

## Sunday Devotion for Martin Luther Church

3rd Sunday of Easter  
April 26, 2020



**A warm welcome to watch this devotion at**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H63ljcjePT8&t=22s>

### A. GATHERING

*The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.*

#### Words of Welcome

Good Morning and welcome to our worship from Martin Luther Church in Toronto. My name is Katja Brittain, I'm one of the lay preachers at this church.

We are celebrating the 3rd Sunday of Easter. And this means in our gospel reading, we are dealing with a resurrection appearance.

Today's gospel begins with two disciples walking to Emmaus, overcome with sadness, loss, and disappointment. They had hoped Jesus, who was crucified, would be the one to redeem Israel! Yet the risen Christ walks with them and then opens their eyes in the breaking of the bread.

Many people recognize themselves in this account. We will take a closer look at some details and I will share my own experience with this story.

And I'm sure you will realise that the words in the gospel have become part of our liturgy of worship that brings comfort and fellowship to us through the Risen One. The idea is for us to go out and say it with a burning heart: the lord is arisen - Christ is arisen indeed.

Grace and peace to you in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

#### Prayer of the Day

Let us pray:

Lord, Jesus Christ, you are present, you are among us. Open our eyes to your presence, touch us with your spirit, that your word will fill our hearts and that our enlightened hearts will show others the way of life. To you who are one with the Father and the Holy Spirit, we pray and honour, now and forever.

**Amen.**



## B. WORD

*God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.*

### **First Reading: Acts 2:14a, 36-41**

A reading from Acts, the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter.

<sup>14a</sup>Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed [the crowd], <sup>36</sup>“Therefore let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified.”

<sup>37</sup>Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, “Brothers, what should we do?” <sup>38</sup>Peter said to them, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. <sup>39</sup>For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him.” <sup>40</sup>And he testified with many other arguments and exhorted them, saying, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.” <sup>41</sup>So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added.

L: The word of the Lord.

A: **Thanks be to God.**

### **Gospel Reading: Luke 24:13-35**

The Holy Gospel according to Luke, the 24<sup>th</sup> chapter.

13 Now on that same day [when Jesus had appeared to Mary Magdalene,] two [disciples] were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, 14 and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. 15 While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, 16 but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. 17 And he said to them, “What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?” They stood still, looking sad. 18 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?” 19 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, 20 and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. 21 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. 22 Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, 23 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. 24 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.” 25 Then he said to them, “Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! 26 Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?” 27 Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

28 As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. 29 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. 30 When he was at the table

with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. 31 Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. 32 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?" 33 That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. 34 They were saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!" 35 Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

P: The gospel of the Lord.  
A: **Praise to you, O Christ.**

### **Sermon- Katja Brittain, Lay Preacher**

Let us pray: Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD - Amen

For the past year I had plans for where I wanted to be today – that is, I wanted to visit my friend in Moscow. We had it all clearly set out. Tickets purchased, visa had been granted, etc. And then, you know what came, the Corona-Situation crushed these plans. It so much disappointed me that I turned into a tunnel-vision full of frustration. And then Holy Week and Easter happened and I think I had a 'walk to Emmaus' experience. What did we read today: Two individuals on the road to Emmaus. What must they have been feeling and thinking, as they limped away from Jerusalem towards their home town, crushed by the shocking disappointment of the crucifixion of Jesus? Verse 21 recalls them lamenting, 'we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel'. They are filled with anxiety and confusion over the bizarre discovery of the empty tomb. Their greatest hope seemed to have been crushed, and their fears over some kind of conspiracy, trick, or sinister grave robbery were deeply unsettling.

Then suddenly, on this road, they encounter a stranger – and everything changes. Today I'd like us to reflect on some of the dimensions of this change. How are we to understand this encounter with the risen Jesus, which is the focus of the church's celebration during the season of Easter?

