

Anglican-Lutheran Society
St Chad's College, Durham
August 2018

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Christ is alive! Really? Where do we find him? In Liturgy

The first liturgical encounter with the risen Christ? Supper at Emmaus

Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, 'What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?' They stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, 'Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?' He asked them, 'What things?' They replied, 'The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him.' Then he said to them, 'Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared!

As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, 'Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.' So he went in to stay with them. 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; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, 'Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?' That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying, 'The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!' Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

[Luke 24:13-35 NRSV]

For reflection: When have you encountered Christ in the liturgy?

Either alone or with your neighbour, reflect on the following question:

When have you been very conscious of the presence of Christ in worship. What was the context or occasion? Was something different from usual, or was the usual somehow different? What did it feel like? What changed for you? What has made it difficult for you to encounter Christ in liturgy?

'The Liturgy': What is it?

'Liturgy' – the work of the people.

'Liturgy' and 'Worship' - are they different? If so, in what ways?

Set forms of worship – words and actions – for particular times of day or year, to mark particular events, to tell particular stories.

The Liturgy: then and now and when

A brief overview of approaches to liturgy, from early development, into the medieval period, and in the churches of the Reformation

Where did 'liturgy' go? Use, order, and instruction.

'Worship by the book' – Liturgy and Anglican identity

How we are shaped by our liturgies

As a way (back) in to encounter with Christ

Language to borrow to speak of God; drama to enter into

Liturgy as mission: the growth in cathedral worship

'As we prepare to meet Christ in Word and Sacrament...'

Reflecting together on where we encounter Christ in the eucharistic liturgy, as it exists in the modern Anglican and Catholic shape. What are the 'ingredients' of the liturgy?

The Greeting

Prayers of Penitence – and knowing we are forgiven

Liturgy of the Word

Liturgy of the Sacrament

In being sent out....

Conclusion and Questions

Finding the risen Christ in our liturgy – the new light in the darkness at Easter; the new life in the water of baptism; words of hope and consolation at the graveside; in the bread and wine as at the supper table at Emmaus on the first Easter day.

Finding liturgy that helps people to encounter Christ – that speaks of both the here and now and the eternal; that is 'apt' for its context, and accessible without being patronising. Do we risk making it all too cosy?

'How do we make fresh what is thought to be familiar, so familiar that it doesn't need to be thought about?' (R. Williams, *The Lion's World. A Journey into the heart of Narnia* SPCK 2012, p. 19). How do we keep encountering, and helping others to encounter, the risen Christ in our liturgy?