

Worship Resource for Sunday April 26

For those who wish to have Worship at Home at their own pace (without Zoom)

This resource is for those who wish to Worship at Home in their own time. A separate resource is available of those who wish to join in with others using Zoom.

The service starts on page 3. First, let's get ready.

Preparing for Worship

Prepare your **meal** and your **space**.

Each week during the Easter season (which runs right up to Pentecost) we'll share our worship time together over a meal or snack.

Gathering around a computer or screen can feel 'less than holy'. These spaces are usually for work time or relaxing time. So, in order to make this an intentionally sacred space, here are a few ideas:

- Gather at your kitchen or dining table, with a laptop or tablet or a printout of this resource if you can. This allows you to participate with one another with space for your food and for you to write and colour. If you are unable to gather at a larger table, use a smaller, dedicated surface.
- In the middle of your table, place a candle and matches, your worry stone (see next page), your Star Word (see next page), a journal or paper to write on and something to write with.
- There is also a colouring in page. Print one of these out and have some colour pencils or textas ready. Throughout worship time, you will hear or read the word "heart" again and again. To focus on the heart of the matter, colour or doodle in a heart each time you hear the word "heart."
- During this time when we are not able to worship in our church building, you might like to keep this home worship space set up throughout this time to remind you of God's constant presence in our lives.

Your meal could be your breakfast or a light snack with a cuppa or juice. If it is warm, keep it covered as we won't start eating until part way through the service.

There are a number of songs which you may choose to listen to. You could take time now to click on the links so that they are ready to go (and so you don't need to wait for the ad to run during your time of worship)

Be Still, My Soul by Eclipse 6: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kqKVFYD8Obc>

On the Journey to Emmaus by Marty Haugen: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AXgpa4kiKWY>

Straight from the Heart by Bryan Adams: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ebtjgK8NNU>

Get Thru This by Tony Covay feat. Rai Jackson & Face: https://youtu.be/_pPYR0h-Oyo



Worry Stone



Throughout the Season of Easter, we invite you to use a “worry stone,” or we could call it a “heart stone” which is a stone you carry about with you to rub when you are feeling anxious or worried.

We encourage you to use your stone used in Easter services or find the one you took home at the beginning of Lent. Find some time to paint or draw a heart on it.

Your worry stone will remind you of the angel’s message, later repeated by Jesus, “Do not be afraid!”.

A Reminder about Star Words

At the beginning of the year during the season of Epiphany, we each received our own star. Each star has a different word. Each of us were invited to journey with that word all year long- to see where the word moves us in prayer, pushes or pulls us in faith, and how it opens our hearts to God’s call on our lives. Our hope is that you have been open to allowing God to speak to you through your word. You be challenged and stretched. God may be leading you to places you never expected through your star word! If you don’t have a Star Word, contact Linda (minister@athelstonechurch.org.au) who will draw one out for you.



Worship

*This service is adapted from resources from www.worshipdesignstudio.com/series by Dr. Marcia McFee.
Other sources are developed by Rev Linda Driver or acknowledged within the text below.*

9.30am *Gather at your table with your meal and all the elements needed for worship ready to go as we join together in Worship at Home.*

Spend Time

We continue with our Easter Season because Easter isn't just one day. It is the message of God's desire for us to live fully every day. The early church practiced their hope in this way:

*"Day by day, as they **spent much time together** in the temple, they **broke bread at home** and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, **praising God** and **having the goodwill** of all the people."
(Acts 2: 46-47a NRSV)*

We create a "temple" of worship in our hearts that connects us across boundaries, distance and time. But as we share this worship, we will stay connected. At the "heart of the matter," we are connected through the Spirit that makes us one in love.

Centering Our Hearts as One

We are going to centre our hearts as one to begin.

Let's take a deep breath together. *Breathe in slowly and deeply, then breathe out slowly.*

Place your hand on your heart and let's lightly tap together in a slow heartbeat rhythm. *Continue this light heartbeat tapping as you pray:*

Holy Living God,
Heartbeat of Creation,
help us to take this time to centre on you,
for you made us,
you gave us life, and you continue to be with us
every moment...

[wait a couple of beats]

every breath...

