

**Sunday, April 14, 2024 – Easter Hill United Methodist Church**

**Bible Study**

**Third Sunday of Easter**

**“We Purify in Hope”**

**Luke 24:36b-48 and 1 John 3:1-7**

Open with a word of prayer

**Gathering Time** (5-10 minutes). In pairs or groups of three, have participants answer, “What did you learn from your family about how to dress for church, theatre, other social gatherings? Were there rules practiced all the time, or only when you had visits at home?”

**Luke 24:36b-48 Context.** Luke tells the story that after Jesus was raised from the dead, he appeared to two disciples who were traveling on the road from Jerusalem to the nearby village of Emmaus, who only came to recognize him much later “in the breaking of the bread.” The two rushed back to Jerusalem to tell the other disciples of their experience. Just as they did, Jesus appeared to them all. That is where this week’s reading begins. The other disciples doubted that it was really Jesus until he ate a piece of fish. Then he “opened their minds to understand the scriptures” that foretold his death and resurrection, and their mission to proclaim repentance and the forgiveness of sins. For Jesus, the scriptures included the “law of Moses, the prophets and the psalms,” the three divisions of the Hebrew Bible that we know even today (Torah, Prophets, Writings; the “writings” include the psalms along with other texts).

**1 John 3:1-7 Context.** The First letter of John is one of three brief, anonymous letters that, because of similarities in vocabulary and theology, have traditionally been attributed to John, the author of the fourth Gospel. This week’s reading, like last week’s, highlights important themes shared with the Gospel: we are God’s children; if we abide in Christ (that is, follow his commandment to love one another), we will not sin; if we sin, we have nothing to do with Christ. Some day, at the end of time, we will be pure and sinless, just as Christ is.

**Read Luke 24:36b-48 and 1 John 3:1-7**

What touches your heart, what do you hear in the scripture, what questions do you have, or what doesn’t make sense to you in the text?

**Read Luke 24:36b-48 and 1 John 3:1-7 again -**

Write down your thoughts or share your thoughts with the person or group you are with.

## Group Dialogue

- Both the Gospel lesson as well as 1 John mention the presence of a new era. It began with Jesus' resurrection. In the Gospel, Jesus appears to the disciples. In the epistle, the writer refers to hope based on our faith. What is the difference between these two experiences? Do you need to see or experience something to accept it?
- How did you begin to come to church? Did you come with your family or a friend? When and how did you begin to feel that the church and your relationship to God by your faith in Jesus was important?
- The epistle mentions purification and sin: "No one who abides in him sins" (1John 3:6, NRSV). This is a difficult verse. The key word may be "abides," which can also mean "living in union with Christ." Sometimes that union gives us an inner assurance that helps us avoid some situations. At other times, somebody or something (a hymn or song, an object) helps us choose between options. Have you ever had that kind of experience?
- How important do you feel faith and hope are to live according to your values? In what ways do you want to be your best self before God?
- What are ways to abide in Christ? How do you try to maintain your communion with God in your daily life? What helps you to be reminded to act according to your values?

## Closing Reflection Question

How is this scripture calling you to change, to see, to be or what might it be calling you to do?

**Prayer** (10 minutes). Share prayer requests and respond appropriately.

**Sending Forth** (2 minutes). After all, have shared, end by praying the following or a similar prayer:

Loving God, we want to abide in you and live our lives according to the faith we have in Jesus Christ. Help us to maintain our hope and faith in the midst of changes, temptations, and discouragement. **Amen.**

And now we pray The 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 trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
Lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, the power  
and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.