



Traveling Companions

Gathering

Create a space for worship - perhaps with a small table with a bible, cross and candle.

This week, it would be appropriate to find a **green** cloth or scarf because we are now in "ordinary" time or a time of "growing together". Take some deep breaths as you gather your thoughts towards God.

Video - All Of This Is Us

<https://vimeo.com/599454567>

Light Candle

As we gather today,
we turn towards the one who is the Light of the World:
Jesus the Christ.
We seek the light.
We celebrate the light.
We allow ourselves to be drawn to the light.



Supper At Emmaus

He Qi

https://www.heqiart.com/store/p177/45_Supper-at-Emmaus_Limited_Edition.html

Acknowledgement of Country

The Ancient of Days, breathed life into this Land and her Peoples. From time beyond our reckoning the Wodi Wodi people of the Dharawal nation have blessed this place through their care and concern.

We pay our respects to their Elders and Leaders:

those who have carried the sacred stories from generation to generation

those who carry the sacred stories today

and those who are learning and growing so that the sacred stories may be carried into the future.

We pray for the future of their communities and that our hearts and minds will be open as we shape a future together.

May we walk gently and respectfully on this Land.

(c) 2017, A.Koh-Butler, This land is God's land and God's Spirit dwells here.

Call to Worship

Whenever we worship

let us worship together.

Whenever we gather

let us gather in God's name.

Whenever we pray

let us pray for each other.

And whenever we meet

let us meet as Christ's body,

Christ's people,

Christ's loving community.

Introduction

Today our time of worship together is shaped around the story of the walk to Emmaus from Luke 24. Those who have been participating in the Living The Questions Series have encountered this story on a couple of occasions and so I thought we might explore it today in a different way, by letting the story shape our worship.

Sing - You Are Holy (TIS 753)

Let's begin by singing a song of praise to the One who comes amongst us - always more than we can fully understand, yet here, with us.

You are holy, you are whole.

You are always ever more than we ever understand.

You are always at hand.

Blessed are you coming near;

blessed are you coming here

to your church in wine and bread,

raised from soil, raised from dead.

You are holy, you are wholeness,

you are present, let the cosmos praise you, Lord!

Hallelujah, hallelujah,

hallelujah, hallelujah, our Lord!

© P.G. Harling

Reading: Luke 24: 13-16

¹³ Now on that same day two of them 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 recognising him.

Prayer

Holy One,

we gather here in this place united by our love for you and for each other.

Together we are part of your worldwide church, the body of Christ.

We come to sing your praises,

to hear your word to us,

to share our joys and sorrows,

to offer our selves to you

and to seek your face.

We are drawn together by your son, Jesus,

the one who revealed your great love for us and invites us into a relationship with you.

We come with faith,

with doubt and with questions.

We confess that too often we get caught up in the gossip of the day and we fail to recognise you in the world around us and in the people we encounter.

We confess that too often we fail to love you as we should

and we fail to listen to your spirit guiding us.

We are sorry for the times we have spoken or acted in ways that were not loving.

Forgive us, we pray
and help us to receive your forgiveness and keep moving onwards.
Help us to open our eyes and our hearts to you.
Renew our commitment to you
and help us to go forward.
So be it. Amen.

Listening for God's Voice

Reading: Luke 24: 17-27

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.

Reflection

Two people, walking along the road, given that one is named and the other is not, it is possible they were a couple, Cleopas and his wife.

They walk away from Jerusalem, saddened by the events of the previous few days.

Perhaps the equivalent today is when we go on a long walk to clear our heads, or even a long ride or drive.

They chat about what has been happening, and then a stranger joins them.

He seems completely oblivious to the goings-on so they fill him in, sharing with him, not just *what* had happened but *how these events* had shattered their dreams, perhaps even their faith, or at least had challenged their understanding of faith...

And rather than nod sympathetically, or commiserate with them, this stranger engages with their struggles and challenges them to see their faith, their God, and themselves in it all, in a different way (24:25-26).

And together they engage deeply as they explore the scriptures together, thinking about how the scriptures speak to the events they have experienced and witnessed (24:27).

And so I wonder, when we are confronted with challenges - of faith, of who we are in the world today, of how God is calling us to engage in our world - how deeply do you engage in the study of the scriptures to guide you?

In a moment, we will hear the conclusion of the story where Cleopas and his companion describe their hearts burning as they engaged in the scriptures together (24:32). And I

wonder whether sometimes the dryness we endure has more to do with our neglect of the scriptures than any absence of God in our struggles.

Who do you listen to in matters of concern to you, the church, or the community of which we are a part?

Do you only listen to the news and political commentators or social media or even your friends and neighbours?

Or do you genuinely search the scriptures, pray, and engage in conversation with other followers of Jesus to figure out how we are called to respond?

In the current discussion about a Voice to Parliament, are you only listening to the voices of Second Peoples? Have you read or listened to the reflections and opinions provided by biblical scholars and First Nations people of faith? There are a number on the Assembly website and I commend them to you.

