

THIRD SUNDAY in EASTER WORSHIP
April 26, 2020
Cross of Glory Lutheran Church
Brooklyn Center, MN

PRELUDE

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Wondrous God,

we confess that at times our doubts and fears override our hope and faith. Forgive us when we lose sight of the joy of your love and instead fall into despair and gloom. Lift up our spirits and help us to remember the promise of new life here and now, not just the hope of resurrection for the future. We give thanks for your son, Jesus Christ, who continues to offer us new life, who continues to turn us around and breaks down the walls of death in our own life. Forgive us, restore us and renew us.

(silence)

Beloved people of God, the tomb is empty, and the stone is rolled away. Darkness has been defeated the light shines. God continues to renew us and restore us. You are forgiven, loved and restored, receiving the gift and promise of new life and resurrection now. Go and share the wondrous news of God's love in Jesus the Christ. **Amen**

GATHERING HYMN

The greatest day in history
Death is beaten You have rescued me
Sing it out Jesus is alive
The empty cross the empty grave
Life eternal You have won the day
Shout it out Jesus is alive
He's alive

When I stand in that place
Free at last meeting face to face
I am Yours Jesus You are mine
Endless joy perfect peace
Earthly pain finally will cease
Celebrate Jesus is alive
He's alive

Happy Day

Worship Team

And oh happy day happy day
You washed my sin away
Oh happy day happy day
I'll never be the same
Forever I am changed
(What a glorious glorious day)
(I'll never be the same)

Oh what a glorious day, What a glorious way
That You have saved me
And oh what a glorious day
What a glorious name

What a glorious glorious day
I'll never be the same

GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

SONGS OF PRAISE

You are always fighting for us
Heaven's angels all around
My delight is found in knowing
That You wear the victor's crown
You're my help and my defender
You're my Savior and my friend
By Your grace I live and breathe to worship You

Victor's Crown

Worship Team

In Your Name I will bow down
In Your Presence fear is silent
For You wear the victor's crown
Let Your glory fill this temple
Let Your power overflow
By Your grace I live and breathe to worship You

Hallelujah You have overcome
You have overcome
Hallelujah Jesus You have overcome the world

Ev'ry high thing must come down
Ev'ry stronghold shall be broken
You wear the victor's crown
You overcome You overcome

You are ever interceding
As the lost become the found
You can never be defeated
For You wear the victor's crown
You are Jesus the Messiah
You're the Hope of all the world
By Your grace I live and breathe to worship You

You Are My King

I'm forgiven, Because You were forsaken
I'm accepted, You were condemned
I'm alive and well, Your Spirit is within me
Because You died, And rose again

You are my King, You are my King
Jesus You are my King, Jesus You are my King

Worship Team

Amazing love, How can it be
That You my King, Would die for me
Amazing love, I know it's true
It's my joy to honor You, In all I do I honor You

PRAYER OF THE DAY

O God, your Son makes himself known to all his disciples in the breaking of bread. Open the eyes of our faith, that we may see him in his redeeming work, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

PSALM 116:1-4. 12-19

¹I love the LORD, who has heard my voice,
and listened to my supplication,

²**for the LORD has given ear to me
whenever I called.**

³The cords of death entangled me; the anguish of the grave came upon me;
I came to grief and sorrow.

⁴**Then I called upon the name of the LORD:
"O LORD, I pray you, save my life."**

¹²How shall I repay the LORD
for all the good things God has done for me?

¹³**I will lift the cup of salvation
and call on the name of the LORD.**

¹⁴I will fulfill my vows to the LORD
in the presence of all God's people.

¹⁵**Precious in your sight, O LORD,
is the death of your servants.**

¹⁶O LORD, truly I am your servant;
I am your servant, the child of your handmaid; you have freed me from my bonds.

¹⁷**I will offer you the sacrifice of thanksgiving
and call upon the name of the LORD.**

¹⁸I will fulfill my vows to the LORD
in the presence of all God's people,

¹⁹**in the courts of the LORD's house,
in the midst of you, O Jerusalem. Hallelujah!**

SPECIAL MUSIC

Keith Williams

GOSPEL Luke 24:13-20, 28-43

The holy gospel according to St. Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

¹³Now 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, ¹⁴and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. ¹⁵While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, ¹⁶but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. ¹⁷And he said to them, “What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?” They stood still, looking sad. ¹⁸Then 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?” ¹⁹He 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, ²⁰and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him.

²⁸As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. ²⁹But 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. ³⁰When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. ³¹Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. ³²They 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?” ³³That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. ³⁴They were saying, “The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!” ³⁵Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread. ³⁶ While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, ‘Peace be with you.’ ³⁷They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. ³⁸He said to them, ‘Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? ³⁹Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.’ ⁴⁰And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. ⁴¹While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, ‘Have you anything here to eat?’ ⁴²They gave him a piece of broiled fish, ⁴³and he took it and ate in their presence.

