

## Wednesday Evening Service, April 22, 2020 - Reflection and Prayer Practice

### Walking Prayer Pastor Amy Zalk Larson

Our reading tonight is a portion of the Gospel reading for this upcoming Sunday from Luke 24. This is a story from the evening of the first Easter according to the Gospel of Luke.

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, <sup>14</sup>and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. <sup>15</sup>While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, <sup>16</sup>but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. <sup>17</sup>And he said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" They stood still, looking sad. <sup>18</sup>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?" <sup>19</sup>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, <sup>20</sup>and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. <sup>21</sup>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."

Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. In their deep grief and fear, they weren't able to see that it was Jesus himself who was walking with them. When he asked what they were discussing, they stood still, looking sad. And, they expressed such longing, "We had hoped that he was the one ... besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place."

Their grief and sorrow prevented them from seeing that Jesus was right there beside them, walking with them. All they could see was death; but Jesus, who cannot be stopped from bringing new life, was right there.

Jesus is also right beside you, walking with you, in these days, in all days. We'll talk more on Sunday about how Jesus opens our eyes and helps us to recognize his presence. Yet for tonight, hear this: Jesus is beside you. The one who can't be stopped from bringing new life walks with you.

The invitation for you this week in prayer is to go for walks and pay attention to signs of God's presence and signs of new life. This is a good practice in these days of quarantine for the sake of the neighbor. It is a good practice on Earth Day. It is also a wonderful practice as we think about Jesus walking with the disciples on the road to Emmaus and walking with us amidst our grief and fear.

Everywhere we look these days, new life is bursting up - now the green blade rises, now the daffodils bloom, now the birds sing. God cannot be stopped from bringing new life to this whole hurting world and to you. Paying attention to this new life can help us to know that we are not alone.

Jesus walks with us, Jesus walks with you.