

Reflection for the Third Sunday in Easter and Earth Day Sunday

April 19, 2026

by Jennifer Irving

This week started with our Lectionary Bible Study taking a look at the passage Wendy read us from Luke about those two disciples encountering Jesus on the road to Emmaus. I invited our group (nicely ensconced in my office amid the sifting and sorting of a tonne of clothing in the church all around us) to engage the scripture using a spiritual practice called “Lectio Divina”. The task, read the scripture through once. Then read the passage through again and see if there is a word or a phrase that jumps out at you. Underline it, write it down, say it out loud. Take time to reflect on what that word is saying to you. Why is it significant to you? What does it mean to you? I invite each of you to go home today and try this simple spiritual practice—with this passage from Luke if you like—see what the divine lights up in your heart today.

The fun thing about doing it in our bible study group is that we could then share with one another our reflections about the words in the passage that were jumping out for us. For each of us, it was a different word, a different part of the passage speaking to our hearts and for different reasons! As is only right seeing how each one of us is unique, with our own set of experiences with the divine. If I’ve learned nothing else in this life-time it is that the divine speaks to each one of us, just as we are, with the voice we need, maybe even the voice only our ears can hear!

I was struck by the description of the disciples in response to Jesus’ question to them about what they were talking about—“They stood still, looking sad.” which led me to thinking about one—how grief can just stop us cold turkey—keep us from living, and two, how grief—our sadness and sorrow, can prevent us from seeing any joy or possibility or hope or goodness.

My grief isn’t as all-consuming as it was even a year ago but I could sure relate to the way it must have consumed Jesus’ followers on the road to Emmaus that first Easter Sunday.

How often have I sat out in the back yard and not even been able to hear the beauty in the birdsong let alone recognize the divine in a visit from a friend? Of course they didn’t recognize Jesus.

But, what really kept me thinking all week was the word that stood out from this passage for Wendy—a word that wasn’t even in the translation I read—and that word was “reasoned” from the King James Version. Luke Chapter 24, verse 15:

¹⁵ And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them.

In the conversation that followed, we talked about how our faith is not rooted in reason but rather in our hearts. In experiences that go deeper than our heads and touch our hearts. The experience of sharing coffee and a cookie after church is where our faith deepens—which is actually a bit of a relief to me since it can be a little daunting to think that anyone’s faith hangs on my well-reasoned and researched sermon!

How fitting that this passage should fall on the Sunday we celebrate Earth Day because it has been my experience and I know many of yours, that it is being in nature that touches our hearts, calls us to an understanding of the divine creator far beyond that which we could learn from studying it in a book.

What is it that wakes your soul to the divine all around us?

Our discussion reminded me of a practice I took part in several years ago, at a “Courage to Lead” based on the work of Parker Palmer. As a way of getting in touch with the divine within us, each of us was invited to sit with our eyes closed as music was played. I can’t remember exactly what the music was called but it had no words and built up and then softened in rhythmic, yet unpredictable patterns and we were invited to stand, and move however our bodies might want to move to that music. If you don’t set aside your reasoning mind for moments like that, you wouldn’t even be able to take part in a practice like this. So I did. It lasted forever and was over in a minute. At one point the tears just flowed out of me, in this group of people!, and the the stress I had been carrying seemed to flow with those tears. I found myself back on the ground—spent.

In that moment, nobody else was in the room—and my heart was burning within me. And I was awakened to the divine energy all around us and within us. Something that wouldn’t have been possible if I had been too caught up in my head.

We all have times where our heads get in the way of our hearts. When our thoughts and judgements keep us from experiencing the divine. There are lots of things that can keep us from being awakened to that divine energy. Maybe we’re singing a hymn you don’t particularly like. Maybe someone in front of you is clicking the top of a pen incessantly. Maybe, the minister just cried one too many times in the pulpit. Or we’re trying to clap together but we’re not doing a good job! There are lots of times that our mind can distract us from the holy, from our hearts, from letting us feel. So I invite you, today, to try to give grace to those things and then set them aside. And to open your hearts.

Yesterday, I sat again in my back yard, with the birds singing their song, a brief respite from the rain with everything turning so green, knowing that just down the street, at the church, dozens of people were being helped by the clothing swap, a family walked by—the parents carrying bags I knew were filled with clothing, their children dancing along with their umbrellas, joyfully.

In that moment, my heart burned within me. And I was awakened to the divine connection that binds us all together and encourages us to care for one another.

What is it that awakens your soul? That sets your heart on fire? That pulls off the blinders so you can see and know God?

Today, I pray that you bask in those experiences that wake you to the holy in all we see. That wake you to divine love.

I take comfort that if it isn’t coffee time after church that does it for people, it is the music that finds its way into our hearts and moves us deeper in our faith. To that end, Megan and I have chosen a song for me to end my reflection with today.

Wake, O My Soul

Wake O my soul, to earth and sea and sky.
Wake to the forests, fields, the mountains high.
Open my eyes to every rock and tree,
the Holy in all we see.

You the Light of all creation,
Blessed be Your name.
Every seed, every soul Your Love proclaim.

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Wake O my soul, to justice and to peace,
Wake to a world where hate and war shall cease.
Where every truth and story is revealed,
the wounds of the past can heal.

You the Light of all creation,
Blessed be Your name.
Every seed, every soul Your Love proclaim.

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Wake O my soul, to laughter and to song.
Sing alleluia every doubt be gone.
Stir in our hearts a sacred harmony,
a prayer of community.

You the Light of all creation,
Blessed be Your name.
Every seed, every soul Your Love proclaim.

You the Light of all creation,
Blessed be Your name.
Every seed, every soul Your Love proclaim.

Words & Music by PAT MAYBERRY
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