, paying our bills and taxes, preparing our meals, etc. But rarely are we inspired by the ordinary events of our lives either.

That is where we find these disciples of Christ in our gospel story today. They had been all hyped up for a big change in their lives. They had invested a lot of their energy and hope in the promise of renewal and change that this phenomenal prophet Jesus had presented, only to apparently have it all crash down around them with his arrest and execution. Everything they had built their hopes on seemed gone. They were despondent, and chose the course most of us would choose.

They apparently were on the road home. Back to the life they had known before following Jesus: back to the same old routine, the same old job, the same old being oppressed. They were visibly resigned, commiserating with each other about how it had all gone wrong. Then in the midst of their despair, they encounter a stranger on the road who asks what they're talking about. Amazed at his ignorance, they give him the short version of what has gone so terribly wrong. Yet he doesn't just take their disappointment at face value and offer his sympathies. He systematically explains to them that their impression of events wasn't the depressing reality they had interpreted it to be. He explains to them why things had to be the way they played out, showing them how the game plan was laid out all along in the scriptures. He then goes to take his leave, triggering them to invite him to continue on with them and dine together, to keep the conversation going. Yet it is in the most routine gesture of blessing the bread before the meal, that their eyes are finally opened. Here is the man whose loss they have been grieving. Here was the hope they thought was lost for good. Suddenly they realized that there still was promise. They understood the real hope all those tragic events of the last several days meant. And just as quickly, this divine presence was gone. Yet they didn't fall back into despair. Instead they turned around and ran seven miles back to Jerusalem to share the news. Suddenly the ordinary world wasn't so ordinary. There was hope to be found.

It's a story we're all familiar with. We invest our time and energy expecting something positive, only to have it not pan out, and find ourselves left with disappointment. It could be

that job we had such a great interview for, only to get the rejection email. It could be that school we really wanted to get into, only to find out we didn't make it. There are countless events in life that we plan for, put our hopes in, only to face disappointment. Especially now, when our reality has suddenly changed dramatically in light of our current situation with the Coronavirus. Our plans have certainly been altered. Travel that had been anticipated is now postponed or canceled. Many of us find ourselves working from home, often having to scramble to find ways to do our work without those human interactions and gatherings that were so vital to our way of doing things. Worse yet, many find themselves suddenly out of work and not able to fall back on that normal routine of work and daily living. They now have to come to terms with a new reality without the constants they depended on. We're now stuck in the most basic version of our ordinary world. Those things that are the most immediate in our lives: our home and local community; our daily tasks; our new work reality.

Even in the church community, we find ourselves feeling lost. All those things we took for granted are now pulled away from us: our weekly gatherings in our beautiful building, our plans for how we go forward with those constants, our face to face fellowship together. How do we function in this new reality? I think we can really understand where these two disciples found themselves in the story today. We know what it means to have the rug pulled out from under us, and have only the most basic routines of our lives to look forward to. The question is, where do we find the extraordinary in the ordinary. How can we find Jesus when he seems so lost from this world right now? Maybe our problem is like that of the disciples in our story. We are looking for Jesus in the wrong place, where our expectations lead, not where he actually is. Maybe we are on our own road to Emmaus right now. We too are on a journey of uncertainty and disappointment.

The question we need to ask ourselves is: where will we find Jesus in this journey. Maybe we, like the disciples, are expecting to find him in the wrong places and circumstances. It might be that it's not the church building that's as important, as the relationships with the people that we meet there. Maybe it's not the hymns and liturgy that are as important as the communal sharing together in our journeys of faith. I think we're finding the importance of those connections outside of a couple hours, one day a week. Many are seeing the value of worship in a different shape and format, some of whom most likely have never set foot inside our church building. Instead of always looking for Jesus in the sacred spaces we're used to, we just might find we can find Jesus in those ordinary spaces we're now relegated to: that person we chat with from a distance with in the grocery store, the person walking their dog in our neighborhood, that old friend on the other end of the telephone. We can see Jesus at work in those ordinary occupations that probably never stood out in our minds before: the healthcare worker at all levels, the grocery store clerk, the food delivery driver. People whose roles have now become so vital to our well-being. On this Earth Day weekend, one can see evidence of the Divine just looking out the window at creation fully in bloom. If we truly look, we can see Jesus at work all around us, in places we would have overlooked before in our normal rush, with the expectations of our old "normal." But our scripture story doesn't end in finding Jesus in the ordinary. It ends in rushing to witness that experience.

So how do we as modern disciples, witness to Jesus in our ordinary world. How can we be the face of Jesus that people recognize in our ordinary selves? Certainly we can model the simple fellowship of Jesus. We can connect and lift the spirits of those feeling isolated and alone. We can support the efforts of all those ordinary people in ordinary occupations that have now become so important. We can be the blessed community we are called to, one that doesn't depend on buildings or rituals but one of honest, real connections. One that meets people where they are and shows compassion and caring, one that shares our real selves with each other. One that looks out, not in. One that shines the true face of Jesus without concealment. We have a rare opportunity now to explore what being the body of Christ really means, outside of the old trappings we have grown accustomed to. The question is, when this crisis is over, will we go back to being the same? Or will we continue to explore the possibilities of this new path we've found ourselves on, and make this a time of learning what can be possible? As we journey together to Emmaus, I hope and pray that we seek to find our savior where we are, in the ordinary around us, and break the bread of life with all those we encounter, as God's extraordinary community here and now. Amen.

Call to Serve

The author of 1 Peter implores us to love one another deeply *from the heart*, and assures us that we have been born anew *through the living and enduring word of God*. In our giving today, let us give, not out of obligation, but *from the heart*. Let our gifts be seeds of *the living and enduring word of God*, that will sprout in abundance of justice and hope all that is necessary for life, for sisters and brothers here at hand, and around the world. If you'd like to support this ministry with your resources, offerings and tithes can still be mailed to the church office, or donations can be made through the link in the video description. As we continue to be beacons of God's grace in continuing to support our staff financially, and showing leniency to our tenants, we are stepping out in faith and relying on the grace of others. May you give prayerful consideration to how you can support our faith community in these difficult times.

A Time for Reflection

As we listen to the following selection, **Ordinary**, by Hannah Kerr, let's reflect how we can find Jesus in the ordinary in our own lives, and how we can reflect Jesus in our ordinary actions each day.

Reflection on the Word [video] *Ordinary*

written by Hannah Kerr, Sean Cook, and Tony Wood.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AAbWG51wqWw>

The Prayer of Thanksgiving

Like the disciples at Emmaus,
we offer what we have.
They offered their company,
their table, their bread.
We invite you to be with us, Jesus,
as we offer you our love,
our devotion, these gifts.
May our eyes be opened
to your holy presence among us,
now and always. Amen.

Benediction/Blessing/Assurance

In the times we think we are most alone, Christ is with us.
When we are most distraught, Christ is beside us.
When we are grieving, Christ is silently listening.
When we rejoice, Christ is celebrating with us.
Know that you are never truly alone. Know that
you are always loved. Know that the hairs on your head are accounted for.
You are God's beloved. Live with the assurance of God's steadfast love,
now and always. Amen.

**As we extinguish this candle, may we keep it's light alive, shining through our own lives,
as we seek to find Jesus at work in the world around us.**

Postlude

Allemande from Cello Suite No. 2 - JS Bach

performed by church pianist Annie Center