

The Emmaus Road **WALKING WITH JESUS**

SPIRITUAL RENEWAL DAY

MARCH 2, 2022



greater european mission
SPIRITUAL LIFE

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WELCOME



Dear GEM Family,

How wonderful to have the gift once again of spending a whole day with God and with you. We're amazed at God's timing as well, lining this day up so perfectly with the Mission Wide Planning Day on March 16. As Joy McAuley so beautifully explained in the GEM Connect, these two days lining up this way are a perfect picture of the cycle of grace: taking time to remember and root ourselves in God's unconditional love and acceptance, coming to Him for sustenance, and then from there finding our significant place in His plan and seeing what fruit He brings. (If you missed that video [watch it here!](#))

Our day today will be grounded in Luke 24:13-35, walking with Jesus and His friends on the road to Emmaus. As with past Spiritual Renewal Days, we want the day to focus on the conversation between you and God. Our morning will be a time of expressing to Jesus what's on our hearts, and the afternoon will be a time to listen in to what He wants to say to us. And because of the emphasis on togetherness at the beginning (v. 14-15) we tried to work in some three-way interactions between us, Jesus, and one-another.

May our eyes be opened to recognize Jesus drawing near as we listen, speak, and break bread together.

With you in Christ.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lena". The script is cursive and elegant.

Lena Larsen

WHAT TO EXPECT OF THIS TIME?



Expect God to speak to you and be with you. What does it mean to become aware of His presence? How do we hear Him? As we become more aware of God's qualities or attributes in our lives, we become more aware of His presence. Throughout the day, be aware of what God brings to your mind of His person.

- Is He bringing to mind His faithfulness, love, grace, compassion, mercy, justice, patience, goodness...?
- How are you experiencing His presence considering these qualities in your everyday life?
- How is your understanding of His different attributes deepening as you spend time with Him?
- What are you longing to experience?

The main thing to remember is that God is the initiator. He delights in you and has specific ways He is engaging with you and in this season. Some questions that can help you notice how God might be speaking include:

- Where are your thoughts turning?
- What is grabbing your attention?
- What are you feeling—contentment, anxiety, sadness, anger?

Talk to God honestly about what you are feeling or thinking. Then take some time to sit quietly with Him—being with Him and listening to Him. When we are with a trusted friend, there are times of sharing and times of quiet. Give space for God to speak to you or to just be silent together.

PREPARING FOR YOUR RENEWAL DAY



Remember, God is the initiator. Try to release your own expectations or any desire for control over the day. What are the things that, if they didn't happen, would leave you feeling disappointed or with a sense of failure or lack? Ask God to help you let them go and to open you to whatever He will do. It may be helpful to write out your prayer here:

It also can be helpful to have a few key people praying for you on the Renewal Day.

Try to take a bit of time the night before to gather up any things you will want on hand—a Bible, a journal, and this guide (preferably printed). You may also want colored paper/pens or art supplies. Eliminate as many distractions as you can from the space you'll be using. We encourage you to spend at least part of the day in silence and solitude. For more thoughts on that or a more in-depth preparation plan see our article on [preparing for a day with God](#).

If you're participating as a family be sure to discuss expectations ahead of time (how much time you will spend together and alone, limits on technology use, etc.), even if it's on the morning of before you start.

RENEWAL DAY OVERVIEW



The time schedule is identical for both Central European Time and Mountain Standard Time except for the overlapping prayer time which will be at the end of the CET schedule and start of the MST schedule. Use this Zoom link for the whole day:

[ZOOM MEETING LINK](#)

08H30-09H00 MST (North America)

Full Group Zoom Meeting

GEM-Wide Prayer and Worship

09H00 – 10H00

Full Group Zoom Meeting

Introduction, Large Group Time, Small Group Time

10H00 – 12H30

Personal Reflection Time #1

12H30 – 13H00

Full Group Zoom Meeting

Midday Touch Point

13H00 – 16H00

Personal Reflection Time #2

16H00 – 16H30

Full Group Zoom Meeting

Wrap up / Debrief

16H30-17H00 CET (Europe)

Full Group Zoom Meeting

GEM-Wide Prayer and Worship

RENEWAL DAY IN DETAIL



The time schedule is identical for both Central European Time and Mountain Standard Time except for the overlapping prayer time which will be at the end of the CET schedule and start of the MST schedule. Use this Zoom link for the whole day:

[ZOOM MEETING LINK](#)

08H30-09H00 MST (North America)

Full Group Zoom Meeting

GEM-Wide Prayer and Worship

09H00 – 10H00

Full Group Zoom Meeting

Introduction, Large Group Time, Small Group Time

For Small Group Time:

- What stood out to you in this passage?
- How does that intersect with your life right now?
- Close with this prayer:

Lord Jesus Christ,
Stay with us, too, we pray,
in every part of our journey,
no matter how full of doubt or fear we may be today.
Through your Holy Spirit,
we pray that you will open our eyes, too
Help us see you as our risen Lord
in all your beauty,
and in all your loving power.
Amen.

