

Order of Service 26/4/2020 Easter 3C

Opening verse on screen

Luke 24:30-31a When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him.

Prelude:

BUC Song Project Now we see

1. Troubled hearts

Walk Emmaus Road

Hope is lost

Empty Scriptures scorned

Chorus 1

Broken but now blessing

bread that is Your body.

Our hearts burn within us,

Now we see

Hidden but now sharing

New wine that is Your blood

Foolish in our faith yet

Now we see

2. Unknown paths,

narrow, darkened ways,

Whispering God

Strengthen us we pray. *Chorus 1*

3. Living God,

Source of hope today.

Be our light

reflect in our face.

Chorus 2

Risen and now present

You bring to us wholeness

Forgive us our doubting

Now we see

Risen and now present

Walking anew with us,

You bring to us healing

Now we see.

Repeat chorus 2

SONG: [Now we see](#), by Elaine Loukes, February 08, used with permission

Gathering, Greeting and Call to Worship

Natalie

Good morning, and welcome to the Brunswick Uniting Church live-stream.

As we continue in the 50 days of Easter, let's light our candles together, and then join in the traditional Easter greeting:

Then: "Christ is risen! **He is risen indeed!**"

Christ, who is risen and walks beside us, has called you to this time and space.

God, who overcomes the greatest of sorrows welcomes you with open arms.

May the Spirit, who breathes life into all things, bring you peace and joy as we worship together.

Let us celebrate the risen Christ, the God who welcomes, and the Spirit who brings life by singing Halle Halle Hallelujah.

If you have some percussion instruments, please join in. And don't be shy about dancing about your room. Ready? Let's go!

Opening Song:

Tis 720 Halle halle hallelujah

Halle, halle, hallelujah!

Halle, halle, hallelujah! (Hallelujah!)

Halle, halle, hallelujah!

Hallelujah, hallelujah! (Hallelujah!)

SONG: [Halle, halle, halle](#), words: traditional liturgical text, from [Together in Song](#), Harper Collins *Religious*, PUBLIC DOMAIN

Acknowledgement of Country

Owen Parris

We acknowledge and respect the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation, the traditional custodians of this land since time immemorial.

We are learning that the land is not ours to own, but to look after; and that if we listen, we may hear in it the calling of the eternal Spirit.

Responding to this call, we commit ourselves to work for justice, reconciliation, and care of the earth.

Welcome and Introduction

Natalie

Welcome to Worship from Brunswick Uniting Church. You are welcome here whether you are familiar with our congregation, or if you have only recently joined us online. During the prelude, we played music written by Elaine Potter, a member of our congregation, and showed a painting by Emmanuel Garibay of the meal at Emmaus. If you'd like to learn more about the painting, please look for the link on the church website and on Facebook.

This morning's service has been pre-recorded with help from many members of our congregation, recording in their homes, or in our worship space. Thank you to everyone who has contributed.

Today is the 3rd Sunday of Easter, and we hear the story of the disciples as they walked to Emmaus and met the risen Jesus along the way. After the service, we'd normally welcome you for morning tea, so please enjoy some morning tea at home afterwards. If you're a regular member you may like to call someone from the congregation that you haven't connected with for a while. If you're not a regular member, please take the time to send us a note through our website so we can connect with you.

And now, let us pray, beginning by singing the chant "O Lord hear my prayer" as we settle into a quieter moment. During the prayer, I will invite you three times to respond like this. I will say In your mercy, and you are invited to respond "hear our prayer". In your mercy: hear our prayer. Let's pray.

Prayers of Adoration and Confession

O Lord, hear my prayer,
 O Lord, hear my prayer:
 When I call, answer me.
 O Lord, hear my prayer,
 O Lord, hear my prayer,
 Come and listen to me.

SONG: [O Lord, hear my prayer](#), by Jacques Berthier, from [Together in Song](#), Harper Collins *Religious*, WORD OF LIFE

Listening God, you hear the cries of your people,
 Restoring and lifting up all who call on you,
 Even when we have turned far from your presence,
 You hear our cries for help, and you respond with grace.

Risen Christ, you walk beside us, even when we do not know it,
 Teaching and inspiring us with your life, death and resurrection,
 Even when we fail to understand the meaning of it
 You heal us from our brokenness.

Empowering Spirit, you move throughout creation,
 Inviting and urging us to see the face of Christ in the stranger,
 Even when we turn away and fail to help
 You blind us with the realisation that we are called to follow.

