

**WESLEY UNITING CHURCH
SUNDAY, APRIL 14TH, 2024
THIRD SUNDAY IN EASTER
10:45am**



The abstract art you see above is by the Russian, Wassily Kandinsky, referred to as “Composition VII”. Kandinsky was a devoted Christian of the Eastern Orthodox tradition and an abstract artist of enormous capacity and imagination. Composition VII is an artistic summation of a range of themes and stories from the Bible: Noah’s Ark, Jonah and the Whale, Christ’s resurrection and the four horsemen of the Apocalypse found in the Book of Revelation. What marked Kandinsky’s thought and art were the themes of death and rebirth, destruction and creation: what we might call “living beyond the horizon”, something he correctly sensed as he anticipated World War I but looked beyond to a resurrected Europe. Today’s readings – in particular, the story of the Road to Emmaus – points to “living beyond the horizon” where resurrection appears when it is least expected, nor even contemplated.

GATHERING OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD

PRELUDE **Schmücke dich, O liebe Seele** (Deck thyself, my soul, with gladness) (attrib. JS Bach arr. G Thalben-Ball)

INTROIT **Be Ye Followers of God** George Thalben-Ball (1896-1987)

Be ye followers of God, and walk in love:
even as Christ lov’d us, and gave himself for us.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY AND SAFE CHURCH STATEMENT

Let us acknowledge the Ngunnawal and Ngambri peoples,
The first inhabitants of this place,
part of God’s good creation.
We honour them for their custodianship of the land,

on which we gather today.

The Uniting Church in Australia believes that all people are made in the image of God, and so we accept every individual regardless of race, age, creed, sexuality and gender.

WELCOME AND LIGHTING OF THE COMMUNITY CANDLE

INVOCATION OF THE TRINITY AND GREETING

The Lord is risen.

He is risen indeed.

In the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

The Lord be with you

And also with you.

CALL TO WORSHIP

This Call to Worship is prepared by the Rev. Paul Mitchell, (ancestral homelands of the Cayuse, Umatilla, Palus, and Walla Walla). He is the senior pastor of Pioneer United Methodist Church of the USA. He is involved in the United Methodist Creation Justice Movement.

How shall we live when lavished with love?

“We are God’s children, but it has not been revealed what we are to become in the future.” (1 John 3:2)

Just as in our origins, our future is tied to our planet.

The Creator has given us partners for mutual flourishing.

Let us worship God, who makes all things new.

HYMN: TIS 210, O for a thousand tongues to sing (Lyngham, C. Wesley, 1707-1788)

PRAYERS OF ADORATION

God Creator;

we adore you.

God crucified and risen us;

we adore you.

God among us and within us;

we adore you.

Father, Son and Holy Spirit;

God Creator, God crucified and risen, God among us and within us, you give us abundant life.

CONFESSING OUR LIMITATIONS ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS

Making sense of resurrection is very difficult, for it breaks apart those rational systems that we build to make sense of things. We can make so much more sense of Jesus and our own lives in the stories of his birth at Christmas, of his baptism (Epiphany) and of his work – what he teaches and what he does – but the story of resurrection takes us beyond our reasoning and comfort zones to the super-rational. It points us to a “beyond” that breaks into human experience, and of which it is difficult to make sense. Yet it stands there, questioning us and challenging us in its mystery and mysticism, but also in its ordinariness. What follows is a prayer based on today’s gospel reading, Luke 24:13-35, of the Road to Emmaus.

What do I know of the Emmaus road,
except that I think it passes not far from my church;
runs through the local shopping mall,
runs through the main street of town,
through the neighbourhoods where the houses
stand amid the trees and shade;
runs almost anywhere today.

What do I know of the Emmaus road,
except that maybe those who walk on it;
lonely in their grieving, stressed in their worrying,
fearful and anxious and searching for hope,
they look like me in the mirror some days,
and sometimes they look like you,
like just about anybody today.

What do I know of the Emmaus road,
except that the place where Jesus meets us;
where he shows up to walk and talk with us,
to come into our kitchens and break bread with us,
or where he reveals himself to us in the stranger,
in the person we can’t imagine as God’s beloved,
that place could be almost any-place today.

What do I know of the Emmaus road,
except that I think I have some of the smell of it;
soaking through to my skin when it rains;
have some of the dust of it sticking right here
on the leather of my worn-out shoes;
and this morning, in this church, the light
pouring in, **isn’t that Christ sitting next to me?**

Amen

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Friends in Christ, know this: the mercy of God is from everlasting to everlasting, and I remind you of this surpassing grace – in Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

Thanks be to God!

