

As they  
sat down to eat

he took the bread  
and blessed it

Then he broke it and  
gave it to them

SUDDENLY

THEIR EYES WERE OPENED  
AND THEY RECOGNIZED HIM

And at that moment

he disappeared

They said to each other

**DIDN'T OUR HEARTS  
BURN WITHIN US**

as he talked with us on the road  
and explained the Scriptures to us?

# THEY HAD NOT RECOGNIZED HIM

from LUKE 24:30-34

Worship for April 26, 2020

Call to worship (Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19) – This is a wonderful psalm to pray in the midst of COVID-19. Read it with that in mind and mark the passages that seem to pertain to your own situation or that of others you know.

*I love the Lord, for he heard my voice;  
He heard my cry for mercy.  
Because he turned his ear to me,  
I will call on him as long as I live.  
The cords of death entangled me,  
The anguish of the grave came upon me;  
I was overcome by trouble and sorrow.  
Then I called on the name of the Lord:  
“O Lord, save me!”*

*How can I repay the Lord  
For all his goodness to me?  
\*{I will lift up the cup of salvation  
And call on the name of the Lord.  
I will fulfill my vows to the Lord  
In the presence of all his people.}* Note: This is a pastor’s prayer after taking ordination vows.

*Precious in the sight of the Lord  
Is the death of his saints (those who love him).  
O Lord, truly I am your servant;  
I am your servant, the child of your maidservant;  
You have freed me from my chains.*

*\*{I will sacrifice a thank offering to you  
And call on the name of the Lord.  
I will fulfill my vows to the Lord  
In the presence of all his people,}  
In the courts of the house of the Lord,  
In your midst, O Jerusalem. Praise the Lord!*

Notice the asterisks in the second and last stanzas. The last 3 lines of each are identical. In Hebrew poetry (the language of the Psalms) repetition is significant; and repetition with variances highlights the meaning of the differences. In these 2 stanzas we’re meant to equate the first line of each: “I will lift up the cup of salvation” and “I will sacrifice a thank offering to you.” The “cup of salvation” is the 3<sup>rd</sup> cup of wine drunk at the Passover meal—the Last Supper of Jesus. When we read these 2 parallel verses together, we see that our response to the “cup of salvation” (the blood of Jesus) is a “thankoffering.” During COVID we are fasting from communion. **What sort of *thankoffering* can you offer to God at this time?**

Confession

With hearts of sorrow we come before you, O God, to confess what you already know: we fail to keep your laws of love and faithfulness. We follow our own ways rather than your life-giving will for our lives. We twist your intentions, ignoring all that we'd rather not notice, using your gifts for our own desires rather than sharing them with others as you have shared everything with us. Forgive us, O God. Cleanse us from the faults we're aware of, and also from hidden faults, so that the words of our mouths and the deeds of our lives may bring you praise and glory. We ask this in the name of Jesus, your ultimate gift. Amen.

Assurance of Forgiveness: Nothing that we do or say or whisper in our hearts is hidden from God. God knows, accepts, and forgives; God welcomes us back, time after time, and calls us into renewed relationship. **What sort of *thankoffering* can you offer to God at this time?**

Gathering Hymn      *The Day of Resurrection!*  
sing to *Lead on, O King Eternal*, #495/805

LBW #141, ELW 361  
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The day of resurrection! Earth, tell it out abroad,  
The Passover of gladness, the Passover of God.  
From death to life eternal, from sin's dominion free,  
Our Christ has brought us over with hymns of victory.

Let hearts be purged of evil that we may see aright  
The Lord in rays eternal of resurrection light,  
And list'ning to his accents, may hear, so calm and plain,  
His own "All hail!" and hearing, may raise the victor strain.

Now let the heav'ns be joyful, let earth its song begin,  
Let all the world keep triumph and all that is therein.  
Let all things, seen and unseen, their notes of gladness blend;  
For Christ the Lord has risen, our joy that has no end!

Then praise we God the Father, and praise we Christ his Son,  
With them the Holy Spirit, eternal Three in One;  
Till all the ransomed number fall down before the throne,  
And honor, pow'r, and glory ascribe to God alone!

Prayer of the Day 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. In the name of Jesus, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

A reading from Acts, the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter (During the season of Easter, we read from Acts instead of from the Hebrew scriptures, what we call the *Old Testament*. Today's reading is the end of Peter's sermon preached after the giving of the Holy Spirit—which we'll celebrate on Pentecost; he declares boldly that God has made the crucified Jesus both **Lord—the one to whom you owe allegiance--** and **Christ—the one to whom you owe salvation.**) Pay special attention to the bold print!

*Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice, and addressed the crowd: "Let all Israel be assured of this: **God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.**" When **the people heard this, they were cut to the heart** and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"*

*Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. **The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.**" With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "**Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.**" Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. (Acts 2:14, 36-41, NIV) The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God!*

Reflections on the text from Acts: What does it mean to you/for you that God has made Jesus **both Lord and Christ**? Is there any worldly authority more worthy to guide your life than our Lord Jesus? If you truly grant Jesus *lord-ship* over you, how will your *life* change? your *values, the way you spend your time and money*? Is there any other power in heaven or on earth that can offer you the gift of forgiveness of all your sins, and the promise of eternal life?