Creator, Christ and Holy Spirit,
 We turn to you and confess those things that divide us from you.
 We hold our earth before you.

In your mercy

Hear our prayer

We hold all the world's people before you.

In your mercy

Hear our prayer

We hold each other and ourselves before you.

In your mercy

Hear our prayer

Hear our prayer so that we may turn to you, and walk with you beside us.

O Lord, hear my prayer,
 O Lord, hear my prayer:
 When I call, answer me.
 O Lord, hear my prayer,
 O Lord, hear my prayer,
 Come and listen to me.

Declaration of Forgiveness

Amen.

Psalm 116, our Psalm for this week tells us that God's ear is inclined towards us, and God hears our voices and our prayers, as long as we live. Through Christ, in Christ, and because of Christ, we have new life and can face the future with confidence.

Sisters and brothers, our sin is forgiven. **Thanks be to God.**

Meg will now bring us our first Bible Reading.

Gospel Reading: Luke 24:13-35

Meg Orton

The Walk to Emmaus

Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, 'What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?' They stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, 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, 'The things 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 hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him.' Then he said to them, 'Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?' Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, 'Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.' So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished 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 was opening the scriptures to us?' That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying, 'The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!' Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

For these words of witness and for Christ the Word

Thanks be to God

With the Children

Jill and Andrew Moorhouse

Jill and Andrew talk about the story of the Cleopas and his companion encountering Jesus on their walk to Emmaus. We also watched a stop motion Lego video created by Harry and Bruce Jackson.

Song – **Road to Emmaus**, by Shawn Whelan (including an introductory video)

Jesus, we long to see your face

Jesus, we long to know your grace

And so we walk

And so we talk

Along the road to Emmaus

O how your words burned within our hearts

O how your call rang true

O how our world was turned upside down

All because of you

Jesus, we long to see your face
Jesus, we long to know your grace
And so we walk
And so we talk
Along the road to Emmaus

So is it true - the tombstone rolled away?
Did Mary hear your voice?
And did she hold your risen body close
And can we now rejoice?

Jesus, we long to see your face
Jesus, we long to know your grace
And so we walk
And so we talk
Along the road to Emmaus

Jesus, we meet you on the Way
Jesus, we serve you and we pray
And still we walk
And still we talk
Along the road to Emmaus
Along the road to Emmaus

[Road to Emmaus](#), by Shawn Whelan, © 2020, used with permission

Epistle: 1 Peter 1:17-23

Geoff Thompson

If you invoke as Father the one who judges all people impartially according to their deeds, live in reverent fear during the time of your exile. You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without defect or blemish. He was destined before the foundation of the world, but was revealed at the end of the ages for your sake. Through him you have come to trust in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are set on God. Now that you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth so that you have genuine mutual love, love one another deeply from the heart. You have been born anew, not of perishable but of imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God.

For these words of witness and for Christ the Word

Thanks be to God

Sermon

Valentina

I would like to begin with an invitation. If you are able I invite -you who are watching, to sit up and close your eyes if possible, take a deep breath and as we do so, let us invite the Holy Spirit to grant us the words to speak, to hear and to reflect as we draw near to God on this day, which we consider our sabbath. (Breathe in... hold...exhale).

Walking together has become an everyday activity for Tom and myself in these #StayHome days. We did go on walks 'together,' before we were asked to 'shelter in place', but not as regularly. Now that we **work** from the same geographical space, our schedules permitting, we go on walks together. I am aware that many folks from our BUC community have been going on walks around their neighborhoods, this because I have seen the images of the beauty, the newness, you discover on your walks posted on social media.

For the most part Tom and I end up taking our walks at the end of our workday in the evening.

Some days, the challenge for me on these walks is that of my vision - things look blurry when I step out. I can see things, but they are not clear. This happens when I have spent more than three or four hours staring straight at my laptop screen. Not a good habit I know, I know! Please let me clarify, it is not like I am unable to see; it's just unfocused and Tom walks with me on those days, so I am ok until my vision normalizes. However, I do have to add that on some of those visually fuzzy days that Tom has not been able to walk with me due to schedules, I am fine walking the paths I walk on since I travel these roads and streets often so they are well known to me. Sometimes something in nature finds me – the call of a bell bird that I had not heard before, the fragrance of a flowering bush, the laughter of the kookaburra – all very clear out of the fuzziness.

Our text from Luke today speaks of a walk. A road we all have heard about – the road to Emmaus. While we may have not walked the actual physical road to Emmaus, that road is perhaps known to us.

