

Rev Robin Selmes  
GILLINGHAM METHODISTS | *Part of the North Kent Circuit*

Church Office | 100 Third Avenue | Gillingham | Kent | ME7 2LU  
01634 575139 | church@gillinghammethodists.uk | [www.gillinghammethodists.uk](http://www.gillinghammethodists.uk)



## Third Sunday After Easter

**This is an alternative act of worship that has been prepared for you to use this Sunday or midweek. The worship newsletter also includes some additional prayers, meditations and details of live services for this coming Sunday.**

### Call to Worship

God, we gather as your people.  
We come to walk a journey together,  
to talk and to share along the way,  
[to feast on bread and wine],  
to meet and to know Jesus.  
Help us to marvel at all that Jesus has done  
for us. **Amen.**

**Hymn:** O Lord my God, When I in awesome  
wonder **STF 82**

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=PdE\\_NKyY\\_o0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PdE_NKyY_o0)

O Lord my God, When I in awesome wonder  
Consider all the works Thy Hand hath made,  
I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder,  
Thy power throughout the universe  
displayed,

*Then sings my soul, My Saviour God, to  
Thee,  
How great Thou art! How great Thou art!  
Then sings my soul, My Saviour God, to  
Thee,  
How great Thou art! How great Thou art!*

When through the woods and forest glades I  
wander  
I hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees,  
When I look down from lofty mountain  
grandeur  
And hear the brook, and feel the gentle  
breeze,

And when I think, that God, His Son not  
sparing;  
Sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in;  
That on the cross, my burden gladly  
bearing,  
He bled and died to take away my sin.

When Christ shall come, with shout of  
acclamation,  
And take me home, what joy shall fill My  
heart.  
Then I shall bow, in humble adoration,  
And then proclaim, "My God, how great  
Thou art!"

Stuart K Hine

### A prayer of Praise and Thanksgiving

Father, we thank you that you come out and  
meet us where we are.  
**We worship and adore you.**

We thank you that you walk the road with  
us, that you treat us  
as an equal even when we fail to recognise  
you.  
**We worship and adore you.**

You always love us, always care for us,  
always want to eat  
and drink with us – such is your love.  
**We worship and adore you.**

Thank you, Lord, that you are not a  
stranger, but our friend.  
We worship and adore you. **Amen.**

## Reading: 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.

## Reflection "Road to Emmaus"

Luke names only Cleopas and another (most likely a disciple) on the road from Jerusalem to Emmaus. Luke's failure to identify by name or gender the other person may be an implicit invitation on Luke's part, to the reader, to identify themselves as Cleopas' companion, to put themselves in the story and feel the emotions more readily as a result of it..

Jesus let Cleopas and his companion tell him about their anxieties and pains; he invited them to grieve and mourn by expressing the root causes of his death. He listened to them with empathy, allowing them to pour out their pain and doubts, then used the scriptures so that they could better understand his "suffering and glory".

Cleopas and his companion showed their openness and caring to the unknown stranger, who it turns out is Jesus, by inviting him to stay with them, to join them in a meal and companionship. The sharing of the meal is a form of love called **ξενία (xenia)**. This is the Ancient Greek concept of hospitality, in the form of generosity and courtesy shown to those who are far from home. It was held at that time that all strangers had a right to a certain gift, whether it was food, gold, entertainment or a place to stay.

Pope John Paul II says that when Cleopas and his companion urged Jesus to stay *with* them, Jesus afterwards responded by giving them a way to stay *in* him, by entering into "a profound communion with Jesus" through the "Sacrament of the Eucharist" (John 15:4). **John 15:4** "Remain in me, as I also

remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me."

Soon after Jesus agreed to their request to stay, according to the Pope, "Jesus' face would disappear, yet the Master would 'stay' with them, hidden in the 'breaking of the bread' which had opened their eyes to recognise him. ... When minds are enlightened and hearts are enkindled, signs begin to 'speak'."

When the two disciples "encountered the Risen Christ" in the supper at Emmaus, they sensed a need and sudden desire to share their happiness and the good news with others, so much so that they were willing to endure the long walk back to Jerusalem. John Paul II argues that the two disciples realised "the duty to be a missionary" after "entering into communion with Christ" at the meal event; and relates it with the dismissal at the end of the Eucharistic Celebration:

'As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.' (*John 20:21*).

The very first instruction Jesus gives to the disciples therefore is to continue his mission. What he was unable to finish we, as his followers, are to continue. *John Paul II*

The light is slow to dawn in the two walking the road to Emmaus – it's like us sometimes, in order to understand something we need the facts spelt out to us in detail. In their case Jesus had to share with them everything, beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, which he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself. The "penny of recognition" finally dropped when they were sharing a meal together. That WOW moment, the realisation that Jesus is alive and sitting next to you. (Or at least he was until he disappeared from their sight). But as we know, you don't need to see to believe. Cleopas spoke about a burning sensation in their hearts when Jesus was speaking about the scriptures; the burning sensation that compelled the pair of them to make the return journey to Jerusalem as quickly as possible, to share the good news of the Risen Christ. The joy etched on their faces no doubt, when they too got to relate their encounter with Jesus to their friends. "He is Alive!"

