

A Easter 3

30th April 17

Place: St Mary's

Luke 24.13-35

Theme: What does it mean to be church?

- ◆ What did you come to church for this morning? What are you hoping for? What keeps you coming? If you have been coming for a long time, what brought you in the first place?
- ◆ As we celebrate and reflect on the Resurrection of Christ at Easter we also need to think about what Easter tells us about what the church is and what it means to be a disciple of Christ. Easter is about God changing things; God saving the world. The church, our church, should be one of the signs of that resurrected power at work here and now and Wimbledon.
- ◆ All our readings this morning tell us important things about the power of the resurrection and how that makes and shapes the church. Let's start with the story of the two disciples on the Road to Emmaus.
- ◆ This is a wonderful story from the first Easter Day. It is a story in which Luke is telling us what it means to be the Church and how individual Christians come to meet with the Risen Lord.
- ◆ The journey of the two disciples on the road is a metaphor for the journey that every disciple takes. Discipleship begins with encountering Jesus's ministry. They have seen and heard Jesus. They were impressed with what they saw, but they don't yet either believe he is risen from

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the dead or that he is God incarnate. They think that he was a wise teacher, a prophet, who came to a tragic and deeply disappointing end.

- ◆ Isn't this the way a lot of people both inside and outside the church think about Jesus? How many times have I heard 'He was a good man and a great teacher, but I just can't believe what I have heard about the resurrection.' So this story is a story that is as relevant now as it was 2000 years ago. It speaks to us now. There are many outside the church have heard rumours of angels but just cannot believe what they are hearing.
- ◆ The great irony of the story is that the risen Christ is with the disciples as they share their doubts about what they have heard and their disappointment about what has happened.
- ◆ Jesus then explains to them why what happened had to happen by showing them the places in the Old Testament that foretell it. This is also what we aim to do week by week. We read the scriptures together and seek to understand what they tell us about how God is working in the world now and what God is doing. We, like the disciples on the road, come to church with our questions, our worries, our griefs and anxieties. These are also the things that we bring to our reading of the Bible together and it is the work of the sermon to help us discover where Christ is in the scriptures and in our lives now and to see how God is working among us.

- ◆ When the disciples reach their home, they invite Jesus in, still without knowing who he is. Their hospitality and generosity brings them the greatest gift of all. As Jesus breaks the bread they finally recognise him. For us too, we meet most intimately with the risen Christ when we share the bread and wine together around this table.
- ◆ Luke tells us through this story that there are three places that we meet with the risen Christ; when we come to church. We meet him in one another as we gather together. When we read this story; we need to remember that this was written at a time before specific church buildings, when every celebration of the Eucharist happened as people gathered together in one another's homes.
- ◆ We meet Christ in the reading and breaking of the scriptures, and we meet Christ in the breaking of the bread; in Holy Communion.
- ◆ The two disciples are transformed by this encounter with the risen Christ. They start to realise and recognise the signs of the risen Christ's presence with them. 'Did not our hearts burn within us.....while he was opening the scriptures?' they say.
- ◆ When they finally recognise Jesus, they are so filled with hope and joy that even though it is evening and they have walked a long way, they immediately return to Jerusalem to share the

good news with the other members of the church, the other disciples.

- ◆ There are a lot of people in Wimbledon who have heard about Jesus, who have heard the rumours of angels, but have never met the risen Christ. They are still living lives that Peter describes as ‘our futile ways.’ They are concerned that our world is subject to a corrupt generation and that they themselves are corrupted.
- ◆ These are the people we have good news for. These are the people we are called to share the good news of Jesus’ Resurrection with and invite to meet with the Risen Christ.
- ◆ This is a very easy thing to do if we are being the kind of Church our readings describe today. If we know that we are about devoting ourselves to breaking the bread together, to learning from the apostles and reading the scriptures and if we are praying. If we are willing to do this and let God change us through doing it we will be people who are generous, willing to share. We will be people with glad and generous hearts who are learning and being purified through our obedience to and concern for the truth. We will be a community of genuine, mutual love, filled with the Holy Spirit and born anew through the Word of God. That’s who I want us to be. That is what I come to church for.