

WELCOME AND NOTICES

- Roger Hinton's funeral will take place at Colney Woodland on Wednesday 27th April at 3.00pm. It was Roger's wish that people attending the funeral should not wear black.
- 14th May 2022 Christian Aid Quiz – choice of meal, quiz plus donation for the work of Christian Aid.

CALL TO WORSHIP

People, the LORD has told you what is good, and this is what He requires of you: to do what is right, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God. Micah 6:8 (NLT)

OPENING HYMNS/SONGS

Here I Am (Paul Oakley)

Here I am, and I have come
To thank You, Lord, for all You've done
Thank You Lord
You paid the price, at Calvary
You shed Your blood, You set me free
Thank You Lord
No greater love, was ever shown
No better life, ever was laid down

And I will always love Your name
And I will always sing Your praise (repeat)

You took my sin, You took my shame
You drank my cup, You bore my pain,
Thank You Lord
You broke the curse, You broke the chains
In victory, from death You rose again!
Thank You Lord
And not by works but by Your grace
You clothe me now in Your righteousness

And I will always love Your name
And I will always sing Your praise (repeat)

You bid me come, You make me whole
You give me peace, You restore my soul,
Thank you Lord
You fill me up and when I'm full
You give me more till I overflow
Thank You Lord
You're making me to be like You
To do the works of the Father too

And I...

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Hear Our Praises (Hillsong Worship)

May our homes be filled with dancing
May our streets be filled with joy
May injustice bow to Jesus
As the people turn to pray

From the mountains to the valleys
Hear our praises rise to You (from the heavens)
From the heavens to the nations
Hear our singing fill the air
(Fill the air)

May Your light shine in the darkness
As we walk before the cross
May Your glory fill the whole earth
As the water o'er seas

From the mountains to the valleys
Hear our praises rise to You
From the heavens to the nations
Hear our singing fill the air (from the mountains)
From the mountains to the valleys (hear our praise)
Hear our praises rise to You
From the heavens to the nations
Hear our singing fill the air
Hallelujah, (x8)

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To You O Lord (Graham Kendrick)

To You O Lord I lift up my soul
In you I trust O my God
Do not let me be put to shame
Nor let my enemies triumph over me

No one whose hope is in you
Will ever be put to shame
That's why my eyes are on you Oh Lord
Surround me, defend me
Oh how I need you
To you I lift up my soul
To you I lift up my soul

Show me your ways and teach me your
paths
Guide me in truth lead me on
For you're my God, you are my Saviour
My hope is in you each moment of the
day

Remember Lord your mercy and love
That ever flow from of old
Remember not the sins of my youth
Or my rebellious ways
According to your love remember me
According to your love
For you are good O Lord

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OPENING PRAYERS

Risen One, like those disciples on the road to Emmaus, we struggle to recognize you in the everyday journey of our lives. We seek your wisdom in the midst of the questions we have about the circumstances we find ourselves in—circumstances sometimes beyond our control, but often of our own making. Open our eyes, Light of the World, to your work of transformation in and around us. As we walk with you day by day, may your new life be made manifest in what we say to others. Help us to understand the power of our words to hurt or to heal;

give us the graciousness to make all our conversations holy.

As you opened the scriptures to the disciples and taught them everything, open our eyes to behold you in your Word, in the beauty of nature, the beauty of another human being and the beauty of sacred art.

And in our seeing, help us to recognize and welcome the stranger in our midst. May our welcome be a celebration of the gifts and graces of persons who are different from us

and not merely some token tolerance of an outsider. So often we forget, Holy One, that you invite us to abide with you; to have our lives hidden in you.

We thank you that you walk with us in our joys and our concerns. **Amen**

CONFESSION

Risen Lord Jesus, help us to empty ourselves of all that hinders our awareness of your presence with us. Fill us with the joy of knowing your continuing presence, so that, like those travellers on the road to Emmaus, we too hasten to share this great good news with others. **Amen.**

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

We know that we were ransomed from our futile and sinful ways by the precious blood of Christ and have been born anew through the living and enduring word of God. In this we recognize God's great love for the world revealed in the death and resurrection of Jesus, who came into the world not to condemn it but to save it. Therefore, those who believe in him are not condemned; instead their sins are forgiven. Thanks be to God! Amen.