Cleopas and companion (who is unnamed) are walking the 7-mile (10 - 11km) road to Emmaus. The Lukan text informs us that they are sad. The story they share with the stranger that has stepped in with them gives witness to their brokenness, it echoes of hopes that have been dashed. We have all been on similar paths, have we not?

We have walked in pain and isolation when we have encountered ruptured relationships.

We have walked in grief and confusion when we have received medical results.

We have walked in disappointment when faced with the loss of a job

We have walked in fear at the prospect of losing the roof over our head.

Cleopas and companion probably feel all that - confusion, pain, disappointment and perhaps some more. I wonder, why they chose to leave and not stay behind with the other disciples? Perhaps they are afraid? We are not sure because Luke does not tell us. However, based on what Luke shares we can assume that they are grieving and deep in conversation with each other. Maybe their conversation revolves around making sense of what they had seen and experienced. Maybe they are analyzing what happened and why? Maybe they are so deep in conversation, and maybe their conversation was so vigorous that they did not recognize Jesus when he got in step with them.

Why was Jesus not recognized at first? Was Jesus wearing a mask like Andrew Moorehouse in our children's time this morning? Did Jesus look different? We are not given that information by Luke.

Jesus falls in alongside Cleopas and companion and asks, "what were you discussing with each other while you walk along?" Their response standing still and sad questioning - don't you know, did you not see, where have you been, are you clueless? They question Jesus' lack of knowledge on current events, but they themselves are unable to see the one who has joined them.

They had high hopes and their hope was built on the prophecy within their tradition – the prophecy of redemption. What have you heard and what do you hope for? Are you still awaiting the resurrection?

Have you seen the risen Lord?

We are still in the season of Easter and we will be until Pentecost. This time given to us, to us who as the text from 1 Peter says we who have been born anew. This time is the opportunity perhaps to discern what Easter, the resurrection means for us today. We have walked down and continue to walk down the road of isolation, broken hearts and lost jobs, broken dreams, and uncertainty of what's next. We have had our hopes crashed. The risen Jesus walks along with us - do you see him? Are you able to expect the unexpected?

On the road to Emmaus, Jesus takes time to retell the story – what was the meaning of all that had occurred - the need for the suffering, the death, and the resurrection.

On our walk during this season - we do need to retell the story and as we retell this story, let us take a deep look around us. As we sit at our tables let us think about what we see. Let us evaluate, rather re-evaluate everything around us. What do you see?

That which was normal is no longer applicable. We are being enabled to see that which has been ignored. People, places, services we took for granted are now being viewed as essential. I choose to use the word priceless. Those who clean our hospitals and our public spaces.

Jesus joins us at the table, the most ordinary of places. A common theme in Luke. Yes, there is significance to gathering around the table because everyone is at this table – take a minute to close your eyes and visualize who is at this table along with Jesus – the poor and the rich, the people on the margins and those in high places, the fisherfolk and the coal barons, the caregivers and big pharma. If you think you are at the wrong table, I invite you to look again, and think again.

My prayer for us is that we remain enlightened, and illumined and that we keep walking towards where we are called in our current world. Spanish Mystic John of the Cross while in prison for trying to bring reform to his Carmelite order wrote, “In the dark night of the soul bright flows the river of God.”ⁱ You may feel a dark night upon us, but I invite you to read, recite, retell the story of Jesus of his life, his death, and his resurrection.

I invite you this day to engage with another in a conversation whether it is across your table as you break bread, or chat across your couch or your coffee table, over phone, over zoom. As you make fellowship with another, retell the story, retell your story, retell how and where you recognize the risen Jesus. Look for how Christ reveals Christ self to you

Resurrection happens in many places, in our everyday living and in our dark nights. God is with us even when we fail to see clearly. Jesus walks beside us! May we recognize the risen Jesus on this, our walk. Amen.

Reflective music after the sermon – instrumental version of **TiS 382 Now the green blade rises**

Offering

Natalie

It's now time for us to respond to God's grace with our own gifts. Making our offering to God is, like everything else about online worship, a bit strange. We can't see the empty bowls being passed around the congregation. If we're in the habit of putting money in the bowl, we can't. Since I give by direct debit, I usually spend the offering thinking about my other offerings to God and the church. My time, the skills I have, or a new commitment I would like to make to respond to the sermon. So, during the offering this week, I invite you to think about these things, perhaps with your hands open, and join in the song whenever you are ready. During the last verse, I invite you to stand and we will, together make a gesture of an offering with our hands like this.

