

This Week at Wilkesboro UMC...

Share the Good News of Jesus Christ, Comfort the Troubled, Embrace God's Love



Happy Administrative Professionals' Day to Hilda Crisman - April 22nd

We extend our heartfelt appreciation to Hilda Crisman who serves two vital positions in our church: administrative assistant and treasurer. In addition to these important roles, Hilda is the first point of contact for phone calls, visitors and workers, and is the “keeper of the church calendar.” Her heart for ministry is apparent through her volunteerism with our various church missions. Thank you, Hilda! We are grateful you are here!

Worship News:

We have been exploring all the post-resurrection stories of Jesus. This past week we went on the road to Emmaus and met the risen Christ along the way. The resurrection causes us to look again at who Jesus is - and recognize that he walks beside us, always. You can read the attached sermon or watch the entire service on [Facebook](#) or [YouTube](#).

Upcoming Events:

Wednesday Night Bible Study - 5:30 p.m. in the Ecclesia Room

We will explore John 10:1-10 and what it means to be part of the fold that follows Jesus. See you there!

Facility Usage Reminder:

Schedule: We are blessed to provide meeting space to many folks in our church and community. Please remember - if you are scheduling a meeting - even one with a few people - please let the Church office know so it can be scheduled and on our calendar. We sometimes need to arrange for special parking or entrance alternatives due to other events. Contact Hilda at the church office - admin@wilkesboroumc.org

and

Secure: Having a daycare on site means taking extra precautions - like keeping entrances secure. **PLEASE do not prop open exterior doors between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m.** If you are hosting a meeting or event, arrange for a door monitor to allow access without propping open the door.

We Give Thanks - Sharing the Flame Card Party



A special thanks to all who worked to make the Relay for Life - Sharing the Flame Card Party a success. Fun was had by all and they raised around \$1500.



Stewardship Update:

Everything we do—worship, outreach, care for one another, and our presence in the community—is made possible through your generosity. If you are able, we invite you to prayerfully consider how you might continue or deepen your support in this season.

We are grateful for the efforts to catch us up on our recent shortfall. We can see a difference but we still have ground to make up.

Thank you for the many ways you already give—through your time, your presence, your gifts, your service and your witness. Together, we trust that God will continue to provide for the work we are called to do.

Celebrating Earth Day:

Today we pause to give thanks for the goodness of God's creation—and to remember our call to care for it. Earth Day doesn't have to be complicated. Sometimes the simplest acts are the most faithful:

Plant a flower, bush, or tree that supports bees and butterflies.

Spend time outside—notice, listen, and give thanks.

Pick up litter in your neighborhood or a local park.

Reduce, reuse, recycle—small choices add up.

Creation is a gift. Caring for it is an act of gratitude and love.

Prayer Requests

Family of Susan Allen

Family of Peter Daniel

Family of Kailey Everette

Family of Dan Parks - Internment Service - May 2, 2026 at the Roaring River United Methodist Cemetery at 2:00 pm.

Phyllis Austin, **Chuck Byers**, Wade & Brenda Church, Margaret Cooper, Brenda Dale, Amy DeSouza, Hendrix DeSouza, Charles Drum, Hal Emery, Jimmy Epley, Kyson Farley, Ronnie Farley, Craig Freas, Charles Gambill, Terry & Anne Garwood, Cade Gibbs, Jennifer Gibby, Troy Harmon, Sherry Harrold, **Kay Hayes**, Kimberly Hughes, Francoise Hughes, Shannon Hughes, Mark Johnson, Brenda Kilby, Pam King, Tom Kinlaw, Barbara Kitchen, Aislynn Ladouceur, **Becky Lakey**, **Mike Mabry**, Bubby McEntire, Janice McHolland, Joe McMillan, **Ricky Moretz**, John Nobles, Glenda Pierce, Adam Randolph, Debbie Reeves, Mary Jane Rich, James Rizoti, Mary Sallie Styers, Gerald Stierwalt, Mary Summerford, Keith Summerford, Amber Thornton, Donnie Thornton, Bob Taylor, Lee Tedder, Kim Tetzlaff, Cecil Walters, TA. Welborn, Dorothy Wilcox, Edgar Wilcox, Derrick Wilson, **Becky Wilson**, Seth Wilson, Ernie Winslow, Gavin Young, Hispanic neighbors, Ukraine, our planet in crisis, for God to bring Peace, for our government, for law and order.

SENIOR LIVING FACILITIES: Brenda Dale (Wilkes Health and Rehab), Cathy Freeman (Harmony at Brookberry Farm/Winston), Wanda Garwood (Rose Glen Village), Barbara Groce (Wilkes Assisted Living), Troy Harmon (Yadkinville Nursing Center/Magnolias), Caroline Randolph (The Pines in Davidson)

Rev. Karen H. Roberts,

Pastor

Wilkesboro United Methodist Church

336-293-3697



SermonApr19
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I was out with a friend a while back and we heard someone call their name. We turned and I watched my friend smile and greet the person warmly. The person talked about how long it had been since they'd seen each other and about some general things. I stood by patiently waiting to be introduced but my friend never bothered. After a while we said our goodbyes and walked away. I said, "You know, you could have introduced me." To which my friend replied, "No, I couldn't - I have no idea who that was."