OFFERTORY

Help us to be generous givers, dear Lord, both of our money and our lives, that we might make a difference in this community of Bowthorpe. We ask this through your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ who gave all that he was that we might know life in all its fullness. **Amen.**

PRAYERS FOR THE SUNDAY CLUB

Father God, we ask for your strong arms of protection to be around our children that they may be held safely within your love. Fill their days and nights with hope and joy; fill their hearts and minds with your truth and light. And bless them now, we pray, as they go to Sunday Club. **Amen.**

READING: Luke 24: 13-35

On the road to Emmaus

13 Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. 14 They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. 15 As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; 16 but they were kept from recognising him. 17 He asked them, 'What are you discussing together as you walk along?' They stood still, their faces downcast. 18 One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, 'Are you the only one visiting Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?' 19 'What things?' he asked. 'About Jesus of Nazareth,' they replied. 'He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. 20 The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; 21 but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem

Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. 22 In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning 23 but didn't find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. 24 Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see Jesus.' 25 He said to them, 'How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?' 27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself. 28 As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus continued on as if he were going further. 29 But they urged him strongly, 'Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over.' So he went in to stay with them. 30 When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. 31 Then their eyes were opened and they recognised him, and he disappeared from their sight. 32 They asked each other, 'Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?' 33 They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together 34 and saying, 'It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon.' 35 Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognised by them when he broke the bread. This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Hymn/song

Cornerstone (Hillsong Worship)

My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness
And I dare not trust the sweetest frame
But wholly trust in Jesus name

When darkness seems to hide His face
I rest on His unchanging grace
In every high and stormy gale
My anchor holds within the veil

Christ alone, cornerstone
Weak made strong in the Saviour's love
Through the storm
He is Lord, Lord of all

His oath, His covenant, His blood
Support me in the 'whelming flood
When all around my soul gives way
He then is all my hope and stay
He then is all my hope and stay

Christ alone, cornerstone
Weak made strong in the Saviour's love
Through the storm
He is Lord, Lord of all
He is Lord
Lord of all

Christ alone, cornerstone
Weak made strong in the Saviour's love
Through the storm
He is Lord, Lord of all

When He shall come with trumpet sound
Oh, may I then in Him be found
Dressed in His righteousness alone
Faultless, stand before the throne

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REFLECTION: Journey of a lifetime

Did you have a good Easter? Its another of those time when we talk about the old

familiar stories isn't it. We have Palm Sunday and Jesus triumphal arrival in Jerusalem, the Passover meal, the last supper, Judas' betrayal, the garden of Gethsemane, the crucifixion, and the resurrection on Easter Sunday. But the Easter events don't end there and if you think they do, then you are missing out on some truly powerful events. One of those events is this little vignette in our reading today. And bear in mind this happened on the very same day as the resurrection that First Easter day.

Our theme today is the journey of a lifetime. There is actually a Royal Geographical Society award called the Journey of a lifetime award. This is an award for people who record their experience on a personal and independent expedition and is run with the BBC as the expedition becomes a BBC programme. Our reading today is about two disciples walking away from Jerusalem, perhaps back to their homes in Emmaus. They are aware of crucifixion, but they did not understand or accept the news of Christs resurrection or perhaps they just missed the importance of it. Perhaps it was based on a slightly misogynistic view that women's testimony was not as reliable as a man's testimony. Perhaps they did not want to think that the end time and resurrections was upon them. Whatever the reason they were walking away from Jerusalem with heavy hearts. They had been there for the triumphal arrival in Jerusalem and the adulation of Palm Sunday but now their hopes and expectations had been dashed. They were probably asking themselves what are we going to do now? Somewhat dejectedly they trudged back to their village. Their teacher and leader had been

killed rather than leading the nation to freedom, overpowering the Romans and into a bright new future. In much the same way we might be devastated by the impact of the coronavirus pandemic or the war in the Ukraine, more mundane the cost-of-living crisis or more simply what is going on in our personal lives we can become distracted. As they walked and talked Jesus came up to them and started chatting to them initially, we are told by asking them what they are discussing as they walk along. And they replied that this stranger must be the only person leaving Jerusalem who was unaware of what had just happened there. As they walked and talked, they got to know each other a little better, they got to know the scriptures a little better. Now when I'm talking about walking with Jesus or God, I want us to think about that in a literal sense but at the same to see the metaphorical sense of our walk with Jesus, both our walk to the point where we recognise Jesus for who he is when we first come into faith but also our continuing walk of faith with him. The latter not simply being an event as in our reading today but reflecting a lifestyle. Leonard Ravenhill said, "Smart men walked on the moon, daring men walked on the ocean floor, but wise men walk with God." May we all be wise. May our lifestyle reflect our beliefs.

