**modified easter 3 worship service, april 26, 2020**

**zion lutheran church, philipsburg**

Welcome to all on this Third Sunday of Easter. We give thanks that we can worship together in spirit today. On our minds and in our hearts this week are the people of Nova Scotia, we will remember them in our prayers this morning. Please remember that Zion relies on your weekly contributions to keep up with our expenses. Thanks to all who have remembered Zion with your offering and prayers.

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

**Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

**pRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray.

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: Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19**

1I love the Lord, who has heard my voice, and listened to my  supplication,  
 2for 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.  
 4Then I called upon the name of the Lord: “O Lord, I pray you, save my life.”   
 12How shall I re-pay the Lord for all the good things God has done for me?  
 13I 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.  
 15Precious 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.  
 17I 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,  
 19in the courts of the Lord‘s house, in the midst of you, O Jerusalem.  Hallelujah!

**GOSPEL: Luke 24:13-35**

The holy gospel according to Luke.

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. 21But 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. 22Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, 23and 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. 24Some 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.” 25Then he said to them, “Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! 26Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?” 27Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.  
  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.

**reflection**

Our gospel reading today takes place on a road, where two people are making a 7-mile journey from Jerusalem to Emmaus. Many stories in Luke that take place on a road where people are on a journey; Mary and Joseph journey to Bethlehem where Jesus is born, the Good Samaritan is traveling on the road when he comes across the robbed and injured victim, Jesus in Luke chapter 9:51, set his face to go to Jerusalem, he began his journey to the cross, to his death, to his resurrection. I think our reading today is something we can all relate to because each of us are always on some type of journey or road.

The passage today is one of my favourites, in that it is so rich in imagery and emotion. In listening to the story progress, you can almost feel that you are traveling along with Cleopas and his companion. The sun is beating down on them, the dust stirs around their sandals because the steps they are taking are heavy and downtrodden. They travel up hills and into valleys. The two are in deep discussion about Jesus’ death. They are confused, grieving, and probably angry, trying to make some sense out of what had happened. Jesus brought them hope and a promise for the future; but now he was gone. Sure, they heard some rumours from the women who gathered at his tomb and found it empty, but Cleopas had not seen Jesus, he did not know that he was resurrected from the dead. Like Thomas from our gospel reading last week, Cleopas and his companion were doubting and hurting. They may have been feeling like their faith was being tested.

Suddenly a stranger shows up and joins them on their journey. He does not ask to join them; we do not even know where he was coming from. He begins to match their pace and casually asks the two what they are talking about. Cleopas stops in his tracks and I am sure he gives the stranger one of those “What! Where have you been for the last 3 days sort of looks! What do you mean what are we talking about?” Cleopas then goes on to explain what has happened over the past 3 days. The stranger listened, not interrupting Cleopas’ lament; the stranger was present to the emotions that were being shared. After Cleopas finished, the stranger began to speak. He reassuringly reminded the two of the prophet’s declaration and how the Messiah had to die so that all would able to enter into glory. Jesus once again showed up, but the two did not know it, for their eyes were kept from recognizing him. In the eyes of God, Cleopas and his companion were on a road journey to discipleship and faith.

When they arrive back in Emmaus, the stranger is prepared to continue walking, but Cleopas asks him to stay, showing the hospitality that Jesus had instilled in them with his teachings and stories. So, he joins them and together they share a meal. Just as the stranger begins to break the bread, their eyes are suddenly opened, and they realize just who the stranger was. With joy, they realize that Jesus joined them on their journey of grief and confusion, he was present to their pain, providing hope for the future. Jesus showed up.

Now some theologians believe that Jesus breaking the bread in our story is an acknowledgment of the sacrament of communion. But others believe differently. Yes, Jesus comes to us in the breaking of the bread and the sharing of the wine, but Jesus also comes to us in the ordinary, in the every day, in the feeding of 3 people and in the feeding of 5000 people. Jesus shows up, again and again. Jesus just shows up!