Let us make our offering to God.

Song: **TiS 382 Now the green blade rises**

1. Now the green blade rises from the buried grain,
Wheat down in the dark earth many days has lain;
Love lives again, that with the dead has been:
Love has come again, like wheat that springs up green.

2. In the grave they laid him, Love whom men had slain,
Thinking that he never would awake again,
Laid in the earth like grain that sleeps unseen:
Love has come again, like wheat that springs up green.

3. Up he sprang at Easter, like the risen grain,
He who for the three days in the grave had lain;
raised from the dead my living Lord is seen:
Love has come again, like wheat that springs up green.

4. When our hearts are saddened, grieving, or in pain,
then your touch can call us back to life again –
Fields of our hearts that dead and bare have been:
Love has come again, like wheat that springs up green.

SONG: [Love has come again](#), by John Maclead Campbell Crum, from [Together in Song](#),
Harper Collins *Religious*, Reproduced with permission by CCLI license no. 247623

Creator, Christ and Holy Spirit, receive these, our offerings,
Money, time, skills, renewed commitment,
May we, and may these gifts, be used for your service, and for the good of all people,
Amen.

Simone will now lead us in the prayers of the people.

Prayers of the People

Simone

Let us pray

Breathe deep

In the stillness

In the quietness

Let us offer our desires to the one who made us.

In the midst of turmoil and confusion

In noisy houses and quiet streets

Please God

Hear our prayers today

We ask for hope

In this isolation

We look for signposts to a hopeful future

We ask for courage

When we can't see the signs yet.

Sit with us

When we feel lonely

Hold us

When panic rises in our chest

Strengthen us

When we feel overwhelmed

Mother God

Let our longing bodies feel your arms around us.

Instead of waiting

Of hibernating

Help us to live our lives fully now

And love our bodies wholly

Even when we feel we must hide away from others.

Help us to see the joy in this time of restrictions

Help us to create joy at this time

And maybe we can bring that joy to others

Through your constant love
We have the strength to love others
With you by our side
We can be the helping hands in our world

Give us courage to face the scars of the world
And to tend the scars within us.

In this moment of silence
Hear our prayers offered up to you.

In the name of Jesus Christ we pray
Amen

Notices

Saide

Good morning I'm Saide. I'm taking a few moments now to share some notices with you. Next Sunday **3rd May**, the first Sunday of the month, we will observe the practice of a communion of the empty hands. We will not be sharing bread and juice instead we will focus and reflect on Jesus' words 'Do this in remembrance of me'.

Please keep up to date with the details of news and events on the Brunswick Uniting Church website through the Olive Press and the events page. Meditation is shared on WhatsApp on weekdays. Table Church is shared via Zoom on the second and fourth Sundays. Sacred Harp will be shared by via Zoom next Sunday. Our church camp was scheduled for 23rd-24th May. Instead of heading off to Adekate we will instead enjoy a virtual camp experience. Courtney will share some news about our virtual camp experience in a moment. And finally we hope that you are finding a way to share a creative way to respond to the Household of God project. Again all the details are on our website and in weekly emails for members of the congregation.

Sending Song

Song: **NCH249 Peace I leave with you my friends** (Ray Repp)

Peace I leave with you, my friends,

Shalom, my peace in all you do.

Peace I leave with you, my friends,

I give to you so you can give to others too.

1. To share God's love is why I came
To show God's kindness without end
Go now, my friends, and do the same,
until I come again.

2. Take my hand and be at peace;
The spirit of our love I send.
And with this love you will be free,
until I come again.

3. With this love now all will know
That loneliness is at an end.
Rejoice, my friends, although I go,
for I will come again.

SONG: [Peace I leave with you](#), by Ray Repp, from New Century Hymnal,
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Blessing and Sending

Friends,
May God who is known to us in Jesus,
Flow brightly into our lives each day!
May Jesus who is our companion,
Walk with, before and behind us every day!
May the Holy Spirit shine through our despair
and illumine our fuzzy our vision.
May we the bearers and sharers of God's story,
find light on our way - Now and Always
Amen.

Closing verse on screen

1 Peter 1:22 Now that you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth so that you have genuine mutual love, love one another deeply from the heart.

Postlude - Peace I leave with you my friends

ⁱ <https://makeheaven.com/st-john-of-the-cross.html> (accessed April 2020)