



Queen Anne

LUTHERAN CHURCH

Called to Proclaim God's Love in Christ for Every Person

2400 Eighth Avenue West • Seattle, Washington 98119

206.284.1960 • www.queenannelutheran.org

✘ *Staff* ✘

Pastor	The Rev. Dr. Daniel Peterson
Cantor	Kyle Haugen
Children's Ministry Coordinator	Terry Anderson
Parish Administrator	Barbara Bash
Sexton	John Bryant
Lutheran Counseling Network	Sarah Tatterson

✘ *In Worship Today* ✘

Pastor	The Rev. Dr. Daniel Peterson
Cantor	Kyle Haugen
Lector	Jan Olson

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THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER

April 26, 2020

"Word Out #8" audio transcript

Prelude

Song Without Words
Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy (1809-1847)

Welcome

P: Welcome, this third Sunday of Easter. Wherever you are listening, we invite you into this space: one where we will hear the good news in proclamation, spoken and sung, a time where you can be still and know God is God.

P: Today's gospel begins with two disciples walking to Emmaus, overcome with sadness, loss and disappointment. They had hoped Jesus, who was crucified, would be the one to redeem Israel. Yet the risen Christ walks with them and then opens their eyes in the breaking of the bread. The colorful story of Jesus's appearance to two disciples on the road to Emmaus answers the question of how Jesus is to be recognized among us. Here he is revealed through the scriptures and in the breaking of the bread.

Greeting


P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

G: And also with you.


Gospel Acclamation

Luke 24:32

G:

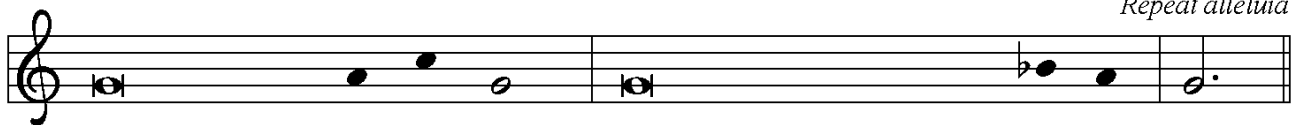


Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.



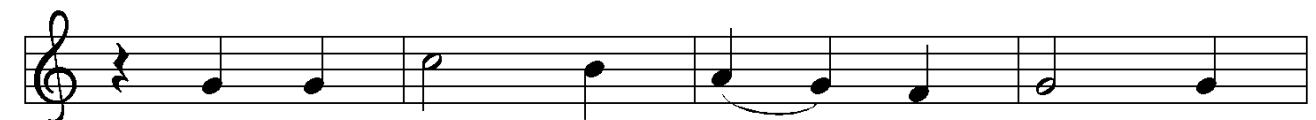
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

Repeat alleluia




P: Our hearts burn within us while you open to us the scriptures.

G:



Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.



Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

A: The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the twenty-fourth chapter.

G: **Glory to you, O Lord.**

¹³Now on that same day [when Jesus had appeared to Mary Magdalene,] two [disciples] were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, ¹⁴and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. ¹⁵While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, ¹⁶but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. ¹⁷And he said to them, “What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?” They stood still, looking sad. ¹⁸Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, “Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?” ¹⁹He asked them, “What things?” They replied, “The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, ²⁰and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. ²¹But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. ²²Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, ²³and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. ²⁴Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him.” ²⁵Then he said to them, “Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! ²⁶Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?” ²⁷Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

²⁸As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. ²⁹But they urged him strongly, saying, “Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.” So he went in to stay with them. ³⁰When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. ³¹Then their eyes were

opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. ³²They said to each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?” ³³That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. ³⁴They were saying, “The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!” ³⁵Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

A: The Gospel of the Lord.

G: Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon

The Other Disciple
Pastor Dan Peterson

Last week we heard the story of the other disciples, apart from Thomas, who huddled together after Jesus’ death “for fear of the Jews.” I mentioned how I would return to this phrase, “for fear of the Jews,” in today’s sermon – and I will. But first I want to remind you of your homework.

Recall from last week that Christ, finding his disciples in isolation, spoke to them a Word of reassurance. “Peace be with you,” he said. That Word, I suggested, was spoken not only to the eleven back then. It is also spoken *to you* here and now. Amid your isolation, your fear, or your fatigue, Christ says, “Peace be with you,” inviting you to share His Word of peace with others. Comforting a friend, reaching out to a fellow church member, helping a neighbor in need – these are examples of how *you* can be Christ to others. Reflect on this for a moment. What new opportunity might be waiting for you in the week ahead to be Christ to someone else?

