Traveling the Way of Love: Worship
Reflection Guide

Scripture

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.

… 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.

Questions for Reflection

1. In this episode, Chris Sikkema visits the Rev. Elsa Marty at St. Lydia’s Dinner Church in Brooklyn, New York, a church that not only serves the Eucharistic meal but also a full dinner. One reason for this approach is that, as Pastor Elsa observes, people in her area are “hungry for intimacy around a meal,” and by combining a worship service with dinner, St. Lydia’s is modeling how Jesus welcomes us at the table by welcoming others. When have you been generously welcomed around a new table? What were the tastes, smells, sounds, and feelings that you experienced?

2. Over the course of dinner, everyone is invited to participate in the preparation, service, and enjoyment of the meal. Pastor Elsa observes that it is “important to come together in our embodied-ness – we hear each other’s voices, we hold hands, we pray, we eat.” Most worship services – even those not in a dinner church – invite us to use our bodies in some form: to kneel, to hug, to sing, to pray, to eat, to smell, to hear. Which physical action do you feel draws you closest to God during worship?

3. Often, “people think they aren’t perfect enough” to come to church, but as Pastor Elsa points out, “worship is something we create together.” A key part of our worship is storytelling and listening – to the story of God (through the Scriptures) and the stories of others (through the sermon, the prayers, the songs). When someone is missing or excluded (including you!), the story is incomplete, the experience is unfinished. Look around your worship service. Who is missing? Whose story and presence would help enrich your worship? How can you invite them to the table?

Prayer
Oh God, be present to us as we gather with others before you to worship. Open our hearts and minds to hear the Good News of Jesus Christ. Help us give thanks, confess, and offer the brokenness of the world to you. As we break bread, may our eyes be opened to the presence of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit among us, making us into one body, the body of Christ, being sent forth to live the Way of Love. Amen.