

Innisfail United Church

Christians: Committed, Caring, Community

3rd Sunday of Easter
April 19, 2026



And be with you all as we meet again

Minister: Rev. Tammy Allan

Thank you for joining us today



Wheelchair Accessible



Equipped For Hearing Impaired

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Web: www.innisfailuc.org email: innucc@innisfailuc.org

Prelude

Greetings and Announcements

Land Acknowledgment

We gratefully acknowledge that we are on the ancient and traditional lands of The Blackfoot Nation, the people of the Treaty 7, and of Metis Region 3. May we cherish and care for the land and the people, as those who came before us did.

Lighting the Christ Candle

Introit MV 21 Open Our Hearts (2X)

Call to Worship

We gather today, as we are.

God welcomes us into the realm of love.

We come with our questions and doubts, our hopes and our dreams.

Jesus meets us where we are, and offers us peace.

Let us worship together, sharing in that spirit of the peace of the resurrected one.

Hymn MV 135 Called by Earth and Sky

Prayer of Approach

God of Easter promise, as we set aside this time to worship, we bring our troubles and our fears. May this time be like the Emmaus Road was for Jesus' friends. May it be the place where we meet the Risen One, and where hope is born anew. In faith, we proclaim that Christ has risen! In joy we celebrate. Hallelujah! Amen.

Time for the Young and the Young at Heart

Book: "The Invisible String"

Hymn MV 92 Like a Rock

Minute for Mission

In Chipman, New Brunswick, along the Salmon River, community isn't just an idea—it's how life flows. For over 126 years, Chipman United Church has been woven into the heart of the town.

The congregation is small—mostly seniors with a handful of youth, four of whom now help lead worship—and the choir is modest. But the impact is anything but small. Each month, about sixty meals are prepared and delivered through the LIFT program, feeding children, seniors, and neighbours who can't leave home. The church hall hosts community groups and sports programs, and members pour hot chocolate at the Christmas parade. Service here isn't occasional; it's a habit.

When some members could no longer attend in person, the church brought worship online. What was expected to reach twenty people drew thousands. Prayer requests now arrive by email, and a painting of the sanctuary is being turned into cards to remind those who feel alone that they belong.

This is rural ministry: rooted, connected, and alive. Mission and Service helps sustain communities like Chipman, keeping churches at the centre of town life.

We can make a difference together. When we give to Mission and Service, we help ensure that churches like Chipman continue to feed, care for, and connect their communities. [Donate today](#) and be part of keeping this heart of the town alive.

Special Music Innisfail United Bell Choir

Scripture Reading Luke 24: 13-35

On the Road to Emmaus

¹³ Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles^[a] 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.

Reflection

I have always loved this story. For me it has been a reminder that encounters with the holy happen in surprising and unexpected ways. Two disciples, the story tells us, one was named Cleopas. The other was not named. Often artistic representations of this story show men walking along the road. I guess I've always been taught about this story as if it were two men on the road, joined by another. Or maybe I just assumed that. Perhaps, though, it was Cleopas and his wife that may have had that surprise encounter with Jesus. There is

some logic to that, as they invited the stranger to stay with them, likely in their home, and they offered him a meal. Sounds like something a woman would do, especially in that time where roles were pretty clearly defined. It would have been the woman of the household that meet those hospitality related needs of a visitor to the home.

It was during that meal that the two disciples, Cleopas and his companion, came to recognize Jesus. It was in that act of breaking bread with him, that they were able to see and know him, to know the presence of the divine with them.

The breaking of the bread. Bread is one of those staples of our lives. Every culture has some form of bread, some form that feeds both body and soul. Breaking of bread is, we know, part of one of the central rituals of our Christian tradition.

I can't help but remember being in my Nanny's kitchen as warm bread emerged from the oven. We could hardly wait for it to cool enough to be sliced. As soon as it was, on would go freshly churned butter. It was melt in your mouth goodness. The aroma, the taste, it was a wonderful thing, a sacred thing. As we gathered, at her table, it was a form of family communion. For with us around that table was always an abundance of love.

Remember how during the time of COVID 19 lock down, yeast and flour were things that were hard to find in our communities. I often wondered if that was because as we struggled with the confines of social distancing, and the stress of knowing we were living in a time of global pandemic that we sought to create things that brought us comfort and peace.

