**CHRIST THE KING LVTHERAN CHVRCH**

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**THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER**

## April 23, 2023

[*Acts 2:14a,36-41*](https://members.sundaysandseasons.com/Home/Index/2023-4-9/0)*; Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19; 1 Peter 1:17-23; Saint Luke 24: 13-35*

***In nomine Jesu!***

Alleluia! Christ is risen! **Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

Notice that the contours of today’s Gospel perfectly parallel the movements of worship. We gather together; Jesus with us; accompanies us on our way; interpreting Scriptures, not as a collective of dead stories and deadening rules, but as the promise of God’s indelible love for us. We stop to share our disappointments and despair. Arriving at table, Jesus makes himself known to us in the breaking of the bread. Once fed, Jesus sends us out to proclaim to all the joy of God’s resurrection love. We are always on the road to Emmaus; every time we gather to celebrate the risen Christ.

We are on the road to Emmaus in another way. Like Cleopas and the other disciple we too have experienced disappointment in our lives. Disappointments come in all sizes — big and small. Some can even be dramatically life changing, huge, communal disasters that affect many, many people in many different ways.

And then there are those personal disappointments which happen only to you and can be big or small. These happen all the time. Hopes are dashed; dreams go unfulfilled. We make plans for our future and then … We prepare for a career and the job market changes. An accident or injury disrupts the life of an Olympian-in-the-making. You make a wrong turn or knock on the wrong door, and disaster ensues. Disappointment is a part of our human condition. None can escape it; and when disappointment is major, everything can change.

It was that kind of major disappointment that the disciples were discussing on the way to Emmaus. They told the one who joined them, “**we had hoped** that he [Jesus] was the one to redeem Israel.” **We had hoped**. Those words are full of sorrow. Cleopas and the other disciple — surely all the followers of Jesus — had believed Jesus to be the Messiah — the one whom God had promised to place upon the throne of their ancestor David, King of Israel. They had an image in their minds of what that would be like, and crucifixion was not it! As yet they did not understand that the suffering servant that the prophet Isaiah talked about was to be the same person as the Davidic Messiah. They hadn’t put things together. It had to be explained to them as they walked along the road, eyes downcast for sorrow, but listening attentively as their hearts burned within them.

**We had hoped** that he was to be the One! That hope had led them to leave behind the life they were living to follow Christ. They left families, jobs, homes — everything!

They believed they were taking a path that would lead to greatness! They intended to be a part of the action; to be known as friends of the long-awaited King of Israel! They had dreams of power, glory, and honor; the respect and admiration of the people. Remember James and John arguing over who would sit at Jesus’ right and left when he came into power! They had visions of grandeur! Now it all seemed like a delusion. They felt tricked. Where was the revolution? Where was the glory? How could they be so wrong?

And so these two disciples found themselves at a loss — wondering what to do next. They were overwhelmed with grief; under the spell of death; walking through the dark valley; their world turned upside down. They didn’t understand why. It’s no wonder they didn’t recognize Jesus on the road with them. All they could see was death, disappointment, and grief.

We too often find ourselves on this road to Emmaus; hopes dashed; dreams dissolved; walking through the valley of the shadow. But take heart, for Jesus walks with us just as surely as Jesus walked with Cleopas and the other disciple. Walking with us, Christ invites us to plunge deeper into the depths of God’s Promises — the center of Holy Scripture — to understand more clearly what God is up to in our lives.

Take heart, you are on the road to Emmaus, at this very moment! You do not walk alone! Jesus walks with you as well as all the company of saints and the whole community of believers. We travel this road together so that we can support each other along the way. We lift each other up when we fall. We carry those who can no longer walk. We welcome everyone into our midst without exception! We place no limits; our boundaries expand to include all who are on this way. We are a community on the move! Where does the road lead? To the risen Christ who eagerly greets you and me and all!

Along the way, Jesus helps us make sense of our disappointments — both big and small. Christ shows us the way forward out of disappointment into hope and life. For this reason Jesus died and now lives — to be our hope; our dream, our future come true!

Jesus reveals himself to us in the breaking of bread and in the cup of salvation. Jesus feeds us with his own body and blood. Jesus is our most basic nourishment for survival in a world full of disappointments and shattered dreams. Fed and nourished, whole, and well and strong, Jesus sends us out into that dark valley where the shadow of death looms large and threatening; sends us out to gather more of God’s beloved children to walk with us on this wonderful road to Emmaus; a road that leads to abundant life.

Alleluia! Christ is risen! **Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

Amandus J. Derr

Interim Senior Pastor