[wait a couple of beats]

every step.

[let the heartbeat tapping fade away]

Hear this assurance from God:

[sing to the tune of Amazing Grace... if you aren't comfortable singing it, you can say it]

Be still, O heart, you're not alone, your beat is shared with me.

Come now, and calm, and centre here, you're mine, secure and free.



Let's take another deep breath, making sure our shoulders and any tension we feel in our bodies is letting go with the breath.

[Pause to do so]

Let's take another one.

[Pause to do so]

Let us pick up our heart stone, sometimes called a "worry stone," and let our touch on its surface remind us that God's touch is within us, between us, and around us.

As close and real as this object is in our hands right now, is how close Love is to us always.

Let us imagine letting go of our worries for now into God's heart of love.

We offer a prayer song of letting go:

[sing to the tune of Amazing Grace... if you aren't comfortable singing it, you can say it]

**Into your care, we offer now,
our worries, fears and strife.**

**We turn to you and know you're near—
Your light, our love and life.**

Light candle

Light your candle now, *place it in a safe place* and set your heart worry stones next to it.

Break Bread

Blessing the Meal

We have gathered with food to nourish our bodies even as we nourish our souls together in worship. This is very much what our spiritual ancestors did as they gathered in those early days in houses. They would bring what they had and share with each other.

Let us pray:

Holy and Surprising God, we gather in your name,
invited by Jesus,
bound together with your Spirit,
in union with each other.

Feed our bodies and our spirits with your comforting presence so that we might be your comfort to others.

Bless this food and break open our hearts.

Bless this drink and pour out your love. Amen...

Let us begin to "break bread" (eat) while we "break open the Word" in our scriptures.

Enjoy your meal!



Listen:

You may like to listen to the song *Be Still, My Soul* by Eclipse 6:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kqKVFYD8Obc>

or read the lyrics:

Be Still My Soul

Be still my soul the Lord is on thy side
Bear patiently the cross of grief or pain
Leave to thy God to order and provide
In ev'ry change He faithful will remain
Be still my soul thy best thy heav'nly
Friend
Through thorny ways leads to a joyful
end

Be still my soul thy God doth undertake
To guide the future as He has the past
Thy hope thy confidence let nothing
shake
All now mysterious shall be bright at last
Be still my soul the waves and winds still
know
His voice who ruled them while He dwelt
below

Be still my soul the hour is hast'ning on
When we shall be forever with the Lord
When disappointment grief and fear are
gone
Sorrow forgot love's purest joys restored
Be still my soul when change and tears
are past
All safe and blessed we shall meet at last

Author: Kathrina von Schlegel; Translator: Jane Borthwick (1855)
Tune: FINLANDIA © Words: Public Domain

Breaking Open the Word with Scripture

We're going to share a story today about another meal that Jesus attended. Because it happened in an unexpected way, listen for how people didn't recognize him at first. It took sitting down to the table for people to realize that Christ was with them still. Every time we gather around a table, we can recognize that Christ is with us, inside each one of us every time we love each other by sharing food together.

Here is how the story of Jesus' surprise visit on the road and at the dinner happened. Imagine yourself walking down the road and a stranger comes along...



Read out loud (Luke 24:13-35):

On that same day, two disciples were traveling to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. They were talking to each other about everything that had happened. While they were discussing these things, Jesus himself arrived and joined them on their journey. They were prevented from recognizing him.

He said to them, "What are you talking about as you walk along?" They stopped, their faces downcast.

The one named Cleopas replied, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who is unaware of the things that have taken place there over the last few days?"

He said to them, "What things?"

They said to him, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth. Because of his powerful deeds and words, he was recognized by God and all the people as a prophet. But our chief priests and our leaders handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him. We had hoped he was the one who would redeem Israel. All these things happened three days ago. But there's more: Some women from our group have left us stunned. They went to the tomb early this morning and didn't find his body. They came to us saying that they had even seen a vision of angels who told them he is alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found things just as the women said. They didn't see him."

Then Jesus said to them, "You foolish people! Your dull minds keep you from believing all that the prophets talked about. Wasn't it necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and then enter into his glory?" Then he interpreted for them the things written about himself in all the scriptures, starting with Moses and going through all the Prophets.

