

# May 3 Worship Transcript

**Introduction:** Pastor Phil

Welcome to Tabor Mennonite Church Worship whether you are joining via video or reading the transcript! This weekend, we are grateful to have Michael Unruh, one of our church members and also the Executive Director at Camp Mennoscah as a guest preacher, and Michael will also be providing several updates from camp later in the service/transcript. Thank you to everyone who helped make this worship service possible! And thank you Tabor Church Family for your continued patience and encouragements and creative ideas during these uncertain times. One new experiment that we are beginning this weekend is a live Zoom call at 10:30 on Sunday morning. The instructions for joining the call are in the church bulletin email and printed in the bulletin. I hope that many people can participate in this so that we can see each other's faces and hear each other's voices. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

**Welcome and Prayer:** Elizabeth Alderfer

Good Morning and welcome to worship here at Tabor. While we continue to worship at home and not in our usual setting, may we continue to experience God's presence with us.

Today, we will be focusing on finding God, even in times that are tough. God is with us even in difficult and unexpected situations. Since the Coronavirus has been going around and everything has been shut down, a lot of things have changed in my life. I haven't been able to finish my senior year of high school the way I had always hoped. I was looking forward to graduation, music events, trips with my class and Elbiata, and all the other memories that are made in High school. However, through this, God has made me slow down and appreciate the smaller and simpler things in life that I hadn't had the time to notice before. Life was always busy with school, sports, and friends, but instantly I had all the time in the world. So how do you spend that time? I'm considering it a blessing. Even though we were forced to slow our lives down, it has been nice to spend more time relaxing, being with family, and enjoying the outdoors. Just a few of the ways that I have seen God in his creation is through the trees and flowers blooming, the birds singing in the trees, and watching the wheat grow in the fields. While I usually see these changes in Spring, this year I have had the time to really watch and see how many ways God is working in nature and in us as well. How will you use your extra time to see God, worship, or spend time with him?

Please join me in a prayer as we enter into this time of worship.

Heavenly Father, Thank you for this opportunity to worship together as a church even though we are still apart. We anticipate the time when we will be together again and be able to sing our praises to You. Be with us today and this week and help us to see you even in the difficult and unexpected situations. Grant us grace and peace as we are challenged by whatever the day may bring. Help us to remember that you are in control and that we need only to be still. I pray this in your name, Amen.

**Scripture Reading: Luke 24:13-35 (NIV) - Lewis Unruh**

13 Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. 14 They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. 15 As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; 16 but they were kept from recognizing him.

17 He asked them, "What are you discussing together as you walk along?"

They stood still, their faces downcast.

18 One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, "Are you the only one visiting Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?"

19 "What things?" he asked.

"About Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people.

20 The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; 21 but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. 22 In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning 23 but didn't find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. 24 Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see Jesus."

25 He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" 27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

28 As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus continued on as if he were going farther. 29 But they urged him strongly, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them.

30 When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. 31 Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. 32 They asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?"

33 They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together 34 and saying, "It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon." 35 Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread.

The Word of God for the People of God

***Thanks Be to God!***

**Sermon:** “Ever Had Heartburn?” Michael Unruh, Camp Mennoscah Executive Director

Good morning, this is Michael Unruh, and I’m the Executive Director at Camp Mennoscah (and also a member at Tabor). I’m coming to you today from the amphitheater at camp. Those of you who received and looked through the worship materials from two weeks ago probably remember this story, of the disciples encountering Jesus on the road to Emmaus. This story in the Gospel of Luke is an intriguing one, and there are a lot of elements to it that could be talked about. Some of those elements were dissected by Pastor Phil two weeks ago. But thankfully, Scripture is deep...deep enough for more than one sermon on a specific text. We’ll even probably leave some leftover for the next time! This morning, I’m going to share about three areas that stuck out to me most as I prepared to share with you this morning

The first is that, **when Jesus appears, the disciples don’t know who he is.** Luke says “their eyes were kept from recognizing him.” To us today, that seems almost laughable. In my mind, I think, “there’s no way I could have been around a guy for 3 years and then not be able to tell when he’s standing right in front of me. Even if I expect that he has died!” How in the world could these disciples not know that this was Jesus?? Instead of suggesting that his face was hidden or there was some supernatural disguise, it’s important to consider the perspective of the author and his purpose. For Luke, Christ is only known through revelation. Earlier in the gospel, Jesus says in Luke 10:22 “...no one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father is except the Son...AND anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.” So, according to Luke, Jesus can choose who he reveals himself to. And when. According to this, it seems pretty clear that Jesus could have revealed himself whenever he wanted, but chooses not to. Were the disciples not ready to see him yet? I find myself wondering what would have happened if the disciples had recognized Jesus right away. I think part of them would have been afraid. I think there’s a good chance they never would have made it to Emmaus. Because they would have turned right around to head back to Jerusalem and tell the other disciples. And I think they would have missed out on listening to Jesus teach and break bread with them one more time.