Was bread-making one of those things? In our search for

comfort, for a harkening back to times of love, we turned to things that elicited memories of happier times, of more simple times. Making bread, savouring its goodness, might have been a way to find a simpler time.

We were living through things we had never experienced before, and that created stress and tension. Now, 6 years later, we are living with new stresses, new cause for worry. The political and economic realities of our world are frightening. Never in my life time have I been as concerned about the state of global peace as I am now. Never in my life time have I had the worries I do about the economy, with a government that has an eye for our federal pension funds, and the incredible jump in the cost of all things oil and gas related as a result of the war in the Middle East.

I'll say that the reality of global events is touching me personally, touching us all personally. I know too, that how I am affected is nothing compared to what innocent civilians in the Middle East are living with. It's little compared to how places dependent on fuel from there, delivered through the Strait of Hormuz are suffering, as their countries' oil reserves are being depleted.

Where do we find hope? Where do we see Jesus, in a world torn by war at the hands of aggressive, unjust political leadership? As we journey our own proverbial roads to Emmaus, where do we find meaning, and understanding in the midst of the pain of our world? I can only speak for myself; however, it feels like we are in the midst of unknown territory, trying to find our way down a road as we struggle and look for peace.

I think of Mr. Rogers, who would tell his child viewers to

look for the helpers. In the midst of the challenges, we are living with, so much of what is happening in our world seems beyond our abilities to change. Yet we can reach out with prayers. We can write letters or email to our own Federal Government, to let them know of our hopes for peaceful negotiation and resolution to end the violence and destruction. I believe Canada could have a role and influence in that. Provincially, letters, emails help too, with the issues that affect us as Albertans.

In addition, when we are hurting, or lost, or afraid, we can reach out. We can find community of like-minded people to walk the journey with. We can find companions for our own Emmaus Road walking.

That word companions – I chose it for a reason. It shares its root with the Latin word for bread – *companiono* – which means, with bread, with one another. We are bread, living bread. We are sustenance for one another on the journey. Most Monday mornings, part of my own spiritual journey is a zoom coffee and conversation time with 3 dear friends and colleagues. We started the practice (it is very much a spiritual thing), during the pandemic, and we're still at it. One of the things we do sometimes is discuss the worship themes. My friends are all retired, one still leads worship as pulpit supply frequently, one is very active in her faith community, and one 'attends' different churches via their YouTube offerings, including ours.

Those 3 women are very much my companion-s, bread for my journey.

A couple of weeks ago, one of them, Christine, paraphrased something she remembered theologian John Dominic Crossan saying: "Emmaus Road never

happened, yet Emmaus Road always happens. That stayed with me, I believe that to be true.

I did a little internet searching to find the actual quote and it led me to a wonderful sermon written by a United Church of Christ pastor, Rev. Salvatore Sapienza three years ago. The UCC is one of our sister churches. Our denominations share a formal partnership relationship, and our theological ethos is the same. I really appreciated reading the whole sermon. Within it, Sapienza offered the following:

...the theologian Marcus Borg said, Emmaus is nowhere and Emmaus is everywhere.

Then he said more about that word 'nowhere:'

"...if you take it apart, it says, "Now, here."
Emmaus is now and it is here. It's everywhere.
Another progressive theologian John Dominic Crossan said the road to Emmaus never happened. The road to Emmaus happens all the time.

And I think he got that from Joseph Campbell...(who said) a myth is something that never happened, but happens all the time...
...I don't know if the resurrection of Jesus really happened. But I know stories of resurrection happen all the time. Just go outside now in the springtime, look at the flowers popping up out of the ground, the leaves in the trees, the birds. Resurrection is real.

Now I don't know if the road to Emmaus actually existed. But I do know that this story speaks to a great spiritual truth... First of all, the word Emmaus means warm spring. The road to Emmaus represents our spiritual journey to spring. What is spring? Well spring is new growth and new life. That's what the road to Emmaus represents – our spiritual journey to new growth and new life.

<https://www.douglasucc.org/homilies/road-to-nowhere-the-emmaus-story>

We need to embrace that idea, and the hope, that the road to Emmaus happens all the time. It's like the invisible string that connects us to one another in love.