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

“OUR ROAD TO EMMAUS”

Luke 24:13-20;28-43

I'm sure that we've all had some road trips that remain memorable for us. One such memorable trip for me happened during my first year of being a pastor. I was making the journey from the parish I served in Dovary, MN to Willmar, MN. As far as road trips are concerned, this wasn't such a long trip -90 miles- about an hour and forty-five-minute trip. I traveled up County road 5 to Highway 19 to County road 6 and then on into Willmar. Not only were there twists and turns in the road but my stomach was tied in knots, and my heart was heavy. You see after countless years of denying the way God had made me -a gay man- I had made an appointment to tell my bishop about my sexual orientation. I remember crying most of the way to Willmar - thinking that this will be the end of my being able to be a pastor - a career that I felt called to by God and one that I loved. After what seemed like a never ending 90 miles, I reached the bishop's office. When he welcomed me into his office, he noticed my tears and asked what was wrong. I blurted out, “Bishop, I'm gay. I thought this was a choice but it's not. I believe it's the way God made me.” I expected that he might respond with words of condemnation but instead I noticed tears in his eyes. He said, “I don't know how you do it.” For the next hour he listened -really listened- as I

shared the journey of so many years of doing anything and everything, I could think of to not be gay. Never before in my life had I experienced such grace. As I was about to leave, I asked him "Bishop aren't you going to fire me." "No," he responded, "absolutely not. We need to grow in understanding this issue. By the way, will you please be on my Bishop's Advisory Committee." I couldn't believe my ears. I walked into his office thinking that this was the end of the road for me in parish ministry. I walked out of his office, however, as being one of a small group of people to advise the bishop. And it would continue to be the presence of Christ coming to me through this bishop and several others, that would sustain me and encourage me in my professional and personal life.

Now I share this experience with you only because it is a personal on-the-road story. You see, our Gospel for today is also an on-the-road story. Two disciples of Jesus are walking from Jerusalem to a nearby town called Emmaus- about 4-7 miles from Jerusalem. It's evening on the day Jesus rose from the dead and these two disciples are talking about what they've just experienced. They're confused, afraid, and more than anything, they're sad. They had thought Jesus was the one who would save the Jewish people by leading them in a rebellion against the Roman Empire, their oppressors. Clearly, Jesus had failed. The rebellion was thwarted, and Jesus was sent to the cross to die. So here they are, walking back home to Emmaus, dejected, wondering what's next.

Have you ever noticed that some of the saddest words in our language begin with letter "D"? For example, disappointment, doubt, disillusionment, defeat, despair and death. All of these sum up the feelings of the two disciples as they walked along the road to Emmaus.

Suddenly, however, a man appears with them on the road. It's Jesus, but of course they don't recognize him, because they think he is dead. They have a conversation. But mostly Jesus listens; he listens to them as my bishop listened to me. Jesus listens as the disciples poured out their heart. He doesn't dumb them down or discount what they are feeling, but rather in infinite consideration for their hurt and their bewildered minds, Jesus comes next to them and joins them on their journey. He walks with them...and he listens...and he enters their pain. Jesus continues on the road with the disciples to their destination, and when they arrive Jesus shares a meal with them -some fish- and shows them his hands and his feet and the disciples realize that they are in the presence of Jesus. All of this fills them with wonder, and after he leaves, they say, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was with us."

My friend when have you experienced the presence of Jesus? What is it that makes you aware of Christ's presence to you? When did you last feel the presence of Christ? It doesn't need to be anything fancy or complicated. It can be the simplest of things: a prayer, a favorite bible verse, a familiar song or hymn, a splash of water on someone's forehead. Or perhaps you have experienced Christ's presence in someone's understanding, or in being forgiven or in someone's receiving and accepting you for who you truly are.

In today's gospel, Luke the gospel writer proclaimed that Jesus is not only risen from the dead, but he also becomes present to his disciples. It is Jesus who seeks them out. It is Jesus who comes to them and stands by them. And Jesus is doing the same for us!

Last Sunday in worship and in the congregational meeting, I saw the great desire that you have as people of Cross of Glory to be together to do the work of the church. As a congregation you are on the journey -on the road- of calling your next pastor. I'm sure that you have hopes and expectations and possibly some fears that these won't be met. But the message of Easter is not that everything comes true or that life isn't at times difficult. The message, however, is that Jesus is walking with you. If you are open to what God is doing, there will be many times that you will be filled with so much joy that you know that you are indeed in the presence of Jesus the Christ! And at times in the midst of great despair you will know that you are indeed in his presence!

