

# TCC Takeout

## An Order of Service for Worship at Home

***God's Extravagant Welcome:  
"No matter who you are or where  
you are on life's journey, YOU are  
welcome here!"***



**Third Sunday of Easter  
April 26, 2020**

### **Announcements:**

#### From Ted Thornton

The UCC has created a website of resources to supplement our worship and prayer during our struggle with coronavirus: [Click here](#).

Send announcements for the weekly Trumpet Blast and prayers for Joys and Concerns to me as soon as possible and no later than Tuesday noon for inclusion in the following Sunday's Order of Service.

I'll be officiating at Ruth Johnson's committal at the West Northfield Cemetery on Monday, May 4 at 11:00 a.m. This will be a private affair (only ten or fewer permitted to attend, social distancing in practice).

Many thanks to Chris, Patter, and Heather for bringing some wonderful music to us. There is some gorgeous special music with a folky flavor to enjoy this week.

#### From Chris Harris

"At my piano, I am reliving more than one performance at TCC (most recently, last summer, by Jonathan Fowler and Lynne Walker) of "Blue Boat Home," with words by Peter Mayer and music by Roland Hugh Prichard, composer of the Welsh hymn tune, Hyfrydol. This tune is familiar as the setting for such hymns as "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling" and "Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus." This past week saw the 50th anniversary of Earth Day and "Blue Boat Home" is an environmental anthem in which the boat is a metaphor for Earth: "Drifting here with

my ship's companions, all we kindred pilgrim souls, making our way by the lights of the heavens, in our beautiful blue boat home." [Listen to it here.](#)"

**Introit:** [Amazing Grace](#) (Michael Chapdelaine, guitar)

## Call to Worship

One: Travelers on the Way, what shall we do?

All: We shall praise God

who hears our prayers,

and brings new life out of death.

One: Dear Ones, how shall we live?

All: With the confidence of God's beloved children,

with security and joy of God's saving grace.

One: Friends old and new, what is the promise?

All: New life, forgiveness of sin, the Spirit as gift!

One: Beloved Siblings, how shall we praise?

All: We lift our voices and our hearts in love, thanks, and praise!

We will praise the Lord as long as we live!

**Opening Hymn:** [Alleluia! Sing to Jesus!](#) (Hyfrydol), arr. Robert Hobby

## Gathering Prayer

Loving God, we welcome your living presence in our midst.

Share our joy and our thanks for the life you give us.

Dance among us! Pray with us!

Shower us with your love! Amen!

## Gloria Patri

[Gloria Patri \(Glory Be to the Father\)](#)

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost

As it was in the beginning,

Is now and ever shall be,

World without end,

Amen, Amen

**Special Music:** [And They'll Know We are Christians by Our Love](#) (Chris Brunelle)

**Reading From Scripture:** [Luke 24:13-35](#)

*"For the word of God in Scripture, For the Word of God Among Us, For the Word of God Within Us, Thanks Be to God"*

**Special Music:** [Open My Eyes, That I May See](#) (Joslin Grove Choral Society)

**Reflection:** Ted

Luke 24:17 And he said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?"

While you're traveling, what do you talk about? Do you talk about how you experience God in your life (maybe not, although perhaps you should). Cleopas and his unnamed companion are on the road when they're joined by a mysterious stranger. Cutting to the chase, the big question for them becomes: how do we know we're in the presence of the risen Christ, the presence of God? How do we know when God's walking with us?

In scripture today, the risen Christ makes himself visible to his two followers when at the end of the day they all sit down to eat. But, the even bigger point is that it happens while they're traveling, while they're on the move, on a journey.

Talking about God while on the move by tradition is called *theologia viatorum*. The phrase literally means, "the theology of pilgrims." But, it has an alternate meaning that I like even better: "theology on the way." Both meanings convey the sense that God is understood not when we're standing still, but when we're on the move; and all of us are "on the move" in an important sense even when we're standing still physically. God is never revealed all at once, only by degrees as we journey through life: think of the invocation with which we begin every service, "No matter where you are on life's journey..."

Now, you may not feel like you're on a journey to Emmaus or anywhere else right now, locked down as you are in your homes much of the time except for trips out to get supplies. But, I'm here to argue that we're all currently on one of the most important journeys of our lives. In whatever way you understand the metaphor, the central truth of *theologia viatorum* is that we see God at any given moment only "through a glass darkly," as Paul put it in First Corinthians 13:12, never fully, never completely, only by degrees as we move through life.

This Easter season, the glass is especially dark. Instead of God, many of us see only the ugly, magnified images of the little virus with all the spikes and media images of some of our political leaders fighting with and blaming each other over what to do about it. So, even though we're hunkered down, we're each very much on our own roads to Emmaus wondering when the risen Christ will reveal himself to us.

