



## Homemade E-devos

May 26, 2022

### Reflection— Rev. Karen Oehl

#### **The Power of the Double AAs**

*"I felt my heart strangely warmed, I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death." John Wesley writing in his journal on May 24<sup>th</sup>, 1738.*

*Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus told them to go. When they saw him, they worshipped him, but some doubted. Matthew 28:16-17*

Aldersgate Day and the Ascension of the Lord. These two events generally happen close together on the calendar; Aldersgate Day is always May 24<sup>th</sup> and the Ascension of the Lord somewhere around 6 weeks after Easter. It is not unusual to have them come and go without any notice on our part in the church. But that is a loss for all of us who have ever doubted, or felt that Jesus is far away, that our faith is irrelevant and unreal. The story of both these events connect head and heart, earth and heaven if we let them.

John Wesley was having a bad time in his life. He had tried to be a missionary in the colonies, in Georgia, and it was a disaster. He had been terrified by a storm at sea while the Moravians on the ship prayed and were at peace. He was a powerful preacher and organizer and technically believed in salvation, but did not KNOW it in his heart. Fortunately for us he was also an indefatigable journal keeper. On Sunday, May 24<sup>th</sup>, he went "reluctantly" to an evening meeting at a place on Aldersgate Street. While somebody was reading from Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans (not the scripture itself, not a prayer, not a piece of music, but a scholarly PREFACE!) he felt his heart "strangely warmed," as he writes in his journal. Head knowledge became heart assurance. Wow.

The Ascension of the Lord marks the event of Jesus taking leave of his disciples and ascending from earth to heaven. His words in Matthew and Luke are about making disciples, being witnesses, receiving power. But then he is gone. And there continues to be that strange mix in our faith lives of worship and doubt, head knowledge and heart searchings.

Put together these two stories, with the anticipation of the Pentecost event, however, and we see that there is hope. In ways that we cannot expect or predict, even when we are unprepared and reluctant, God moves. In other people's words, in church, in a meeting, on a mountain, God moves. In power and weakness, God moves. Jesus is real, sin is forgiven, we are powered by grace. Amen and amen.