The second element that stood out to me is that partway through the story, **Cleopas gives a brief history of all the happenings about Jesus...to Jesus.** The words of Cleopas, if you look closely, are essentially the Gospel condensed. We have the **teachings** of Jesus. Cleopas describes Jesus as a prophet mighty in deed and word. A teacher. We have the **suffering and death** of Jesus: our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death. And last, we have evidence of the **resurrection**: they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. Of course, the two disciples don’t recognize this description as the resurrection at the time.

My favorite part of the story comes toward the end, right after Jesus vanishes from their sight and they recognize that it's been Jesus all along. In verse 32, they say to one another, "**Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?**" We find out, here at the end rather than at the time, that these two disciples were feeling something while on the road. They had heartburn! Of course I'm not talking about heartburn in the physiological sense. This kind of heartburn happens when something in our bodies recognizes what's going on before our other senses even do. For the disciples on the road, their eyes couldn't process what was happening. It didn't register in their minds who they might be talking to. And yet, there was a feeling within, a response to the presence of Jesus among them. It's like their bodies were saying "Hey, hey! Look who it is! Come on, why are you not celebrating?!"

This Road to Emmaus story highlights **two ways of knowing**.

On one hand, there's **knowing with your mind**: the disciples knew a lot about Jesus from their time with him. Enough to know the "gospel condensed" and recount it to Jesus. They knew the Scriptures from growing up in Jewish communities. They knew the process of the breaking of the bread. There was a lot of good stuff up here.

On the other hand, there's **knowing with your heart**. Their hearts knew that they were in the presence of Jesus, even though their minds registered a stranger. That's a pretty significant type of knowledge! I would even go so far as to say that it was their hearts that knew inviting this stranger over for a meal would be a good idea. This is heart-knowing, or heartburn, as I'm choosing to call it, which they identify only *after* Jesus has left them. This prompted them to act.

I think we get heartburn still today, when we're in the presence of Jesus. I think most of the time our heart recognizes when we see Jesus today before our minds do. Sometimes that heartburn can cause us to respond to Jesus right away, like when we see a person in immediate need and step in to help. It can feel like we're already moving toward the person before we really even have time to think about the pros and cons of doing so. That's heartburn. Sometimes it's only afterward that we understand the significance of what our hearts were trying to tell us. I'm disappointed to say that on more than one occasion I have ignored my heartburn and continued about my day. The thing about that is, to me that type of heartburn lasts much longer, as the missed opportunity stays on my mind and in my heart.

You might be wondering why I chose to record this sermon out at camp at this specific location. The amphitheater isn't a place we often visit at camp during the daytime. But at night, for campfires during summer youth camps, the amphitheater is full of campers eager to deepen their relationship with God. It's also a place of *significant* heartburn.

The Holy Spirit stirs hearts and prompts them to act. In small ways. In big ways. I'm going to close this time today by giving you the opportunity to read about how campfires here at Mennoscah have led to this kind of heartburn that the disciples experienced in the presence of Jesus on the road to Emmaus.

**Partial quotes from video: Why is campfire at Mennoscah important to you?**

- A safe environment where everyone sits with open minds and hearts for those sharing
- A place for kids, counselors and staff to feel safe and supported regardless of their backgrounds or story
- Campfire brings home the Mission of camp on a nightly basis
- One of the places that I feel most connected with God.
- A place for all to experience Christ through nature, connection, and friends
- Time to enjoy the sounds of night around camp
- Seeing campers' reckless faith
- Experiencing campers' love for each other
- Favorite part of camp
- Great memories of Men and Boys Retreat at the amphitheater
- Campfire at Women's Retreat has become a favorite time of worship
- A beautiful women's choir under the stars
- Listening to relatives and friends play bluegrass music
- Gave me all the lullabies I sing my son at bedtime
- A vital part to every week of camp
- Beautiful to see campers' eyes mesmerized by the fire, soaking in all of the speaker's word
- Young adults become a safe place for a camper to tell their story after they experienced the vulnerable story of the staffer at campfire
- Hearing campers' stories
- Sharing faith stories in front of 180 or so people
- Seeing campers' valued vulnerability
- Hearing campers' stories of growth
- The most intimate place at camp
- Everyone can be vulnerable with each other and with themselves
- Singing together under a sky full of stars and having time for silence and reflection
- A quiet time where everyone can sit and reflect on the day
- Time to relax after a busy camp day
- You can truly consider your personal connection to the days' lessons and to God
- A simple peace that's felt while sitting around a campfire and looking up at the stars, mesmerized by God's love and creation
- Reinforces that camp is more than just having fun with friends
- Grew to become my favorite part of the day

- A chance to reflect on all the ways God worked through relationships and His creation
- Individual reflection and connection with God
- Provides time to reflect on the day and what I've learned or done
- Definitely the first place I felt the spirit move
- A safe haven
- Sacred space
- A place of hope and healing
- Very few spots on this earth mean more to me than that spot because of how intimately I have experienced God there

### **Camp Mennoscah Update:** Michael Unruh

Hi, this is Michael Unruh, and on behalf of the staff and board of directors at camp, I bring you greetings. We hope this video finds you healthy and well, and we hope your physical, emotional, and spiritual needs are being met during this time of physical distancing.