[Literally walking with God?](#)

Looking at the literal sense then we can see in the old testament examples of people who actually walked with God. Adam of course was the first man to walk with God in the garden of Eden. In Genesis 3: 8 – 9 we learn that God was strolling in the garden of Eden but couldn't find Adam, so he calls out to him. I'd like to

think that this evening stroll was a regular thing that God and Adam did together before the fall. A pleasant gentle evening walk to talk about whatever was on their minds, whatever God wanted to open up to Adam. It is interesting to note that our story begins with a tree, the tree of knowledge of good and evil yet is brought to stunning conclusion at another tree in the shape of the cross. The fruit of the first tree brought about pain and death, the fruit of the second tree was life eternal.

Or how about Enoch. Now he's an interesting character if you're not familiar with him have a look at Genesis 5: 18 – 24, Enoch walked faithfully with God 300 years! Was that literal or metaphorical? Enoch is also one of only two characters in the old testament who do not die the other being Elijah. There was no chariot for Enoch however, Enoch lived in a close relationship with God for 300 more years; he also had other sons and daughters. 23 He lived to be 365 years old, 24 but Enoch had such a close and intimate relationship with God that one day he just vanished - God took him. So, Enoch did not experience death he went straight into heaven without dying.

Then we have Noah a little later on in Genesis 6: 9 where we read that "Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked faithfully with God." Now I said earlier we need to keep two thoughts in our minds at the same time to literal and the metaphorical. Walking in the bible can therefore be seen as referring to a lifestyle. One where we choose to follow God's ways not our own. Noah sought to eliminate from his life anything that did

not enhance his walk with God. Do we do the same? Do we take literally the instruction in 1 Corinthians 10: 31 – 33, 31 So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. 32 Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God— 33 even as I try to please everyone in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved. Is that how we live our lives? Do we seek to eliminate from our lives everything that detracts from our walking with God?

But don't think that walking with God is only an activity for the very few I've just mentioned. God desires all his children to walk with him, he desires our company. Meeting with him is not simply an activity to be reserved for Sunday mornings plus high-days and holidays. It is a daily and ongoing fellowship where God and his kingdom is at the centre of what we think, what we believe, what we do and what we say. It becomes a way of life to do as we are instructed, "To act justly, love mercy and to walk humbly with our God.

What might we learn from this example from 2000 years ago that is still relevant today? Firstly, I suggest we look at the example, as the disciples walked, they were discussing the burning issue of the day. They did not become distracted with the trivia of the day. Today you often see people walking with their ear buds in lost in a world of their own making. They are concentrating only on themselves, often barely avoiding bumping into others they are so distracted by their music, their video, their phone call. Rather imagine going for a walk with a good friend what normally happens? As you walk you often

fall into step. Remember the London Millennium bridge opening in 2000 when it wobbled from side to side. It turned out people crossing bridges fall into step with each other to the extent that the bridge swayed, people lurched to the left then the right in unison. This is why the military break step when crossing bridges for fear of bringing the bridge down due to the vertical loading of marching in step. Walking with a good friend you start talking about a variety of things that are important to you, you exchange your views, your understanding. The one thing you do not do is haul out your phone and start texting someone else that is just plain rude isn't it. You give your friend your full attention as you walk along you get to know what is happening in their life, what they are feeling, you get to share in their joy and their pain. And they get to know about you in the same way. In walking and talking together there is a sense of harmony and community between the two of you during the walk. What might those distractions be in our walking and talking with God? We could easily be distracted by the things of this world, the latest gadget, the latest TV show, the latest fad or fashion trend those distractions is the sin that we cling to and won't let go of. How can we concentrate on what God is trying to say to us if we are still clinging to our old security blanket of sin. How can we hear what God is saying to us if we spend most of our time away from him in our old sinfulness. Sometimes I must admit when walking I do like to get lost in my own thoughts, lost in the wonder and beauty of God's creation while walking but then there are times when we just need to be silent in our friend's company and enjoy their presence in our shared activity, to enjoy

that sense of harmony. There are also times when walking with a good friend may mean saying no to other things. We prioritise our friendship over other things. We might want to go out to some fancy restaurant but if our friend calls needing to talk, we prioritise their needs over ours. We can always go to the restaurant another time.

