

**SermonBytes: Walking together**  
**Luke 24: 13-35**

**Sept. 24, 2017**  
Rev. Elizabeth Foster, Crossroads United Church

Prayer: Guide us on a journey of faith this morning.  
Guide the words I speak. Guide the thoughts and meditations of our minds and hearts.  
Speak hope and confidence to each of us whatever our situation.  
Amen.

This passage in Luke, “On the Road to Emmaus” has been the one that holds true for my faith journey throughout my ministry.  
It has helped me to picture my ministry as walking with others, discussing our faith and sharing our struggles and questions, and often meeting Jesus when sharing food and hospitality.

There were 2 disciples of Jesus walking to a small village after Jesus had been crucified and buried. They were struggling with what happened when Jesus was crucified and what it would mean in their lives.  
Two people walking together when bad things happen, when the world gets turned upside down, when someone you love dies, leaves- one person can listen to the other. Then the other can listen to the first one as they try to make sense of a new way of life.

And then a stranger joins in, and the story gets told again – And the stranger tells them- this is exactly what was supposed to happen. The Messiah, the chosen one had to suffer thro’ all these and then enter his glory!

When it was getting late in the day, they were close to their destination - the stranger started to go on ahead, as if to leave the two disciples. The two friends were going into the place where they were going to stay. They asked the stranger to come in and stay with them.

Supper was prepared, the stranger blessed the bread before eating, said the grace... and the two disciples recognized Jesus- it was Jesus! A sacred moment happened! Just as they recognized him, he disappeared, slipped out when they looked at each other.

Afterwards they realized their hearts were burning within, their hearts were on fire when Jesus had been walking and talking with them, telling things that they now could connect with the scriptures and wisdom they knew.

This pattern of traveling and finding Jesus or God, present with us happens on our faith journeys.

People still today make journeys with their faith and health in mind, and when we want to be closer to God.

We go on Pilgrimages.

One such Pilgrimage is the walking trip across the north of Spain going from close to the border with France all the way, 500 miles to the town of Santiago de Compostela, near the ocean.

A spiritual writer named Joyce Rupp, went on this kind of Pilgrimage trip. The trail she walked is called the Camino.

Has anyone walked it? Or heard of someone who did?

In her book \*"Walk in a Relaxed Manner, Life Lessons from the Camino", Joyce tells her readers about this journey.

Joyce walked with a friend Tom who also was on a similar faith journey. Both were Christians and both ready for deepening their faith.

They prepared and practiced walking longer hours at a time per day for months ahead of the trip so that were ready for the long days of walking to cover 500 miles.

Joyce says:

To be a pilgrim is to be willing to live with the mystery of what will happen both interiorly and exteriorly as one walks day after day after day toward the destination of the sacred site. What happens inside cannot be planned or mapped out in the same way that the physical route is mapped. Becoming a pilgrim means there are no maps of the heart. One simply holds onto the hand of the Great pilgrim and travels with hope that one day the spiritual benefits of the road will reveal themselves and be understood....

In the rhythm of physical walking, the spirit gathers its own rhythm of adventure and harmony. Body and spirit befriend one another and in doing so, are united in a new sense of oneness with something greater.... The journey was walking me as I was walking it. I knew I would never be the same again. (see pages 40, 41)

It is my hope that you and I have been prepared by our history of faith to go deeper into our spiritual journeys.

It is my prayer that you and I become good at walking together, so that we are united with something, someone greater than our day to day trips to and fro.

We have already started some of the preparations for our journey together.

Joyce tells us that she began to look for unaccustomed angels on the journey. She and Tom were in a city called Ponferrada right at rush hour traffic. It was starting to rain and hard to find the signs that pointed the way for the Camino foot paths across the city.

As they were searching for the Camino signs, a voice behind her said: Follow me. A blond-bearded man in a long flowing, red rain cape motioned toward an alley to the right. His cape blowing in the wind he appeared mysterious, sinister almost. Should we go with him or be wary that he was going to lead us astray? She thought. Quickly and silently Tom and Joyce followed the silent pilgrim who was already moving rapidly down steep steps toward a parklike area along a wide river.

She says: He was taking us on an alternative path along a beautiful waterway lined with trees, a much pleasanter walk than through the busy industrial streets we left behind.

When we lagged behind his speedy movements he slowed his pace so we could follow. When we reached the edge of the city the central path was right in front of us. We knew which way to go. Then the silent pilgrim picked up his pace and soon was nowhere to be seen.

Like the two on the road to Emmaus, Tom and Joyce pondered that unusual event.

Joyce says:

How was it, we marveled as we walked along, that the stranger came by at just the moment of our need? How kind that he called out for us to follow him. What caused him to slow his pace so we could keep up with him? Why did he care enough for us to even bother to show us the alternative route?

We both felt a certain mystical aura about the experience, almost as if some divine intervention had blessed us. (see pages 154-156 for more)

It is my prayer for us that we discover holy moments of understanding that God is with us here, God is with us on our faith journeys.

My prayer is that we will become aware of God with us next Sunday as we break bread together in Holy Communion.

I will keep these walking shoes here and wear them in this church building to remind me that I am walking in a sacred place with you on a sacred journey.

This is the prayer with which Joyce and Tom began each day -

I pray it for us-

Guardian of our souls, guide us on our way this day.

Keep us safe from harm.

Deepen our relationship with you, your Earth, and all your family. Strengthen your love within us

That we may be a presence of your peace

In our world. Amen.

\*Walk in a Relaxed Manner, By Joyce Rupp, published by Orbis Books, Maryknoll, New York, 10545-0308. Copyright 2005.