



Notes for the sermon on 5th July 2026 in Flitton Church – Rev Philip Davies

A "Jigsaw Window" in a church typically refers to a stained-glass window created or restored from hundreds of shattered, historical fragments. (Famous examples include the 14th-century glass at All Saints Church York, St Leonard's Church in Sussex and St John the Baptist Flitton,) where surviving shards of medieval glass have been painstakingly reassembled like a giant puzzle.

Missing pieces of a Jigsaw.

To consider both missing pieces and the reassembling of shattered fragments as we think about the two travellers on the road to Emmaus who are shattered by what they have recently been witnesses to.

For the bigger picture. Go back to their experience of travelling with Jesus. Their experience hearing his stories and witnessing people healed, reconciled, and people being brought home within community including those perceived as outsiders. Jesus' deep connect to people's lives and to the living world around him. His understanding of the scriptures and his opening them out in a way that connected the people with each other and with God.

His valuing of the integrity of considered honest, self-giving worship that emphasised the presence of God. His making special, sacred, the world around him and the things of everyday living including bread and wine.

His challenge of the structures and systems both secular and religious that constrained and contained human flourishing and limited the fulness of God's wisdom, mercy and love.

And these travellers had, also either from a distance or perhaps closer, witnessed his betrayal, arrest, trial and death. In fear many of the followers had fled and at this time of trial some denied. All of this they had not felt prepared for or able to make sense of. A missing piece.

For the two travellers on the road to Emmaus are not expecting to find this missing piece even though they later recall how their hearts had burnt within them as the stranger on the road talked with them. "The stranger on the shore."

The missing piece, including the coming together of many shattered pieces, found to be the stranger on the road, the stranger who is welcomed by them into the house, the home, the missing piece a guest, a guest who becomes the host at the supper and who is recognised by them in the breaking of the bread.

A missing piece for those called to ordained ministry: the affirmation and the authorisation to preside with and for the people at the Eucharist. To receive the offering of the people, to bless the bread and wine, to break the bread and to give and to share the bread and the cup with the people.

A painting for an Emmaus Jigsaw puzzle. Caravaggio's painting "The Supper at Emmaus" which is usually on display at the National Gallery in London.

No other painting has ever truly made me stop and stare and really feel that the artist is really drawing me into the subject matter. Artists use techniques to do this and here I think there are two. First the figure of Jesus in blessing the meal, has his hand reaching out in a way that is opening, inviting and inclusive.

And second, the three other figures in the painting are all positioned in such a way as to reveal themselves as eager spectators to what it is that Jesus is doing and there is space in the right foreground for the viewer to be similarly drawn into what is going on.

Closer observation of the painting enables the viewer to see the tattered clothes worn by one of the figures; the artist suggesting that the presence of the risen Jesus is to bring hope especially for those in need. The arms of another are outstretched like a cross, as he considers how the man he had seen nailed to a cross is now bringing blessing and hope in heart and mind, the active love of God reaching out from the risen Christ to all. The third figure represented is a servant who has prepared the meal.

The Easter affirmation are the words Jesus is Risen: He is Risen Indeed speaking to the very heart of the church's presence in a benefice shaped through gathering for Holy Communion when we embody together the presence of the living lord in sharing the bread and the wine and doing as he instructed us to do in remembrance of him. As we recall Jesus teaching the disciples about the new commandment to love one another as I have loved you and the conversations that the disciples had with Jesus and each other, as he washed their feet and they shared that final Passover meal together.

The Easter affirmation expressing belief that through Jesus' living, dying, and rising, all things are being made new, each new day a day of new beginnings and that God's presence is to be found with and alongside those who are

suffering. Challenges our thinking and intention. Venezuela. Suffering and abandonment. A people shattered by loss.

At the house, the home in Emmaus, these things coming together when the followers recognise that it is the crucified and risen Jesus who opens their eyes to how God's work has been going on amongst them. Jesus who shared human suffering, who died on the cross and who is ever with and amongst us: opening for each of us new possibilities that we can respond to with wisdom, with generous hearts, and with unconditional love for all.

A missing jigsaw piece the way Jesus living, dying and rising make a difference for each of us, for our communities, for our world. That God can speak to us in and through the stranger, the perceived outsider, "the resident alien", "the sojourner"; fellow travellers who in the Old Testament included both Moses and Abraham, and who themselves began to recognise that God's people can say that we are a people always on the road, always on a journey together.

A missing jigsaw piece. Holy Communion in the Parish, town, city and village Church. The "Parish Communion Movement" and the "Parish and People Movement". Participants in a common endeavour, priest and people, a movement of compassion, caring, reconciling, breaking down barriers and truly together being nourished to love and serve the world.

A movement that made participation in Holy Communion a more communal commitment, priest and people together, all being expectant of encounter with God and enabling the releasing of gifts and talents in serving and loving others in the world.

Being on a journey accompanied with fellow travellers, friends and strangers with hearts and minds open to God's presence, a people who indeed can wonderfully be the missing pieces, the shattered and scattered pieces transformed within the hopeful and joyful promise that all things can be made new.