There are two things I suggest we focus on in this story. The first is verse 27, where we read, *'Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, Jesus interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.'* The second is verse 31, which says, *'Then their eyes were opened, and they recognised Jesus; and he vanished from their sight.'*

Let's turn first to verse 27 - *'Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, Jesus interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.'* This passage brings to a close the first section of the reading, in which the two pilgrims on the road between Jerusalem and Emmaus encounter a stranger – the risen Jesus, who they don't recognise. They recount to him the story of the crucifixion and of the empty tomb, and then Jesus begins to teach them the biblical account of what God's Messiah would have to endure. It is at this point that verse 27 tells us that, *'Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, Jesus interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.'* What is noteworthy here is that, despite all of this teaching, these two individuals still do not recognise Jesus. Does this not seem curious?

Having the scriptures explained to the two individuals is not enough for them to recognise Jesus. Was the resurrected Jesus not a good enough teacher?

Although the two individuals still do not recognise Jesus after his teaching, they nevertheless invite him to come to their home and share a meal. As they break bread together – finally – they realize who it is that is present among them – Jesus, the one crucified, has risen and is in their midst.

And then we read this strange verse 31: 'Then their eyes were opened, and they recognised him; and he vanished from their sight.' They remember their hearts burning as Jesus opened the scriptures to them, and they rush back to Jerusalem to spread the word that they had encountered the risen Christ.

What stands out here is the fact that neither of these individuals respond to the sudden vanishing of Jesus with fear, confusion, or despair. They aren't upset or disoriented by his disappearance, but instead they rejoice. This suggests that despite the way Jesus seems to suddenly appear and re-appear, the experience people have of him is not as if he is some kind of ghost or haunting personal vision. They do not undergo some supernatural form of knowing or seeing; instead, what seems implied here is that they experience that, despite their anxiety, confusion and despair over the crucifixion, the cross was not the end of Jesus and his mission - far from it, he is present with them.

I believe the two travelers to Emmaus were just so disappointed, after witnessing the crucifixion; but for the faith to be restored to the two, they needed to experience the presence of Jesus himself, and to be shown that he was still indeed *with them*.

What does this have to do with my crushed plans for Moscow, or more generally, with the difficult and confusing times in your lives? Many Christians, despite hearing the good news of the Gospel, sometimes find themselves stuck in their life of faith. They have had a positive experience of God, have known the joy of feeling God's love and grace, but then, the challenges and difficulties of life wear down this enthusiasm and make God feel less immediately present. Some feel like God's promises have been taken away from them and locked up tightly in a tomb. Sometimes, in our walk with Christ, we find it difficult to make the move from Good Friday to Easter Sunday.

What these individuals on the road to Emmaus realise in their encounter with the risen Christ is that they can share in Christ's resurrected life; and that what is true of the resurrection of Jesus is true of their own resurrection. They realise that God's mission is not undermined by this world's failings or weaknesses; who we are is not simply who we have been, or how we feel in this exact moment in time. To share in Jesus' resurrection – to meet the risen Christ - is to know this; it is to let ourselves be transformed through God's grace, and to not hold on to the disappointments of our lives as if they are all there is to focus on. What God has planned for us is not yet done. 1 Peter puts it this way, 'You have been born anew, not of perishable but of imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God'. In Luke's Gospel, the risen Jesus doesn't use only words; instead, while at the table with the two individuals, he simply takes bread, blesses it, and gives it to them. In that act, these two travelers recognised that, just as Jesus was offering them this bread, he had offered himself fully to the world on the cross, and was once again offering them the inexhaustible gift of God's grace. To eat at Jesus's table is to benefit from his total self-offering. In similar fashion to this story, in Christ, we, assembled here as God's church, participate in God's risen body – the body of Christ – as we gather together to pray, to celebrate, to

comfort and uphold one another – even if it’s happening digitally. We come to recognise what we hadn’t fully recognised before, or what we often forget or fail to feel in the midst of our disappointments: that Jesus is present here with us, and offering us the gift of God’s grace.

This morning, may we all recognise that this story from Emmaus is also our story. May we all know the hope and joy that an encounter with the risen Jesus can bring. May we all recognise that Jesus is present with us. May this reveal to us again that what our world fears as the terrors of death, pain, and suffering, we need not fear, for we know that death’s victory is an empty one; that the story that death tells is not the whole story. In Christ, each of us can share in the life of the resurrected Jesus. Each one of us, like the ancient people of Israel, can find grace in the wilderness. Each one of us, like those travelers on the road to Emmaus, can recognise what we first failed to see, and say with them “were our hearts not burning within us?”