I first started taking *theologia viatorum* seriously when studying with one of my most influential teachers: a professor of New Testament named Dieter Georgi. Dieter emigrated from Germany to the United States as a young man after World War II. He used to say he became a scholar, not in the German universities where he earned his PhD, but at the age of fourteen in 1944 and

1945 as whole swaths of his homeland of Germany were being reduced to rubble in the wake of the allied advance. Much of that time he remembered spending on the move from bunker to bunker to escape the bombing raids. He saw his home town of Frankfurt go up in flames. And, he was in an underground shelter in Dresden when the allied “firestorm” bombing destroyed that city in February of 1945. These experiences taught him that the essence of life is impermanence, and the essence of faith is what theologians call *theologia viatorum*: the theology of pilgrims, of Christians on the way, like those two followers of Jesus on the road to Emmaus. Authentic theology is always theology in perpetual motion, never at rest, always on the move.

Whether you’re religious or not, the lesson is that nothing stands still and none of us is ever everything we can be. Therefore, we should never seek refuge in static dogmas about ourselves, about others, or about this changeable world of ours whose global history can be so irrevocably altered by a tiny virus: no final judgments about anybody or anything. We’re never complete; we’re never finished products, not on this side of the grave anyway. All of this goes especially for this church of ours, which has been on the move, at times perceptibly, at times not so, for more than one hundred and fifty years.

Dieter’s experience instilled in him an acute sensitivity to change, a critical capacity for anyone who aims to become a genuine historian or theologian. And, his experience, mediated through his teaching, cemented my own twin loves of history and theology. Dieter was the best teacher of both disciplines I’ve ever known. His principal lesson was that we’re always on the road to an Emmaus somewhere, to one Emmaus after another, always in flux: this is the reality of life. This is our condition. So, we’d best be humble about any conclusions we’re tempted to draw about one another, about history, and particularly about this pandemic we’re in.

Instead, the lessons of Emmaus and *theologia viatorum* are that we’re closest to God when we’re able to nurture two qualities that on the face of them seem to be contradictory or at least in tension: complete trust in God on the one hand and a healthy tolerance for ambiguity on the other, the kind of tolerance for ambiguity that leads us to practice humility and to be suspicious of dogmatic, absolutistic positions, especially those that lead to exclusion and harm of others.

Dieter Georgi’s favorite novelist was William Faulkner, whom he labeled without a trace of irony, “America’s greatest theologian.” One of his favorite Faulkner novels is The Reivers. Like many great novels, the story is about a journey, this one to Memphis in a stolen (or “reived”) automobile. There are many hilarious misadventures on this journey. Along the way, the car gets traded for a racehorse who, it turns out, always comes in last because he likes to look at the other horses. His owners finally get him to win by bribing him with one of the more interesting performance enhancing drugs out there: a sardine administered on the sly, of course. The story is a metaphor for life as movement, life as surprise, life as a joyride, a joyride for which none of us has full permission.

Don't be afraid to look at your own life as a joyride, a journey of constant motion and change. You didn't ask permission for it; it was gifted to you. And, as you grew, you began to realize that life is a record of changes you meet along the way.

Granted, many of us are inclined to dislike change. But, over and over again in our faith and in the human experience, it's in times of great flux, change, and even danger that we discover what's most good for us and see God most clearly.

So, as you draw near to your next Emmaus, welcome the mysterious, ambiguous stranger into your midst and be open to the changes he or she will bring to you. Amen.

**Hymn of Reflection:** [Lord Jesus, Think on Me](#)

## Joys and Concerns

Gen Clark has a joy: she is welcoming her 16th (or 17th - she's not quite sure!) grandchild: a little girl named Emma born on April 14.

Ed Finch had a birthday on April 20. Happy Birthday, Ed!

Heather relayed a message from Gary Gartletts: Alan Abel has contracted Covid-19, and is in the hospital on a ventilator. He and Janet have had a very rough year. Prayers for Alan and Janet are urgently requested.

Heather also reports that Margot Parker has had her surgery and is home. Her children and father are taking care of her. She is grateful for all our prayers and is looking toward recovery. She would welcome cards. Anyone wishing to call, please call Heather first.

Please keep Linda Leavis' grandson Dana Kellogg and his fellow National Guardsmen in your prayers as they work on the front lines to help victims of Covid-19.

## Pastoral Prayer

Risen One, like those disciples on the road to Emmaus, we struggle to recognize you in the everyday journey of our lives. We seek your wisdom in the midst of the questions we have about the circumstances we find ourselves in—circumstances sometimes beyond our control, but often of our own making.

