

Easter 3 2026

May I speak with the love and grace of the living God. Amen.

The two disciples on their way to Emmaus have been through a whirlwind and then some over the past few days. Jesus entered Jerusalem in a manner that promised he would be the new king, likely to challenge the Roman empire, but then within less than a week he was arrested and executed on a cross and now there are ever growing rumours of him having been raised from death and appearing to people, all alive. It's confusing and a little scary. What should they think, what should they believe, how to make sense of all this noise?

And now suddenly they meet this stranger, who seems to know an awful lot and somehow is able to calmly make sense and explain all that they have experienced in a way that all the puzzle pieces start falling into place. After the chaos, noise and stress of the last few days, this is like a soothing balm. Naturally they want to stay a bit longer with this stranger who brings such soothing calm and clarity and so they invite him to stay with them and have dinner together. Nothing fancy, a very simple breaking of bread. The stranger breaks the bread and suddenly they realise, the one who has been walking with them has been the risen Jesus all along.

When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him

In the breaking of the bread, they recognised him, through the breaking of the bread, Jesus made himself known to them. And in the breaking of bread Jesus continues to make himself known to us, continues to encounter us, as he encountered the disciples on their way to Emmaus.

At the last supper Jesus gave us that commandment, that we should break and eat bread in remembrance of him:

**Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.**

And so again and again, when we share in bread and wine, as Jesus taught us to do, the risen Jesus becomes present to us, makes himself known to us and encounters us. Sometimes we might experience that encounter similarly to how these two disciples experienced the moment when Jesus broke the bread, clear and undeniable, we recognise Jesus and what he does for us in that moment. Other times we might not fully realise how Jesus is making himself known to us in the bread, just as the disciples did not recognise Jesus, as they walked together and he helped them to make sense of all that had happened in the light of scripture.

In bread and wine, Jesus has committed to encounter us. In bread and wine God offers to encounter us, we are all welcome at God's table, all are welcome to encounter God in bread and wine. And whenever we gather around God's table to share in bread and wine, God encounters us, sometimes in quiet, gentle ways we barely notice, and at other times in ways that are powerful and clear to us, transforming us in ways we never forget.

Yet most of the time I think our encounters with God are much more like the shared journey of the Emmaus disciples with Jesus. That was most of their time together, and they did not realise it, the moment that made it all clear to them, the breaking of the bread, was very brief, only a few seconds. I think that our Christian journey with Jesus is often similar, Jesus walks beside us, gently guiding us, being present with us, day in and day out, often without us truly recognising his presence with us. But every so often, we might get a glimpse, a moment of recognition: Oh, it is you, you

are the one who walked beside me, you are the one who made yourself known in the breaking of bread.

God does not force Godself on us, but if we long for God's presence in our lives, if we are willing to welcome God's presence with us, stretching out are hands for that broken bread, God will come and encounter us. And it might not happen the way we think it should, it is very unlikely to be accompanied by trumpets and thunder, but God does come and encounter us. A lot of the time quietly, unspectacularly but nonetheless transformative. It might be that slowly, like for the Emmaus disciples, the fog clears, and where there were confusion and noise, calm and clarity enter. It might be a still small voice encouraging us to reach out with kindness and generosity. It might be a gentle presence, barely noticed, helping us to hold on as we go through loss and pain. It might be a tender little plant of courage growing in us, helping us to reach out to the stranger, to someone we are not entirely comfortable with, but a still small voice reminds us, they are made in the image of God just like ourselves.

As we again and again make the decision to hold out our hands and welcome God, encountering us in broken bread, God enters our lives, transforming us, often with us barely noticing, even though we might have the occasional moment, when we recognise Christ in the breaking of the bread.

All are welcome at God's table, today, would you like to hold out your hands and welcome God to encounter you, however God might see fit? Amen.