Today, the third Sunday of Easter, we turn to a different story concerning what happened after Jesus died. It’s the only account of its kind in the New Testament. One commentator calls it “the most dramatic resurrection narrative in the New Testament.” It’s also the first.

According to Luke 24:13, while some of the women who followed Jesus found his tomb empty, and while they had a vision of angels who indicated that he had

risen, it was *these two followers of Jesus* on their way to the village of Emmaus who experienced him “that same day,” presumably even before Peter (see 24:33-34).

Now this is darn peculiar. The Apostle Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 15:4 that Christ “was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas [Peter], then to the twelve.” Paul then refers to several more appearances (that is, visions) of the risen Christ, including to 500 people at once. “Last of all,” he says, “to one untimely born, he appeared also to me” (v. 8). It seems like a comprehensive list, but something is missing. Do you see what it is? Emmaus! Paul says nothing of it. How can that be? The leadership of the church in Jerusalem presumably gave him the list. Did they leave it out deliberately, and if so, why?

The absence of the Emmaus account in 1 Corinthians 15 is not the only thing strange. Consider Luke 24:26. There Jesus is speaking with two of his followers who do not yet know his identity. He tells them the Messiah should suffer according to the scriptures before entering his glory. Unfortunately, as one commentator concedes, “specific texts [in the Old Testament] which make these points are not easy to find” (*Interpreter’s On-Volume Commentary on the Bible*, p. 705). We have virtually no idea, in other words, what books of the Bible or passages Jesus had in mind when he “interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures” (v. 27). All we can do is guess – or chalk it up to what Pastor Wayne used to call a holy mystery.

The Emmaus story has other riddles too. A couple stand out, both of which are *about* a couple – two followers of Jesus, a man named Cleopas and his anonymous companion, the true identity of which might explain *why this account never made the list of resurrection appearances early church leaders gave to Paul, much less appear in any of the other Gospels*.

We’ll return to this couple and the **potential conspiracy** surrounding one of them in a moment. Let me “solve” a few other riddles in the text first.

Let’s start with an easy one. Verse 26: Why was it *necessary* for Jesus to die? Have you ever wondered that? People often say, “to atone for our sins.” In Mark 10:45 and Matthew 20:28, we read accordingly that Jesus came “to serve, and to give

his life as a ransom for many.” What’s fascinating here is that this saying is not found in Luke! As New Testament scholar Bart Ehrman explains, “For Luke, Jesus dies the death of a righteous martyr who has suffered from miscarried justice; his death will be vindicated by God at the resurrection” (*A Brief Introduction to the New Testament*, p. 110). The resurrection is the whole point for Luke; that’s why Jesus’ death is necessary: the only way to new life is through death!

What’s important about Jesus’ death for Luke is the repentance it inspires. *That* reconciles us to God, not the blood on the cross.

Another riddle for me is v. 21. It’s clear, to be sure, that Jesus was not the messiah his followers expected. “But we had hoped,” the passage reads, “that he was the one to redeem Israel.” Does this mean, since Jesus neither defeated Rome nor restored balance to all creation by feeding the hungry and raising up the poor (see Luke 1:46-55) that he was a failure, that the Kingdom of God so central to his preaching and ministry had not (and will never) come?

Here we can see why Jesus’ sharing of the meal (v. 28-31), which follows the same pattern of the Last Supper and the Feeding of the 5,000 where Jesus takes, breaks, and blesses the bread, is so important. “God’s kingdom has come in Jesus and his sharing of food with others, especially outcasts. Jesus, who at his last meal said that he would not share food with his disciples until God’s kingdom came (22:16, 18) now shares food with them and thereby shows that God’s kingdom has indeed come. Now his table companions are not toll collectors, but his own disciples who have strayed from the way [i.e., because he did not meet their expectations]; they are forgiven and sent back on their way . . . but all this happens to them only because they have been hospitable” (*The New Jerome Bible Commentary*, p. 721).

So the kingdom is realized, and it’s all because these two followers were, again, hospitable. As they near Emmaus, Cleopas and his unnamed companion say together, “Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over” (24:29). This single expression of hospitality changes everything. Disciples who entertain strangers will have their eyes opened.

We're hearing a lot in the church lately about Holy Communion, and absolutely, Christ is "in, with, and under" the bread. But it's the *sharing of the bread*, as this story indicates, that matters most, not the elements themselves! The sharing helps make God's kingdom come, God's will be done. This is the Way.

There are other riddles that raise questions in Luke 24, but there are also answers that solve *our* riddles. The text tells us bluntly, for example, who really killed Jesus: not "the Jews," as John's Gospel sometimes says, but "our *chief priests and leaders* handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him," says Cleopas in v. 20. Yet even here we have a riddle: who was this Cleopas, and who was his mysterious companion?