So as these two disciples walked and talked Christ asks them what are you discussing, much as we might ask our friend or a child in distress, "What is wrong". At first, they rebuke the stranger for not knowing what has happened that first Easter. Their gloom overwhelms them. They had recognised Jesus as great and powerful teacher and leader, they had thought he was the one to save the Jewish nation. They were wallowing in their gloom, their lack of hope for a future, their dreams had been shattered. They could see and talk to this stranger, but they did not recognise him as the Jesus they were talking about. There was nothing wrong with their eyes but rather it reveals something about their hearts. They had heard Jesus teach, they had followed him, but they were thinking of a messiah, the anointed one, the new king of Israel, the descendent of King David, that this person would establish a new earthly kingdom, to restore the nation to its greatness and former glory. They did not understand that his kingdom was spiritual rather than secular. They wanted a kingdom where they were the rulers not the ruled, where they were top dog. They had overlooked his role as a deliverer from sin, as the once and for ever sacrifice for our sin to reconcile us to the father. He did not fit their preconceived ideas of the messiah. They seem to doubt the reports

of the resurrection. Mark spoke last week about conspiracy theories. One such that the authorities tried to spread was that some of Jesus' followers had stolen his body, perhaps they fell for that conspiracy theory. They knew Jesus, they followed Jesus, but they did not have Jesus in their hearts he was not what drove their habits.

I know there are times when we too feel God is far away or simply not listening to us because of what we are going through. In just the same way these two disciples felt they had been abandoned by their messiah. But there is nothing God doesn't know about your life. You may know the past and present, but God also knows the future. Choose today to walk securely - not in what you know, but in what you believe. – said David Jeremiah. In those moments of doubt, we need to remind ourselves of Jesus response to these two doubtful disciples. It is now Christ's turn to chastise them. Jesus knew these two men by name, true they were not among the 12 named disciples, they were just two ordinary followers of Jesus. Like the good shepherd he is Jesus set out to bring them back into faith by walking, talking with them and opening their hearts and minds to what he had been saying. So Jesus is concerned for the ordinary people too. Christ opens the meaning of the scriptures up to the disciples, just as when we walk with Jesus he will, through the Holy Spirit move our hearts and minds so that we too see his glory and understand his teachings. Through the spirit of wisdom and revelation he will reveal to us the light of the glory of God that is found in him. Just as he did when he walked and talked with disciples on the road to Emmaus. If you let

him, he will turn your life around too just as he did with these two disciples.

It was only when Christ broke bread with them that they recognised who he was, despite their burning hearts when Jesus was teaching them. We can all have an Emmaus road experience if we want. We don't always recognise Jesus when he walks with us until the point, he reveals himself to us and we respond by asking him into our lives. John Eldredge said, "Only by walking with God can we hope to find the path that leads to life. That is what it means to be a disciple. After all -- aren't we 'followers of Christ'? Then by all means, let's actually follow him. Not ideas about him. Not just his principles. Him." In our seeking to understand the big questions why am I here?, what is it all about that we looked at in our lent course. The film *The Way* focusses on a group of disparate individuals who as they walked together, bonded together and had a spiritual experience. They became a community as they walked, they supported each other. As Jesus walked with the disciples and broke bread with them, he changed their world from one of fear and uncertainty to one of hope, one of joy one with a future. And he offers each one of us that same turn around away from fear and despondency to joy and a future. It needs to be said that in doing so nothing had materially changed in the world situation the disciples were in but rather their view on the world had significantly changed. So changed were they that despite the late hour they run, through the dark of night, all the way back to Jerusalem to tell the 11 that they have seen the risen Lord, that's about a 7 miles trip. Our encounter with the risen Lord also should make our hearts burn with

desire to share Christ and his hope for the future with those around us. Our encounter with Christ should be as energising for us as was the encounter that these two disciples had with Jesus. Their gloom dispelled by hope, their doubts and disbelief dispelled by certainty, knowing the truth that Jesus had risen from the dead just as the prophets and Jesus had said.

