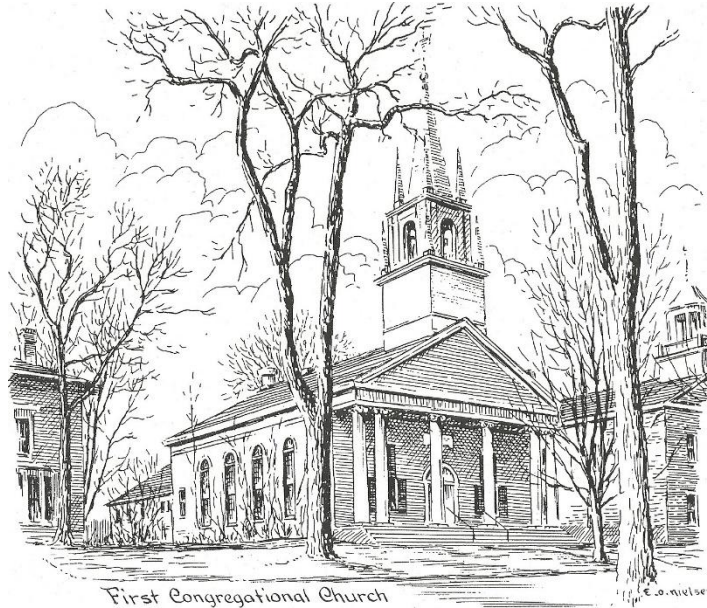


First Congregational Church  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
*An Open and Affirming Church*



We welcome you to the First Congregational Church of Wiscasset.

*VISION: We are on a journey to reflect God's love, embracing diversity and affirming the dignity and worth of all.*

*MISSION: Together we strive to praise God, grow in faith, cultivate love, spread joy, care for all people and God's creation, promote peace, and do justice.*

April 19, 2026

THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER

We welcome all to our worship service, whether present in the sanctuary, joining us on streaming video, or watching our service in the future.

Spiritual Contemplation Quote for the week: "If we encounter Jesus on our road to Emmaus, He will send us back to Jerusalem" — *St. Augustine.*

PRELUDE                    *“My Comfort by Day, My Song in the Night”* arr. Gilbert Martin

RINGING OF THE BELL

WELCOME and ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHORAL INTROIT                    *“Be In Our Midst”*                    Douglas Wagner

Be in our midst, O Lord our God, this moment as times past.  
Inspire our vision from this day to know Your love at last.  
May Christ's peace rule within our hearts, blest fellowship of love;  
The word that richly dwells in us, our guide to One above.

\* CALL TO WORSHIP

L: Easter is not an event that has occurred it's an adventure that has begun

**All: it is not a place that we have visited but a path on which we stand**

L: Easter is a story not complete, but unfolding characters still breathing stations still teeming with the promise of new life

**All: not just for you and me but for all people, in all places; a cosmic crux a turning point of time**

L: Easter is the season of wild hope of dangerous intent of potent promise

**All: where the future flaps unfurled in the spirit's breeze where hopes bubble with uncorked effervescence**

L: where toes tap to free-form rhythms where rainbow hues splash empty canvas

**All: we continue the journey**

L: we re-enter the story

**All: to explore our questions**

L: to uncover our doubts

**All: to face our nagging need**

L: We walk the path of two who traveled a dusty road wrapped in confusion and despair two who shared the company of a stranger

**All: voicing their pain airing their fears and in the listening heard words of hope and promise and in the eating received true bread of life**

L: Let us re-enter the story with expectation that Christ will also reveal himself to us in sights and sounds in words and symbols.