In last Sunday's reading from Acts 2:22-32 Peter reminded the throng gathered in Jerusalem that they, "with the help of wicked men, put Jesus to death by nailing him to the cross." This is why in today's text, **when the people heard Peter's words, they were cut to the heart**. What "cuts you to the heart" in your worship of and relationship to Jesus, our **Lord and Christ**? For me it's the feeling I get when I sing "Chief of sinners though I be, Jesus shed his blood for me."

Peter tells the crowd that **the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call**. *All whom the Lord our God will call*. How dare we, as children whom God has already blessed by calling us—how dare we ever judge other people as "outsiders" not worthy of the blessing of God? Peter *pleads* with them: **Save yourself from this corrupt generation**. An enormous aspect of "this corrupt generation" today is our perceived right to judge others as in some way "not worthy," "not good enough," because they think, or dress, or speak, or live in a way different from ours. How will people ever learn God's love if those of us who are blessed with it withhold it from them??

A reading from First Peter, the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter

*Since you call on a Father who judges each person's work impartially, **live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear.** For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that **you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you** from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so **your faith and hope are in God.** Now that you have purified yourselves by **obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers and sisters, love one another deeply, from the heart.** For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.** (I Peter 1:17-23, NIV)*

Reflections on the text from First Peter: The Bible is God's word to us today as it was to those who wrote it, quoted it, copied it, and tried to live by it beginning 4000 years ago. Therefore I want to take some liberties with understanding this text from First Peter, interpreting it into my experience of the coronavirus.

In the first bold line it strikes me that we are, in a way, "**living as strangers here in (reverent) fear.**" Social distancing has created a new way for us to be together as the body of Christ, the communion of saints, the fellowship of believers. Sometimes it *does* feel to me as if I'm a "stranger" to the congregations I serve. I can still picture you where you usually sit, but not as clearly as I could 5 weeks ago. Some of you I've spoken to, but many I've had no contact with. And while our *fear* may not be *reverent*, we all have a certain amount of anxiety about what our new "normal" will look like when the danger of contagion has been relieved.

Will we, then, live as if **redeemed from the empty way of life** we'd been living before COVID-19? Will we have revised our priorities? re-learned the infinite value of family? learned to slow down and appreciate the "simpler" things of life? Hopefully we'll recognize more clearly that **our faith and hope are in God**, not in the world's false idols and "stuff" we cling to so dearly.

One thing is sure, we have learned to "purify" ourselves! Hand sanitizer or soap and water, applied and rubbed in for the length of time it takes to sing *Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise him all creatures here below. Praise him above ye heavenly hosts. Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost!* We've been asked to wear masks or other face coverings in order to protect *others* as well as ourselves; this is one way of showing that we have **sincere love for our brothers and sisters, loving them deeply, from the heart.** **Thanks be to God!**



The holy gospel according to Luke, the 24<sup>th</sup> chapter. **Glory to you, O Lord!**

*Now on that same (first Easter) day two of the disciples were going to a village called Emmaus (emm-MAY-us), about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about everything that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; but they were kept from recognizing him. He asked them, "What are you discussing as you walk along?" They stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas (CLAY-oh-pahs), answered him, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?" He asked them, "What things?"*

*They replied, "About Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death, and crucified him. **But we had hope that he was the one to redeem Israel.** Now it is the third day since all this took place, and some of the women in our group amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning but didn't find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. Some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but him they did not see.*

*He said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter into his glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the scriptures concerning himself.*

*As they approached the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going farther. But they urged him strongly, saying "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he opened the scriptures to us?"*

*That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together, saying, "The Lord has risen indeed! He has appeared to Simon!" Then the two told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread (Luke 24:13-35).*

This is the gospel of our Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ!**

Reflections on the gospel: *But we had hoped that he would be the one to redeem Israel.*

Can you hear—can you *feel*—the disappointment, the let-down, the despair that the one they'd believed to be Messiah was dead? Not only dead, but vanished from the tomb! Where was Israel's God when they needed him most? It seemed as if God's chosen people would remain under the oppressive rule of the Romans, and the poor and needy among them would have to continue worshiping under the hypocritical leadership of the Pharisees, the scribes, and the elders.

Their hope had been that they would be vindicated in the eyes of their foreign adversaries to prove the power and glory of their God, and remove the *shame* of a nation whose god wasn't as strong as the gods of the pagans around them.

How different is the expectation we have of our God today. Removing "shame" is still important, but it's "poles apart" from what the early Hebrews believed. And the remedy God provides for freedom from shame is nothing less than the body and blood of his one and only Son, given to a broken world that's been living for itself alone.

