

**Sunday 19 April 2026**  
**Third Sunday of Easter**

**Collect:**

Risen Christ,  
you filled your disciples with boldness and fresh hope:  
strengthen us to proclaim your risen life  
and fill us with your peace,  
to the glory of God the Father. Amen.

**Readings for this week:**

*Zephaniah 3:14-20; Psalm 116:1-3, 10-17; Acts 2:14a, 36-41; Luke 24:13-25*

The opening prophecy from Zephaniah probably originated in the latter part of the prophet's career. In phrases that are echoed in Jeremiah it talks about the Lord being in the midst of the people, having taken judgment away from them. Having acted as the divine warrior, meting out destruction upon the unfaithful, now the Lord is ready to bring them home. The pride that has caused the people's destruction has been washed from them, they are once more blessed with God living in their midst, renewing them with holy love. Psalm 116 opens with words of thanksgiving, acknowledging and appreciating how God has heard the singer's cry, acted and relieved them of their troubles. The singer pledges to trust in God, offering sacrifices which mean the offering of himself as a servant, a follower of God. The Lord, Yahweh, is named ten times in this short passage – God is transformative, God offers an alternative to suffering and death, and thus, God is to be both followed and praised.

The reading from Acts opens with the same verse as last week, reminding us that we are listening to Peter's Pentecost sermon to the Jerusalem crowd. From there we move to the conclusion of his speech. So, perhaps, on this occasion it is not the content of Peter's words that is important but the response of the crowd. They ask what they can do to meet with Jesus as Messiah themselves. Peter's response is baptism which brings forgiveness and the blessing of the Holy Spirit. Three thousand step forward to begin a new life. Implicit in the positivity of their response is the impact of the resurrection. It is this event that takes Jesus from an executed Galilean peasant to being confirmed as Messiah.

The events on the road to Emmaus comprise our Gospel reading. It is a famous passage from Luke, skilfully telling of a great transformation, when from a state of unbelief, through Scripture and the sacrament of bread and wine, two disciples encounter the risen Jesus and are energised to go back out into the world – in the risky hours of night – to share the good news. Their return to Jerusalem gathers all the disciples together with everyone relating their experiences of recognising the risen Jesus and confessing their belief in him.

Living God,  
your Son made himself known to his disciples  
in the breaking of bread:  
open the eyes of our faith,  
that we may see him in all his redeeming work;  
who is alive and reigns, now and for ever. Amen.

**Readings for next week:**

*Genesis 7; Psalm 23; Acts 2:42-47; John 10:1-10*  
*Fourth Sunday of Easter*