---John Witvliet, from the close of a sermon on Luke 24

10H00 – 12H30

Personal Reflection Time #1

"...Jesus Himself drew near and went with them."

RENEWAL DAY IN DETAIL (continued)



When Jesus draws near to his disciples and begins walking beside them, He listens in for a bit and then asks them what they're talking about. Of course, he knows the events they're discussing better than anyone, but He gives them a chance to express to Him their own experiences of those events. He listens. Take time this morning to let Jesus listen to you. Below are two options if you want a jumping off point for expressing your longings or experiences to Christ.

Option 1 -- Longings

Longings and desires: There are many themes within Luke 24:13-34, but we want to focus on what the Holy Spirit was stirring in you as we went through the passage together. Slowly read through the passage again. What longings are you sensing? Are there any desires that come to mind as you reflect on the passage? Do any of these phrases trigger emotions or thoughts as you read them:

- ...talking about everything that had happened. vs. 14
- Jesus himself suddenly came and began walking with them. vs. 15
- But God kept them from recognizing him. vs 16
- ...but our priests and other religious leaders handed him over to be condemned to death... vs. 20
- We had hoped... vs. 21
- Jesus took them through the writings of Moses and all the prophets, explaining the Scriptures... vs. 27
- ...but they begged him, 'Stay the night with us...' vs. 29
- Suddenly, their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. vs. 31
- Didn't our hearts burn within us as he talked with us on the road and explained the Scriptures to us? vs. 32
- And within the hour they were on their way back to Jerusalem. vs. 33

*New Living Translation

Perhaps what stood out to you wasn't one of these phrases, but something else. Whatever it was, use it as a springboard into conversation with Jesus. What does Jesus want to show you regarding that longing or desire? If you are unclear, ask him why he's bringing that up at this point in your life in your current situation?

Feel free to take a walk or do a creative activity that occupies you physically while you contemplate and converse with Jesus about this passage.

RENEWAL DAY IN DETAIL *(continued)*



Option 2 -- Asking Jesus to reveal himself as we look back on the past year

There is something about us as humans that makes us want to tell and retell our story or how we experienced a particular event (how many times in the last year have you shared about your Covid experiences?). The disciples were sharing (or re-sharing) their experiences and expectations as Jesus joined them on the road to Emmaus. Then as Jesus walked them through the Scriptures, their stories and expectations were reformed and reworked with the truth of the Gospel.

During this reflection time, allow Jesus to walk with you through your past year asking Him to reveal how He was present and working in your life. Jesus joined His disciples as they were “talking and discussing these things together”. If you can, you may want to do this with someone else—perhaps while you take a walk together or by phone as you walk separately. The “togetherness” aspect will bring another dimension to the experience. Let it be a three-way conversation between you, Jesus, and your friend.

1. Take a few minutes to go through the past year, month by month, starting with March 2021, and quickly remember the main events of each month. The holidays, vacations, special events, highs and lows etc., might help you remember what was going on each month. Do not spend a lot of time on this step. It's meant just to jog your memory of the year.
2. Now take a walk with Jesus (and ideally another person) asking Him to show you where He was in each month. Allow Him to highlight different parts of each month. i.e., If an event or situation comes to mind, ask Jesus where He was in that moment and pause as you wait for a response. Does a kind word come to mind? A provision? A way that you were transformed or that you grew?... Give space to let Jesus speak to you. Keep in mind that Jesus might bring conviction about a situation, but He won't bring condemnation.
 - a. Here are some questions you could ask yourself, or the other person you are with, as you reflect on the events of the past year and how you feel about them:
 - How have you encountered Jesus when you pray about ___?
 - Jesus, what were you doing in this ___?
 - Jesus, what do you have to say about ___?
 - What healthy things have come out of ___?
3. At the close of this walk through the year, thank Jesus for His presence and His revelation of Himself in your life.

RENEWAL DAY IN DETAIL

(continued)



Lunch: (You may have lunch whenever it makes sense for you in your day).

There is a curious aspect of Luke 24 regarding meeting with Jesus. Verse 16 says, “But God kept them from recognizing him.” And later in verses 31 and 34 it says, “Suddenly, their eyes were opened, and they recognized him.... they recognized him as he was breaking the bread.” God chose the moment to reveal Jesus to them. Do we have the time and patience to wait for God’s timing in His revealing?

