A photograph of a church interior, showing rows of wooden pews facing a sanctuary. The sanctuary features a large, colorful stained glass window and a wooden altar. The ceiling is made of exposed wooden beams with several pendant lights hanging down. The overall atmosphere is warm and inviting.

APRIL 22, 2020

AGAPE FROM AFAR

Adjusting to life amidst Coronavirus

A WORD
FROM
PASTOR
JILL

As a way to remain connected during this time apart, I will be putting together a weekly newsletter with a reflection based on the upcoming Sunday scripture passage. I hope that by taking a few moments to reflect on the Word of God and pray, we can feel grounded and connected to God and to one another during this uncertain time. *-Pastor Jill*



The scripture for this week is from Luke 24:13-35. In this passage, the resurrected Jesus joins two disciples as they walk along the road to Emmaus. The disciples do not recognize Jesus until he joins them for a meal and he breaks the bread. I wonder how many times in our ordinary lives Jesus walked beside us but we didn't recognize him? During this time of isolation do you feel like God is walking beside you or is unrecognizable? My hope is even for a brief moment, you may be able to recognize God's presence beside you.

Take some time to reflect on Luke 24:13-35 on the following pages.



Read the passage:

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.’

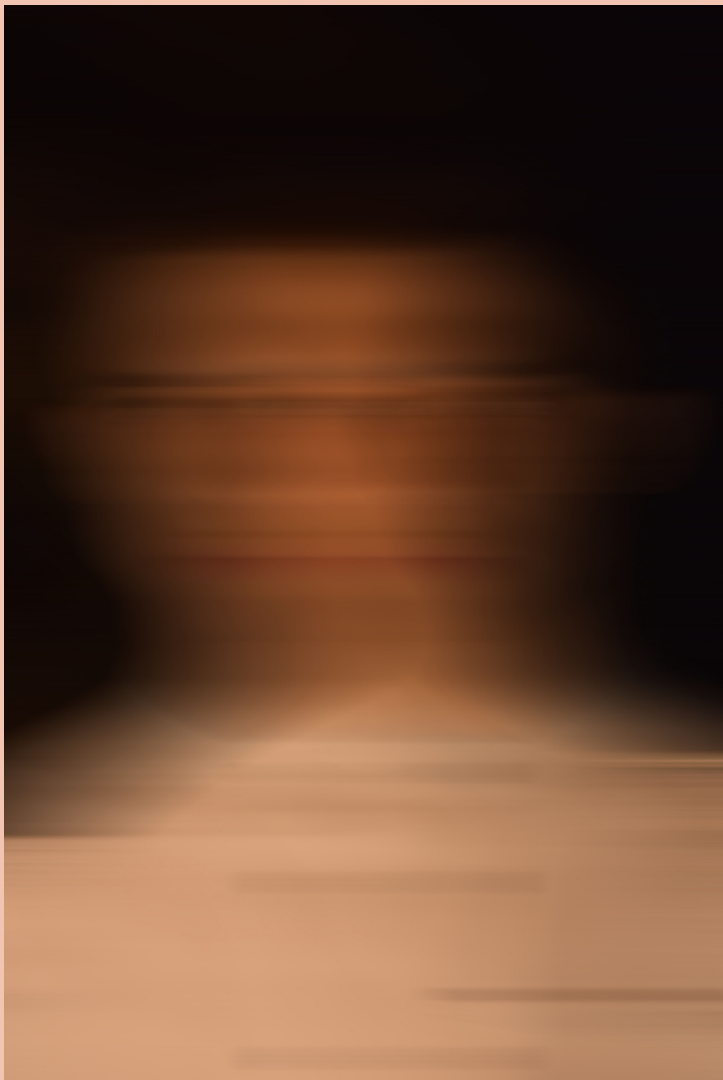
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Then he said to them, ‘Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?’ Then beginning with Moses and all 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.



Supper at Emmaus
Caravaggio - 1601
National Gallery, London



Reflect:

1. Why do you think the disciples didn't recognize Jesus right away?
2. Have you ever had an experience where when you looked back you felt God was involved even though you didn't realize it at the time?
3. Have you seen God show up during this health crisis in any surprising ways?
4. What is this passage calling you to do today? This week?

Pray:

God, forgive us when we fail to see you on the ordinary roads of life. Help us to recognize your presence in our lives and in turn to offer your peace and love to others. Amen.

IT IS HARD TO WAIT



Waiting is hard. In the last week, it seems that some people are at the end of their ropes. Instead of following the stay-at-home restrictions, there have been crowds of protesters showing up at state capitols demanding that the country be opened back up.

We are in a challenging time and frustrations are high especially for those who are worried either about their finances or about their health. But to protect our health care workers, first responders, the medically vulnerable, and ourselves we **MUST** continue to stay home.

We have been asked when we will reopen the church. The answer is "We do not know." It is a hard answer to hear, but it is the only answer that can be given at this time. We care deeply about the safety of you and your family, and we will not open the church until it is as safe as possible to do so.

Waiting is difficult but it is necessary.

If you need assistance--financial, spiritual or emotional--during this time of waiting, please contact a staff member.

What I have been
reading:
Untamed by Glennon
Doyle

What I have been
Listening to:
The Beautiful Not Yet by
Carrie Newcomer

What I've been
watching:
Season 2 of *The Repair
Shop* on Netflix

**Please reach out to
staff if you have a
need. We continue
the work of caring
for one another by
meeting physical,
emotional and
spiritual needs.**

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