GLORIA (TIS 772)

Worship, honour, glory, blessing,
Lord we offer to your name:
Young and old, their praise expressing,
Join your goodness to proclaim.
As the saints in heaven adore you,
We would bow before your throne;
As your angels serve before you,
So, on earth your will be done.

PEACE

We greet each other with the words, “The peace of the Lord be with you” or if from a distance, the hand over the heart, or the hands clasped.

SERVICE OF THE WORD

During the season of Easter, readings from the Acts of the Apostles replace the Hebrew Bible

PRAYER FOR UNDERSTANDING

In our struggle to hear your word O God,
bless even our doubts,
our wonderings,
our wanderings,
our soul struggles, our deep questions and deeper mysteries.
Teach us to love your questions as well as our answers.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES: Acts 3:12-19, p. 887

¹²When Peter saw it, he addressed the people, “You Israelites, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we had made him walk? ¹³The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our ancestors has glorified his servant Jesus, whom you handed over and rejected in the presence of Pilate, though he

had decided to release him. ¹⁴But you rejected the Holy and Righteous One and asked to have a murderer given to you, ¹⁵and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses. ¹⁶And by faith in his name, his name itself has made this man strong, whom you see and know; and the faith that is through Jesus has given him this perfect health in the presence of all of you. ¹⁷“And now, friends, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. ¹⁸In this way God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, that his Messiah would suffer. ¹⁹Repent therefore, and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out.

EPISTLE 1 John 3:1-7 p. 990

³ See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. ²Beloved, we are God’s children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is. ³And all who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

⁴Everyone who commits sin is guilty of lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. ⁵You know that he was revealed to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. ⁶No one who abides in him sins; no one who sins has either seen him or known him. ⁷Little children, let no one deceive you. Everyone who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous.

HYMN: TIS 465 Father in heaven (Halad, Filipino folk melody, *arr.* Elena G. Maquiso. Words, Daniel Thambyrajah Niles 1908-1970)

GOSPEL: Luke 24: 36-48, p. 861

³⁶While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.” ³⁷They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. ³⁸He said to them, “Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? ³⁹Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.” ⁴⁰And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. ⁴¹While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, “Have you anything here to eat?” ⁴²They gave him a piece of broiled fish, ⁴³and he took it and ate in their presence. ⁴⁴Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to

you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.”⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures,⁴⁶ and he said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day,⁴⁷ and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things.

This is the Gospel of the Lord - **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ**

ANTHEM Lead Me Lord Samuel Wesley (1810-76)

Lead me, Lord, lead me in thy righteousness,
make thy way plain before my face.
For it is thou, Lord, thou Lord only,
that makes me dwell in safety.

PREACHING

OFFERING HYMN: TIS 382 Now the green blade rises, (Noël Nouvelet, French traditional melody, *harm* The Iona Community, John Macleod Campbell Crum 1872-1958)

The Offering is received as the congregation sings. We remain standing as the prayers over the offerings are made.

PRAYERS OVER THE OFFERINGS

In Easter gratitude and hope, we give of our money and of ourselves to your reign.

Amen

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

We are asked to pray today for the peoples of Belarus, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine. We continue to pray for the peoples of Gaza, Israel, the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

At the end of each petition the following bidding is offered and we end with the “Our Father”

Liturgist: Lord have mercy

Response: **Christ have mercy**

**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 for ever. Amen.**

THE SENDING FORTH

ANNOUNCEMENTS

HYMN: TIS 380, Yours be the glory (Maccabaeus, Edmund Luis Bundrey 1854-1932, *tr.* Richard Birch Hoyle 1875-1939)

COMMISSION AND BLESSING

“Love will come to perfection in us when our relationship to this world is just like Christ’s. There is no fear in love, for perfect love drives out fear.” (1 John 4:17-18)

**Mountains and valleys, flora and fauna,
receive your love and echo with praise.
Our salvation is bound together with Creation.**

Go in peace, and remember:
goodness is stronger than evil;
love is stronger than hate;
light is stronger than darkness;
life is stronger than death.
Victory is ours through Christ who loves us.

The Lord is risen
He is risen indeed.

Our service has ended
Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
In the name of Christ.

POSTLUDE Theme und Fuge über Christus ist erstanden
(Rudolf Bibl, 1832-1902)

Liturgist and Preacher: Rev'd Dr. Geoff Dornan

Music Coordinator: Jade McFaul

Organist: Lorraine Macknight

Wesley Music Scholars: Evangeline Osborne and Martin Magill (choir)

Bible Reader: Jan Sismey

Sound and Video: David Bengner and Christine Hearn

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