While you take time for lunch, be aware of God’s presence and how and when He chooses to reveal Himself to you. What are you noticing in your surroundings or in what you are eating? What comes to mind from the morning group and personal reflection time? What are you sensing throughout this “breaking of bread”? Is this a time to be sitting in His presence or a time for your eyes to be opened? Give space to what God is doing in you right now.

Prayer:

In Your presence
I’m surrounded with Your peace
My fears melt like tears when I’m near You Jesus

In Your presence
I’m filled with hope
As Your loving arms enfold me
Once again, I can stand
Strengthened by Your hand
I’ll rise into Your plan
Embracing Your presence
Right where I am

--From In Your Presence by James Meyer

*If you’d like to use a full mid-day liturgy, particularly if you are with others during this day, we’ve included one in the appendix.

12H30 – 13H00
Full Group Zoom Meeting

13H00 – 16H00
Personal Reflection Time #2

“...were not our hearts burning within us as He talked?”

RENEWAL DAY IN DETAIL (continued)



Now that we've had some time to talk to Jesus, let's settle in for a good listen. Take a few minutes to ponder the following questions:

- What does it look like when you truly listen to another person? What is your physical posture? Your internal posture? What would it be like to carry those same postures into your interaction with God?
- Can you think of a time when you heard from God? How did you know that it was Him?
- What happens when you listen and don't hear from God? What is your internal dialogue like when that happens?

Listening can be difficult. It requires us to relinquish control. We must acknowledge that God is His own person and can choose to speak (or not) when and how He wants. The other thing that often makes listening to God hard is our own internal activity. The word of God is "alive and active" but so are our hearts and minds. We have a multitude of things, within and without, vying for our attention. It is important therefore, as we listen to God, to extend ourselves grace as we dance back and forth between focus and distraction. Adele Calhoun encourages us, "Rather than judging ourselves as a miserable failure on the basis of inner detours, humbly return listening attention to Jesus."

What will help you enter a time of listening to God right now? Is there anything from the morning or other life circumstances lingering or weighing heavy on your mind? Entrust them into God's hands for the time being—you can write them on a piece of paper and leave it in another room with a verbal statement, "Lord I leave these with You," or imagine holding them in your fists and then slowly loosening your grip, letting them go and imagining them falling into God's open hands.

Take a few minutes to stretch, breathe deep, or do something else to either release pent up energy or get the blood flowing through the post lunch sleepiness. Express your desire to listen to God and ask for His grace to continue returning your "listening attention" to Him as distractions arise.

Option 1 – Inviting Christ to Reveal Himself in Scripture

Cleopas and his friend have the amazing experience of being with Jesus face to face as he explains all that the Old Testament Scriptures have to say about himself.

Option 2 – Inviting Christ to Reveal Himself in Song

Alternatively, you may want to practice listening with a worship song. Often, we have music on as background noise, or we sing it to express ourselves

RENEWAL DAY IN DETAIL (continued)



Option 1 – (continued)

What might Jesus have to say to you about Himself as you come to a passage of Scripture and let Him lead you through it?

1. Pick a passage of scripture (perhaps Isaiah 53, or John 1). Take a few moments to quiet and prepare yourself, then slowly read through it.
2. Continuing in your posture of listening, read the passage again, asking Jesus what He wants you to notice about Him. Let Him direct your attention, let His Word set the direction of the conversation.
3. What aspect of His character are you drawn to? Ask Him why. Maybe something about how He's described makes you uncomfortable. Again, ask Him why. Or perhaps nothing stands out. Sit in silence for a bit, come back to the passage, and then sit quietly again. Ask Him to help you rest in His presence, even if you can't "feel" it.
4. Continue that rhythm of reading, listening, and pausing as many times as you like. When you're done, finish with a few minutes of just sitting with Jesus.

The most prominent thing about Jesus that His disciples were left with at the end of their time with Him was the fact that He was alive—which naturally filled them with uncontainable joy! What aspect of who Jesus is has He left you with today? What emotions does that raise in you? What might it look like to carry that with you into this evening, or tomorrow?

Option 2 – (continued)

to God. For this time, we'll focus in on a single song, asking God what He wants to say to us through the music and lyrics.