New Testament scholar Raymond Brown says, "We know nothing of this Cleopas . . . or of his unnamed companion" (*An Introduction to the New Testament*, p. 261). After all, the name Cleopas appears nowhere else in the Gospels and Luke mentions him only once. John 19:25 mentions "Mary the wife of Clopas," which some argue is an alternative spelling of Cleopas. Matthew 10:3 mentions "James son of Alphaeus," the latter of which is apparently a Greek variant of the Aramaic original. These parallels make Edith Deen in *All of the Women of the Bible* more confident than Brown. "Cleophas and this Mary were parents of the apostle James the less, who had a brother Joses, the latter being a Greek form of Joseph" (21), she writes.

Deen's book, which is on the shelf in our Queen Anne Lutheran library, as are most of the wonderful books I've cited here, opens up a possibility that Brown may have overlooked. Most commentaries up until quite recently simply speak as Brown does: Cleopas is a disciple (in the broader sense of the term, not one of the original twelve) traveling with an "unnamed companion." But then something remarkable happens in the scholarship. Amy-Jill Levine in *The Jewish Annotated New Testament* writes, referring to v. 18, "*Two of them, Cleopas and an unidentified follower, who may be a woman*" (166).

How fascinating! For centuries, the patriarchal assumption was that the anonymous companion of Cleopas must be a man. Perhaps Luke had given her neither name nor much voice because she wasn't a man. But we can't stop there. One more piece of her identity remains.

Return with me once more to verse 29 where Cleopas and his unnamed companion say to Jesus, “Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.” Do you hear that? “Stay with us.” Who talks like that? Robert Brawley, a contributor to *The New Testament Fortress Commentary on the Bible*, has an answer: “The travelers,” he says of Cleopas and his companion in verse 29, “*probably husband and wife, extend the stranger hospitality*” (p. 260).

Wow. Imagine that: two disciples, not only a man and woman but a husband and wife, abandon the Way of their Messiah only to be the first two people he encounters in His risen form! They invite him out of hospitality into their home and break bread with him, sharing what they have, which not only opens their eyes, but also the Kingdom of God! While Tabitha (Dorcas in Greek) is the only woman *explicitly* identified as a disciple in the New Testament (Acts 9:36), we would do well to acknowledge Cleopas’ wife Mary as **the other disciple** on the road to Emmaus.

You recall toward the outset I mentioned a **potential conspiracy**. Here it is: *the story of Emmaus arguably never made the list of resurrection appearances early church leaders gave to Paul because all of those listed were men*. Women were second-class citizens. And even if the disciples could acknowledge their primacy in being the first to discover the tomb empty, perhaps they could *not* acknowledge that Jesus, in appearing to a man *and* a woman right from the beginning, was ushering in God’s reign that made some of them uncomfortable – one where all of us, Jew or Greek, male or female, and by extension today sick or healthy, infected or uninfected, would be one in the body of Christ (Galatians 3:28), equal with one another, sharing what we have, receiving others into our midst, making manifest the Kingdom of God.

And all God’s people say, Amen.

Hymn of the Day

Stanzas 1, 2, 5 (see page 11)

Christ Is Alive! Let Christians Sing

ELW 389

Prayers of the Church

P: Uplifted by the promised hope of healing and resurrection, we join the people of God in all times and places in praying for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

P: For those whose hearts are touched by your gospel, that they be empowered to tell the story of your love in their lives and to show hospitality in response to this love. Lord, in your mercy,

C: **hear our prayer.**

P: For the diverse natural world: for jungles, prairies, forests, valleys, mountains, and for all the wild and endangered animals who call these spaces home, that they be nurtured and protected. Lord, in your mercy,

C: **hear our prayer.**

P: For broken systems we have inherited that we continue to perpetuate, forgive us. Restrain the nations from fighting over limited resources. Redeem us from the cycles of scarcity and violence. Lord, in your mercy,

C: **hear our prayer.**

P: For all who call upon your healing name, give rest. Stay with us, and walk with those who are hungry, friendless, despairing, and desiring healing in body and spirit, especially for caregivers who provide this care: doctors, nurses, administrators, and service workers. Lord, in your mercy,

C: **hear our prayer.**

P: For the faith-forming ministries of this church. For ministries we must presently suspend, that they return out of hibernation later this spring with new vitality. Lord, in your mercy,

C: **hear our prayer.**

P: For whom or what else do the people of God pray? We invite you listening at this time to pray silently, or use this time to speak.

