

## Walking with Christ: Do you know the way to Emmaus?

Christ shows up in the most unexpected places — in the wisdom of a stranger, in the breaking of bread and even in those moments when all hope seems lost.

That is one lesson from Luke: 24:13-34, the only detailed account of Jesus' post-resurrection walk to Emmaus. The risen Christ travels about seven miles from Jerusalem alongside two grieving disciples. The two already know the testimony of the women at the empty tomb, but they fail to recognize their teacher until he joins them for a meal. The familiar Bible story remains cherished Easter reading and scholars and other Christians see plenty of reasons why the story still resonates with Christ's followers today.

"The storytelling catches me every time," said Ryan Schellenberg, a New Testament professor at Methodist Theological School in Ohio.

"There's this beautiful irony in the disciples not knowing it when Jesus is walking among them. Then there is this scene of revelation when Jesus reveals himself in the breaking of the bread."

The passage explains how people in the post-resurrection era come to recognize Christ, said the Rev. Thomas E. Phillips, a New Testament scholar and dean of the library at United Methodist Claremont School of Theology in California.

"They come to recognize Jesus through the opening of the Scripture (24:27) and through the breaking of bread (24:30)," said Phillips, who served as the lead translator for the Gospel of Luke in the Common English Bible (Abingdon, 2010). "That is, Christ is made known to us through preaching and Eucharist."

The four biblical Gospels each offer slightly different takes on what happened Easter morning and its immediate aftermath. For example, only the Gospel of John recounts Jesus appearing to Mary Magdalene outside the tomb and later appearing to the once-doubting Thomas.

Schellenberg and other scholars believe Luke includes the Emmaus account in his biography of Jesus because it fits well with themes the Gospel writer wants to emphasize.

One of those themes is the importance of table fellowship. Schellenberg noted that in Luke, Jesus reveals himself to be someone "who likes a good banquet."

As happens when he reaches Emmaus, Jesus often acts as host, even when he is a guest in the house. Jesus is an inclusive host. He feeds the 5,000 with loaves and fishes. He eats with sinners and tax collectors. In Luke, unlike other Gospels, Jesus also eats with the observant Jewish lay leaders known as Pharisees.

Read more of this article at [umcom.org](http://umcom.org).

— Heather Hahn, United Methodist Communications

## Kits for UMCOR to be collected at Annual Conference

As your church begins preparation for collecting items for kits, there is currently an appeal from UMCOR for Health and Bedding kits. While these are currently in high demand, there other kits that are being collected include Birthing, Cleaning, Layette, School, and Sewing. Go to <http://www.vaumc.org/ncflerepository/AC2017/2017Kits.pdf> for the complete list of items and instructions on packing each kit (pdf). The times for collection of the kits are Thursday, June 15, from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m.; Friday, June 16, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.; and Saturday, June 17, from 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. If anyone has questions about the kits, you can contact the Kit Collection Coordinator, the Rev. David Magruder at Zion UMC in Seaford (York River District) at (757) 898-7417 or [davidmagruder@vaumc.org](mailto:davidmagruder@vaumc.org).

## Bishop's Convocation on Prayer video shares highlights of the day

Bishop Sharma D. Lewis carried on the tradition of the Convocation on Prayer begun by Bishop Young Jin Cho. This year, the convocation featured classes on different types of prayer as well as a plenary session with the Rev. Juanita C. Rasmus who challenged participants to think about prayer in a new way. View the video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kfjzZFn1RfA>.

## Items for AC virtual promo packet due May 19

In an effort to be good stewards of the environment and financial resources of the conference, the annual conference "promo packets" will again this year be virtual. Electronic copies of materials previously submitted in hard copy for the tote bag will be accepted — at no cost to the organizations submitting them — for inclusion in the Virtual Promo Packet, which will be posted on [www.vaumc.org/AC2017](http://www.vaumc.org/AC2017). The Virtual Packet will be available for viewing on the website beginning June 1. Those organizations still wishing to disseminate their information in a hard-copy format may arrange for a display table at the Hampton Convention Center by contacting the Rev. Eric Vaudt at 757-759-7484 or [EricVaudt@vaumc.org](mailto:EricVaudt@vaumc.org). Display guidelines and a Display Request form are also available on the 2017 Annual Conference Information page of the conference website. Information for the Virtual Promo Packet needs to be submitted in pdf format to the Office of Connectional Ministries ([BevMyers@vaumc.org](mailto:BevMyers@vaumc.org)) for approval by Friday, May 19.

## Bishop Lewis urges sharing news, potential crises with conference office

In her column for the May *Advocate* issue, Bishop Sharma D. Lewis shares the importance of communication with the conference office. Pastors and church leadership are especially encouraged to read the column to know what to do if the media contacts them or their church. Read more at <http://www.vaumc.org/pages/bishop-lewis/bishoplewisadvocatemay2017>.

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