What if we don't walk with God? Well, I think CS Lewis summed it up quite succinctly when he said, "To walk out of his (God's) will is to walk into nowhere." Do you want to be somewhere or nowhere? I know which one I'd choose. If you are feeling down, hopeless, in despair, full of gloom and doubt. If the news headlines are making you fearful then reach out to Jesus let his joy drive out the gloom, let his peace drive out anxiety and despair, let his love drive out hopelessness, let his promise of life eternal through his death and resurrection bring you certainty and hope for the future. All you need do is reach out to him, it's your choice. He will walk with you if you want or leave you be if that is your choice there is no compunction. But if you want to experience the same sense of being overwhelmed, full of joy, energised that the disciples on the road to Emmaus experienced then reach out to Jesus and invite him into your life if you haven't already. For in him we too can have a bright hope for the future. It will be a journey of a lifetime as well as a journey for a lifetime.

Lord help us to seek you out and to stay true to your teachings. May our walking with you reflect our lifestyle into this world that through our behaviours this

world will see that we are your followers. May we share in the joy and energy that the two disciples experienced when they realised, they had been walking and talking with you Lord. **Amen**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

God of new life, of resurrection, we come before you this Easter season, our hearts rejoicing in you. And yet, despite our joy and hope, we feel the darkness around us. May we know your healing presence in that darkness, and may your light shine in and through us. Comfort and strengthen us that we may be beacons of your light to those around us.

Mysterious one, you walk among us, but do not always recognize you in our midst. Open our eyes to you. Open our ears and our hearts that we may see you at work in our midst, through our neighbours, in our community.

Source of all power, we pray for our leaders and the leaders of the world at large, that they too may recognize you in unexpected places, that instead of vying for power, they may strive to work with and for their constituents, that they may recognize the value of life of people near and far. We especially pray for the leaders and people of the Ukraine, as they fight against the invaders who are intent on impaling their will on them.

Maker of the universe, as the world around us bursts into life and colour, we rejoice in your creation. Help us to be good stewards of our home, the earth, that we so often take for granted. May we, with awe and wonder, care for your creation: the land, water and air that sustain and nourish us.

Source of comfort and peace, we ask that you be with all those who suffer. We lift up those who have lost loved ones: through illness, old age, disaster or violence. We pray especially for those who have lost family and friends this past week, those in the middle east whose lives are punctuated by war and unrest. We ask for your comfort and peace in the face of the fear, anger and grief of loss.

Light of the world, you hear all of our prayers, those spoken aloud and those whispered only in the silence of our hearts. Cast your light upon us, gracious one.

In Your Name, **Amen**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us:

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.
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.

CLOSING HYMN/SONG

Lord I Come Before Your Throne of Grace (What a Faithful God)

Lord, I come before Your throne of grace;
I find rest in Your presence
And fulness of joy.
In worship and wonder
I behold Your face,
Singing what a faithful God have I.

What a faithful God have I,
What a faithful God.
What a faithful God have I,
Faithful in every way.

Lord of mercy, You have heard my cry;
Through the storm You're the beacon,
My song in the night.
In the shelter of Your wings,
Hear my heart's reply,
Singing what a faithful God have I.
Lord all sovereign, granting peace from
heaven,
Let me comfort those who suffer
With the comfort You have given.
I will tell of Your great love for as long as I
live,
Singing what a faithful God have I.

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CLOSING PRAYER AND BLESSING

Lord, your word is a lamp to our feet and
a light to our path. Thank you that we can
live in Your light and, like the disciples on
the Emmaus road, walk in Your truth.
May the things that you have revealed
and thoughts that we have shared dwell in
our hearts and stir us to action. We ask all
this in the precious name of Jesus. **Amen.**

And now may the blessing of God
Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be
with us all; all those we love, all those we
care for, and all those we pray for, now
and always, **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
In the name of Christ, Amen.