

**Jesus Appears to the Disciples Luke 24:36b - 48**  
**Sunday 18th April 2021**  
**Rev. Susan Pickering**

Gathering of the People of God

**Organ Prelude**

**Welcome & Notices**

**Centring Prayer**

Let us prepare our hearts and minds for worship,  
let us rest in the silence, breathing in the presence of God...

**Processional Hymn**                      **TiS 380**                      **Yours be the glory**

**Light the Christ Candle**

We light this candle as a reminder that Christ is the light of the world.

**Call to Worship**

We are a community of faith  
created by the love of God.

**Let us gather as the community of Christ**

We are a people called to reach out to others,  
To extend a hand of community, to welcome all.

**This is a safe space for all to gather,**  
**For we gather in the love of God.**

Gathered together, let us worship God,  
Let us welcome the presence of the Spirit,  
Let us prepare to encounter Christ the intruder  
**We gather together thankful of the Christ in our midst**  
**Gathered together, let us worship God.**

**Acknowledgment of Country**

We recognise that God created heaven and earth, the sea and the sky, and all that is in them.

***This land is Holy Ground***

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As we gather we acknowledge the traditional custodians,  
the Turrbal and Jagera people, elders, past, present and emerging  
***We honour them for their custodianship of the land, on which we gather today.***

**Introit      The Call by Ralph Vaughan Williams Words by George Herbert**

**Prayer of Thanksgiving & Confession**

Constant Creator...

...Forgive us God,  
Send your Spirit upon us,  
May her wisdom rest upon us,  
Touching our eyes, ears, lips, mind and hearts,  
Enabling us to see the risen Jesus in our midst,  
Transforming our lives, moving us from fear to freedom.  
In the name of the One who greets us with Shalom, Amen

**Words of Assurance**

God is always with us, the risen Christ gives us peace, beyond peace. We are forgiven and at the rolling back of the stone from the tomb we were liberated from the darkness of captivity - free to be the people of God, people of Easter and Resurrection faith.

***Thanks be to God.***

**Doxology                      CH 809      Praise God the Source of Life and Birth**

Service of the Word

**Readings**

**1st reading              Acts 3:12 - 19 Peter Speaks in Solomon's Portico**

**2nd reading              Luke 24:36b - 48 Jesus Appears to his Disciples**

This is the Living Word  
***Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.***

**Anthem                      There is a Balm in Gilead Traditional African American  
Spiritual arranged by Boesiger and MacDonald**

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**Sermon**

We continue through the Easter season, it's a season where we encounter a fair bit of repetitiveness. Our reading from Luke today contains many similarities to last week's reading from John. The account is yet another appearance account - another account of Jesus intruding, simply turning up, bringing with him a greeting of peace/Shalom. Today's reading is a continuation of the appearance story on the road to Emmaus. While we're a couple of weeks post resurrection, today's reading is likely relaying an event that occurred on the evening of the resurrection.

Understanding that today's reading is a continuation of the Road to Emmaus account provides some clues into what the 'this' that they are talking about is their experience of Jesus being made known to them in the breaking and sharing of bread. The "they," then becomes Cleopas and another who remains unnamed, suggested to possibly be a woman.<sup>1</sup>

The Road to Emmaus experience is the context for today's reading. It's not long since the women had shared with the disciples the news of the empty tomb, the message they'd received that Jesus had risen, and not long since Peter took off to check for himself.<sup>2</sup> We arrive at today's reading with Jesus casually turning up and greeting the gathered with, "peace be with you."<sup>3</sup> Now they'd been discussing the fact that Jesus had appeared, and that eventually they recognised him, yet still they 'were startled and terrified,' thinking they were seeing a ghost, the Greek here is πνεῦμα (pneuma)<sup>4</sup>, but regardless of what word you use, I think that their response is fairly reasonable. Jesus had appeared elsewhere and was eventually recognised, the fact that he just materialises again in a different place may just knock them off balance. We must take into account that Jesus has been preparing, or at least trying to prepare, the disciples for this event throughout his ministry and they missed it. Another possibility for the fear is that in the ancient world ghosts represented the unfinished business of the dead<sup>5</sup> and it's only a few days since they'd abandoned Jesus, denied him, if they're still not getting it perhaps they fear Jesus has come to seek revenge?

Jesus asks them why are they afraid and why doubt? He tries to calm them, he wants them to engage their senses, he encourages them to look, see, touch, check out my hands and my feet. It seems they're still not quite convinced, because in

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<sup>1</sup>Ringe

<sup>2</sup> Luke 24:2-5, 12

<sup>3</sup> Luke 24:36b

<sup>4</sup> Greek New Testament Luke 24:37

<sup>5</sup> Villigas in Preaching the word on [sojo.net.au](http://sojo.net.au)

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their 'joy' they 'were disbelieving and still wondering.'<sup>6</sup> Meanwhile Jesus decides he's hungry and so they provide him with 'a piece of broiled fish,' as you do, which Jesus 'ate in their presence.'<sup>7</sup> All of these gestures, the offer of touch and the consuming of food offers proof of his physical presence, his physical resurrection, this point to the restoration of the cosmos in all it's ordinariness! At this point we hear the significance of sharing food, of gathering, knowing that in the sharing of food Jesus becomes present. At this moment the he is enabling the disciples to be eyewitnesses in the resurrection.