1. Pick a song you want to listen to. Two options that relate to the theme for today are
 - a. [I Can See](#) (On the Emmaus Road) by Steve Green or
 - b. [Psalm 130](#) (I Will Wait for You) by Shane and Shane.
2. Prepare yourself to listen. Get in a comfortable position, close your eyes, relax your hands on your lap, whatever will help you turn your attention to God.
3. Listen to the song. Let yourself soak in the words and the music.
4. Sit quietly for a bit and then listen to the song again, this time inviting God to bring a specific part of the song to your attention. Ask God why that is important. What is He wanting to say to you through that?
5. Repeat that rhythm of pausing, listening to the song, and listening to God as many times as you like. When you're done, finish with a few minutes of just sitting with Jesus.

RENEWAL DAY IN DETAIL (continued)



16H00 – 16H30

Full Group Zoom Meeting
Wrap up/ Debrief

We highly recommend looking at “Continuing with the *Cycle of Grace*” below to close out your day or revisit in the week ahead.

16H30-17H00 CET (Europe)

Full Group Zoom Meeting
GEM-Wide Prayer and Worship

CYCLE OF GRACE

Continuing with the *Cycle of Grace*

As our spiritual renewal day comes to a close, consider going further with the Cycle of Grace either this evening or sometime in the next two weeks leading up to the GEM-wide Strategic Planning Day.

After spending time in the first two dimensions of the Cycle of Grace, Acceptance and Sustenance, it is good to prayerfully reflect on our life rhythms and evaluate if they are helping us to be filled with God’s grace. This is true especially before moving into the 3rd and 4th dimensions, Significance and Fruitfulness, as we’ll be doing on March 16, during the GEM-wide Strategic Planning Day. Looking at Vision, Intention and Means is a helpful way to process what God is inviting us into regarding the “sustenance” dimension of the Cycle of Grace.

Use the questions on the following page to process through your life rhythms.

CYCLE OF GRACE

(continued)



Vision for transformation:

Vision develops while we are abiding with Christ — in the Word, prayer and community. It is a transformative work that God wants to do in us, with our cooperation, and it is beyond what we can do on our own. If we try to do it on our own, the result is our striving.

What are one or two desires that God has been bringing to the front of my mind during this renewal day (and perhaps before coming)?

Examples (but not limited to these ideas):

- I want to be living a life of _____.
- I want _____ to be more evident in my life.
- God is revealing my habits/attitude of _____ that He wants to transform.

Intention to see it through:

Intention is the motor that links vision and means. Transformation won't just happen. There needs to be a conscious decision to commit to a plan.

How committed am I to letting God work on _____ in my life?
What is holding me back?

Means to opening ourselves to God's transformation:

Spiritual disciplines are a means, but they do not transform us. They can open us up to transformation, but God transforms us with our cooperation.

What are some disciplines/habits that would help me be in a place where I am open to God's transformation? What rhythm(s) do I need to have?

APPENDIX



Mid-Day Prayer

[Leader, Response, UNISON]

Lord, draw near to us.
CHRIST, LINGER HERE WITH US.

† LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE†

Lord, I believe my life is touched by you, that you want something for me and of me.

GIVE ME EARS TO HEAR YOU, EYES TO SEE THE TRACING OF YOUR FINGER,
AND A HEART QUICKENED BY THE MOTIONS OF YOUR SPIRIT. AMEN.

Almighty God, we give you thanks for this life and all its blessings,
for joys great and simple, for gifts and powers more than we deserve,
for love at the heart of your purpose and wisdom in all your works,
for light in the world brought in Christ and always shining through your Spirit.
Giving thanks to you we pray for that light to dawn upon us daily
**that we may always have grateful hearts, and a will to love and to serve you to
the end of our days.**

HEAR OUR PRAYER AND OUR PRAISES, THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD.
AMEN.

[Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing](#) (Verses 1-2)

PSALM 100 (NIV)

1 Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth.

2 **Worship the Lord with gladness;
come before him with joyful songs.**

3 Know that the Lord is God.

It is he who made us, and we are his;
we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

4 Enter his gates with thanksgiving
and his courts with praise;
give thanks to him and praise his name.

5 For the Lord is good and his love endures forever;
his faithfulness continues through all generations.

APPENDIX

(continued)



Mid-Day Prayer (continued)
[Leader, Response, UNISON]

We pause in the middle of this day, O God, to lift our souls to you.
GRANT US STRENGTH AND GRACE SUFFICIENT TO THE REMAINDER OF
THIS DAY, THAT WE MIGHT MOVE THROUGH ITS UNFOLDING IN
HUMBLE OBEDIENCE TO YOUR WILL, IN SENSITIVITY TO YOUR SPIRIT
AND IN JOYFUL EXPECTANCY OF YOUR COMING KINGDOM. AMEN.

READING FROM SCRIPTURE: Luke 24:28-35 (NIV)

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.

This is the Word of the Lord!
THANKS BE TO GOD.

