



KNOX CHURCH, DUNEDIN

Easter 3

10am – Sunday 26 April 2020

This service can be accessed from the Knox Church YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCYksSjG0llfO0NeogNIGs7A>

or, after the live service concludes, from the Knox Church website <https://knoxchurch.net/>

Pre service music from around 9.45 am

Welcome and call to worship based on Luke 24:13-35

Hymn

1 Where mountains rise to open skies
your name, O God, is echoed far,
from island beach to kauri's reach,
in water's light, in lake and star.

2 Your people's heart, your people's part
be in our caring for this land,
for faith to flower, for aroha
to let each other's mana stand.

from Alleluia Aotearoa (tune Dunedin) – Shirley Murray

3 Your love be known, compassion shown,
that every child have equal scope:
in justice done, in trust begun
shall be our heritage and hope.

4 Where mountains rise to open skies
your way of peace distil the air,
your spirit bind all humankind,
one covenant of life to share!

Opening prayer, assurance of forgiveness and the announcement of peace

Children - Jordan Redding

Readings – read by Moira Thomson

Acts 2:14a, 36-41 But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, "Therefore let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified." Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, "Brothers, what should we do?" Peter said to them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him." And he testified with many other arguments and exhorted them, saying, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added.

Luke 24:13-35 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.

Anthem

Reflection "Going somewhere"

I have a hunch that if Jesus asked each of us now "what are you discussing", we could talk for a while - COVID-19 and its impact.

Some people are anguished— we worked hard to build up our business, long hours, tight budgets, and we had hoped. Some are disappointed – we planned this project or this trip or this extension for months if not years ... we had hoped. Some are frustrated – we want to visit our relative in the retirement village or friend in the hospital or person in prison, and we know they feel alone ... we had hoped. Some feel unsafe – we know we can carry a virus without knowing and it can come into our homes and our workplaces ... we had hoped. Some are reflecting – so if this virus spreads

so quickly and causes this level of disruption, and we are told that this is not the big one, will the next virus cause more disruption, more loss ... we had hoped. And the church wondering what kind of church we will be after lockdown.

The two on the road to Emmaus were so absorbed in conversation, they didn't recognise the one who joined them. They had hoped Jesus was the rescuer of Israel, but now he was dead and his body had gone – we had hoped. On the way, they tried to make sense of what had happened and of the strange news of his appearance. They were walking and talking, but going nowhere. What happened did not fit how they assumed life would be. Much of how we live relies on assumptions that are increasingly being questioned. That scientific knowledge will solve our biggest problems. That our economic system is good enough to keep people in work and share wealth equitably. That our political systems will produce the best decisions. That here in Aotearoa our distance from trouble-spots keeps us safe. And if we are careful, we can be safe at home.

Climate change raises the same kind of questions. It challenges the idea that if we individually live ethically and responsibly, we'll be ok. Instead we have learned again that it is how we live together that makes for safety. That how people live in Wuhan or New York or ... affects our wellbeing. That is how connected we are. A wider world.

Jesus is determined to help us see wider. He opens out the people walking to Emmaus to the wider picture, the long story, the God story. He reminds them that God has walked with them over hundreds of years, and he puts himself in that story. Koyama calls God a three mile an hour God, one who has always walked with us, at our pace, always an Emmaus God. Jesus confronts their narrow reference points that trap them, that cause them to go round and round, saying the same things time after time, going nowhere. Reread your Bibles, you fools, he says. God has always been reaching out to you, entering darkness, opening tombs, raising people up. This is not god as part of your story; see yourself as part of God's story, a very different perspective. It was an exciting view. And it was liberating and energising, because it released what they had been holding on to and what had been holding on to them. Didn't our hearts burn with us?

They longed for him to stay, and they uttered three significant words. Stay with us ... There is much in those three words. The Christian faith is about learning to live with God all our days. Stay with us. Three words that open us to the divine presence, to wider insight and deeper connection – a walk that goes somewhere. Stay with us so that what traps us bursts open. He breaks the bread and they recognise him. Perhaps because they recognise their own brokenness. Perhaps because it represents the way he has already broken open their worlds. Recognising him, releases their pent-up energy. So they walk back to where they came from, with a different spirit. To the place that represented darkness and fear. They had the courage to go back there, Jerusalem. And to find others – different people, different place, different way, but who had encountered the living Christ. Isn't this what church is? Very different people encountering the same risen Christ.

I find it startling that the next step, according to the book of Acts, is baptism. If this is the new world of Jesus feels like, why not be immersed in it. Baptizo. Live in it, with the Jesus who walks with us and stays with us and takes us somewhere as people of the long story. May Jesus stay with you, that you may live with God all your days.

Prayer for others and the Lord's Prayer – led by Janet and Peter Wishart

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 forever. Amen.

Hymn

(tune Love Unknown CH4 238) - John L Bell

1 God, give us peace that lasts
not through the fear of might,
but through the force of love
and love of life and right.
Where costly wars and weapons lure,
show us our Lord among the poor.

3 God, give us hope that lasts
through passion and through pain,
through danger, doubt, and death
till life is raised again.
When dread and pessimism loom,
direct us to the empty tomb.

2 God, give us love that lasts,
which makes of strangers, guests;
which startles hurt with hope
and for the weak protests:
what hate or guiltiness emboss,
confront with Jesus and the cross.

4 And all these things we ask
in knowledge of your grace
which gave the earth its birth
and bore a human face;
and with our prayers we give our word
to serve and follow Christ our Lord.

Blessing

We continue to appreciate all tithes, gifts and offerings. Our bank account number is 03 0903 0016425 00 and our charity number for tax rebate purposes is #CC52318.