I have mentioned more than once over the past 6 weeks that we are on our own type of journey right now. For some, the road is straight and relatively easy going. For others, the road is full of potholes and large stones making travel difficult. But whichever road we are on we can be steadfast in the knowledge that Jesus shows up, that Jesus knows our struggles and our pain. I cannot help but think of the journey and the road that the folks in Nova Scotia are on this week. My heart breaks for them as they try to deal with the trauma and pain of losing family members and friends. May it bring them some comfort to know that as Jesus wept for his friend Lazarus, he also weeps for our communities consumed by grief, disbelief, and anger.

I asked each of you last week to take some time to reflect on where God showed up in your life. If we would have been together this morning, we would have shared our experiences. I hope you were able to share your experiences with others around you. For me, God showed up in texts and emails that I received from friends and members of the congregation when I was feeling anxious. They were simple check-ins, but they reminded me that I am loved. We are often led to believe that God only shows up when we are sitting in our church pews on a Sunday morning, but God shows up all over the place; in new spring blossoms, in phone calls, in making masks to keep others safe, in listening to classic rock and roll, in prayer, in tributes and song sent out to a grieving province, in saying I love you.

In our reading today God through Jesus Christ shows up in the ordinary, in the journey, and in the simple sharing of a meal. Our travelers went from a lack of recognition to recognizing Jesus Christ; they moved from sadness and grief to joy and gladness in having their eyes opened to the unconditional love of Jesus Christ. So again, this week I ask that you take a moment to see where God shows up in the ordinary of your life, and I pray that it opens your eyes to the unconditional love of Jesus Chris, that it eases your mind and that it brings you joy and comfort in a chaotic world in which we have little control.

May peace be with you on your journey this week. Amen

**PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

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.

For those whose hearts are fervent with love for your gospel, that they are empowered to tell the story of your love in their lives and to show hospitality in response to this love. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For the diverse natural world: for jungles, prairies, forests, valleys, mountains, and for all the wild and endangered animals who call these spaces home, that they are nurtured and protected. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For broken systems we have inherited and that we continue to perpetuate, forgive us. Restrain the nations from fighting over limited resources. Redeem us from the cycles of scarcity and violence. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For all who call upon your healing name, give rest. Stay with us, and walk with all those who are hungry, friendless, despairing, and desiring healing in body and spirit Eddie, Elaine, Betty, Ruth, Mary Ann and those we name in the stillness of our hearts. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For all affected by Covid-19, give peace. We pray for all who are sick, and all who have died especially those in congregant homes. Give perseverance and faith to PSW’s and nurses, doctors and first responders, cleaners and cashiers, shelf stockers and truckers, and all others who continue to work during these times of uncertainty. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For the victims and their families of the mass murder in Nova Scotia bring strength and comfort. Shine your light into their darkness, grief, anger, and sorrow as they try to comprehend the events and grieve their losses through these times of social isolation. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Create in our hearts a yearning to rest in your promise of eternal and resurrected life. Give us thankful hearts for those who have died, even as we look forward to the hope of new life with you. 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.**

**THANKSGIVING FOR THE WORD**

Let us pray.

Praise and thanks to you, holy God, for by your Word you made all things: you spoke light into darkness, called forth beauty from chaos, and brought life into being. For your Word of life, O God, **we give you thanks and praise.**

By your Word you called your people Israel to tell of your wonderful gifts: freedom from captivity, water on the desert journey, a pathway home from exile, wisdom for life with you. For your Word of life, O God, **we give you thanks and praise.**

Through Jesus, your Word made flesh, you speak to us and call us to witness forgiveness through the cross, life to those entombed by death, the way of your self-giving love. For your Word of life, O God, **we give you thanks and praise.**

Send your Spirit of truth, O God; rekindle your gifts within us: renew our faith, increase our hope, and deepen our love, for the sake of a world in need. Faithful to your Word, O God, draw near to all who call on you; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory forever.

**Amen.**

**LORD’S PRAYER**

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray 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.**

**BLESSING**

May the one who brought forth Jesus from the dead raise you to new life, fill you with hope and turn your mourning into dancing.

Almighty God, Father + Son, and Holy Spirit bless you now and forever.

**Amen**

**DISMISSAL**

Alleluia, Christ is risen.

Go in peace. Share the good news.

**Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

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