When Cleopas and his companion sat at the table with Jesus, he—as the male guest—was the host: **He took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to them.** These two men were among his disciples in Jerusalem. They may have been present at his Last Supper, the Passover meal which celebrated God's delivery of Israel from bondage to Pharaoh 1500 years earlier. That Easter night when they received the meal from their guest, **their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight.**

When have the eyes of your heart been opened by an encounter with Jesus? Has there been a time in your life when your **heart was burning within you** as you recognized, or even just sensed, his presence with you? My prayer for you today is that your heart will yearn for a closer relationship with this Lord and Savior who died to show the world how much God loves all of us. —Thanks be to God!

Sermon Hymn     *Christ Is Alive, Let Christians Sing*     LBW 363, ELW 389

**This hymn is copied on the next page, after the Creed.**

**Creed:** God has made us his people through our baptism into Christ. Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith: I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

# 363 Christ Is Alive! Let Christians Sing

1 Christ is a - live! Let Chris - tians sing, His cross stands  
 2 Christ is a - live! No long - er bound To dis - tant  
 3 Not throned a - far, re - mote - ly high, Un - touched, un -  
 4 In ev - 'ry in - sult, rift, and war, Where col - or,

emp - ty to the sky. Let streets and homes with  
 years in Pal - es - tine, He comes to claim the  
 moved by hu - man pains, But dai - ly, in the  
 scorn, or wealth di - vide, He suf - fers still, yet

prais - es ring. In death his love shall nev - er die.  
 here and now And con - quer ev - 'ry place and time.  
 midst of life, Our Sav - ior with the Fa - ther reigns.  
 loves the more, And lives, though ev - er cru - ci - fied.

5 Christ is alive! Ascended Lord—  
 He rules the world his Father made,  
 Till, in the end, his love adored  
 Shall be to all on earth displayed.



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.

God of faith, we pray for those whose hearts are fervent with love for your gospel, that they may be empowered to tell the story of your love in their lives, and to show your love in their words and deeds. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of all peoples and nations, we pray for the broken systems we have inherited, that we may stop abusing this good creation of yours. Restrain all nations from fighting over limited resources. Redeem us from the cycles of scarcity and violence. Call all leaders—international, national, and local—to be servants of those whose lives they hold in their hands. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of health and healing, redeem our earth and all her people from the coronavirus that is devastating lives and livelihoods. Your wisdom holds all creation together. Turn the hearts of all people away from personal gain and selfish desires, that we may fight this unseen deadly enemy with unified purpose and fervor. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of hope, 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.**

All these things, and whatever else you see that we need, we ask you in the name of Jesus, your Son, our Savior. **Amen.**

Offering Song      **Praise God from whom all blessings flow.  
Praise him, all creatures here below.  
Praise him above, you heavenly host.  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

Benediction: May the Lord bless you and keep you, may the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you, may the Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Sending Song      *Jesus Christ Is Risen Today*  
*Words on next page*

Sending Song      *Jesus Christ Is Risen Today*

Jesus Christ is ris'n today, Al-le-lu-ia! Our triumphant holy day, Al-le-lu-ia!  
Who did once upon the cross, Al-le-lu-ia! Suffer to redeem our loss. Al-le-lu-ia!

Hymns of praise then let us sing, Al-le-lu-ia! Unto Christ, our heav'nly king, Al-le-lu-ia!  
Who endured the cross and grave, Al-le-lu-ia! Sinners to redeem and save. Al-le-lu-ia!

But the pains which he endured, Al-le-lu-ia! Our salvation have procured; Al-le-lu-ia!  
Now above the sky he's king, Al-le-lu-ia! Where the angels ever sing. Al-le-lu-ia!

Sing we to our God above, Al-le-lu-ia! Praise eternal as his love; Al-le-lu-ia!  
Praise him, all you heav'nly host, Al-le-lu-ia! Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Al-le-lu-ia!

A final closing prayer (from LBW 129; this is the prayer pastors use when they forget to bring the ones they'd planned)

Let us pray: Almighty and everlasting God, you are worthy to be held in reverence by all the mortal race. We give you thanks for the innumerable blessings which, despite our unworthiness, you have showered upon us.

We praise you that you have preserved for us your saving Word and sacred worship in your house. Grant and preserve to your Church throughout the world purity of doctrine and faithful pastors to preach your Word with power; and help all who hear, rightly to understand and firmly to believe your Word of truth.

Protect and defend your people in time of tribulation and danger, so that we, in communion with your Church and in unity with all Christian people, may fight the good fight of faith and in the end receive the fullness of salvation.

Upon all the nations of the earth bestow your grace. We ask you to bless our land and all its inhabitants and all who are in authority. Cause your glory to dwell among us, and let mercy and truth, justice and peace everywhere prevail. Accept, we pray, our bodies and souls, our hearts and minds, our talents and powers, together with our offering of praise.

And as we are strangers and pilgrims on earth, help us to prepare for the world to come, doing the work which you have given us to do while it is day, before that night comes when no one can work. And, when our last hour shall come, receive us into your everlasting kingdom, where, with your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, you live and reign, God forever. **Amen.**

Now go (or stay!) in peace to love and serve the Lord! **Amen.**