Whatever might be the state of your heart and mind this morning as you travel towards your intended destination: keep wrestling with the scriptures, continue to pray without ceasing, and live in expectation that the risen Jesus will reveal himself to you – usually when you least expect it.

May the peace of God, which is higher than all human reason, preserve our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

Amen.

### Prayers of Intercession

God, our Heavenly Father, you are with us on our way through Christ your Son. You strengthen us through the presence of your Spirit. We come to you with our prayers, knowing that you will hear us.

We pray for your church, which you strengthen in bread and wine and enliven by your Spirit. Let your people find the way to life with Christ. Empower others to be good companions on the pilgrimage of life. We call to you: **be near us on the way.**



*Katja Brittain and Vicar Silke Fahl*

We pray for your creation, through whose abundance we experience your goodness every day. Grant us wisdom to distribute these gifts fairly and to use the Earth’s resources carefully.

We call to you: **be near us on the way.**

We pray for governments and opinion leaders. Open their eyes and hearts to the needs of all people. May they work to ward off fear and distrust and help their people to trustfully walk the path of peace and reconciliation.

We call to you: **be near us on the way.**



We pray for those who have celebrated birthdays this week. May they feel your presence and the love of others in this time of physical distancing. We pray for: Hans-Peter, Alexander, Erna, Peter, Dennis, and Linda.

We call to you: **be near us on the way.**

We pray for people who need support and strengthening: for the homeless and poor, for those who are marginalized.

We pray for the sick and dying. Let them know your proximity when evening falls.

We call to you: **be near us on the way.**

We pray that you give skill, sympathy and resilience to all who are caring for the sick, and your wisdom to those searching for a cure. Strengthen them with your Spirit, that through their work many will be restored to health.

We call to you: **be near us on the way.**

We pray for those who seek to follow you along God's path: for all the baptized, for people whose faith began as recently as this Easter, for those who have been traveling for a long time. Be with them and strengthen them with your living bread.

We call to you: **be near us on the way.**

God, you are on the way with us at all times. Stay with us on the pilgrimage of life.

Accept our prayers, because only you can save this world. This we pray through Christ our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

### **The Lord's Prayer**

Let us pray together as Jesus taught us:

**Our father who art in heaven  
Hallowed be thy name  
Thy kingdom come,  
Thy will be done,  
On earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread;  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
As we forgive those who trespass against us;  
And lead us not into temptation,  
But deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
And the power, and the glory,  
Forever and ever. Amen.**

### **C. SENDING**

*God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.*

### **Blessing**

The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace.

## Dismissal

Go in peace. Share the good news.

**Thanks be to God.**

## Announcements

In light of the current COVID-19 outbreak, **all meetings and worship services are taking place virtually.**

- Sunday [Video Devotions](#) are on our [YouTube Channel](#). Please subscribe and comment on our videos.
- German [Radio Devotions](#) on our website and on Sundays at 9.30 a.m. live on CHLO Radio AM 530
- Virtual Sunday Coffee Hour at 11:00 am through Zoom
- Sunday School lessons on our website
- [Virtual Coffee Shop Talk](#), Mondays 7:00-9:00 pm through Zoom led by Vicar Silke Fahl
- [Virtual Prayer Circle](#), Wednesdays 5:30-6:00 pm through Zoom led by Solveig Christina Voss; we also have a Prayer Request Wall in the Church Foyer  
To request a prayer or join our prayer circle, email [prayers@martinluther.ca](mailto:prayers@martinluther.ca).
- Corona-Care Calls- Volunteers are continuing to call you with more information and to understand your needs. Please provide us with your emergency contact person. Also, please share our information with this person to ensure we are able to help you.  
Let us know if you'd like to join the call team!
- Please phone or email the church office:
  - ◇ if we can help you in any way
  - ◇ if you'd like to volunteer by yourself or with people you are isolated with.  
Spring clean the church building, backyard and garden at 5 Superior or come up with ideas for how to help your neighbours and MLC.
  - ◇ with feedback on what we're offering
  - ◇ to support our church and [donate](#)

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*Member of Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) &  
Partnered with Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (EKD)*