

SUNDAY, APRIL 19, 2026
THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER YEAR A
LUKE 24:13-35 | "GOING ON"



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CHURCH OF CHRIST**
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SUMMARY OF TODAY'S SCRIPTURES

From "Preaching Through the Christian Year" Fred Craddock
All four readings today develop the theme of salvation – as something offered experienced, discovered, and that elicits a response of thanksgiving.

Acts 2:14a, 36-41 This passage consists of the final section of Peter's Pentecost sermon, in which he urges his hearers to repent, be baptized, and receive the gift of God's Spirit. If the first lesson sees salvation as a gift extended, the second lesson looks at salvation in retrospect, as something already experienced. It reminds us of what is already ours in Christ and how we should behave accordingly.

Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19 The final section of a psalm of thanksgiving in which the psalmist reflects on an experience of divine deliverance and offers himself in thankful praise to the God who delivered him.

Luke 24:13-35 the familiar episode of Jesus' encounter with the two men en route to Emmaus. Here we see faith in the risen Lord arising from nothing: the first encounter Jesus as one unknown, but eventually their hearts are opened to the true reality of his New Being.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRAYER CONCERNS:

THE BELL IS RUNG:

PRELUDE: "Jesus Shall Reign" Dorothy Wells

PENNIES FOR MISSION: UniPres Kinder Cottage

***RESPONSIVE CALL TO WORSHIP (INSPIRED BY PSALM 116)**

One: We call upon the name of the Holy One who hears our cry and responds to our prayer. What shall we return to the Holy One for all the blessings we receive?

Many: We will call upon the name of the Holy One for as long as we live.

One: The Holy One has been our Companion in suffering and our Comforter in anguish. What shall we return to the Holy One for their presence among us?

Many: We will serve the Holy One and be companions and comforters for God's people.

One: The Holy One has given a new covenant of salvation, redemption, and restoration for the world. What shall we return to the Holy One for the gift of covenantal love?

Many: We will declare the goodness of God with praise and thanksgiving. Hallelujah! Bless the name of the Holy One!

***INVOCATION:**

Living God, you are the fire that burns within us. You open our hearts to your presence, revealed in word and song, in hospitality and friendship, in sacrament and presence. Open our minds again so that we may recognize you when you meet us in unexpected moments. Let us encounter you in every phase and

movement of worship that we might know you and love you more than before we gathered. And, may that love burn brightly like the sun cutting through the gloom of the storm to inspire us to go on with renewed hope and spirit. Amen.

***OPENING HYMN: 386 "The Church's One Foundation"**

***PRAYER FOR TRANSFORMATION AND NEW LIFE**

Spirit of the Living God, we ask you to meet us in those moments when we recognize that we have caused, through action or inaction, through words or silence, through participation or lack of participation, that we have caused or allow harm to take place. In those moments, allow our hearts to break in order to be mended with the burning fire of repentance and sharpening. In those moments, let our hearts cry, "what should we do?" In those moments, guide us to wisdom and discernment Holy Spirit, so that we would not only be forgiven but gifted with the work of repair and restoration. Amen.

***WORDS OF GRACE**

Beloved, the Holy Spirit continues to be our present companion. When we seek them, the Spirit responds with wisdom, hope, and peace. Be encouraged that the Holy One awaits to meet us where we are in order to

journey with us to where we could be for the glory of God and the good of the world.

***GLORIA: Glory to the Creator, and the Christ and the Spirit so near. As it was from the start so it shall be forever, One God always here.**

(repeat two more times.)

(end) One God always here. One God always here.

SCRIPTURE LESSONS:

Acts 2:14a, 36-41

¹⁴ Peter stood with the other eleven apostles. He raised his voice and declared, “Judeans and everyone living in Jerusalem! Know this! Listen carefully to my words!

³⁶ “Therefore, let all Israel know beyond question that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

³⁷ When the crowd heard this, they were deeply troubled. They said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what should we do?”

