

**Rev. Paul Nesbit**  
**First Congregational Church of Westfield**  
**April 23, 2023**

Just a Closer Walk

We have been sitting quietly and patiently for the past month while the pastor has stood behind the pulpit and preached. It is now time for a bit of congregation participation. I have some questions for you.

- How many songs do you know about walking?
- How many people here have heard of or own a Fitbit or a Fitbit “knock-off?”
- How many steps are we told to take each day?
- Why do we walk?
- How many have taken a walk with a friend? Do you talk? What might you talk about?

Have you ever felt closer to a friend or a person after one of your walks?

Simon and Cleopas are walking home to Emmaus from Jerusalem after they had been in the city for the Festival of Passover. It was during this time that they had witnessed the mob scene, crucifixion, and heard of the resurrection of Christ. They walked because they had no other mode of transportation. On a side note, Jerusalem to Emmaus is approximately 7 miles. If there are 2200 steps in one mile, they certainly got their steps “in” that day.

On this walk they were participating in what my friend Quentin calls a “postmortem” of an event. A postmortem is similar to an autopsy. However, they discuss what happened at the event and what they would like to remember. I am sure that many of us have engaged in the same activity, but after a party, a funeral, or an event. It is apparent that Simon and Cleopas

are doing the same thing. It becomes easier as they are introduced to a stranger who seems unaware of the event that took place.

These two had been through the gamut of emotions from A-Z and were happy to share them with this stranger. And, according to their custom, they invited this person to share a meal with them. It was here that they recognized the Risen Christ in their presence. “Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?”

Sometimes when we walk or move with others we can find ourselves in deep conversation much like the one that Simon and Cleopas were having. As we share our faith we are able to deepen our own. I would like to encourage everyone to invite someone to “walk” with them in the weeks to come. Invite them to go when it is not pouring rain. Invite them to “walk” with you here at church. If you are on Facebook, please share the posts that we put out about our Sunday worship at both First Congregational Church and Southwick Congregational.

Sometimes we have to walk the lonesome valley with Jesus. We walk and talk with God in the Garden. If we can take a closer walk with Jesus, we’ll never walk alone. We’ll walk by faith and not by sight. We will walk as children of the light. Let’s go for a walk, shall we?