



St. Luke's East Hampton

Sermon Preached by the Rev. Benjamin Shambaugh

April 19, 2026; Easter 3A: [Acts 2:14a, 36-41](#) [1 Peter 1:17-23](#) [Luke 24:13-35](#)

We typically begin staff meetings at St. Luke's by talking about what we call God moments, recent experiences of the presence of God. One of them happened to me a week ago on Thursday. Shari and I were in Atlanta, waiting for an Uber to start our trip home from a visit to my father in his home and my step mother in a Memory Care facility where I had helped her move at Thanksgiving. The Uber App gives you the name of the driver, so he pulled up, I said, "Hi Derrick." He smiled and said hi. While he was putting our suitcases in the trunk he motioned to my father who was standing at the door waving goodbye. He said, "His wife was in the hospital or something. How's she doing?" After I gave him a little summary, he said, "And last time I was here, he wasn't using a cane, is he OK?" Once we started driving, our conversation stopped. I sat in the back of the car, amazed that this guy whose territory covered the whole Atlanta metro area and spent a lot of time going in and out of the airport which was on a completely different side of town, remembered my dad and his wife. We had a good visit with them. I was a little anxious about leaving them alone. Derrick, the Uber Driver, gave me the message that they weren't alone after all, and that people were watching out for them.

When we meet them today, the disciples walking on the Road to Emmaus are anxious as well. They had heard rumors about the resurrection but it didn't make sense, it didn't fit their understanding of Jesus, and it didn't fit their feelings of fear and grief. In the form of a stranger, Jesus comes to them, shares the scriptures with them, and joins in a meal. When they are eating, their eyes are opened and they realize that Jesus had been with them all along.

At that moment all their fears and anxieties were taken away. In that moment, they discovered that the resurrection wasn't just about Jesus, it was also about them. This is an example of

what in our Bible study last week we called “Realized Eschatology.” Eschatology is about the future, about the Kingdom of God. Realized Eschatology is about God’s kingdom breaking into our world and about our experiencing the new life of that kingdom today.

That new life can be hard to experience when the world around us is a mess. This is how the people in our reading from Acts are feeling when we meet them today. For them, the crucifixion was a sign of everything that was wrong around them and everything in their own lives they needed to change. They asked what they were supposed to do. Peter’s answer was simple: “repent” (which means “change direction” or “turn around”) and be baptized. What are we supposed to do? Turn around, change what needs to change in our own lives, and focus on living out our baptismal vows. As Peter explains in our second reading, this happens when we practice genuine mutual love and love one another deeply from the heart.

In the weeks leading up to Easter, I attended three Interfaith or Ecumenical events: the Souper Supper at Most Holy Trinity, an Iftar at the Islamic Center of the Hamptons, and a Seder held here with the Jewish Center of the Hamptons. The last two involved discussing theology and scripture. All three were grounded in the sharing of food. In each, I had an experience of the presence of God. The same thing happened to the disciples on the Road to Emmaus. On the Road to Emmaus, they did what we do every time we gather here. They welcomed a stranger. They wrestled with scripture. They broke bread together. When they did those things, they discovered that the stranger wasn’t a stranger. When they did those things, they could see that the stranger was Jesus. Their fears and anxieties were taken away and their hearts were filled with joy.

In this season of Easter, our task isn’t just to see Jesus. It is to be Jesus as well. Do you remember Derek, the Uber Driver I met who changed the streets of Atlanta to my own Emmaus Road? Our Easter task is to be Derek, to let people know they are not alone, that someone sees them and cares about them and that everything will be OK. If we can be Dereks, we will not only help other people experience the resurrection, we might just find our own anxieties taken away and experience the resurrection ourselves.