Luke 24:36b-48

Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.” They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. He said to them, “Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.” And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, “Have you anything here to eat?” They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate in their presence. Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.” Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.

Living the Way of Love. That’s our theme for Eastertide this year. As people of the Way, followers of Christ Jesus, we are a people who live our faith, who live the Way of Love each and every day.

Sometimes Living the Way of Love is about prayer and study and worship. Sometimes it’s about picking up the phone and calling someone we haven’t been in touch with in a while or someone who might be lonely or going through a tough time. Sometimes Living the Way of Love is about speaking up to things we hear or see around us that are just plain wrong. Sometimes it’s sharing a meal with our family or planting a garden. Sometimes it’s walking on the beach and thanking God for all the wonders of creation. Sometimes Living the Way of Love is about reaching out to the needs of folks in our community who need food, housing, and hope.

Living the Way of Love is following in the Way of Christ Jesus, each and every day. In today’s Scripture reading that David read for us, we once again find Jesus totally surprising his disciples by showing up amongst them. They’re still trying to figure out what the Resurrection is about. They think they’re seeing a ghost, Scripture tells us. Jesus goes out of his way to prove that he’s not. Not at all. “Look at my hands and feet. Touch me and see.” I’m no ghost! Incarnation does not disappear into Resurrection. I’m no less real now than I was before, he seems to be saying. And then, to make it abundantly clear, he asks them, in one of the funniest lines in Scripture, “Do you have anything to eat?”

Here he is. King of Kings! Lord of Lords! Asking: “do you have anything to eat?” It doesn’t get much more basic than that, more ordinary than that, more human than that, does it? “Do you have anything to eat?” They scrounge around and give him a piece of broiled fish and he eats it right there in front of them. OK, Jesus. We get your point.

The Risen Christ is still pointing us to the basic needs that he and everyone has—for food, for shelter, for hope, just as the living Jesus had done.

Who in our community needs food? Who needs housing? Who needs to reach out and grab a hand up?

Today we join together in today’s Home Run for Kids, praying with our feet as we do in this event each year to benefit Upward Bound House, our community partner just across the street here. Upward Bound House works with homeless families to find stability, independence and success through Emergency Shelter, Bridge Housing and Rapid Rehousing. We served 505 families in 2020 including 971 children—in the midst of the pandemic! Overall 75% of our families move into their own homes. 90+% still in their home a year later. A roof over their heads. A bed. A safe place to live. Food on the table.

“Do you have anything to eat?” they ask. Kids ask their moms and dads when they’re homeless and living on the street or in their car. “Do you have anything to eat?” we hear them asking us.
Listen to one young mother’s story: “My 9-year-old son has epilepsy and needs specialized care. The demands of looking after him as a single mother of three put a lot of strain on my job. I was laid off and eventually I could no longer afford my apartment. My savings were depleted and for a while my children and I were sleeping in our car. I knew it was time to seek help and eventually I was referred to Upward Bound House.

I was fortunate enough to secure a job the day after I moved in to Family Shelter. I could now focus on my work knowing I had a place to come home to where I could prepare meals for my children. The kids made new friends, the staff was so helpful and more importantly we felt supported as we moved on to the next chapter in our lives. I’ve had stable employment for the last 3 years and have been able to afford my rent through hard work and determination. This inspired me to give back to other mothers at Upward Bound House by starting a support group called ‘Mothers Strengthening Mothers’. I’ve learned that homelessness does not have to be the end; it can be the start of a new beginning.”

A new beginning…isn’t that what Easter is really about? It’s as transcendent as Alleluias and as basic as offering someone something to eat. It’s all part and parcel of Living the way of Love.

The great teacher, theologian, and bishop of the early church, St. Augustine once said: “A Christian should be an alleluia from head to foot!” Isn’t that a great way to think of Living the Way of Love? To BE an alleluia from head to foot?

Today our heads tell us that there are way too many homeless people in our community and show us a way to become part of the solution. And today our feet can get moving, in a manner of speaking anyway, as this year’s Home Run for Kids is a virtual event. It’s not too late to sign up and participate and/or to make your donation to support the on-going work of Upward Bound House. The link is in the description of the video and on the church website.

For still the Risen Lord is saying to us “Peace be with you.” And still speaking to his frightened, hungry little ones living in cars, promising them: “Peace be with you. We’re at work even now to give you something to eat.”

Together, let’s be an Alleluia from head to foot, church!

Christ is Risen! HE IS RISEN INDEED!