³⁸ Peter replied, “Change your hearts and lives. Each of you must be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ This promise is for you, your children, and for all who are far away—as many as the Lord our God invites.” ⁴⁰ With many other words he testified to them and encouraged them, saying, “Be saved from this

perverse generation.” ⁴¹ Those who accepted Peter’s message were baptized. God brought about three thousand people into the community on that day.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: Psalm 116: 1-4, 12-19 Page 699

SECOND TESTAMENT READING: 1 Peter 1:17-23

¹⁷ Since you call upon a Father who judges all people according to their actions without favoritism, you should conduct yourselves with reverence during the **time of** your dwelling in a strange land. ¹⁸ Live in this way, knowing that you were not liberated by perishable things like silver or gold from the empty lifestyle you inherited from your ancestors. ¹⁹ Instead, you were liberated by the precious blood of Christ, like that of a flawless, spotless lamb. ²⁰ Christ was chosen before the creation of the world, but was only revealed at the end of time. This was done for you, ²¹ who through Christ are faithful to the God who raised him from the dead and gave him glory. So now, your faith and hope should rest in God.

²² As you set yourselves apart by your obedience to the truth so that you might have genuine affection for your fellow believers, love each other deeply and earnestly. ²³ Do this because you have been given new birth—not from the type of seed that decays but from

seed that doesn't. This seed is God's life-giving and enduring word.

***GOSPEL LESSON: Luke 24: 13-35**

Encounter on the Emmaus road

¹³ On that same day, two disciples were traveling to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. ¹⁴ They were talking to each other about everything that had happened. ¹⁵ While they were discussing these things, Jesus himself arrived and joined them on their journey. ¹⁶ They were prevented from recognizing him.

¹⁷ He said to them, "What are you talking about as you walk along?" They stopped, their faces downcast.

¹⁸ The one named Cleopas replied, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who is unaware of the things that have taken place there over the last few days?"

¹⁹ He said to them, "What things?"

They said to him, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth. Because of his powerful deeds and words, he was recognized by God and all the people as a prophet. ²⁰ But our chief priests and our leaders handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him. ²¹ We had hoped he was the one who would redeem Israel. All these things happened three days ago. ²² But there's more: Some women from our group have left us stunned. They went to the tomb early this

morning ²³ and didn't find his body. They came to us saying that they had even seen a vision of angels who told them he is alive. ²⁴ Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found things just as the women said. They didn't see him."

²⁵ Then Jesus said to them, "You foolish people! Your dull minds keep you from believing all that the prophets talked about. ²⁶ Wasn't it necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and then enter into his glory?" ²⁷ Then he interpreted for them the things written about himself in all the scriptures, starting with Moses and going through all the Prophets.

²⁸ When they came to Emmaus, he acted as if he was going on ahead. ²⁹ But they urged him, saying, "Stay with us. It's nearly evening, and the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them. ³⁰ After he took his seat at the table with them, he took the bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. ³¹ Their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he disappeared from their sight. ³² They said to each other, "Weren't our hearts on fire when he spoke to us along the road and when he explained the scriptures for us?"

³³ They got up right then and returned to Jerusalem. They found the eleven and their companions gathered together. ³⁴ They were saying to each other, "The Lord really has risen! He appeared to Simon!" ³⁵ Then the two disciples described what had happened along the road

and how Jesus was made known to them as he broke the bread.

MESSAGE: “SURPRISE!!”

It is our custom, especially for children, to dress up at Halloween. Sometimes you can't tell who the true child or person is. When you finally figure it out, they shout, “It's me, grandma. Didn't you recognize me?” And everyone laughs.

Our Gospel story today has surprises but I'm not sure about the laughter; maybe a smile and a feeling of relief. At the level of drama, this story had everything. Sorrow, suspense, puzzlement, gradual dawning of light; then in the second half unexpected actions, astonished recognition, (the surprise part), a flurry of excitement and activity. It is both a wonderful, unique spellbinding tale, and also a model (and the author Luke surely knew this) for a great deal of what being a Christian, from that day to this, is all about.

The slow, sad dismay at the failure of human hopes; the turning to someone who might or might not help; the discovery that in scripture, all unexpected, there lay keys which might unlock the central mysteries and enable us to find the truth; the sudden realization of Jesus himself, present with us, warming our hearts with his truth, showing us himself as bread is broken. This describes the experience of many Christians, and indeed

goes quite a long way to explaining what it is about Christianity that grasps us and holds us in the face of so much that is wrong with the world, with the church, and with ourselves.

Even before we start looking under the Halloween costume for deeper meanings within the story, the surface meaning itself is powerful enough. Cleopas must have thought at first that the stranger might have been a spy; it must have taken a certain amount of courage though perhaps by then he was beyond caring – to reveal that the two of them were part of Jesus' followers. In any case, the story Cleopas tells is simple, profound and emotional.

