

In the Meantime

A sermon shared with the congregation of St. Andrew's United Church

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This is the name of a Bible commentary blog by scholar David Lose, and, it is the sentiment I feel as I process the significance of the story in Luke today. Jesus has just made a startling appearance to two friends en route to Emmaus. They didn't recognize him until he broke bread with them. Now he appears again. Even as he invites them to touch him, eats broiled fish in front of him, they feel wonder, but there still seems an element of doubt.

For the storyteller Luke, compared to John's Gospel appearances of Jesus helping to see so they believe, Luke here is telling the story to followers that Jesus is with us, not just a ghost – it is me... Jesus! – that those seekers of Jesus decades, centuries, even millennia later may know that Christ is with us.

These disciples are amazed, but these are crazy times. They feel wonder, not quite understanding. But that's ok, Jesus says (I paraphrase), wait here. In the New Revised Standard Version translation, Jesus says:

...stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high. ¹

No judgment for not quite getting it. I am so grateful for that lack of judgment, because I am not always, ok, well, not often the paragon of unflappable faith I wish I was. God, revealed in Jesus, apparently loves me anyway.

Smart enough in that chaotic, confusing moment not to give too much detail in the instructions. Wait here, I'm sending someone to give you a power that comes from God. The classic ending, hinting at a sequel; the sequel, of course being Luke's next epic book, the book of the Acts of the Apostles which, just in the second chapter, sends Spirit like fire upon those confused friends of Jesus.

So. Waiting. You are doing a lot of that. Of course, we are DOING things, but in the meantime, waiting for COVID and its mutant friends to go away, what sorts of things are you doing? Waiting leaves lots of room to fill with tasks, but also space, quiet, for listening work...watching. What to listen for? What are we looking for? We share that same question with those disciples, played by Tracey and Connor so powerfully. re-engaged by this story that WE are the ones commissioned. We might first and foremost share grace and love of God that God first unconditionally gives us – share that with others. This world, our homes, our circles, need love right now. You just never know when you will be called upon while waiting.



I took this photo in 2006, on Easter morning, when a friend and I were waiting for worship on the Mount of Olives. Wouldn't you know it, a young person fell from a rock where they were perched to see the worship leaders. Believe it or not, my friend Sonia, a peace activist for Christian Peacemaker Teams, was also a surgeon. She jumped into

¹ Luke chapter 24, verse 49.

action, immobilized the broken limb, and we – three of us including the wounded worshipper – raced to the hospital.

Very few of us are a surgeon on scene, but, in these waiting times, what opportunities to do spiritual triage does God have in store for you? A listening ear for someone who you wind the call up with, but then you let your heart speak – maybe I can really listen. Your heart is touched by a crisis or a cause – listen to your heart just a little moment more than usual. Is Christ whispering in our ears that something is coming? *Wait here, and in the meantime, love everyone, unconditionally, just as I have loved you.*