

Open My Eyes- April 26, 2020

Luke 24:13-35

**“Open my eyes, that I may see
glimpses of truth thou has for me.
Place in my hands the wonderful key
that shall unclasp and set me free.” (VU 371)**

Open my eyes, illumine me, Spirit divine!

Grace & Peace to you, Dear Friends,

Well—How are you doing?--on this third Sunday of Easter? I hope you are able to download the video for this week. **PLEASE send back some feedback.** I really miss contact with you!

It has been an incredible difficult week. When I try to imagine & stand with the people of Nova Scotia—it is absolutely heart-wrenching. Words can't capture the hurt—the anger – the grief & suffering of the families.

The isolation that we are having to endure pales in comparison.

And so--**What have you been doing?** I know some have been doing jigsaw puzzles--& cooking—much to the delight of others in the household. My husband Bill cooked up a delicious pumpkin loaf. We decided to freeze some of it—before we devoured it in one day! Others have been working up their gardens—or their farm lands to get ready for planting. It will soon be time to plant the corn.

I must say I don't really like the loss of freedom to come & go as I choose. However, **I do like to read, talk on the phone—but it's not quite the same--**

I miss our church gatherings—Sunday service, Bible Study Tuesday, Choir Thursday, cards on Saturday-- I especially miss lunch at the restaurant & coffee or /tea with dear friends.

So--What do you doing in all your spare time? for your mental health? And to keep your spirit whole?

I've enjoyed just walking in the yard.

Did you notice the dandelions this week?? When the sun was out this week, they were in full bloom. Bright yellow—can't miss them. My Dad always worked hard to get them out of the lawn. – A large stretch of green was always his aim. –Not one yellow spot! He liked it like a golf course. And he generally succeeded.

Now my Mom always thought dandelions were beautiful. She loved their brightness. I always agreed with my Mom—bright golden—welcoming the Spring. They are indeed a symbol of new life after the winter coldness. Ah! It is truly spring now! Ours are growing behind our garage—where it is sheltered.

What I admire about dandelions is – **they are tough**. They are not only beautiful, but they are tough. When I went for groceries in Bothwell, there were some growing at the Dairy Case on the crack between the asphalt parking lot and the wall of the store. It didn't look as if there was any soil—and yet they were hail & hearty. For me these plants symbolize “Hang in –better days ahead. They are truly the plant for COVID-19. —God's love is like that-- steadfast. And God's Spirit too is like the parachutes of the dandelion —the seeds of the dandelion-- --able to fly—take flight –to extraordinary heights—to go to unbelievable places—to soar with the eagles! God's love is powerful-- & eternal—forever!

Our scriptures today made me think of the dandelions—or perhaps it was the dandelions that brought the scripture to mind.

The theme today is “**Open My Eyes**”

Let us review again the very famous story of the Road to Emmaus

Luke 24:13-35

The morning of the Resurrection, two companions were making their way from Jerusalem to Emmaus.

This journey would take them approximately 11 kilometres/7 miles. The two companions were talking about all that had happened and were discussing the events of the day with each other.

We know from scripture that one was called Cleopas.- and the other is not named. As they were talking, a third traveller came alongside them. It was Jesus, but the two companions did not recognize him. The Bible does not tell us why. Perhaps, their grief over losing Jesus had clouded their thoughts and their vision both physically and spiritually.

The stranger asked the two travellers what they were talking about as they travelled this road together. Their faces were downcast and sad.

Cleopas replied, “Are you just a visitor, do you know what events have happened in Jerusalem over the last few days?” “What events?” asked Jesus.

“The events leading to the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth,” they replied. “Jesus was powerful, and the presence of God was with him. He was able to perform many miracles. He was handed over to the Romans to be sentenced and ultimately crucified. We thought Jesus would free Israel from the oppression of Rome.

Some of the women that followed Jesus went to the tomb this morning, but they didn't find his body in the tomb. Mary Magdalene says she saw Jesus, that he is alive! Some of the men followed and found his tomb empty, but they didn't see Jesus.”

The stranger answered, “Didn't the prophets say that the Messiah would suffer and that his suffering would lead to a path of glory?”

They arrived in Emmaus, but the stranger continued on. It seemed he had further to go.

“It is nearly dark, come and stay with us” urged Cleopas. And so they sat at the table in the inn. And then stranger took the bread, and gave God thanks, broke the bread, and began to pass the bread to the two.

That was the moment that their eyes were opened. It was Jesus who had travelled with them! When all hope seemed lost, Jesus had travelled alongside. And it was Jesus who was breaking the bread.

Suddenly, Jesus was gone.

“How could we not know this was Jesus? Weren’t his words touching our souls as we journeyed to Emmaus? We must go back to Jerusalem at once.”

Arriving in Jerusalem, they found the others and told them about what happened on their journey home, and how they recognized Jesus when he broke the bread. Yes, we have seen the Lord! We felt his presence.

In this COVID time, that we are living through, sometimes, we too don’t recognize Jesus. The Holy—the sacred that is always with us—even though we may not recognize it.

We are not alone. God is with us. So—let us celebrate God’s presence in **our** lives!

I was looking this week for a story that would be a modern illustration of the mystery, the power and the faithfulness of our God.

Here’s a true story:

A few years ago, my husband & I had a cow-calf operation. Actually Bill, my husband had the cow-calf operation. I just admired and came out to the barn to exclaim: Ah! Isn’t he cute when the new born calf stood for the first time and suckled on his mother’s teat. The white of the head of a newborn calf is so pure & pristine. And before long they are kicking up their heels as they frolic in the field with the rest of the herd.

