All-Age Worship, The Road to Emmaus

Opening prayer

Let us be still as we begin our worship today.

Psalm 66 vs. 1 – 6 (Youth Bible):
Everything on earth, shout with joy to God!
Sing about his glory!
Make his praise glorious!
Say to God, “Your works are amazing!
Because your power is great, your enemies fall before you.
All the earth worships you
And sings praises to you.
They sing praises to your name.”

Confession

Here’s a prayer of confession based on Jesus’ encounter with the disciples on the Emmaus Road (Luke 24: 13-35)

O Jesus Christ, sometimes we are so busy talking with each other that we forget to find you beside us. We walk on, so focussed on our questions that we do not make quiet spaces which would allow you to speak with us and see you on the journey with us.

Let’s be quite to think about where Jesus has been on the journey with us.

Stay with us, Jesus Christ. Reach out towards us and invite us to stop and meet with you, we pray.

As we look at our lives and that of the world around us, we are sometimes too nervous to share our real questions and fears at this time during corona virus, we are sorry Jesus.

Let’s be quiet and think about our questions and Jesus with all of us.

Stay with us, Jesus Christ.
Reach out towards us
and invite us to pause and meet with you, we pray.
We call your name, O Christ,
and hope to discover you here
in our community of vulnerable faith. Amen.

Words of Assurance

Whether we believe it, or not, Jesus Christ never leaves us nor forsakes us. Let us open our hearts to receive the grace which Christ brings to us in faithfulness. We are forgiven!
Thanks be to God!

**Gospel reading: On the Road to Emmaus (Luke 24 vs. 13 -35)**

*(Lion Storyteller Bible)*

Talking and walking, walking and talking, the two men travelled from Jerusalem to Emmaus. It was a long journey on foot and because the two men were followers of Jesus, there was plenty to talk about - like the rumour that some of His friends had seen Him alive again! So talking and walking, walking and talking, they made their way. Then a stranger joined them:

“I hear you talking, I see you walking”, said the stranger. “You sound excited, what are you talking about?”

“We’re talking about Jesus”, said one of the men and then talking and walking, walking and talking he explained: “Jesus was a prophet sent from God. He did amazing things. Many of us thought He was the special one God promised to save us from our enemies but the religious leaders sentenced Him to death. The Romans killed Him on a cross and all our hope died with Him. That was three days ago but this morning, some of the women who knew Him went to visit His tomb and His body wasn’t there! Better still, an angel told them that Jesus wasn’t dead anymore! That He was alive again!”

The stranger listened carefully and then talking and walking, walking and talking, He told the two men what He thought.

“You sound surprised”, He said. “Isn’t that what the prophet said would happen to the special one? If this Jesus died and came to life again, then surely that shows that He is the special one you’ve been waiting for?”

At last, talking and walking, walking and talking, they came to Emmaus.

“It’s late”, said the two men to the stranger. “Why don’t you stay here with us over night?”

And so talking and walking, walking and talking, they prepared a simple meal.

“Do you mind if I give thanks for the food?” asked the stranger.

“Of course not”, said the two men.

So taking and breaking the bread, the stranger bowed His head and prayed and that’s when the two men knew – the stranger, the man on the road, the one they’d been talking and walking with all afternoon wasn’t a stranger at all! He was Jesus alive again! But before they could say a thing, Jesus disappeared. He simply wasn’t there anymore and they were left alone to wonder.

“We need to tell someone about this!” they cried.

So they hurried back to Jerusalem - not talking, not walking, but running and jumping for joy!

**A Reflection on the reading**

*(Christine Cattanach, Intergenerational Missioner in Ross)*

I’ve been thinking about the two people who are walking on the road to Emmaus. We hear that they are in a time that they didn’t expect to be in and how they thought one thing was going to happen, but instead something completely different has happened. We hear about their feelings of confusion and bewilderment and even fear. It reminds me of the situation we find ourselves in at this moment in history – this time of pandemic where we are all of us experiencing something that we never expected to happen. The journey we find ourselves on has interrupted our lives and created feelings of confusion and fear and bewilderment.
As we look at this story, what does Jesus do when He arrives on the scene? He doesn’t introduce Himself, He doesn’t talk about the weather - He wants to know what the two disciples are talking about. He wants to know what’s on their minds. He listens to what they say and He brings, by being there, his physical presence. By the way He speaks, His compassion, His listening ear, He brings understanding to them and He ultimately brings peace to the situation. He tells them that all of this was foretold and nothing unexpected has really happened. It made me think about the situation we are in now and it made me question that, just like the two people walking on that road – do we recognize Jesus? Do we recognize that He is in fact walking right next to each one of us, all of the time? It makes me think about a shape:

You might recognize this yourself. You might think, is it a maze? You might feel like you’re in a maze at the moment. A maze looks a bit like this but a maze has lots of entrances and it’s got lots of dead ends and it’s got no definite path or it has paths that lead you to confusion or to a feeling of being lost or frustrated. But a labyrinth is not like a maze, it’s different. It only has one entrance and one exit and no matter where you go on your labyrinth, you will always find your way. You can follow this one with your finger, or if you know of a labyrinth outside, you could walk along it.

In a labyrinth, as you walk and put one foot in front of the other, it doesn’t matter how far you actually go from the centre of the labyrinth. No matter where you go, it will always eventually lead you to the cross. The cross is really important in the story, but it’s really important in our lives as well, because the cross is the thing that represents what happened 2000 years ago but is relevant now. It’s the cross that can bring us transformation. It’s the cross that can bring us liberation from our feelings of being overwhelmed or fearful. It’s the cross that can bring us reassurance. It’s the cross that can bring us peace.