\* OPENING HYMN                    *‘Alleluia! The Strife is O'er’*                    No. 209

OPENING INVOCATION TO PRAYER

**Jesus, you made the way for us to come and worship God. As we see your sacrifice lead us in the way of the wilderness, the way of the cross, the way that leads to eternal life. Amen.**

JOYS AND CONCERNS: After each Joy or Concern, Please respond:  
Pastor: "God," Congregation: **"Hear our prayer."**

LIGHTING OF THE PEACE CANDLE

Global Mission Partner Prayer this week: Armenia

MORNING PRAYER

SILENT MOMENTS FOR PERSONAL PRAYER

LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

Choral Response *"Amen"*

SCRIPTURE LESSON **Luke 24:13-35**

\* HYMN **'Crown Him With Many Crowns' v.1,4,5** No. 210

SERMON **'Road Trip'**

OFFERTORY PRAYER

OFFERTORY & CHORALE OFFERTORY

*"Let All the World in Ev'ry Corner Sing"* Gordon Young

Refrain: Let all the world in ev'ry corner sing, "My God and King!"  
The heav'ns are not too high, His praise may thither fly.  
The earth is not too low, His praises there may grow.  
Let all the world in ev'ry corner sing!  
The church with psalms must shout,  
No door may keep them out;  
But, above all, the heart must bear the largest part.  
Let all the world in ev'ry corner sing!  
(refrain)

\* DOXOLOGY

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise God, all creatures here below;  
Praise God for all that love has done;  
Creator, Christ, and Spirit One. Amen.**

DEDICATION PRAYER

\* CLOSING HYMN **'Abide With Me'** No. 487

## BENEDICTION

### BENEDICTORY RESPONSE

**Go now in peace. Never be afraid. God will go with you each hour of every day.  
Go now in faith, steadfast, strong and true. Know God will guide you in all you do.  
Go now in love, and show you believe. Reach out to others so all the world can see.  
God will be there watching from above. Go now in peace, in faith, and in love.**

**Scripture: Luke 24:13-35**

### **The Walk to 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,<sup>[c]</sup> 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! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?’ Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures. 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.

This is the Word of God.

**Thanks be to God.**

New Revised Standard Version Updated Version

POSTLUDE

*“A Mighty Fortress Is Our God”*

arr. David Cherwien

*You are invited to sit for the postlude.*

\* \* \* \* \*

**“Our worship ends, let our service begin”**

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**Minister and Teacher:** Rev. John Hogue

**Music Director:** Joel Pierce

**Those serving you today:**

**Ushers:** UCCW Youth Group

**Reader:** Rev. John

**Flowers:** Congregation

**Online Streaming:**

**Please join us** for fellowship, coffee or tea, and refreshments in Fellowship Hall following worship.

**Please take note** of the colored paper prayer slips in the pew rack. These are for you to write a word or phrase of prayer or concerns. Fold it and place it in the offering plate. It will only be shared with Rev. John.

**Happy April Birthday to** Anne Harris, Harriet Matthey, Meg Skidmore, Linda Wallace & Susan Zimmerman

**Help Yourself Shelf Wish List**

\* jarred spaghetti sauce \* 1lb. white rice \* drink mixes \* canned chicken \* tuna \*  
\* cereal \* SPAM \* mayo \* baked beans \* toothpaste \* dish soap \* cat litter \*

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**TODAY! Sunday April 19<sup>th</sup>**

**Potluck at 11:30am, followed by the Bountiful Blessings Mission Auction at noon.**

### **Church World Service (CWS) Kit Program**

Please return all kits to church **TODAY! Thank you!**

If you have questions, please contact the one of the CWS Team.

**Reminder:** Hilary will be out of the office (visiting family in Texas), April 20-29th.

**Spring Cleaning!** April 25<sup>th</sup> 9:00am-12:00pm

**Purse Auction-** Saturday May 2<sup>nd</sup>, beginning at 10:00am. If you have a new or gently used purse you would like to donate to the Organ Society fundraiser, please drop it off in the church office, with your name on it.

**Bring a Friend Sunday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>**-In the spirit of Derby Sunday, wear a hat &/or bright colors (optional). "Bring a Friend" worship will be followed with Starbuck's coffee, and treats in Fellowship Hall.