SILENCE

[Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing](#) (Verse 3)

O God, who opened the eyes of the blind and made light shine in the darkness:
GRANT US, IN THE MOVEMENTS OF OUR DAY, EYES TO RECOGNIZE YOU AND
HEARTS OPEN TO YOUR WORD. MAY WE FIND GREAT JOY IN KNOWING YOU,
OUR RISEN SAVIOR.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

Let us continue in the Peace of Christ. AMEN.
Let us receive this meal with gratitude. AMEN.
Let us bless the Lord. THANKS BE TO GOD

*Adapted from the Transforming Center's [Liturgy for Mid-Day Prayer](#)

APPENDIX

(continued)



FAMILY OPTION

Here we've selected and adapted a few of the above reflections and put them together into a suggested schedule for families. They're in order here, but the length of time you spend on each one and in between each one is up to you.

Prepare a Place: You may want to set aside a specific place in your home for kids to go throughout the day if they want to be with God. We thought it sounded fun to make a blanket fort or set up a tent, but this could also be a room or even a closet. Put a few things there that the kids could use in their time with God, such as a kid's Bible, a way to listen to worship music (with headphones), scripture [coloring](#) or [journaling](#) pages, blank paper, crayons/markers, etc. Talk to the kids about what's there and if needed, how to use them.

Parent Time: Decide as parents when (and where) you will each get time alone with God. This could mean splitting the morning with each parent having half the time alone and half the time with the kids, one parent taking some time in the morning and the other in the afternoon, etc.

Further Suggestions: Reduce or eliminate technology as much as possible on this day. It may be helpful to allow each family member to share responsibility for leading a portion of the day; choosing worship music, etc. Teens might take the quiet time to walk with a friend and talk about their disappointments in the last year (morning) and/or fears for the future (afternoon). As they set out, they could prayerfully ask Jesus to join them.

MORNING

Option 1: Examen with Luke 24:13-24.

- Begin by taking a few minutes to thank God for the gifts He's given you. (Among the other things that come up, thank Him for being with you and talking to you.)
- Ask God for the grace to be open to Him and whatever He wants you to notice in this story.
- Read Luke 24:13-34 slowly. Work together to tell the story in your own words.

APPENDIX

(continued)



FAMILY OPTION (continued)

- Reread verses 13-24 slowly. The two disciples were talking about all that had happened recently. What would your conversation be if you were walking with a friend and discussing this last year in the pandemic? If Jesus joined you, how would your face look? Here it says that the disciples' faces were downcast, and they asked Jesus "Are you only a visitor to Jerusalem and do not know the things that have happened there in these days?" If Jesus asked you what happened in the last pandemic year, what would you say to Him? Are there any disappointments that you need to express?
- Take an age-appropriate number of moments to sit, arms crossed over your chest like a hug, breathing deeply, and remembering that God knows everything and is always with us, always ready to listen to us.
- If you want, think of something you can do as a family to watch for God's interactions with you each day.

Option 2: Take a family walk.

As you walk, talk about all that has happened in the pandemic and how you feel. Where did you see God with you, helping you? What would you want to say to Jesus if He was walking with you today? What do you think He might be saying to you?

LUNCH

Go through the Mid-day liturgy together before you eat your noon meal.

AFTERNOON

Reread Luke 24:25-34. Retell the events of the story in your own words.

Option 1:

After the disciples told Jesus all that happened and their disappointments, He explained everything and why it had to happen. As Jesus talked and they spent time with Him, they were able to see Him. Their sad faces became happy faces. What memories do you have of times when you felt close to God or when God helped you in specific ways through the pandemic? God wants to hear our worries and our disappointments, and He wants us to know He loves us. For young children it may be helpful to allow them to color these pictures as you talk together ([Road to Emmaus, Meal with Jesus.](#))

APPENDIX

(continued)



FAMILY OPTION *(continued)*

If you can, memorize 1 Peter 5:7 as a family.

Memorization game—write out the verse on a whiteboard or large sheet of paper. Use a ball or a bean bag and toss it back and forth from person to person. Each time you catch the ball say the next word in the verse. Do it several times until you're comfortable with the verse. Then cover up part of the verse and see if you can still do it. Cover up more and more of the verse until you can say the whole thing without looking.

Option 2:

As a family, make a list of the good things that happened in the past year. Make a thank you card to God using the list. As you create the thank you card for God, picture Him walking beside you through the past year. Are there ways you can remember that God is always with you?

ENDING

Take some time to talk about the day together.

- Did you experience God with you or talking to you today? What was that like?
- Are there any other “next steps” you think God is inviting you to take?
- What would you like to celebrate from today? How could you do that?