*A parallel moment to the joy and realisation of Jesus sitting amongst them, then disappearing and their rejoicing in him, may be found in Acts 8: 36-40*

Ian Watton

### Responsive prayer

Dear Lord,

The more you reveal of your word, the more you reveal of yourself. Through reading the scriptures we find the truth of who you are. We may not see you physically, but we can feel you in our hearts. Through your love you fill us with the knowledge of who you are and who we can be through knowing you. Lord, we pray that you continue to reveal yourself to us through your word and that as our faith in you grows, the greater our desire will be to share you amongst ourselves and beyond.

All praise and thanks to the risen Saviour.

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father

Hymn: Shout to the North

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=xcqxmIBqWBk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xcqxmIBqWBk)

Men of faith rise up and sing  
Of the great and glorious king  
You are strong when you feel weak  
In your brokenness complete

*Shout to the north and the south  
Sing to the east and the west  
Jesus, Saviour to all  
Lord of heaven and earth*

Rise up women of truth  
Stand and sing to broken hearts  
Who can know the healing power  
Of our Awesome King of Love

We've been through fire.  
We've been through rain  
We've been refined  
By the power of His name  
We've fallen deeper in love with you  
You've burned the truth on our lips

Rise up church with broken wings  
Fill this place with songs again  
Of our God who reigns on high  
By his grace again we'll fly.

**Martin Smith**

## **Blessing**

O God whose greeting we miss  
and whose departure we delay:  
make our hearts burn with insight  
on our ordinary road;  
that, as we grasp you in the broken bread,  
we may let you go, and return to speak your word of life  
in the name of Christ. Amen

## Time to Meditate

### TakeTime Meditations

TakeTime meditations use your imagination to provide a calm, comfortable space in which to meet God. At the heart of TakeTime is the Ignatian idea of an imagined encounter with the Jesus of the Bible in which we are invited to step into an episode from the New Testament and imagine a conversation with Jesus.

This week's meditation is based upon Luke 24:13-31 "Resurrection encounter near Emmaus"

Link: [www.taketime.org.uk/themed-meditations/131-resurrection-encounter-near-emmaus/](http://www.taketime.org.uk/themed-meditations/131-resurrection-encounter-near-emmaus/)

Take a time to sit quietly with this poem:

#### **On The Emmaus Road by Malcolm Westwood**

Dismayed they journeyed sadly,  
Jerusalem behind,  
Recounting what had happened  
To one who was so kind.

Their hopes they thought had vanished  
And danger filled the air,  
The followers of Jesus  
Were hiding everywhere.

But as they walked, a stranger  
Came walking with them there  
Enquiring of their sadness  
Why they were full of care.

He taught them from the Scriptures  
Of all that God had planned,  
Of how the resurrection  
They soon would understand.

As evening shadows beckoned  
They urged that he should stay  
Though he would venture further  
Despite the darkening day.

And as they dined together,  
With thanks he broke the bread  
And suddenly they knew him –  
Jesus, no longer dead!

They remembered as he spoke  
Their hearts were warmly stirred  
And now they saw him clearly  
Their eyes no longer blurred.

They hastened to the city  
With news had to contain-  
'We've seen the risen Jesus,  
He's with us once again!'

All those who meet with Jesus  
Their hearts will burn within,  
His cross, the tomb are empty  
The cure for inbred sin.

Let's share with those disciples  
On the Emmaus Road  
And meet the living Jesus  
To hear all they were told.

The go as he directs us  
Our debt to him repay  
By telling all who need him  
That Jesus lives today!

## Additional Prayers & Poems for use at Home

Christ, walk with us,  
walk with us,  
walk with us on the road to our Emmaus;  
Open our hearts, open our eyes, let us hear  
your voice,  
no matter how hidden your presence may  
be.  
In the dusk of our days, stay with us and,  
when we least expect it, break bread for us  
and,  
pierce our souls with your presence, your  
Spirit;  
If our road becomes dark, walk before us,  
guide us with your light,  
show us the way;  
When it is time, leave us, encouraged,  
standing in your strength and not our own,  
so that with the remembrance of you and  
that moment,  
we race to tell others of the Good News,  
'We have seen The Lord!'

Derek Gallagher

### **A prayer of thanksgiving**

Father, we thank you that you meet us  
where we are.  
We thank you that you walk the road with  
us,  
that you treat us as an equal even when we  
fail to recognise you. You always love us,  
you always care for us,

### **Poem by Anne Boulwood**

Do you know the Risen Saviour?  
Do you know the King of Kings?  
Have your eyes been opened to his glory?  
Do you raise your voice to sing?  
That he walks with us and talks with us  
And guides us on our way  
That he teaches us and challenges us  
to good disciples be,  
sharing witness and faithfulness  
for all the world to see.  
Do you know the Risen Saviour?  
Do you know the King of Kings?  
Have your eyes been opened to his glory?  
Do you raise your voice to sing?  
Long Live the King of Heaven! Long live the Risen King!

you always want to eat and drink with us –  
such is your love. Thank you, Lord, that you  
are not a stranger, but our friend. Amen.