### **Coming Up This Week**

Monday, April 20

Rev. John's Office Hours 9:00am-12:00pm

Office Hours 9:30am – 1:30pm

Mah Jongg 6:00pm – 8:30pm

Tuesday, April 21

Rev. John's Office Hours 9:00am-12:00pm

Office Hours 9:30am – 1:30pm

Wednesday, April 22

Rev. John's Office Hours 9:00am-12:00pm

Office Hours 10:00am – 2:00pm

Organ Society 9:30am

Feed Our Scholars packing 11:00am

Saturday, April 25- **Spring Cleaning** 9:00am-12:00pm

Sunday, April 26

Sunday Worship 10:00am

Coffee Hour in Fellowship Hall following worship

First Congregational Church UCC  
PO Box 350, 28 High Street, Wiscasset, ME 04578

Minister and Teacher: Rev. John Hogue  
revjohnwiscassetucc@gmail.com

Pastoral Care – 207 955-0055

Music Director: Joel Pierce

Sexton: Mary McKinney

Office Administrator: Hilary Atwood

Church Office Email – [fccw@myfairpoint.net](mailto:fccw@myfairpoint.net)

Church Office Phone – 207 882-7544

Church Website – [www.uccwiscasset.org](http://www.uccwiscasset.org)

# Alleluia! The Strife Is O'er

209

Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

1. The strife is o'er, the bat - tle done; the vic - to -  
 2. The powers of death have done their worst, but Christ their  
 3. The three sad days are quick - ly sped, he ris - es  
 4. Christ, by the stripes which wound - ed thee, from death's dread

ry of life is won; the song of tri - umph  
 le - gions hath dis - persed; let shouts of ho - ly  
 glo - rious from the dead; all glo - ry to our  
 sting thy serv - ants free, that we may live and

has be - gun:  
 joy out - burst:  
 ris - en Head! Al - le - lu - ia!  
 sing to thee:

*D.S.*

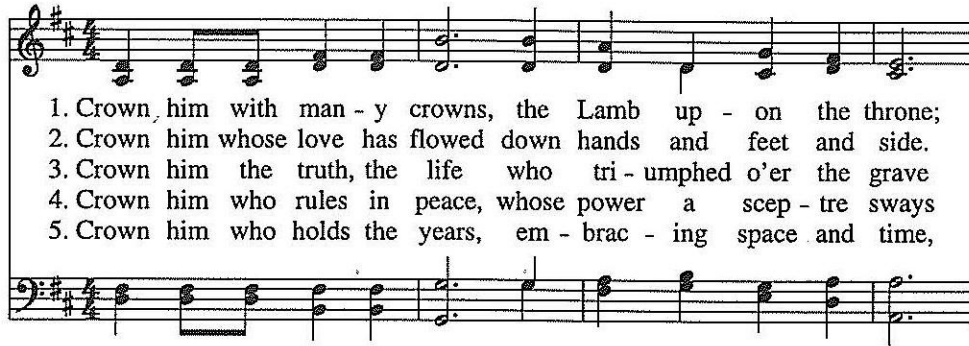
WORDS: Latin, c. 1695; tr. Francis Pott, 1861, alt.  
 MUSIC: Giovanni da Palestrina, 1591; arr. William H. Monk, 1861

VICTORY  
 888 w. alleluias

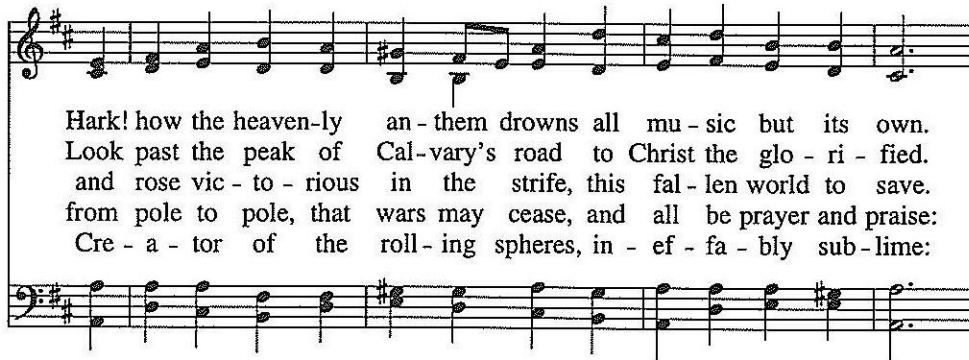
English Anglican minister Francis Pott, on becoming deaf, devoted the last eighteen years of his life to arranging music and worship materials.