We've all had those moments, right? Where we think we know someone - or someone seems to know us and we have no idea who they are. It is one of the things that make the gospel stories so...human. Several of our post resurrection stories begin with the disciples encountering the risen Jesus but having no idea who he is. Mary Magdelene is sure he is a gardener - until he speaks her name - only then she recognizes him. Some are startled by his sudden appearance in a locked room and assume he is a ghost. Thomas even famously says that seeing Jesus won't be enough - unless I touch his wounds I won't believe it is him. And then we have our two friends, headed home to Emmaus. I want to make excuses for their blindness. We all know there is such a thing as "the fog of grief," - a grief so thick and disorienting that nothing looks familiar or comforting. Luke makes sure we know these two men are in that fog.

They are sad. As a matter of fact, I think the four saddest words in scripture are uttered by these two men: "but we had hoped." Thirteen little letters that hold an incredible amount of despair between them. All their hopes had been in Jesus redeeming Israel. But it is obvious they felt their hope betrayed by their religious leaders and their hope dashed by Jesus' death. "But we had hoped ..." he was the one.

There was a line from a song in our Tenebrae service describing the grief of the crucifixion as - "hope and despair both mingled down" - this was what was happening on that road to Emmaus. "Hope and despair both mingled down." The men are processing their pain - trying to make sense of it all - and we can't help but notice how overwhelmed they are by it because just when things were getting interesting back in Jerusalem - just when the women and angels and empty tomb were proclaiming Jesus has risen - these two men left for home. They aren't the only ones walking away - others are on the road for home - the Passover festival ended - and none of them know what to do with all they had seen and heard except talk about it with those who shared the road with them.

So, they are astounded to meet a stranger who knows nothing about what happened in Jerusalem - "what are you talking about?" the stranger asks. "Are you kidding? You've got to be the only one who hasn't heard" - and they recount the story...with sadness...with
I was out with a friend a while back and we heard someone call their name. We turned and I watched my friend smile and greet the person warmly. The person talked about how long it had been since they'd seen each other and about some general things. I stood by patiently

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So, they are astounded to meet a stranger who knows nothing about what happened in Jerusalem – “what are you talking about?” the stranger asks. “Are you kidding? You’ve got to be the only one who hasn’t heard” – and they recount the story...with sadness...with lament...with tears in their eyes and throats choked up against the words. This isn’t gossiping fodder for the hungry – this is grief for the brokenhearted.

The stranger then begins to tell his own story – explaining the purpose of the Messiah and why things had to unfold as they did. What Luke doesn’t tell us is whether the men buy the story or not. But we know they want to hear more. When they reach home, they invite him to stay – and he does – and it is when they sit down to eat – when he reaches in the breadbasket and breaks off a piece to share with them - that their eyes are opened and they recognize him – and he vanishes.

The question we are left with is why all the peekaboo games? Why is Jesus unrecognizable even when he stands right in front of them? I don't have an answer – but I do have two reflections I think are meaningful.

The first is – Jesus isn't content to let any of us just walk away. When these two disciples are walking away from Jerusalem – leaving the uncertainty of death and empty tombs and supernatural reports behind them – Jesus goes after them.

For all our talk about the need to “find Jesus” – scripture, more often than not, shows it is Jesus who finds us. It is Jesus who goes to great lengths to comfort us

– to restore hope in us

– to reveal truth to us

– to open his hands wide and say, “Here I am”

just when we are worried, we might never see him again.

Now, there are many things that might cause someone to walk away from Jesus – disappoint, grief...even misunderstanding – but we can be assured that Jesus doesn't walk away from us. I think we can also be assured that even when we think we can't see him – even when we think he isn't there – it doesn't mean we can't come to know him.

A few weeks ago, I shared a story about a woman who said she has forgiven Jesus for being weak – completely misunderstanding the power of the crucifixion and resurrection – I think of her often – especially given how many other times we've recently seen Jesus mischaracterized and scripture misquoted.

My point is this – Those two disciples had held a very specific hope that Jesus would redeem Israel – they thought they knew exactly who Jesus was and what he came to do –

But when Jesus fulfilled his purpose – they didn't recognize it – because it wasn't the purpose they expected. They expected Israel redeemed – Jesus redeemed the world – Jesus rewrote the rules. In their mind – that make him unrecognizable – and therefore – in order for him to be seen, he had to first be hidden.

Jesus needed to “step aside” so to speak so that all the preconceived ideas of him could die and he could then come in new revelation – teaching us of God's truth when our own version of expectation (or truth) had failed us.

Maybe the good news is not that we always recognize Jesus.

Maybe the good news is that he keeps coming toward us - even when we are walking the wrong way...even when our hope has slipped into the past tense...even when we cannot yet see him for who he is. And somehow, along the road...our hearts begin to burn.

Not because we have figured it all out - but because, by his grace, we are beginning to see. And maybe... even now...the risen Christ is here - nearer than we know.

And in his presence, there is peace...there is rest...there is strength for the journey ahead.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Let us pray - when I say, “Lord in your mercy” - you respond with “hear our prayer”

Gracious and ever-present God,
you walk beside us -
even when we do not recognize you.

In the quiet of this moment,
we bring before you the prayers of our hearts.

For your Church -
that your people may be attentive to your presence,
faithful in our witness,
and open to where you are leading us...

Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

For the world -
for places of conflict and suffering,
For places where power is abused and people and land become commodities,
for leaders and communities,
We pray that peace may take root and the fruit of justice may grow...

Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

For our community—
for those who are weary,
those who are grieving,
those in need of healing or hope,
For all who need to know your presence and strength...

Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

For this congregation—
for rest where we are tired,
for strength where we are stretched,
and for grace to recognize you among us...

Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

May your Spirit move among us, whether seen or unseen, in ways that bring wisdom for the journey, strength for today, and bright hope for tomorrow. In the name of our risen Lord, we pray. Amen.