This morning I'd like to share some updates from camp. A few things that have been happening since the last time you were probably here are:

We installed some lights for "The Whale" and gaga ball pit.

We continued the dining hall renovations with window and door replacement.

We've also installed guttering and drainage onto the new part of the kitchen, and we spent some time painting the interior of the dining hall.

In addition, we moved the barrel (barrel "horse") to a new location.

We received a memorial gift that was to go toward improving bird habitat at camp, and so we spent some of those funds and had some volunteers come out and assemble new bird nesting boxes.

One of our events we had this spring was the Hymn Sing and Dessert Auction at Tabor Mennonite on March 1, and that was actually one of the last in-person gatherings that the camp community has had this year. Throughout the spring we have continued preparations for the summer. You can see behind me that the dam was installed. It's no surprise due to COVID-19, but this spring has been filled with cancellations.

At the end of April, we had to make what I would suppose is one of the most difficult decisions in camp menoscah's 72-year history. We have decided to cancel in-person summer youth camps for 2020 Summer. This was a very sad decision and we did not come to it lightly. We explored creative ways to still have camps in person, but we couldn't envision a way to safely and responsibly continue in-person summer camps at Camp Mennoscah in the midst of this pandemic.

We will miss the laughter, the joy, the spiritual encounters and new friendships that happen during summer youth camps. Olivia, the other staff and board of directors, program directors and counselors are already dreaming of ideas to still connect with children and youth this summer. If you or your child were registered for camp this summer, you will be contacted directly about your registration.

Summer camps are a significant source of revenue for our yearly budget, this cancellation creates a substantial need for Camp Mennoscah during this time. Camp did apply for and receive a Paycheck Protection Program loan to provide some relief and allow staff to continue working on programming and operations, and that was a blessing to us. Some summer expenses will be very limited with the lack of in-person camps, but others will happen as usual.

We recognize that this coronavirus pandemic has affected everyone in different ways. If you are in a position to make a financial gift to camp during this time, a gift to Camp Mennoscah will contribute to the production of meaningful summer content and help maintain camp operations so that when camp is able to have groups, children and youth again, we will be able to do so in a safe and responsible way. Options for giving to camp during this time could include:

Donating an amount equal to the amount you would have spent on summer youth camps.

If you are a regular donor to camp, consider kicking in a little extra during this unique year, if you are financially able to do so.

A quick note that CARES Act allows those who don't itemize their deductions on their tax returns to deduct up to \$300 in cash donations to nonprofits during this 2020 tax year.

All donations received will help ensure that camp can continue to be a vital place of faith formation for years to come. Camp Mennoscah's mission to encourage all to follow Jesus Christ, to live as people of healing and hope, to practice love, forgiveness, and hospitality, to seek God's peace, to affirm diversity and heal brokenness, and to experience God's creation is not limited to just 240 acres in eastern Kingman County. Camp is not just a location, it is a people, too. It is a community made of people like you. That means the camp community can continue existing, forming relationships, and deepening faith whatever comes our way and no matter where we find ourselves! And that's a pretty special thing. We are grateful for the many ways your congregation supports Camp Mennoscah's ministry. We can't wait to see you again in person! Bye for now.

## **Congregational Prayer & Blessing: Pastor Katherine**

God who walks with us,  
We lift up our prayers on behalf of ourselves and others:

We pray for all who are grieving due to the loss of a loved one, both here in our community and around the world.

We pray for all who are ill and recovering and in need of your healing presence.

We pray for all who have lost their jobs and fear how to make ends meet.

We pray for all whose depression and mental illness are exacerbated during this time.

We pray for all who are grieving the loss of that which is familiar.

We pray for all who are fearful and anxious and who long for your peace.

We lift up to you these and all of the prayers and petitions that we carry in our hearts.

God, as you met the disciples in the midst of their despair as they walked the road to Emmaus, come and walk with us in the midst of the grief of these days. Assure us that you are indeed with us, even if we cannot always recognize your presence.

May our hearts burn within us as we worship you and delight in your Word and remember your promises to us and to all of creation.

May we rejoice in your Good News and seek to share this with all who need assurance of the hope, peace, and new life that you bring.

May we recognize you in the simple and seemingly mundane tasks and interactions of our every day lives, even in something as ordinary as the breaking of bread.

Thank you for walking with us. In your name we pray, Amen.

May God bless you with eyes to see and hearts to burn within you so that you may know that God is indeed walking beside you as you journey through these days. Grace and peace be with you all. Amen.