When they came to Emmaus, he acted as if he was going on ahead. But they urged him, saying, "Stay with us. It's nearly evening, and the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them. After he took his seat at the table with them, he took the bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he disappeared from their sight. They said to each other, "Weren't our hearts on fire when he spoke to us along the road and when he explained the scriptures for us?"

They got up right then and returned to Jerusalem. They found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying to each other, "The Lord really has risen! He appeared to Simon!" Then the two disciples described what had happened along the road and how Jesus was made known to them as he broke the bread. - Luke 24:13-35 (Common English Bible CEV)

This is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God



Listen

You may like to listen to *On the Journey to Emmaus* by Marty Haugen

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AXqpa4kiKWY>

while looking at this picture “*Supper at Emmaus*” by Caravaggio



Supper at Emmaus Date: 1601 Artist: Caravaggio, Michelangelo Merisi da, 1573-1610

Reflection

Jesus' table ministry was a particular way that he showed and shared a depth of love unseen in his time. He ate and spent time with those considered unworthy of his attention. Even in his post-resurrection appearances, it was in the breaking of bread that he was “recognized”—perhaps because so many times in his ministry, it was at tables that he invited people to open up and share “straight from the heart”—getting right to the heart of the matter. As we gather this day, we remember that, at the heart, his message was unconditional love. To offer ourselves “straight from the heart” is the seed he planted in us, and this is the growth we must continue to nurture.

Today we are going to invite you to share straight from your heart..

The lyrics from Marty Haugen's song:

- “He opens our stories and he opens our eyes.”
- “So we begged him, “Stay with us and grant us your word.”
- “And his words burn within us - let none be ignored –“

lead us toward something that has blessed us this year... our star words...



These Words have spoken to us individually in surprising ways. We are only into the 4th month of the year (even though it feels way longer) and yet our words have already had quite an impact. This morning we are going to hear from a number of people who have been asked to share how their star words have spoken to their hearts so far this year..

Jeff Dry:

My STAR WORD was Endurance. The dictionary meanings are as follows:

- the ability to endure an unpleasant or difficult process or situation without giving way.
- the ability to withstand hardship or adversity especially: the ability to sustain a prolonged stressful effort or activity

Who knew when the word was plucked out of the hat how prophetic it was going to be? Given the last few months I could only wish that we all chose this word as this is what we have all needed over this period.

Linda has asked us to talk about how our star word has spoken to our heart so far this year.

In reflecting on my own star word I went to the Bible and found this verse

Thessalonians 1:3 New International Version (NIV):

We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Hope almost always accompanies endurance.

I have found that 'hope' through so many things but being able to share with my church community through these worship services, being able to connect through the regular phone calls and Zoom meetings and knowing that we are praying and caring for one another gives me hope.

This virus is forcing me to see that we are not running a sprint race but it is more like a marathon. Athletes need endurance to compete in a marathon just as we need endurance to cope with what life is about now.

I pray that my faith has given me hope and I know that things will get better but we need to hang in there and I know I will be able to endure and not give up.

I am so grateful for this word as it has been a constant motivation for me and Jeanine during this period.

Vicki Burford:

Greetings to all in my church family. My star word is PLENTY. When I first read it, my immediate thought was that I have so many things to be thankful for. PLENTY of things to be thankful for. During this virus time, I can still find PLENTY of things to be thankful for. My prayers for all in our church family. With lots of love to each and every one of you from Vicki



Pat Howshild:

My word was "self control". I did think about this and on occasions could see I could make some changes. Now that we have the present situation there is a greater need for self control. My girls were very definite about not going to shops at any time. I really miss this little outing but have been sensible.

Nola Pearce:

When I saw my Star Word "**Perseverance**" I laughed. Perseverance is something that I struggle with every day. I am such a butterfly. I flit from job to job, from project to project, leaving a trail of unfinished jobs, projects and equipment behind me. My pile of unfinished craft projects is so vast I don't dare get them out to look at them all at once, and definitely not count them.

I have found my Star word "**Perseverance**" encouraging. I look at it frequently and keep reminding myself "just keep going Nola. You can do this"

Last week I saw an interview featuring Justin Langer, the Australian Cricket Coach. One quote from Justin was a stand out for me.