Those Emmaus travelers were walking along, sharing their sorrows, over the loss of their friend Jesus. And when they came to know him in the breaking of the bread, they went and shared their joy with others.

In these troubling, challenging times we are living in, we need companions on the journey with whom to walk with, talk with, share sorrows and joys with.

We need one another on that spiritual journey to new growth and new life. For with companions on the way, we can hold on to the truth that we are not alone. The resurrected Christ walks with us.

Thanks be to God.

Hymn VU 182 Stay with Us Through the Night

Offering VU 538 For the Gift of Creation

Special Music Innisfail United Bell Choir

Offertory Prayer

O God of the empty tomb, we have walked in a world full of grief and despair. Touch our souls and lighten our spirits. Come, in power and mystery; draw us in to meet the risen Jesus. Bless what we have offered here, and help us find our voices to share the astonishing news. In the name of the Risen One, Amen.

Prayers of the People

God of the way, we are grateful for your presence with us as we journey through life. We are grateful also, for the companions we meet along the way, whether they are with us for a brief time, or are lifelong friends and family.

Your presence among us helps us to find peace and hope as we journey. May we be a presence of peace for others as we travel our own Emmaus roads.

Today, we pray for our world – for all the people and places torn by war or the threat of war. May peace prevail on earth. As the news feeds bring stories that bring fear and cause anxiety, help us to find hope in you and in the people striving for a world where love abounds.

We hold in pray those closer to home who are struggling – with health concerns, with feelings of loneliness, loss, or isolation. May your healing love surround them.

On our community prayer list:

Guided by you, held by you as we walk in faith, we join our voices together in the words of Jesus.

The Lord's Prayer

Hymn VU 703 In the Bulb There is a Flower

Words of Departure

Let us go into the world to live for the risen Christ, as the risen Christ lives in us. May the God of hope fill us with joy and peace, this day and always. Hallelujah, Amen!

Sung Blessing MV 221 I am Walking a Path of Peace
(2X)

Postlude



Announcements

Wed. Apr 22 – Senior Service at Rosefield
2:00 pm, Sunset 3:00 pm

Grief and Loss Support Group will be meeting on the last Thursday of the month **April 23** (exception as Tammy is at regional meeting on the 30th); **May 28. June 25 at 4:00 pm**

Thurs. Apr 23 – Senior Service at Autumn Grove **7:00 pm**

Fri. Apr 24 – Ladies Night Out - **TBD**

Sat. Apr 25 – GrammaLink – Africa's Fabric Sale – Gaetz United Church – **9:00 am -1:00 pm** (more details on poster on admin door and hall)

Sat. Apr 25 – **Innisfail Community Garage Sale** – Lacking a garage? Limited items to sell? Don't want to open your garage to strangers? In conjunction with the Town Wide Garage Sale, we are renting spaces in our parking lot for those who wish to sell from the back of their car. Rental is \$20.00 for the day. Coffee and tea will be provided for our vendors as well as bathrooms for vendor use only. Signage will be placed on 50th and again on 42nd indicating our location. Yes, you bring your own tables. Yes, you provide your own weather protections. Set your own hours. Coffee and bathrooms will be available from 9:00 am – 3:00 pm Book your space by calling the church at 403-227-3881.

Tues. Apr 28 – Sundae Social at Autumn Grove – **2:00 pm**

**Rolling Out 'Toward 2035' in Chinook Winds Region
Survey - is now available online**

<https://chinookwindsregion.ca>



**2026 Spring Hanging Basket
Fund Raiser**

10" Hanging Basket -\$25.00

12" Hanging Basket -\$33.00

14" Hanging Basket -\$45.00

Order forms can be picked up at the office (4720 48 Ave
Tues to Thurs. 9 am to noon) or by email request
innucc@innisfailuc.org Call 403-227-3881

Drop your orders into the office by **Thurs. April 23rd** with
payment by cheque made to Innisfail United Church, cash
or e-transfer to innucc@innisfailuc.org **indicating in the
memo "Flower Baskets"**

Baskets are to be picked up from Jungle Farms
(28120, Township Rd 362, Red Deer County, AB)
Monday through Saturday - from 10-6 May 8th to June 5th