



SONrise

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EMMAUS

NEWSLETTER

... Strengthening the Local Church

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!!

Prior to Easter Morning, and even prior to Good Friday, comes Maundy Thursday. Maundy comes from the Latin word mandate or commandment. Hence, on Maundy Thursday, Christ gave his disciples a new commandment - John 13:34 "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another."

The church I attend celebrates the Last Supper Christ had with his disciples in the upper room with a special foot washing service called Maundy Thursday. The service begins with those in attendance gathering around the communion rail and at the foot of the cross confessing our sins and then receiving absolution of our sins - "Sandy, in obedience to the command of our Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins." The word is then read and Pastor has a proclamation of that word, this year's sermon focusing on Jesus revealing true love. And then comes perhaps the most moving part of the service as Pastor carries a pitcher, basin, and towels to the front of the chancel and invites those who wish to participate to come forward and have their feet washed. It is a very humbling time with quiet hymns being played and Pastor offering words of encouragement and love to each person as he washes feet. Remembering Christ's command to love one another, we then move to the greatest gift of love as we celebrate Holy Communion, remembering again Christ's broken body and shed blood. The last thing that occurs in the service is the stripping of the Altar in preparation for Good Friday. That final act of stripping away all the worldly things until we hear the words "It is finished." Christ loved, prayed and sacrificed for each of us that we might have new life with Him in the resurrection of Easter Morning!

As I reflect on the above service and the spring walks, I see a number of parallels. We, like the disciples, come to the walk tentative at best and not sure where we are going and what it all means. We learn and have the reminder that we are sinful people who need to die to our sins daily seeking God's merciful forgiveness. We are shown and taught what love means and how we are to demonstrate that love to those around us. We are fed with the word and with the sacrament of Holy Communion, remembering all Christ has done for us. We are stripped bare and then renewed and sent out to take up our crosses ready for our new life in Christ, filled with His Holy Spirit.

I had the wonderful opportunity of being the Board Representative on the Women's Spring Walk and had the privilege of watching the transformation that takes place in the pilgrims' lives as well as the team and the community as the walk unfolded. What a blessing the Emmaus Walks are to us as individuals, as well as our families, churches and community as each person goes from the walk to begin to strengthen and make changes

in his or her world. Some of Christ's final words in the upper room were to reassure his disciples. He tells them - John 14:27 "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid." A wonderful ending to the Maundy Thursday service, to the Walks to Emmaus, and for each of us. Easter arrived on Sunday. He is Risen! He is Risen Indeed!

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Community Lay Director