What Jesus teaches us here is the practice of reflecting on the events and challenges of the world in the context of our faith and the grounding of the scriptures. It is both a discipline and an art - and is essential to our growth as disciples. So if this is something new to you, or something you would like to explore or learn more about, then listen in, come and talk to me or to any of our Elders, come along to our quarterly Retreat and Reflection days (the next one is Saturday 11 November), and stay tuned, probably, early in the new year, for your opportunity to learn more.

As we come to the table now, we first pray for people around the world who struggle to provide enough food for themselves and their families...

Prayer for Others

Generous God,
we thank you for the wonderful bounty our world provides for us,
grains and beans,
fruit and vegetables,
meat and fish,
all colours, shapes and sizes,
each part of the world
producing its own varieties.

Loving God,
we are all too aware that for too many
access to food that is fresh and affordable is difficult.
War, threats of violence, natural disasters make access to food difficult and sometimes impossible.

We pray for people who struggle to eat enough each day,
for those who cannot afford to buy the food they need for their family
and for those who have to travel many miles to have access to food.

We give thanks for the charities and people who volunteer to ensure everyone is fed and has access to food. In this community, we pray especially for the ministry of the Homestead of Hope which provides a nourishing meal for the homeless, hungry or just lonely people of Kiama on Tuesdays and also gives vouchers for food or petrol etc to those in need.

We pray for our world leaders,
that they might make it a priority to find ways to share resources fairly.

We give thanks for farmers and fishermen,
for all who work in the food chain
producing, processing and delivering food to us
and for the shops and markets where we can choose what to buy.

We pray that one day
everyone would have access to daily bread
and have all they need to thrive and flourish
as you long for them all to do.

Help us to make wise choices with our food,
to reduce waste and share with our neighbours,
to offer hospitality when we can
and build strong relationships with others.
Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer. Amen.

Responding

Sing - Come To The Banquet (ATW 475)

As we come to the table, and as we hear the last part of the story, we sing a song of invitation - this table is for everyone and there is a place for you...

Come to the banquet, there's a place for you.

Though you maybe have no money,
though you maybe feel unworthy,
in your strength or in your weakness
you are welcome, come.

Come to the banquet, there's a place for you.

See, you are an honoured guest,
from constant serving you may rest;
so sit you down, be fed and blessed,
for you are welcome, come.

Come to the banquet, there's a place for you.

Woman, wise one, mother, maiden,
see your plate with food is laden
and your place is set and waiting.
You are welcome, come.

Come to the banquet, there's a place for you.

Worker, father, little boy,
old man or youth without employ, come
rest your worry, here is joy,
and you are welcome, come.

Come to the banquet, there's a place for you.

Whether you've been lost or faithful,
whether you've been wise or wasteful,
here's a place of rest and grace,
and you are welcome, come.

Come to the banquet, there's a place for you.

Here is one who runs to meet you,
loving arms stretched out to greet you.
Do not let your fear defeat you.
You are welcome, come.

Come to the banquet, there's a place for you.

Willing hands have made this bread
with yeast and salt and labour shared.
Let all the hungry ones be fed.
It's time for feasting, come.

Come to the banquet, there's a place for you.

Abundant wine, enough for all!
Our generous, loving host has called.
The cup of blessing now is poured
for sweet communion, come.
Come to the banquet, there's a place for you.

Reading: Luke 24: 28-35

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 recognised 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.

For the Word of God in Scripture,
for the Word of God among us,
for the Word of God within us,
Thanks be to God!

Holy Communion

If you would like to share in Communion and are unable to join with us in-person, please let Rev Kath or Rhonda Back know. We would love to bring Communion to you in your home at a time that suits you.

Offering

As we have received, so we consider our response...

We make space now to think about what we have heard and seen today and consider our response to God's nudging today.

As we make our offering - we remember again that this is not just about money - either here in the plate or through a bank transfer - this is also about how we are generous with our time and energy and gifts; and about how we resolve to live differently because we have encountered the living Christ.

And if this is your first time with us or if you are visiting, please don't feel obliged to give. You are our guests, and we want you simply to enjoy the blessings of worshipping God together. We are glad you are here!

Generous God,
we thank you for all that we have been given
and we offer to you our gifts today.
Take all that we offer and use what we bring to share your good news far and wide.
Amen.

Sending

Sing - Companions on the Journey (Seasons 8-8)

As we move into a time of sharing and meeting together, we sing a song that reminds us that we are all in this together...

*We are companions on the journey,
breaking bread and sharing life;
and in the love we bear is the hope
we share
for we believe in the love of our God,
we believe in the love of our God.*

No longer strangers to each other,
no longer strangers in God's house;
we are fed and we are nourished
by the strength of those who care,
by the strength of those who care.

*We are companions on the
journey...*

We have been gifted with each other,
and we are called by the Word of the
Lord:

to act with justice, to love tenderly,
and to walk humbly with our God,
to walk humbly with our God.

*We are companions on the
journey...*

Words and Music: Carey Landry

Sending and Blessing

Go now and walk wherever God sends you
with whomever God brings into your circle.

Let Jesus walk beside you
and the Spirit guide your path.

Take the love of God with you
and share it with everyone you meet.

And may God - Divine Creator, Divine Word, Divine Presence - bless you on your journey.

Liturgy adapted from material from:

Spill The Beans, Issue 48, Resources for Sunday 8 October 2023

Rev Kath Merrifield

8 October 2023