They had regarded Jesus as a prophet, and more than a prophet. God's power had been present with him in his miracles and his teaching, and they couldn't doubt that this was the man of God's choice. Here comes one of the surprises. Cleopas and most of the disciples thought Jesus was the one who would redeem Israel. Clearly, for them, this referred (as Luke has been saying all along) to the new Exodus; just as Israel had been “redeemed” from slavery in Egypt at the first Passover, so they had hoped that now Israel would be “redeemed”, that God would purchase her freedom. The hope that Israel would be liberated once and for all from pagan domination, free to serve God in peace and holiness.

That's why the crucifixion was so devastating. They didn't know anything about this Halloween party. It wasn't just that Jesus had been the bearer of their hopes and he was now dead and gone. It was sharper than that; if Jesus had been the one to redeem Israel, he should have been defeating the pagans, not dying at their hands! He should have been in a superman costume, not dressed as a person in a coffin.

Cleopas's puzzled statement only needs the slightest twist to turn it into a joyful statement of early Christian faith: "They crucified him – but we had hoped he could redeem Israel" would shortly become, "They crucified him – and that was how he DID redeem Israel." And it was, of course, **the resurrection that made the difference**. All costumes were taken off.

But before they could begin to understand what had just happened they had to be prepared. They, like everybody else in Israel, had been reading the Bible through the wrong end of the telescope. They had been seeing it as the long story of how God would redeem Israel FROM suffering, but it was instead the story of how God would redeem Israel THROUGH SUFFERING ; through, in particular, the suffering which would be taken on himself by Israel's representative, the **MESSIAH**. When Luke says that Jesus interpreted to them all the things about himself, throughout the Bible, he doesn't mean that Jesus collected a few or even a few

dozen, isolated texts, verses chosen at random. He means the whole story, from Genesis to Chronicles. The whole story which pointed forwards as fulfillment which could only be found when God's anointed took Israel's suffering. Hence the world's suffering was put on to himself, died under its weight, and rose again as the beginning of God's new creation. God's new people. This is what had to happen; and now it just had. SURPRISE!
Amen.

SPECIAL MUSIC: Video: "Turn Your Eyes on Jesus"

PASTORAL PRAYER:

OUR LORD'S PRAYER:

PRAYER RESPONSE: 775

**And God will raise you up on eagle's wings,
Bear you on the breath of dawn,
Make you to shine like the sun,
And hold you in the palm of God's hand.**

INVITATION TO GENEROSITY

1 Peter 1:21 tells us that, "Through [Jesus], you have come to trust in God who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your trust and hope are in God." Let us give glory to the Living God by demonstrating that trust and hope in the offering of gifts to meet the needs

of our community and to manifest the love of God in us.
Amen.

OFFERTORY: “Leaning on the Everlasting Arms”

Dorothy Wells

***DOXOLOGY:**

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

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION AND THANKSGIVING**

Generous God, we pray that these gifts will bring glory to your name and bless your creation through good stewardship, Spirit-led discernment, and generous love.
Amen.

***CLOSING HYMN: 382 “Come, We Who Love God’s Name”**

BENEDICTION

As you go, may your heart burn
For the love of God to ignite throughout the world
Through acts—great and minute— of compassion,
kindness, and community
Through sacrifices—great and minute—for justice,
liberation, and restoration

Through commitments—great and minute—to bring good news to every moment, decision, and interaction.
Go on...enflamed with the hope of peace burning brightly from the heart.

***BENEDICTION RESPONSE: 571**

“O God of Love, O God of Peace”

**O God of love, O God of peace,
Make wars throughout the world to cease.
The wrath of human wrong restrain;
Give peace, O God, give peace again!**

THE BELL IS RUNG:

POSTLUDE: “The Road to Emmaus” Roy E. Nolte

PRAYER LIST: Bruce Wagner, Becky Ballard, Roger Ballard, Mary Lou and Urban Baum, Ronald Bopp, Geralyn Gamon, Russ Hartmann, Lynne Knecht, Marilyn Paul, Pam and Syd Safriet, Terry Thorpe, Grandson Landon, Yvonne Weber, Jackie Canterbury, Jeff, our Beloved Country.