

Sunday 18th April 2020 – Bulwell United Reformed Church

Today's worship for the second Sunday after Easter is based on Jesus appearing to the two disciples on the Emmaus Road. A short service for personal communion is included as we remember Jesus revealing himself in the breaking of bread in this story. Please have your bread & wine/juice ready.

A gathering prayer

God, we gather as your people.
We come to walk a journey together,
to talk and to share along the way,
[to feast on bread and wine],
to meet and to know Jesus.
Help us to marvel at all that Jesus has done for us. **Amen.**

A prayer of confession

Risen Lord, we are sorry
that we fail to recognise you in our midst,
that we are too preoccupied with ourselves.
We are sorry
that we let you down,
that we feast and don't invite others to share with us.
We are sorry
that we welcome friends but not always the stranger,
or anyone who makes us feel uncomfortable.
Forgive us, Lord.
Help us to be generous people,
our church, our homes – and our hearts –
always places of welcome. **Amen.**



Our Father

Song - The Power of the Cross (Oh to see the dawn) – Keith & Kristyn Getty

[\(463\) The Power of the Cross \(Official Lyric Video\) - Keith & Kristyn Getty - YouTube](#)

Luke 24: 13-35 - On the road to Emmaus

¹³ Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles^[a] from Jerusalem. ¹⁴ They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. ¹⁵ As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; ¹⁶ but they were kept from recognising him.

¹⁷ He asked them, 'What are you discussing together as you walk along?'

They stood still, their faces downcast. ¹⁸ One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, 'Are you the only one visiting Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?'

¹⁹ 'What things?' he asked.

'About Jesus of Nazareth,' they replied. 'He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. ²⁰ The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; ²¹ but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. ²² In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning ²³ but didn't find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. ²⁴ Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see Jesus.'

²⁵ He said to them, 'How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?' ²⁷ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

²⁸ As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus continued on as if he were going further. ²⁹ But they urged him strongly, 'Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over.' So he went in to stay with them.

³⁰ When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. ³¹ Then their eyes were opened and they recognised him, and he disappeared from their sight. ³² They asked each other, 'Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?'

³³ They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together ³⁴ and saying, 'It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon.' ³⁵ Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognised by them when he broke the bread. (NIVUK)

REFLECTION - *On the road to Emmaus, two followers of Jesus were talking about what had happened to him. They did not yet know that he was risen. They were in darkness and could not yet pray as we can pray in our dark times:*

Dying Jesus,
whose final human pain was a sense of abandonment by God,
look mercifully on this suffering humanity
that we who endure the evil of this world
may enter into your transformation of it,
and in so doing come again into hearing range
of our heavenly Father, whose love is stronger than death
and to whom we pray in your name.

As the two followers talked, Jesus drew near, but they did not see that he was the Risen Christ. When we do not recognise how close Jesus is to us, we may pray:

Saving God, to whom the darkness and the light are both alike,
enter into the dark places of our lives
and fill them with what you want us to see.
Take our blindness and give us new vision for the way ahead;
take our fear and give us fresh courage for the path
that leads to the fulfilment of our lives:

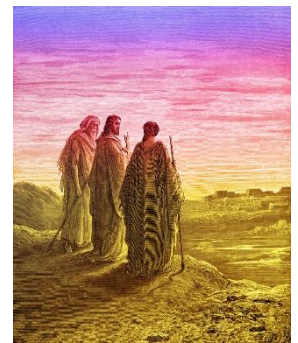
for the sake of your beloved human race
made perfect in your beloved Son, Jesus.

In answer to Jesus's questions, the followers told their story, his story, and he opened the scriptures to them. We pray for our eyes to be opened to God's Word.

All-seeing and unseen God,
you make your presence known to us when we least expect it.
Come to us, we pray, when our need is greatest;
and when we have forgotten need and least think of you.
Give us peace when we are troubled;
disturb us when we are complacent.
When we are locked into darkness, release us.
When we are neglectful of the darkness, open our eyes
to see the one who overcame the powers of darkness for our sakes.

As they neared the end of their journey, the two followers invited Jesus to supper. Only then did they realise who he was. We pray to be aware of Jesus in the world today.

God of darkness and light, we see you not as you are but as we are.
Take these clouded lenses from our eyes.
Unprotected from your brightness,
make us not so dazzled by your purity,
or so blinded by your perfection,
or so horror-struck by your integrity
that we fail to see you all around us
in the struggle of our lives.
Through the holiness of your Spirit



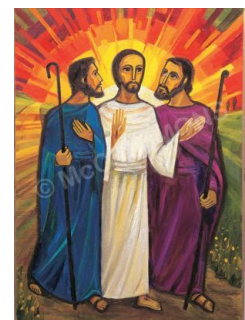
At the end of the journey, the two followers knew resurrection joy. With great energy, they walked the seven miles back to Jerusalem to tell the other disciples. We too give thanks for the Saviour's presence in our daily lives.

Living Jesus,
whose presence on our daily road we fail to see in the grief that surrounds us,
warm our hearts with fresh confidence in your Word so that, in making room for the
stranger beside us, we find your hospitality awaiting us, and the reassurance of your
presence to inspire us to tread the road again and share the good news of your resurrection
life.

Terry Garley, Fire & Bread, Wild Goose Publications

Prayers during the pandemic

Gracious God
as we journey through this pandemic,
watching its effect, fearing its progress,
we turn to you in hope and expectation.
By restraining ourselves
from greeting others as we would wish for over a year,



we have learned to value human contact as never before.
Let your Spirit's touch upon our lives encourage and sustain us
in these days of promise and recovery.
We commit to you those who grieve.
We thank you for all who sustain us.
Amen.

By the Revd John Young, retired minister of the Scottish Synod URC and member of Giffnock URC

Hymn How deep the Father's love for us (Stuart Townend) Video:

[\(463\) How Deep The Father's Love For Us - YouTube](#)

HOLY COMMUNION

A gathering prayer for the communion table

Heavenly Father, we are reminded today that Jesus met with many people on different occasions.

He shared in simple meals and showed his love for all those present by comforting them, encouraging them and challenging them.

As we share in this meal, we thank you for his body and blood so freely given.

Give us the vision to carry on the task he gave to each one of us, to share not only what we have with others but to spread the good news about his love for the whole world.

Amen.

The Breaking of the Bread and Pouring of the Wine

Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast.

I Corinthians 5:7

The Sharing of the Bread and the Wine

Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.

Blessed are those who are called to the wedding feast of the Lamb. Alleluia.

Take, eat; this is the body of Christ, broken for you. Do this in remembrance of him.

This cup is the new covenant in the blood of Christ, shed for you and for all, for the forgiveness of sin. Drink of it, all of you, in remembrance of him.

Prayer after Communion

God of a love stronger than death, you have given us new birth into a living hope through the gift of your Son.

God with us, you have fed us with yourself and strengthened us for journeying ahead.

God of truth and power, you take our weakness and our sin and refashion us by grace.

Blessing

Gracious God,
may the love which bids us welcome at this table
gather all your children into one,
in your eternal presence,
whole and free at last. **Amen**