Our gospel story for today isn't just about two disciples traveling away from Jerusalem, is it? It's not just about two people with dashed hopes and unmet expectations sadly walking away from all they dared to believe and trust. Those two disciples travel two ways on that road! At the beginning of the story, they walk away from Jerusalem, but by the end of the story they have turned around and are heading back to toward Jerusalem. What happens? What makes the difference? What causes them to change their direction? What causes them to change their lives? Our gospel makes it very clear; their dramatic transformation is caused by the presence of Jesus. Christ came to them and met them on the road, and everything changes for them. The difference is Christ Jesus!

Years ago, on my road trip to Willmar, I realized through the bishop that I had been in the presence of Jesus. I pray that as you journey along, as you experience joys and celebrations and also disappointments and despair in your daily life, that you will welcome the stranger that longs to join you on your journey. And as you do, may your heart be warmed by Christ's company and may your life be ignited with passion to share with all that you have seen the risen Lord! Amen.

HYMN #385 Good Christian Friends, Rejoice and Sing! verses 1, 3 and 4

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 Good Christian friends, rejoice and sing!
Now is the triumph of our king!
To all the world glad news we bring:
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia! | 3 Praise we in songs of victory
that love, that life, which cannot die,
and sing with hearts uplifted high:
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia! |
| 4 Your name we bless, O risen Lord,
and sing today with one accord,
the life laid down, the life restored:
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia! | |

CONFESSION OF FAITH Apostles' Creed

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**
**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius
Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day
he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**
**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the
resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

OFFERTORY RESPONSE #379 Now the Green Blade Rises verses 1, 2 and 3

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 Now the green blade rises from the buried grain,
wheat that in dark earth many days has lain;
love lives again, that with the dead has been;
love is come again like wheat arising green. | 2 In the grave they laid him, love by hatred slain,
thinking that he would never wake again;
laid in the earth like grain that sleeps unseen;
love is come again like wheat arising green. |
| 3 Forth he came at Easter, like the risen grain,
he that for three days in the grave had lain;
raised from the dead, my living Lord is seen;
love is come again like wheat arising green. | |

OFFERING PRAYER

Like the disciples at Emmaus, we offer what we have. They offered their company, their table, their food. We invite you to be with us, Jesus, as we offer you our love, our devotion and these gifts.

May our eyes be opened to your holy presence among us, now and always. Amen

PRAYERS of the PEOPLE

Uplifted by the promised hope of healing and resurrection, we join the people of God in all times and places in praying for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

(a brief silence)

Lord Christ meet us on the road to Emmaus. Guide us on the path toward our destination and renew our strength as we continue to walk. Open our eyes, so we see the signs of your presence around us. Open our hearts, so we may receive your peace and love. Empower us to pass on to others the grace you have shared with us so freely. Lord in your mercy.... **Hear our prayer.**

Lord Jesus, you traveled through towns and villages curing disease and illness. At your command, the sick were made well. Come to our aid now, in the midst of the global spread of the coronavirus, that we may experience your healing love and presence. May your presence surround those who are sick with the virus and those families who are grieving the death of loved ones. Heal us from our fear and keep us ever mindful of your presence with us always - never leaving us or forsaking us.

Lord in your mercy... **Hear our prayer.**

Loving Savior, you know our needs, and you respond with love. You continue to tell us that you love, not the person we are trying to be, or have promised to be, or want to be, but you love the person we are, just as we are. As you delight in us, O Lord, may we always delight in you, forevermore.

Lord in your mercy... **Hear our prayer.**

With bold confidence in your love, almighty God, we place all for whom we pray into your eternal care, through Christ our Lord. **Amen**

LORD'S PRAYER Lord remember us in your kingdom and teach us always to prayer.

Our father, who art in heaven

BENEDICTION

Go now as those who have met with Christ in the morning of this day.

Go now as those whose hearts have burned within them, as the scriptures were explained.

Go now as those who have been touched by the resurrection.

And may the blessing of almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be with you now and always.

Amen.

SENDING FORTH SONG #389 Christ is Alive! Let Christians Sing verses 1, 2 and 5

1 Christ is alive! Let Christians sing.
The cross stands empty to the sky.
Let streets and homes with praises ring.
Love, drowned in death, shall never die.

2 Christ is alive! No longer bound
to distant years in Palestine,
but saving, healing, here and now,
and touching ev'ry place and time.

5 Christ is alive, and comes to bring
good news to this and every age,
till earth and sky and ocean ring
with joy, with justice, love, and praise.

DISMISSAL

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Go in peace. Share the good news. Alleluia!

Thanks be to God. Alleluia!