Worship Song

'Who You Say I Am' Hillsong Worship
Words and Music by Ben Fielding & Reuben Morgan
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Who am I that the highest King would welcome me?
I was lost but He brought me in, oh His love for me
Oh His love for me
Who the Son sets free, oh is free indeed
I'm a child of God, yes I am
Free at last, He has ransomed me
His grace runs deep
While I was a slave to sin, Jesus died for me
Yes He died for me
Who the Son sets free, oh is free indeed
I'm a child of God, yes I am
In my Father's house, there's a place for me
I'm a child of God, yes I am
I am chosen, not forsaken
I am who You say I am
You are for me, not against me
I am who You say I am

A creative activity to reflect on the reading (from Messy Church, BRF):

Try these activities and think about our story today. If you can’t get exactly these materials, just see what you can find around the house instead!

**Footprints**

You will need: cardboard; craft knife or scissors; chopping board; sticky tack or PVA glue; paper; paint

With adult supervision, cut the cardboard into the rough shape of little feet (a small disc will be fine, if a foot shape is too fiddly) – make them small enough to stick on to the end of your finger as if your finger is the leg. Stick a foot with sticky tack or PVA glue on to the tip of your middle and index fingers, dip into the paint and ‘walk’ your feet along the paper, leaving a footprint trail behind. Repeat it with a different colour of paint walking beside the first set. Then, with a third colour, add a third set of footprints joining the first two half way across the paper.

Talk about how in today’s story, two of Jesus’ friends were walking down the road on Easter afternoon, when someone very surprising met them and walked along with them as far as their home. Perhaps when you’ve heard the story, you’d like to add what each of those sets of footprints did next!

**Slo-fast races**

You will need: a clear space inside or out; a timer

The challenge is to see who can go from A to B the most slowly: make a note of the time it takes each person – you can all do it together. Then see who can be fastest to go from B back to A.

Talk about how sometimes when you’re sad, a journey can seem to take a really long time, but when you’re happy, the same journey can pass by really quickly. I wonder why two friends of Jesus went one way with very heavy sad hearts, but came back again the same day at full speed and full of excitement.
Hello, my name is Beckie Dotson and I have been asked to write just a little bit about my journey of faith during this time of self-isolation and social distancing. It hasn’t been the easiest thing to do over the years and one that has been quite a struggle. Over this time, I have been finding different ways to draw closer to God and that has been through journaling and colouring. I have several colouring scripture books and Bibles and some of those are Inspire Psalms and my Inspire Bible.

I have taken this time to read my way through the Psalms and God has really spoken to me through them. I don’t know about you, but I sometimes would much rather read a novel than pick up my Bible and so I challenged myself to read the Psalms a bit like that to start with and write down all the verses that jumped out to me. The ones that I wanted to try and remember. This has meant that I am not reading it like a novel anymore because I have slowed down to read the words and want to know more as to where it fits in other places in scripture and what God is saying to me.

Over this time, I have wanted to know more about God, who He is as a person, what He has done for us and how we can do this. As a family, we all like to colour, so I have found different Psalms colouring sheets for them to use online and we have been able to have that time together. Although this isn’t the easiest time for anyone, we have been given an opportunity to spend time with God and to learn more about Him through the scriptures. The Psalms are full of God’s promises and His love for us and they are repeated over and over again.

Other ways that as a family we are trying to learn more is by doing little challenges. This has involved using the alphabet to think about some Bible names and then written them down. We are then using that list to find out what information we can about the characters in the Bible. What did they go through, where was God with them and anything else that we can find out about them. You might find a few surprises, just like I did when I started with David.

In this time, I have found permission to read my Bible like never before and to go deeper and to grow more in my relationship with my Heavenly Father. This has also helped to strengthen my relationship with Him and to hear Him talk to me like I haven’t before.

Over this time, I would encourage you to find a way that works for you to journey with God and to finder that deeper relationship with Him. These are just a few of the ways that God has used to speak to me over this period of social distancing and I believe that He wants to do that with you too. I pray that you may find this a little encouraging as you grow deeper in your walk with our Heavenly Father.

**Prayers**

**Words by Jo Child (Intergenerational Missioner in South Wye)**

*Please pray for our families and young people who would have been attending Christian camps and festivals, that they remain connected to God and each other at this time.*

Lord God, we thank You that life and faith is a journey. Even when we find ourselves in a hard place, we are not stuck there. With you beside us, there is always a way forward.
As we journey with you during this Easter period, help us to also journey with one another – to learn and grow together in faith.

Comfort us Lord, when our hopes are dashed and the road ahead looks frightening and uncertain.

Forgive us for our lack of trust, and help us to place our confidence in you, knowing that you are always with us, bringing us peace and hope.

Help us to recognize your voice, when you speak to us, and to see you in the small, ordinary, everyday moments of life.

Most of all, Lord, let Your presence fill us with joy, and a desire to share that joy with others.

In the Holy name of Jesus we pray, Amen.

Closing Prayer

Lord thank You for drawing us together - for showing us so many way ways that You speak to us and draw close to us. We thank you for the opportunity to worship together in spirit with our friends and family and strangers from across the world, even though we are physically apart. We pray that as we go from this time, that You will draw close to us and we would recognize you in the most ordinary of places and the most extraordinary of experiences. Bless us we pray, as we walk with You and may we know You each and every day. Amen.