This particular early spring day—like some of the very cold days we had this week, we saw a brown blob in the field. Bill went out to investigate & found what he thought of a dead newborn calf. The mother had abandoned it—thinking too that it was too far gone. But as Bill stood there, he heard a very weak, “baa”. It was alive—a little heifer! So Bill picked it up. Put it over his shoulders. I can still see him coming into the house with the calf—like a shawl over his back & shoulders.

Now it was early in our marriage. I’m originally from the city & not familiar with the comings & goings of cattle and farming. So—I was quite amazed when he put this newborn calf in our bathtub!!

Now the calf looked dead—a blue nose, eyes glazed over. I remember thinking, “This is not going to be a good day. Bill will be so disappointed to lose a calf— a sad day. I better prepare something good for supper.”

But Bill started with cold water so as not to shock the calf. Gradually he added warmer water and gently rubbed the calf—staying with it and making the water very gradually warmer. -- probably about ½ an hour. Then, he called me in and we saw the nose go pink and the eyes came to life--. How wonderful! Next he dried her off with a big pink bath towel—rubbing her and placed her on another big bath towel in the living room by the south window. I saw how content she seemed in the sunlight. A couple of hours later, I happened to look in-- and to my great surprise, she was standing up—in the living room! Bill, I hollered “Get her out of here! I know what she’s going to do next!”.

I tell this story as an illustration of how our God never gives up on us. Our God is ever-present and ready to help us—to bring us to new life.

On the Road to Emmaus, the travellers didn’t recognize that the very God was with them.

In this COVID time we sometimes get discouraged & may feel very alone & isolated from family & friends. -- But know that the Holy presence is with you. We need “open our eyes” to see the blessings that abound. eg. emails, facebook chats, phone calls made & received, a wave to a friend or neighbour—simple acts of compassion & kindness. We are warmed and brought to life—just as the calf came back to full potential and just as Cloepus & his friend were renewed by the encounter with Jesus. “Did we not feel on fire as he conversed with us.”

Our scriptures today call on us to---Open our eyes.

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Thanks Be To God for the many blessings bestowed on us! AMEN!

PRAYERS: for Healing

The people of Nova Scotia who mourn the loss of their dear ones. We stand in solidarity. Cheryl Fisher, Dorothy Vogt, Lisa (Downie) Power, Corinna Asdal, Donna Jewett, Larry Saylor Shirley Bolton, Deb Griffith, Luis Pereira

All who are dealing with COVID-19 & taking precautions. **(This includes us.)**

Especially, the front line workers, cashiers, truck drivers, PSW's doctors, nurses & others who are working to keep us safe & healthy.

PRAYERS: of Thanksgiving & Praise:

B-days for April: Rev. John Maroney, Mason Pegg, Dean Patterson, Bill Lester, Alex Ross, Ken Burgess, George Smith, Colton Browe, Andrew Sinclair, Breeze Lindsay, Derek Daly Emily Boylan, Pete McBrayne, Sara Daly, Josh Boylan, Ken Imeson, Scott Boylan, Eli McDonald Cera Stonefish, Xavier Martin, Eva Cryderman & Rosalyn Sinclair.

May 1st: Harold Elliott celebrates a VERY special B-day. Blessings to you, Harold!

Happy Anniversary on April 21 to Professor Nina Reid-Maroney & Rev. John Maroney. 29 years! God blesses you indeed!

Please let me know who you would like included for next week in prayers: phone/text 519 365 5511.

For the MERRY HEART:

Some one-liners:

I find it ironic that the colors red, white, and blue stand for freedom, until they're flashing behind you.

I'm great at multi-tasking--I can waste time, be unproductive, and procrastinate all at once.

Television may insult your intelligence, but nothing rubs it in like a computer!

Behind every great man is a woman rolling her eyes.

If you keep your feet firmly on the ground, —you'll have trouble putting on your pants.

Ever stop to think and forget to start again?

When I married Mr. Right, I had no idea his first name was Always.

My wife got 8 out 10 on her driver's test--the other two guys managed to jump out of her way.

There may be no excuse for laziness, but I'm still looking.

He who laughs last thinks slowest.

Women sometimes make fools of men, but most guys are the do-it-yourself type.

Change is inevitable, except from a vending machine.

If at first you don't succeed, skydiving is not for you.

Now a word from our treasurers:

If you would like to make a donation to the caring cupboard, please make out your cheque to

Bothwell United Church
Box 187 178 Elm St.
Bothwell, ON
N0P 1C0

You can include this on your regular weekly/monthly cheque. On the memo line, indicate the amount you would like for General, M&S, Caring Cupboard etc.

For Wabash United: Send your offering to Dave Martin
11956 Base Line
RR 7 Thamesville, ON
N0P 2K0

The Peace of Christ be with you!

Stay safe, practice social distancing, wash hands & be kind.

Shalom, Annalee

P. S. The next Video & message is planned for FAMILY SUNDAY MAY 10. It will be coming to you thanks to John Beaugrand of JB Videos out of Alvinston.

And—thank you to Barrett & Nina who put all our messages on wabashunited.org. Many go to that site to see our thoughts & activities. We also enjoy very much Ruthie's blogs.

I'm also hoping to send out a ZOOM social invitation for next week –date to be announced.

That's all folks! Stay healthy!