Open our eyes, Light of the World, to your work of transformation in and around us. As we walk with you day by day, may your new life be made manifest in what we say to others. Help us to understand the power of our words to hurt or to heal; give us the graciousness to make all our conversations holy.

Just as we desire that our speaking be holy, may our seeing be holy as well. We are bombarded with images everyday O Christ, that shape our attitudes and behaviors. As you opened the scriptures to the disciples and taught them everything, open our eyes to behold you in your Word, in the beauty of nature, the beauty of another human being and the beauty of sacred art.

And in our seeing, help us to recognize and welcome the stranger in our midst. May our welcome be a celebration of the gifts and graces of persons who are different from us and not merely some token tolerance of an outsider.

You were known to the disciples in the breaking of the bread. May your resurrection presence guide us in the decisions we make about what we take into our bodies—especially what we eat and what we drink. Help us to understand our eating and drinking as sacred events, not to be abused or approached mindlessly.

So often we forget, Holy One, that you invite us to abide with you; to have our lives hidden in you. We thank you that you travel with us in our joys and our concerns.

Amen.

Church of Ireland:

<http://www.churchnewsireland.org/wp-content/uploads/Easter-3-.pdf>

## **Intercessions**

Jesus Christ, you traveled through towns and villages “curing every disease and illness.” At your command, the sick were made well. Come to our aid now, in the midst of the global spread of the coronavirus, that we may experience your healing love. Heal those who are sick with the virus. May they regain their strength and health through quality medical care. Heal us from our fear, which prevents nations from working together and neighbors from helping one another. Heal us from our pride, which can make us claim invulnerability to a disease that knows no borders.

<https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2020/03/02/coronavirus-prayer>

Hear O Lord, we pray, our petitions of general intercession. We pray for the lonely, for the bereaved, for the sick, for the aged, for those who feel overwhelmed by personal problems. We ask, on their behalf, for the comfort of your presence.

We pray especially for those in need who are on our hearts and minds and lips this morning. We pray for all who are ill or who suffer from any affliction: physical, mental, or spiritual. Bring healing and comfort to them, their families, and to those who care for them and to others who love them.

Bless and protect from harm all workers who risk their health and their lives in the service of others: first responders, police, doctors, nurses, and all others who work in the healing professions. We ask these things in the Name of Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Now praying together as Jesus taught us, we say,

Our Father who art in heaven,  
 hallowed be thy name.  
 Thy Kingdom come,  
 Thy will be done,  
 on earth as it is in heaven  
 Give us this day our daily bread.  
 and Forgive us our sins,  
 as we forgive those who sin against us.  
 Lead us not into temptation,  
 but deliver us from evil.  
 For thine is the kingdom,  
 and the power and the glory forever.  
 Amen.

**Prayer Response - NCH 769 - *Hear Our Prayer, O God* -- [Audio version](#)**

Hear Our Prayer, O God,  
 Hear our prayer, O God,  
 Incline Thine ear to us,  
 And Grant us your peace.

**Moment of Inspiration**

From THE GOOD-MORROW  
 John Donne

...And now good morrow to our waking souls,  
 Which watch not one another out of fear;  
 For love all love of other sights controls,  
 And makes one little room an everywhere...

**Closing Hymn: [Because you Live, O Christ, NCH 231](#)**

1 Because you live, O Christ,  
 the garden of the world has come to flower,  
 the darkness of the tomb  
 is flooded with your resurrection power.

Refrain:

The stone has rolled away and death  
 cannot imprison!  
 O sing this Easter Day, for Jesus Christ has  
 risen,  
 has risen, has risen, has risen!

2 Because you live, O Christ,

the spirit bird of hope is freed for flying,  
 our cages of despair  
 no longer keep us closed and life-denying.

Refrain

3 Because you live, O Christ,  
 the rainbow of your peace will span  
 creation,  
 the colors of your love  
 will draw all humankind to adoration.

Refrain

**Choral Benediction:** [Hold Each Other Up](#) (Cathy Fink and Marcy Marxer)

### **Pastoral Benediction**

Friends, rejoice in the mothering and fathering love of God!

Rejoice in the victorious life of our Risen Savior!

Rejoice in the power of the Spirit!

Go, living in the love of Christ!

Go, serving in the name of Christ!

Let your love of God embrace

Your children

Your family

Your enemies

Those who are afar off

Those who are strangers met on the road

May your lives praise the Lord!

**TRINITARIAN CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH**

147 Main Street, Northfield, MA 01360

413 498-5839 / [busoff147@gmail.com](mailto:busoff147@gmail.com)

<http://www.tccnorthfield.org/>