

St. John's Good News

From Mary Scott Wagner: "I had hoped..."

The road to Emmaus story, from Luke's gospel, is one of my favorites; and, as with all really great stories, it speaks to me in different ways, depending on where I am in my life.

Luke doesn't tell us where these disciples were during the events we now call Holy Week, but we do know that they were in Jerusalem as all of it unfolded. They had either personally witnessed or been told about the unspeakable horror of Jesus's death on a cross—and then, three days later, they were beginning to hear these unbelievable stories about an empty tomb and visions of angels saying that Jesus had somehow risen from the dead. It seems to me that these bewildered disciples had just had enough. Sad, scared, completely confused, they decided to head back home. On that long walk to Emmaus, they found themselves deep in conversation, trying to make sense of something that made no sense at all.

Somewhere on the road, the disciples encounter a stranger, whom they invite to join them in their walk. Unknown to them, their new companion is in fact Jesus. They tell him that they've been mulling over all the things that happened in Jerusalem over the past few days. "What things?" Jesus asks. Their sadness just stops them in their tracks, and it all just comes spilling out. "We had hoped that Jesus was going to redeem Israel." "We thought he would free our people from oppression, and instead he fell victim to the very violence and injustice we thought he would end forever." In addition to their grief over Jesus's horrible death, they must have wondered if they had wasted their lives, and they may well have been afraid for their own safety.

Those three words the disciples used as they began their story are among the saddest I can think of: "We had hoped." That's the past perfect tense by the way, used to indicate that an action has been completed and is over. In this case then, the action that has been completed is hope. It isn't just their teacher and friend who died, but also their hopes. They are grieving not just the terrible events of the past few days, but the loss of what might have been, the future they had allowed themselves to imagine and to hope for.

(contd)



May 2017

Worship Schedule

Sundays
8am ~ Rite I
10am ~ Rite II

Phone: 781-233-1242

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| Inside this issue | Page |
|---|-------------|
| From our Priest, Rev. Mary Scott Wagner | 1-2 |
| Class update, History Bits, etc. | 3 |
| ECDS, Plant Sale | 4 |
| Word Search | 5 |

Maybe you've been in that "we had hoped" or "I had hoped" place. "I had hoped...." Fill in the blank: that job would work out; the cancer would be in remission; my child would forgive me someday; we would spend the rest of our lives together; my beloved would find recovery; our family would be financially secure—whatever it is. The truth is, our lives rarely go the way we have scripted them, and sometimes our hopes are dashed. Life can deliver some pretty painful blows.

I was thinking of my own life and of the sometimes-dissonant place between reality and what I had hoped for as I read about the encounter with Jesus on that seven-mile walk to Emmaus. Jesus invited the disciples to tell their genuine, unvarnished truth, and he stopped with them in their sadness, and listened to them. The disciples remembered later that Jesus set their hearts on fire as he talked to them about the scriptures. But it was in the context of their naming their grief, confusion, and lost hope that the fire in their hearts was rekindled and took hold.

Once they reached Emmaus, Jesus made as if to continue along the road, but the disciples called him back and invited him to stay with them and to share a meal. Only then did they realize, through the blessing and breaking of the bread at supper, that they were in the company of the risen Christ, their beloved Jesus. That seems to me a very important part of the story. There was an invitation: "Tell me your truth. What is making you so sad? What things are troubling you?" That invitation elicited an invitation in return. "Stay with us. Be with us." That is the context in which Jesus Christ became known to them in the breaking and sharing of the bread. And it is the same for each of us, now, many Easters hence.

We are invited to give every bit of ourselves and our lives—good and bad—to God in Christ. Hopes get dashed. Plans go awry. We mess up and we break things. That's reality. But we can come to God in all our brokenness and tell the truth. We can say, "I had hoped that...but it didn't happen." And we can trust in a God who has been there in all the messy brokenness of being human, a God who has suffered, and yet whose love overcame violence, injustice—and even death. We can believe that we are beloved children of the living God, and that God in Christ will never leave us and never not love us. Even when we cannot love ourselves, we can trust that God can and does.

Our own road to Emmaus may seem a lot longer than seven miles. But we are not alone on that road. We have each other, even when we sometimes forget that. We have a Christ who can set our hearts on fire if we allow it. We can tell the truth, name our own dashed hopes and show God our broken places. We can ask for Jesus Christ to stay with us, and to be made known to us. When we do, we can be confident that we can face whatever life brings with the dignity, grace, and courage of disciples of the living Christ and beloved children of God.

