

From the Pews, Mark Matlock

“Open my eyes, that I may see, glimpses of truth thou hast for me;
place in my hands the wonderful key that shall unclasp and set me free.”
“Open My Eyes” Hymn #451

To say that the last five or six weeks has been disruptive likely would be the understatement of the millennia. Plans, hopes, dreams and lives have been brushed aside like autumn leaves as the COVID-19 virus has wreaked havoc on us all.

It's been a dizzying string of No's (hugging, shaking of hands, gathering as a family of faith) and Musts (wash hands, stay home, social distancing). The virus and its tentacles have rattled us to our cores.

But as the New Testament does frequently, it provides a beacon in the darkness with today's Scripture verse, Luke 24:13-35. It's the story of two of Jesus' followers walking on the road to Emmaus, lamenting the Messiah's crucifixion.

They are heartbroken about Christ's death, and bewildered by the tale Mary Magdalene shared about visiting Jesus' tomb that morning and being told by angels that He is alive. Suddenly a stranger appears to them seemingly ignorant of all that has happened. Not knowing that the person in their midst is indeed Jesus, they turn and give him the “Dude-where-have-you-been?” speech.

Right now, some of us might be feeling just like those followers. Our lives have been changed by a seismic event and much with which we are familiar has been altered. How can we cope? How can we go on?

Again as the New Testament does frequently, it offers hope through Jesus. He listens and then admonishes 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?”

Later, they invite the “stranger” to stay with them that night. At the evening meal, the stranger blesses the bread, breaks it and gives it to them. At that moment, they recognize Jesus and He vanishes.

I think one of the messages that we as followers of Christ can take from this scripture in April 2020 is that God is always with us. God never promises that we won't have obstacles, that we won't encounter disappointments or that we won't suffer. Many can attest to such challenges.

But God does promise that he is on the walk with us ... always. Even if it's in the middle of the road ... or in the middle of a pandemic, God walks with us.

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Sunday, April 26th, 2020 | online, 11:15a | Third Sunday of Easter



Prayer of Preparation

“We cannot love God unless we love each other, and to love we must know each other. We know Him in the breaking of bread, and we know each other in the breaking of bread, and we are not alone anymore. Heaven is a banquet and life is a banquet, too, even with a crust, where there is companionship.”

— Dorothy Day, *The Long Loneliness*

Gathering and Preparing for God's Word

Prelude, *Festive Trumpet Tune*
Welcome and Announcements

German

Sentences of Scripture

Hymn #238, *Thine is the Glory*

MACCABEUS

See hymn sheet.

Morning Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

**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 debts
as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever.

Hearing God's Word

Prayer for Illumination

New Testament Lesson, *Acts 2:42-47*

Time for Children

Gospel Lesson, *Luke 24:13-35*

Homily, “*When Jesus is a Stranger*”

Responding to God's Word

Solo, *I've Been Changed*

Aspaas

Affirmation of Faith, *The Nicene Creed*

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,
begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary
and became truly human.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living
and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Prayer of Dedication

Hymn #252, *Day of Arising*

RAABE

See hymn sheet.

Charge and Benediction

Postlude, *Thine is the Glory*

arr. Whitworth

Leading Worship this Morning

Ben Dorr, *preaching*

Mary Kathleen Duncan, Lauren Slingerland, Leigh Stuckey, *liturgists*

Nancy Smith, *organist*

Mark Kemp, Judy McKinney, *vocalists*

238 Thine Is the Glory

1 Thine is the glo - ry, ris - en, con- quering Son; end - less is
 2 Lo! Je - sus meets us, ris - en from the tomb; lov - ing - ly
 3 No more we doubt thee, glo - rious Prince of life! Life is naught

the vic - tory thou o'er death hast won. An - gels in bright rai - ment
 he greets us, scat - ters fear and gloom. Let the church with glad - ness
 with - out thee; aid us in our strife. Make us more than con - querors

rolled the stone a - way, kept the fold - ed grave - clothes
 hymns of tri - umph sing, for the Lord now liv - eth;
 through thy death - less love; bring us safe through Jor - dan

Refrain

where thy bod - y lay.
 death hath lost its sting. Thine is the glo - ry, ris - en, con - quering
 to thy home a - bove.

This Easter text, first in French and later in English, was written to fit the music, a chorus created for Handel's oratorio *Josua* and moved to *Judas Maccabeus* in 1751. It grew widely popular following its use at the First Assembly of the World Council of Churches in 1948.

Son; end - less is the vic - tory thou o'er death hast won.

252 Day of Arising

Capo 1: (Esus) (E) (B) (E)
 Fsus F C F

1 Day of a - ris - ing, Christ on the road - way, un - known com -
 2 When we are walk - ing, doubt - ful and dread - ing, blind - ed by
 3 Lo, I am with you, Je - sus has spo - ken. This is Christ's
 4 Christ, our com - pan - ion, hope for the jour - ney, bread of com -

(Amaj7) (F#m7) (B7) (Esus) (E)
 Bbmaj7 Gm7 C7 Fsus F

pan - ion walks with his own. When they in - vite him,
 sad - ness, slow - ness of heart, yet Christ walks with us,
 prom - ise, this is Christ's sign: when the church gath - ers,
 pas - sion, o - pen our eyes. Grant us your vi - sion,

(B) (E) (Amaj7) (B7) (E)
 C F Bbmaj7 C7 F

as fades the first day, and bread is bro - ken, Christ is made known.
 ev - er a - wait - ing our in - vi - ta - tion: Stay, do not part.
 when bread is bro - ken, there Christ is with us, in bread and wine.
 set all hearts burn - ing that all cre - a - tion with you may rise.

Guitar chords do not correspond with keyboard harmony.

Based on Luke 24:13-35, this text tells how Christ walked with two dejected believers on the way to Emmaus. This journey reminds us of our own spiritual wanderings, and the revelation of the risen Christ in the breaking of the bread gives us hope for such an encounter in worship.