A silence is given so that your prayers may be offered.

P: Lord, in your mercy,

C: **hear our prayer.**

P: Create in our hearts the desire to live the resurrected life. Give us thankful hearts for those who have died, even as we look forward to the hope of new life with you. Lord, in your mercy,

C: **hear our prayer.**

P: With bold confidence in your love, almighty God, we place all for whom we pray into your eternal care; through Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

Lord's Prayer

P: Lord remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

C: **Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.

**For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,
now and forever.**

Amen.

Announcements

P: We thank you for joining us for this service. If you would like to hear other services or access the newest edition of *the Quill*, we invite you to go to our website at queenannelutheran.org.

Benediction

A: Let us bless the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

P: Almighty God, the Father, ✠ the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
bless and preserve you.

C: Amen.

Dismissal

P: Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

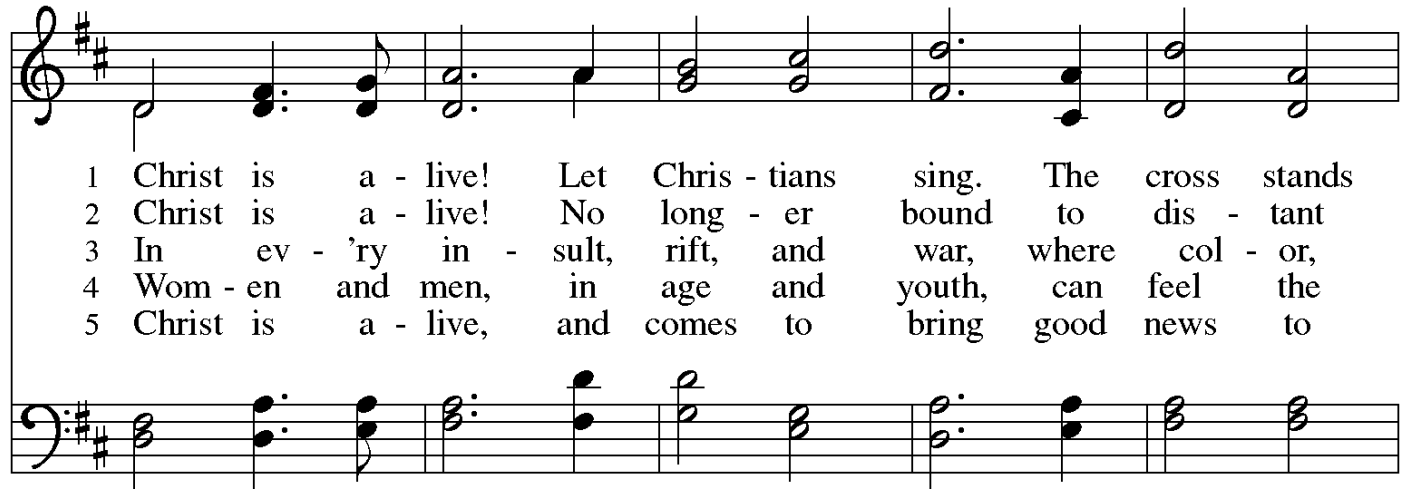
C: Thanks be to God.

Postlude

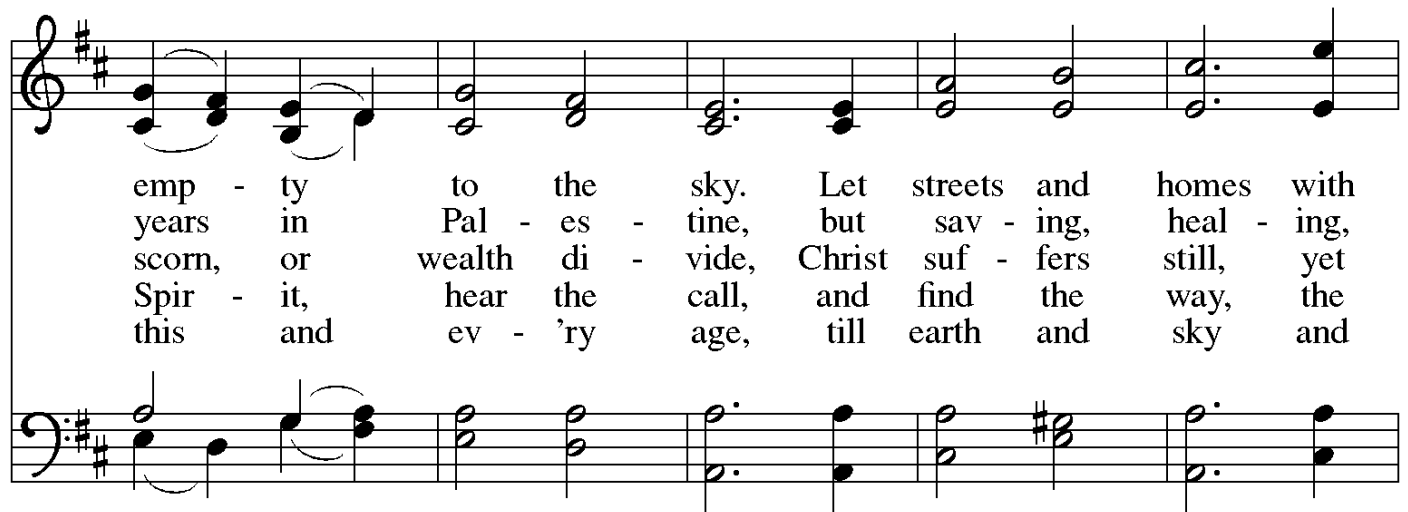
Andante alla Marcia
Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy