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**The Rev. Roger Nelson visiting next week**

Join us Sunday, May 14th as Rev. Nelson officiates Mother's Day worship!

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Vestry Retreat Reminder and Monthly Meeting Change

The retreat is Saturday, May 6th at Bethany House in Arlington. Meeting date this month has been changed to Sunday, May 21st, following 10am worship.

Confirmation Class

Meets this month on May 21st at 7pm.

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**This month in history and notable birthdays:**

- \* On May 1<sup>st</sup> 1707, Great Britain was formed.
- \* The New York Stock Exchange was established in 1792.
- \* The first "Run for the Roses", the Kentucky Derby, took place on May 17<sup>th</sup> 1875.
- \* Nationwide, over 600 banks and 15,000 businesses shuttered as a result of the Wall Street crash of 1893.
- \* Germany surrendered to the Allied Forces, ending WWII in Europe.
- \* Less than a month after his Russian counterpart (Yuri Gagarin), in 1961, Alan Shepard became the first American in space.

**Birthdays:**

Actor, Laurence Olivier ~ U.S. Presidents, Harry S. Truman and John F. Kennedy ~ Poet, Walt Whitman ~ Entertainer, Al Jolson ~ Israeli Prime Minister, Golda Meir ~ Nurse and Public Health Activist, Florence Nightingale ~ Physician and psychoanalyst, Sigmund Freud ~ Movie Director, Frank Capra ~ First American female attorney, Arabella Mansfield

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Mother's Day Flower Remembrance

If you would like to offer a special flower remembrance for Mother's Day, please contact the office as soon as possible.



Every Child Deserves to Smile

Thank you to all who have contributed to the Grocery Gift Card collection! We will continue to collect gift cards and donations to purchase gift cards to Stop & Shop and Market Basket through the month of May. For those wishing to contribute, envelopes are available in the pews and may placed in the offertory.

The families are also in need of microwaveable foods. Donations of these items may be left in the ECDtS collection box in the vestibule.

Our next quarterly meeting will be held Thursday, June 1st at 9:30AM in the Hurl Room. All are welcome as we discuss the evolution of our ministry.

Contact Jeanne Seaboyer with any questions or comments: jmseaboyer@gmail.com /781 662-4342

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## **2nd Annual Plant Sale**

**Saturday, May 13th**

8am—2 pm  
(Rain or Shine)

Just in time for Mother's Day!

Choose from beautiful Geraniums, Begonias,  
Impatiens, and New Guinea Impatiens in  
assorted colors

Hanging Planters and Potted Plants

Grown and supplied by  
Kane's Flower World, Danvers, MA

# Word Search

P R E A C H E R R X F C M P L B O  
 U X J E E A R T H Z X A F Q I E O  
 C X A X R Q M O T H E R S V T N M  
 J H D V Y B U T S U M Y K A U A J  
 E N I N Y K C H I R P I N G R S J  
 K N E C U S B K A Q E E M M G C S  
 A H Q S K V L E Q O V U P G I E B  
 S T J F T A E H N U F R N J C N A  
 S A M G Q I D S J E T W C S A S S  
 O T C P A Q N E T K V Y I T L I E  
 F Y E R J R R G E I D O N B C O B  
 Q B Y E I M D K T L B A L V L N A  
 J E T X P S H E A Y N U N E S T L  
 R H V Y M L T R N E M D L S N Z L  
 R Z C A M I E Y V I E Y Z E K C S  
 B H X H I M Q O K F N A T U R E E  
 R B M O E N C T K E E G N W V W W

Ascension ~ Baseball ~ Benevolence ~ Chickadee ~ Chirping  
 Covenant ~ Earth ~ Emerald ~ Gardening ~ Liturgical ~ Mothers ~ Nature  
 Nesting ~ Preacher ~ Rejuvenate ~ Sacristy ~ Steeple ~ Vestibule  
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**Clergy & Officers:** The Rev. Mary Scott Wagner, Priest ~ T. J. Martin, Sr. Warden ~ Fritz White, Jr. Warden ~ Phil Littlehale, Treasurer ~ Janet Lancaster, Asst. Treasurer ~ Sandy Mears, Clerk of the Vestry

**Vestry:** Nancy Belyea (2019) ~ Alison Coppola (2018) ~ Armand Couture (2018) ~ Paul Felci (2020) ~ Cheryl Miller (2019) ~ Sandy St. Clair (2019) ~ Jeanne Seaboyer (2020) ~ Jenna Sharwood (2020) ~ Nick White (2018)