### **A prayer for others**

Living Lord, we bring to you the needs of the  
world.

We pray for those who consider themselves  
to be strangers and outcasts. Help us  
always to welcome the stranger, whatever  
the cost, not sitting comfortably and ignoring  
people who we think don't fit in, not taking  
the easy way.

We pray for countries where food and  
medical supplies are in short supply. May  
we live sustainably and sensibly,  
so there is enough to feed the whole planet.  
Help us not to be selfish, but always to  
consider others.

Lord, we long for the day when all in society  
will be equal.

We pray for those who are lonely and have  
no one to eat with them. May we learn from  
our current time of isolation just how that  
feels. When we are able to do so again, may  
we open our doors to our neighbours, so  
that love and friendship can flourish, and all  
can enjoy the feast. We ask in Jesus' name.

**Amen.**

## One final reflection by Mandy Harris:

This year I enrolled in a pottery class at Rochester Adult Education Centre. I was hoping to complete a sculpture for Easter but this was sadly cut short 3 weeks in due to the Covid-19 closures. As part of my research, I was looking at images of Jesus painted and sculptured through the ages and by artists worldwide.

The Methodist Modern Art Collection has a good number of images. If you are online, why not take a look?

[www.methodist.org.uk/our-faith/reflecting-on-faith/the-methodist-modern-art-collection/](http://www.methodist.org.uk/our-faith/reflecting-on-faith/the-methodist-modern-art-collection/)

*Which picture do you like most? Why? Is it the colours? The figures? The style? Or maybe it's the story it tells or scripture verse it refers to?*

My favourite artist was *He Qi*. The colours and imagery of his works are amazing! He uses different styles too. One day I'll make my sculpture. *I wonder which Jesus story you would sculpt, paint or draw and why? Why not give it a go!*

I've found it really interesting seeing how others have portrayed Jesus and the stories he was part of. Many draw on their own culture and way of seeing the world. I wanted to sculpt an image based on 'The road to Emmaus' and found some images here online:

[www.artandtheology.org/2017/04/28/the-unnamed-emmaus-disciple-mary-wife-of-cleopas/](http://www.artandtheology.org/2017/04/28/the-unnamed-emmaus-disciple-mary-wife-of-cleopas/)

The whole article by *Victoria Emily Jones* is worth a read. My particular favourite is *Barry Motes'* (American), *Supper at Yummaus*. Picturing Jesus in a KFC with Cleopas and his wife, Mary. *What do you think?*

I love the fact that Jesus is at a road stop café eating with friends. He's on a journey and teaching them where they are. It made me smile probably because it features older folk like me, so I suppose I related to it! It reminded me too that Jesus continues to share bread with us ordinary people across the world whatever type that bread may be and wherever we might find ourselves. Whether it's burger bun in USA; naan bread in India; tortilla in Mexico; gluten free in London; stottie in Newcastle or Tesco white in Gillingham (or all of them at home depending on stocks when shopping!) – Jesus comes to share our bread now, warming our hearts at breakfast, lunch, tea, dinner and supper (or snacks in between). Jesus is '*God with us*' wherever we are. The same - today, yesterday and tomorrow - and forever. We never eat alone.





## Sunday & Mid-week Worship

### **BBC 1 – Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> April 10.45am**

A service from Hereford Cathedral led by the bishop of Dover, the Right Reverend Rose Hudson-Wilkin, with hymns recorded for Songs of Praise in 2017.

### **Circuit live streaming**

You are warmly invited to join others in the North Kent Methodist Circuit in worshipping from home on **Sunday 26th April at 10.30am..** **If you have access to the Internet**, the service will be 'live streamed' at 10.30am.

Before 10.30am, go to the North Kent Methodist Circuit website

[www.nkmethodists.org.uk/news/invitation-to-worship-from-home.html](http://www.nkmethodists.org.uk/news/invitation-to-worship-from-home.html)

or

Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/groups/northkentmethodistworship/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/northkentmethodistworship/)) to find the live stream.

You can download the order of service from the same page.

**Alternative worship: Swan Bank Methodist Church** in Burslem, this worship will be studio based, contemporary style. **Sunday 10:45am**

[www.youtube.com/user/SwanBank](https://www.youtube.com/user/SwanBank) and [www.facebook.com/swanbank/](https://www.facebook.com/swanbank/)

### **Mid-Week Prayers**

A short service of prayers to set you up for the day.

Join the Wesley's Chapel for morning Prayer. The service uses the Methodist Worship Book but it doesn't matter if one doesn't have it in one's own possession. The services lasts about 15 mins and is led by either, Rev Jen Smith, or her husband Rev Keith Raglan or Rev Steve Cooper.

[www.wesleyschapel.org.uk/livestreaming/](http://www.wesleyschapel.org.uk/livestreaming/)