RESURRECTION AND EXALTATION

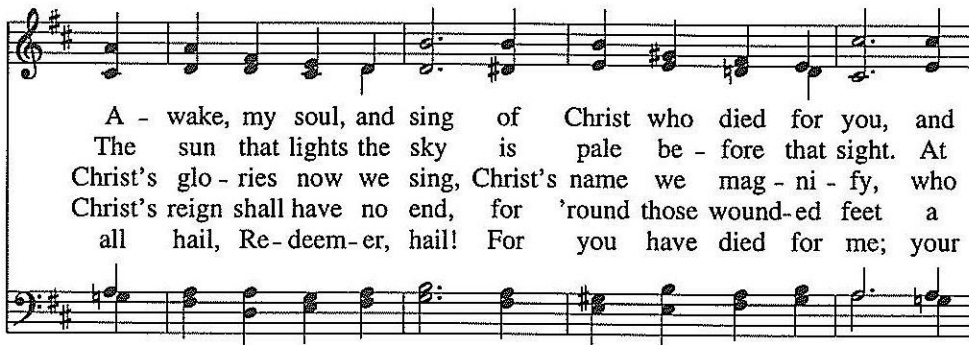
## Crown Him with Many Crowns



1. Crown him with man - y crowns, the Lamb up - on the throne;  
 2. Crown him whose love has flowed down hands and feet and side.  
 3. Crown him the truth, the life who tri - umphed o'er the grave  
 4. Crown him who rules in peace, whose power a scep - tre sways  
 5. Crown him who holds the years, em - brac - ing space and time,



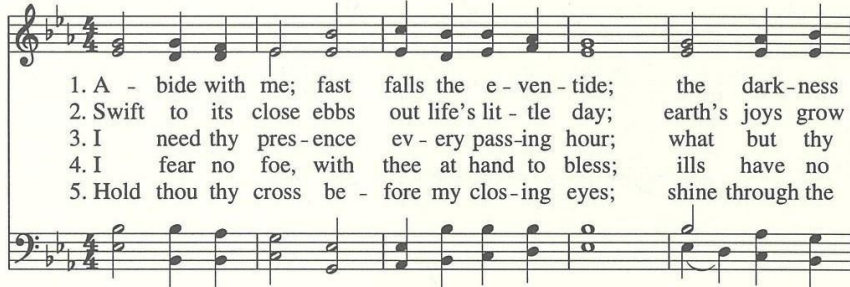
Hark! how the heaven-ly an - them drowns all mu - sic but its own.  
 Look past the peak of Cal-vary's road to Christ the glo - ri - fied.  
 and rose vic - to - rious in the strife, this fal - len world to save.  
 from pole to pole, that wars may cease, and all be prayer and praise:  
 Cre - a - tor of the roll - ing spheres, in - ef - fa - bly sub - lime:



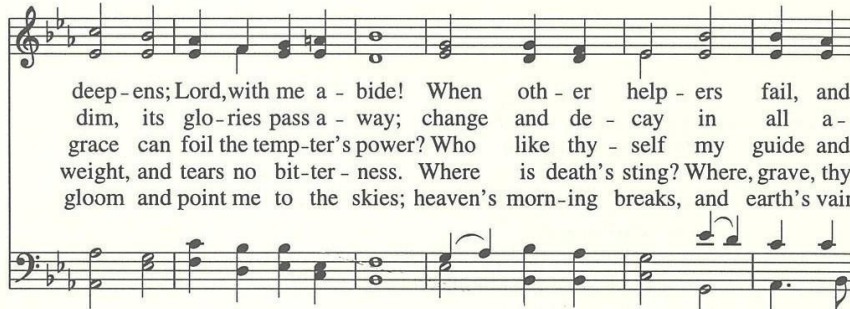
A - wake, my soul, and sing of Christ who died for you, and  
 The sun that lights the sky is pale be - fore that sight. At  
 Christ's glo - ries now we sing, Christ's name we mag - ni - fy, who  
 Christ's reign shall have no end, for 'round those wound-ed feet a  
 all hail, Re - deem - er, hail! For you have died for me; your

