

**April 26, 2020**  
**Psalm 19:1-6 & Luke 24:13-35**  
**Pastor Tim Emmett-Rardin**

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Like last week, no full sermon this morning, just a brief reflection on the texts to lead us into a service of healing for the earth.

What jumps out for me from the gospel reading that Eriks just shared with us is the final verse, verse 35: "Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread."

This, of course, is another of the post-Resurrection accounts—in fact, we're told it's still the same day of the Resurrection, and while the rest of the disciples are huddled together in an upper room, in fear—as we read last week—these two appear to be getting as far away as they can.

Jesus shows up out of nowhere and starts walking with them, but they don't recognize him. And apparently aren't at all startled that this stranger has joined them. He asks them what they're discussing, and shocked that he doesn't seem to have any idea what's been going on (you know, the cross, the tomb, the apparent resurrection), they fill him in on all the details. And you can hear their confusion, their uncertainty, their disappointment that Jesus may not have been who they thought he was. And that, as far as they know, no one has seen him.

The whole time they're walking with him, seven miles to the village of Emmaus, they don't recognize him. When they arrive, seeing that he's starting to continue on, they invite him to stay. They offer hospitality, not to Jesus, but to a stranger. And here rings true the text from Hebrews 13: "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it." Or in this case, Jesus.

And it's not until they're gathered around a table that their eyes are opened—at the moment when Jesus does as he did with his disciples the night before he was crucified, taking bread, blessing it and breaking it, and giving it to them. Their eyes are opened, Jesus disappears as mysteriously as he appeared, and they are so moved by the experience that they immediately rush back to Jerusalem, back the seven-mile road they just walked because they can't wait to share the good news with the disciples: How the risen Jesus was made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Were not our hearts burning within us, they say? Jesus was with them the whole time, but they couldn't see it. Our eyes are not always open to see it, but the divine presence is always there. Within and around us. And so it is that the divine presence, the good news of resurrection and new life, is made known to us, again and again and again, in the most elemental of acts. In bread, broken.

And so, too, is the divine presence made known in the elemental beauty and splendor of creation, as the Psalmist proclaims in our other text. It is pure poetry: “The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims (God’s) handiwork. Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night declares knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard; yet their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.”

If only we have ears to hear, eyes to see what’s right in front of us. The divine presence is weaved into the interconnected fabric of creation, into the steady rhythms of each day and night, but only if we have ears to hear and eyes to see.

The tragic reality, of course, is that—as a whole—we have not. As a whole, we do not. In this age of human-caused, fossil-fuel dependent, greed-driven climate change, the voice of creation cries out instead.

Cries out in the form of a former coal industry lobbyist now head of this country’s Environmental Protection Agency. In the form of the most recent protection rollbacks, among hundreds from this administration over the last three years, of clean air and water regulations in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the form of ozone warnings and polluted rivers and streams. Warmer air and warmer oceans. Melting glaciers and polar ice caps and rising sea levels. More and more potent storms and extreme weather. Increased precipitation and flooding, increased drought and forest fires, increased tropical disease. Changes in the timing of seasons, in the distribution of habitats, in migratory patterns. Endangered and extinct species. All of which, not unlike the coronavirus, sees black and brown and poor people disproportionately exposed to its impact.

Do we have ears to hear and eyes to see? Are not our hearts burning with us?

As Dr. Kimberly Nicholas put it recently, “It’s warming. It’s us. We’re sure. It’s bad. We can fix it.”

Time is short, very short, but there is still hope. Still the promise of resurrection and new life. There is good news in the form of wider and louder and younger voices crying out as part of a global movement on behalf of creation. The push to keep fossil fuels in the ground and increase use of renewable energy (solar panels at Calvary!). The proposed Green New Deal. Global Climate Strikes. Do we have ears to hear and eyes to see?

In that spirit, I invite you, all of us, to consider, to re-consider how you and how we together might respond, or further respond, to creation’s cries, to what we’re hearing and seeing all around us.

And so we turn our focus now to the planet's need for healing and justice. And we begin with what is generally a good place to start, with gratitude for the divine presence made known to us in creation's beauty and splendor.