

The Upper Culm Valley Mission Community  
The Parishes of Hemyock with Culm Davy, Clayhidon and Culmstock

**Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2023**  
**3rd Sunday of Easter**  
Worship sheet

**Welcome to Sunday worship!**

**Collect**

Risen Christ, you filled your disciples with boldness and fresh hope: strengthen us to proclaim your risen life and fill us with your peace, to the glory of God the Father.

**Bible reading: Luke 24: 13-36**

<sup>13</sup>That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, <sup>14</sup>and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened. <sup>15</sup>While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. <sup>16</sup>But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. <sup>17</sup>And he said to them, "What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?" And they stood still, looking sad. <sup>18</sup>Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?" <sup>19</sup>And he said to them, "What things?" And they said to him, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, <sup>20</sup>and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. <sup>21</sup>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 happened. <sup>22</sup>Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, <sup>23</sup>and when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. <sup>24</sup>Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see."

<sup>25</sup>And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! <sup>26</sup>Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" <sup>27</sup>And beginning

with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

<sup>28</sup>So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if he were going farther, <sup>29</sup>but they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent." So he went in to stay with them. <sup>30</sup>When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. <sup>31</sup>And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight. <sup>32</sup>They said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?" <sup>33</sup>And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, <sup>34</sup>saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" <sup>35</sup>Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.

<sup>36</sup>As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, "Peace to you!"

**'Come In, Go Out'**

*Reflection by Piers Langdon*

Who are the two people walking back home in this story? And why are they quitting Jerusalem so quickly after that terrible weekend? We know one is Cleopas but who is the other? Many older commentaries assume it is a man. But others wonder if it might be Cleopas's wife. That would make some sense as the couple invited Jesus into their home, at the end of our reading. Another commentary thinks it could have been Luke himself, the author of this book, which would explain the detailed knowledge of the conversation. We don't know, but I like the thought that the master storyteller that Luke was, whose gospel is full of journeys, invites you the reader to be the second person in the story! Now that's a thought, will it give us a fresh understanding of what is going on?

Let's imagine it was you (or me) who walks with Cleopas on the way to Emmaus. To walk seven miles would take 2-3 hours and as they arrived late afternoon they must have set out at around 3.00 pm. It is the hottest part of the day, the road or track is rough, and you would have a cover over your head to protect you from the sun. As you keep your eye on the track to stop you from stumbling the conversation would have been about the last three days. It's very disappointing, your whole world for ages had been involved in following Jesus, it had been a roller coaster of experiences and emotions culminating with the high of the triumphal entry with the whole thing then unravelling and the humiliating and frightening crucifixion of the one you followed and in whom you had so much expectation. It's all over. Let's get

back home to Emmaus where it will be safer and pick our lives up again. Is that why they (you) left Jerusalem?

Just at that moment there is a voice from a man you had not noticed who seemed to be about to overtake you. 'What are you talking about?' he asks. You start walking again, but a little slower as the man explains in brilliant and riveting detail why the Messiah had to suffer before entering his glory – from Moses and all through the prophets – the Torah. You hang on his every word as your mind slowly begins to light up with understanding.

This, I think, is why "Their hearts burned within them". Can we experience anything like this today? The former Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, was speaking in Colyton near Axminster last Sunday evening. This is how he explained it: -

'Imagine you are in your favourite cathedral; look up and see the beauty of the vaulted ceiling, it's as if the pillars that support the domes are exalting God, a link between earth and heaven. Jesus takes the two walking on the road to Emmaus and shows them what is the other side of the dome. Cleopas and the disciple had been living in their own world with all the intensity of this last week. You could say they were in a bubble with the other disciples. Can you imagine being literally in a bubble? That beautiful rainbow coloured sphere we played with as children, except we are inside the bubble, our world, it's all we know. We have never looked outside it, we never knew there was anything outside. Then you have suddenly met this man on the road to Emmaus who takes you and gently allows your head to go through the bubble so you can see the wonder of the outside. You are still in the bubble but he is giving you a new understanding. He starts with Moses pointing out all it means and then shows you the same in the prophets. Wow! No wonder their hearts burned within them.'

And suddenly they have arrived at the house in Emmaus, the day is nearly over, and the man makes as if to go on. With that strangely exhilarating sensation in their hearts and because custom dictates they invite the man in. "Come in," you say (the first half of the title to this message). The man seems to assume the leader's role once the food is prepared. Luke uses the exact words that were used at the supper the previous Friday "He took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them". In that instant, they could see who it was, and he disappeared from their sight. During that conversation with Jesus, as they walked, Jesus gave them a glimpse beyond the vaulted ceiling. The law and the Prophets had new clarity, they could see and understand the pointers.

They had left Jerusalem looking inwards, talking about the past, fearful of the consequence of the crucifixion. But when Jesus disappeared

from sight after breaking bread they quickly gather their few things and head back to Jerusalem, looking outward and talking about the future. The resurrection means everything, it brings new hope. **Come in** they said to Jesus as they opened the door to their home to him. Then, as they begin to understand and without any hesitation, they **Go out** to tell the others in Jerusalem. You can feel the excitement. This changes everything, they suddenly do not need his physical presence. The resurrection brings courage, Jesus lives forever. They leave and hurry back to Jerusalem, but this time with joy.

So, if we can imagine being the second person on the way to Emmaus how can we summarise what has happened? Well, Jesus came to them as they hurried away, they were frightened and confused. He came when they really needed him, and he explained how scripture pointed to him. We could ask him to do the same. They invited him in, the invitation was on their terms. He did not force himself in or say it's a good idea I give you some more teaching until you've understood it.

Jesus is there at the breaking of bread, he is always there but the breaking of bread seems to be particularly important. After all, he did say "Do this as often as you remember me".

The response of the two was to go and immediately tell others. As they entered the room in Jerusalem there was a chatter of excitement as they talked about who had met Him. As they stood around excitedly talking about Jesus, he was suddenly there in the room with them "Peace be with you" he said. Intriguingly Cleopas and the other person have seen Jesus twice in the same day! I wonder what passed between them as their eyes met his for the second time in a few hours.

As if to re-enforce the significance he says "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms."

Talking about Jesus and hearing about him does indeed cause our hearts to burn or as it sometimes put, strangely warmed. **Come in** they said, and it caused them to **go out** and their lives were never the same again.

### **Prayer**

Living God, your Son made himself known to his disciples in the breaking of bread; open the eyes of our faith, that we may see him in all his redeeming work: who is alive and reigns, now and for ever.