WORDS: Matthew Bridges, 1851, and Godfrey Thring, 1874; adapt. Thomas H. Troeger, 1993, alt. DIADEMATA  
 MUSIC: George J. Elvey, 1868 SMD

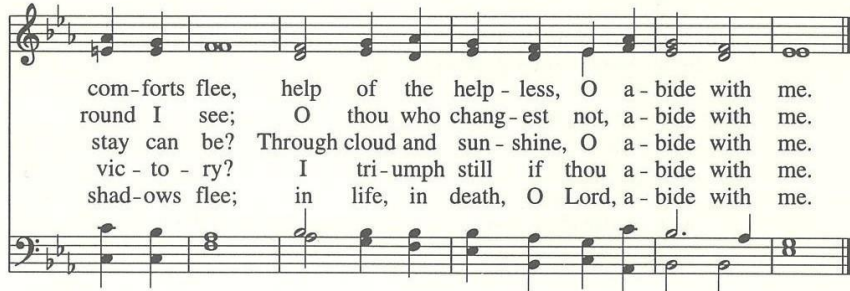
## Abide with Me



1. A - bide with me; fast falls the e - ven - tide; the dark - ness  
 2. Swift to its close ebbs out life's lit - tle day; earth's joys grow  
 3. I need thy pres - ence ev - ery pass - ing hour; what but thy  
 4. I fear no foe, with thee at hand to bless; ills have no  
 5. Hold thou thy cross be - fore my clos - ing eyes; shine through the



deep - ens; Lord, with me a - bide! When oth - er help - ers fail, and  
 dim, its glo - ries pass a - way; change and de - cay in all a -  
 grace can foil the temp - ter's power? Who like thy - self my guide and  
 weight, and tears no bit - ter - ness. Where is death's sting? Where, grave, thy  
 gloom and point me to the skies; heaven's morn - ing breaks, and earth's vain



com - forts flee, help of the help - less, O a - bide with me.  
 round I see; O thou who chang - est not, a - bide with me.  
 stay can be? Through cloud and sun - shine, O a - bide with me.  
 vic - to - ry? I tri - umph still if thou a - bide with me.  
 shad - ows flee; in life, in death, O Lord, a - bide with me.

WORDS: Henry F. Lyte, 1847, alt.  
 MUSIC: William H. Monk, 1861

EVENTIDE  
 10 10.10 10

Written by a well-known English Anglican, this hymn was introduced to Americans in Congregationalist Henry Ward Beecher's hymnal *Plymouth Collection* in 1855. British Anglican William Henry Monk wrote the tune specifically for this hymn in 1861.

I will lift up my eyes to the hills — from where will my help come?  
 My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.  
 He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber.  
 He who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.

— Psalm 121:1-4, NRSV

DEATH AND ETERNAL LIFE

## ROAD TRIP April 19th

Luke 24:13-35

Rev. John Hogue

Every soul has a story with a Road trip. We all have them. Road trips in Maine are of another caliber.

There's something about Maine roads. When I first started traveling these roads in Maine, I put 30,000 miles in 11 months for Anwell Hospice where it went clear into the tip of the Canadian border, down into the town of Greene that was my territory. You set out with a clear destination—towards the Western Mountains of Maine and somewhere along the way, you missed a turn. Not a big, obvious turn... just one of those quiet, unmarked ones. Next thing you know, you're on a frost heave broken down road, wondering how your drive turned into a wilderness survival exercise.

Here's the thing: most of us don't immediately turn around. No, no, we keep going.

Because maybe... just maybe... this road will loop back. Maybe it'll work itself out. Maybe we'll stumble into something better. Friends, that's the road to Emmaus.