Hymn of the Day

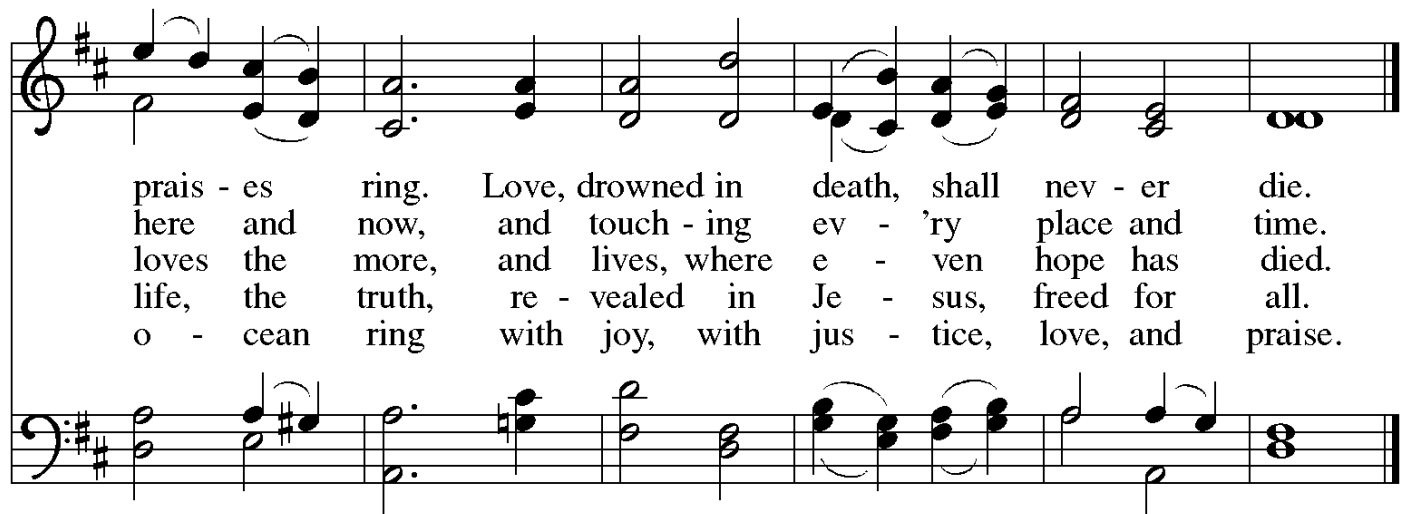
Christ Is Alive! Let Christians Sing, ELW 389



1 Christ is a - live! Let Chris - tians sing. The cross stands
 2 Christ is a - live! No long - er bound to dis - tant
 3 In ev - 'ry in - sult, rift, and war, where col - or,
 4 Wom - en and men, in age and youth, can feel the
 5 Christ is a - live, and comes to bring good news to



emp - ty to the sky. Let streets and homes with
 years in Pal - es - tine, but sav - ing, heal - ing,
 scorn, or wealth di - vide, Christ suf - fers still, yet
 Spir - it, hear the call, and find the way, the
 this and ev - 'ry age, till earth and sky and



prais - es ring. Love, drowned in death, shall nev - er die.
 here and now, and touch - ing ev - 'ry place and time.
 loves the more, and lives, where e - ven hope has died.
 life, the truth, re - vealed in Je - sus, freed for all.
 o - cean ring with joy, with jus - tice, love, and praise.

Text: Brian A. Wren, b. 1936

Music: TRURO, T. Williams, *Psalmody Evangelica*, 1789

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