Jesus points to the familiar texts, referring to law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms<sup>8</sup> all in his bid to bring some calm to the situation because it seems until this point the fear of the disciples is preventing full engagement, and let's be honest each of us have probably had moments where fear has prevented us from a full experience. Once the fear is alleviated he is able to open their minds to understand the scriptures.

He once more reminds them of his foretelling of his suffering, death and resurrection, we again encounter the commissioning; repentance and forgiveness is to be proclaimed in his name and while they will start in Jerusalem, the city where he was killed, they are to take it to all nations and he tells them clearly, "YOU" are witnesses,<sup>9</sup> the disciples are now to be the intruders and disturbers that bring good news - no pressure!

We share the peace each week and we turn to one another to proclaim "peace be with you," we respond, "and also with you." Each week I remind us that the peace we share is a reconciling peace, it's more than an opportunity to catch up. In the past when Jesus has called for peace the wind and the sea obey, and in our appearance accounts when Jesus greets the disciples with peace they become terrified. The disciples have come to know that the peace that Jesus offers and brings disturbs the peace of the world, upsets the peace of the religion and politics.

Our faith in general has become safe and comfortable, in fact I think often the most uncomfortable part of our worship is the pews, I was once told they need to be uncomfortable to keep us 'awake and alert!'

The reality is that the news of the resurrection and the kingdom of God movement ought to disturb and unsettle us, it ought to shock us out of our comfort zone, remind us to be awake and alert, you remember all those readings about staying awake. The cry of Easter Sunday, He is Risen, alleluia, perhaps a more appropriate

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<sup>6</sup> Luke 24:41

<sup>7</sup> Luke 24:41-42

<sup>8</sup> Luke 24:44

<sup>9</sup> Luke 24: 46 - 48

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cry is He is Risen, OMG we have work to do, take cover - are you impressed with my refrain there?

We ought to be disturbed and unsettled when we hear of the number of aboriginal deaths in custody. We ought to be unsettled and disturbed when we hear of hundreds of girls being abducted by armed men in Nigeria. We ought to be unsettled and disturbed when we hear of shootings in the US. A friend of mine is a Pastor in the MCC in Florida, her Facebook post yesterday '45 mass shootings in 30 days...something has to change.' We ought to be disturbed and unsettled at the way Australia treats people seeking safety. We ought to be disturbed and unsettled when we see and hear the impact of our agricultural and consumer practices on the environment. If we are able to look at the world and not be unsettled and disturbed the reality is we may not be the disciples we thought we were - harsh, I know!

The presence of the risen Jesus ought to disturb and unsettle us, the resurrection isn't about making us comfortable, it is about making us hopeful and that doesn't necessarily equate to comfort. The appearance accounts remind us that recognising Jesus is one thing, accepting it and what that means is something quite different. Resurrected life is not other worldly, it turns up in unexpected places, to break down barriers and share food.

Likewise reading the good news of Jesus the Christ is one thing yet putting it into action is something completely different. The action we are called to includes being prepared to go back to Galilee where it all began and interpret the life and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth and to consider whether or not we are acting and responding to that life and ministry. It's a call to turn back to God and the kingdom way of living, to work for transformation in a world that still today desperately needs it, it's been open to our attitudes, behaviours and practices to be transformed. It's so much more that the catchphrase "what would Jesus do," and we ought to be disturbed and unsettled.

We are the witnesses, the physical hands, feet, heart and voice of Christ in this community and this place, we are called to ensure that the tomb is never sealed again, keeping people in the darkness of death. It's a huge task this discipleship stuff, I like the way the Dalai Lama puts it, I've shared it before "if you think you are too small to make a difference try sleeping with a mosquito."

We need to remember that the call does not end when we leave this place, indeed I think it intensifies. We need to look at how we engage our senses and become witnesses to the resurrection in this community. We need to think about how we become the ones that greet others with the disturbing greeting of "Shalom - peace be with you."

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**Prayer**

Praise be to you who disturbs and unsettles. The challenge of discipleship it seems is not for the faint hearted yet here we are God. We ask that you send your Spirit upon us, that courage rather than fear begins to be our lifeblood, that we dare to speak truth to power and hall for transformation in the world. In the name of the one who meets us at the table, amen.

**Hymn**                      **CH 604**                      **Holy Wisdom**

**Offering & Prayer**

**Prayers for the People**

Blessed be you, Holy Mystery...

...And as a sign of sacred unity, we join together in the prayer;

***Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done,***

***on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.***

***For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.***

**Peace**

Sending Forth the People of God

**Hymn**                      **TiS 613**                      **Lord of all Hopefulness**

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**Words of Mission & Blessing**

Let us leave this place knowing that we are witnesses;  
to the love of God,  
the peace of Christ,  
and the presence of the Spirit in the world.  
Let us be surprised, challenged, healed and nourished,  
let us go out in joy to work for justice and peace,  
Let us never become complacent.

The blessing of God inspire us all to work for the kingdom,  
The blessing of Christ encourage us to work for and bring true peace  
and the blessing of the Holy Spirit, Woman Wisdom birth within us the desire to  
work for transformation and love in the world.

**Shalom to You**

**Postlude**

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