Two disciples are walking away from Jerusalem. Away from hope. Away from the community. Away from everything they thought God was doing. Their words say it all: "We had hoped..." Not "we hope." Not "we are hoping." But we had hoped. That's past tense faith. That's the kind of faith that's been bruised, disappointed, and quietly packed away. If we're honest, we know that road. It's the road of unanswered prayers. The road of grief that doesn't lift. The road where the world feels unsteady and evil seems loud and winning. The road where faith feels more like memory than reality. One can walk that road a long time. Now here's where the story gets almost funny in that holy, Maine kind of way. Jesus shows up and they don't recognize Him. It's like running into someone at the grocery store in Norway, Rangely, Rumford, Brunswick—you know you know them, but your brain just won't cooperate. You smile, nod, pretend you've got it all figured out... meanwhile, you're thinking, "Who is that?" Except this isn't just someone—they're walking with the risen Christ. Yet they miss it. Why? Because despair has a way of clouding recognition. Grief narrows our vision. Fear rewrites what we think is possible.

Like many of us today, the disciples on the road to Emmaus were at a loss and in despair over a world seemingly gone mad, seeing the foundational principles of the world around them being shaken. They were living in fear for their lives. The horror and shock of the Crucifixion had overwhelmed all hope and threatened the teachings of love and compassion Jesus had sought to instill. Do the horrors of today's world events overwhelm your sense of hope? Do the teachings of love and compassion seem pointless in the face of terrorist atrocities, America at war with everyone suffering at food and gas prices, global warming, racial hatred, refugee crises, and so many other evils? Wherever you are at this moment, you are on that road to Emmaus. Something happens on this road.

Christ walks beside us today. Christ breaks bread with us today. Christ opens our hearts with his Word today in exactly the same way he did on that road to Emmaus 2,000 years ago. His teachings are the same: Love God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind. Love your neighbor, and pray for

your enemies. Forgive all. Welcome the stranger. Care for the sick. Visit the imprisoned. Provide for the least among us. The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. Nothing has changed, except now we are the ones walking the road.

This encounter on the road so turned the hearts of the disciples that they literally turned around and ran back into the fray, back into Jerusalem, back into the world. So must we allow our encounter with Christ in others, in prayer, in the Eucharist, and in the Word to turn around our hearts today. We must allow ourselves to be so overwhelmed by the revelation of a God of love that no fear, no evil, no suffering, and no hatred can leave us in despair. The choice is ours. You can continue on your road to Emmaus and stay there. Continue to live in despair, confusion, instability, and fear. Continue to live in a world where evil has the last word and death is the end of life. Or hear the Word, hear the Voice, and be overwhelmed by Love. Go back to Jerusalem, back to your passion, back to healing, back to a life of hope, and back to a world where love has the last word and life never ends. I've been to Emmaus. You have too. We all get there eventually. Emmaus is the place you go when your world has collapsed, the tossing and turning of the night has left you exhausted and fragile, your dreams are shattered, and your hope is gone. That is what we cannot escape from, life itself.

A few winters ago, a man up in western Maine got stuck during a snowstorm. Not unusual. But this one got bad fast—whiteout conditions, roads drifting over. He took a wrong turn trying to get home and ended up stuck on a back road miles from anywhere.

He did what folks do—stayed in the truck, conserved gas, tried to think it through. Hours passed. Darkness came. That quiet, cold kind of fear started creeping in. Here's the thing: he wasn't actually far from help. Just a couple miles back... a main road. Just a couple miles the other way... a house with lights on. But in the storm, disoriented and anxious, he kept thinking forward was the only option. He kept waiting for something to change.

Eventually, when rescue came, they told him: "You weren't lost as much as you were going the wrong direction." That'll preach. That's Emmaus. That's us sometimes.

One winter, someone I know (and I will not name... because it was me) was using a snowblower that wouldn't start right. I pulled, and pulled, and pulled. Nothing. Checked the gas. Fine. Checked the choke. Fine. Muttered a few "pastoral reflections" under my breath. Finally, a neighbor walks over, looks at it, and says, "You got the switch off." Now... I had two choices: 1. Thank him, flip the switch, and move on 2. Pretend I meant to do that and keep yanking like a fool. I chose humility. Sometimes in life, we're exhausting ourselves—not because life is impossible—but because we're headed the wrong way with

the switch off. With the switch off, we keep moving forward in despair, thinking something out there will fix it. We keep rehearsing the pain, the confusion, the fear. We keep walking away from the very place where hope began. Yet all along, Christ is walking with us... speaking... opening the Word... stirring something in our hearts. Did you notice what the disciples said later? “Were not our hearts burning within us?” They didn’t recognize Him yet—but something in them knew. Hope was flickering again. Truth was warming the cold places. Then comes the turning point. At the table. In the breaking of bread. In that simple, sacred moment— Their eyes are opened. Suddenly everything changes. Not the world. Not the circumstances. But their direction. They don’t say, “Well, that was nice. Let’s get some rest.” No—they get up immediately. They turn around. They go back. Back to Jerusalem. Back to community. Back to the place of pain—but now also the place of promise. Back to hope. Here’s the heart of it: The choice is ours. We can stay on the road to Emmaus. We can keep walking in circles of despair. Keep believing fear has the last word. Keep assuming death, loss, and brokenness are the end of the story. Or... We can listen. Hear the Word. Hear the Voice. Pay attention to the burning in our hearts. Turn around. Turning around isn’t weakness—it’s wisdom. It’s saying: “Maybe I’ve been heading the wrong way.” “Maybe hope isn’t behind me—it’s calling me back.” “Maybe love has more to say than fear.” Turning around means: Going back to the people you withdrew from. Back to the calling you gave up on. Back to the place where God first stirred something alive in you. Back to a life where love—not fear—has the final word. Let’s be honest—it can feel risky. Because going back to Jerusalem means facing the same world that hurt you. The same uncertainties. The same questions. However, here’s the difference: You’re not going back alone. You’re going back with the living Christ. That changes everything. So maybe today you feel like you’ve been walking that long Maine back road. A little turned around. A little worn down. Not quite sure how you got here. Here’s the good news: You don’t need a brand-new map. You just need to turn around. Because Christ is already with you. Already speaking. Already stirring your heart. Love—real, resurrection love— still has the last word. So choose. Stay on the road to Emmaus... or turn around and go back to life.

Let’s be honest—no Maine journey is complete without a stop at Dunkin’ which seems to be every Maine town, or Starbucks. But have you ever gone out of your way for coffee... and then kept going in the wrong direction afterward? You’re sipping your coffee, feeling blessed and highly caffeinated...and suddenly you realize, “I have no idea where I am.” That’s a whole sermon right there. Because sometimes we settle for a quick comfort— a distraction, instead of asking, “Am I actually headed toward life?” “So maybe today, faith isn’t about pushing harder down the same road... maybe it’s about finally listening to the Voice that’s been saying all along— ‘Turn around. You’re closer to home than you think.’”

This is exactly what a lobsterman once explained how traps work. The lobster goes in easy—but getting out? That’s another story. Not because it’s locked... but because the lobster keeps moving forward instead of backing up. He said, “If they’d just turn around, they’d be fine.” I thought—well, there’s half of the human race right there.

We get stuck in patterns, stuck in thinking, stuck in fear... Not because we’re trapped— but because we won’t turn around.

There is one true story of how kindness overrode and turned around with compassion. This takes place in the Seattle Special Olympics. It was the hundred-yard dash, there were nine contestants. All of them are so-called physically or mentally challenged. All nine of them assembled at the starting line and at the sound of the gun, they took off. But not long afterward, one little boy stumbled and fell. He hurt his knee and began to cry. The other eight children heard him crying, they slowed down, turned around and ran back to him.

Every one of them ran back to him. One little girl with down syndrome, bent down and kissed the boy and said, ‘This’ll make it better’. The little boy got up and he, and the rest of the runners linked their arms together and joyfully walked to the finish line. They all finished the race at the same time. And when they did, everyone in that stood up and clapped, whistled and cheered for a long, long time. People who were there are still telling the story with great delight. You know why? Because deep down we know that what matters in this life is more than winning for ourselves.

What really matters is helping others win too.