"The pain of discipline is nothing compared to the pain of disappointment."

I would add to that. "The pain of self discipline is **nothing** compared to the pain of disappointment, regret, guilt and shame."

Thank you Linda for engaging us with our own special Star words. I am finding my word challenging, encouraging and productive.

Respond

We invite you to spend time now reflecting on your own star word: How has Jesus opened your eyes to something or how has that word burned within you... if at all? Spend some time writing in your journal, then share with those at your table about this. If you are by yourself, make a point of calling someone after the service and letting them know about your star word experience so far.

Breaking Open Our Hearts with Prayer

It is difficult in this moment not to be near some of the people we love and might be worried about. Take a moment and write down the names of people you wish were right there next to you at your table today. As we name them, they are present with us in our hearts.

We specifically pray:

- For health workers and other essential community service providers who continue to provide vital care and support to the most vulnerable.
- Prayers for thanksgiving for the acts of kindness, big and small, that we continue to witness every day and for which we are immensely thankful.
- On Break the Silence Sunday, we pray for the survivors of rape and sexual assault, and those currently in situations where they experience these horrific acts.



- Current and past members of the Australian Defence Force, who served or are serving now, at home and abroad, their families and descendants - and all who carry the scars of their service in body, mind and spirit.
- Uniting Church Chaplains in Navy, Army and Air Force who support people of faith or no faith at all.
- For our brothers and sisters in the Pacific as they face the devastating effects of Cyclone Harold and respond to the Coronavirus pandemic.
- For our UCA partner churches in Asia, Africa and the Pacific who are caring for their COVID-19 affected communities.
- For Jewish and Armenian communities around the world who are this week remembering the horrors of genocide committed against them.

We also want to call to mind the people we cannot name, whose names we do not know. But we know they need our prayers and God’s comfort.

This list could be read by several voices from your table

For those who have lost loved ones

For those who are feeling alone and isolated

For those who are sick and recovering

For those who are helping and are so very tired

For those who are caring for loved ones who are sick at home

For those who are struggling to find friends, food, and comfort

For those who are caring for persons in medical care

For those who are afraid

[add other categories that come to mind]

For those who are separated from loved ones

Let us take another breath of Spirit as we say “Amen” together.

We know that God sends out our prayers and the Spirit, Breath of God, is blowing from within us outward, as a Spirit of Compassion and Presence.

Offering

All that we are, and all that we have is first a gift from God. Our offering to God is from the fullness of all we have received, from the depth of our hearts. You may wish to consider how you can use the gifts God has given to you at this time: gifts of kindness and compassion, gifts of skills and knowledge, gifts of money and time, gifts of love and connection. Let us give of our offering with grateful hearts.

Pray: Lord bless all we give so that it might be used for the good of all. Amen

Adapted from The Centre for Music Liturgy and the Arts from “Worship in Times of Isolation”



Praise God!

It is time to praise God and raise our endorphin levels to improve our heart-health, both physically and spiritually! So whether your “dance” is in your bed, clapping in your chair, or moving all over the living room, it’s time for the Easter Season Dance Party! If you are going to dance standing up, go ahead and get ready.

Let’s start with this affirmation:

**We know Jesus is present among us even in this very home.
We will not let fear be louder than love
but with glad hearts and rejoicing souls, we will sing God’s praise
for we are Easter People!
Let’s choose to dance and sing “Straight from the Heart!”**

Click here to listen, sing and sway along with Bryan Adams “Straight from the Heart”.

Play this link if you are able: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ebtjgK8NNU>

Have Goodwill - Spread Joy

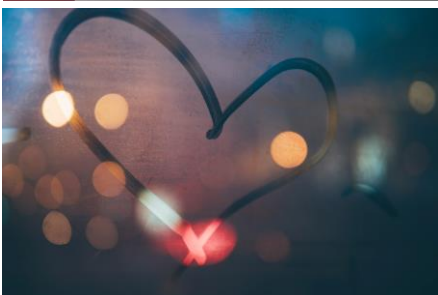
That was great! I hope you feel some good vibes right now. So while we have our energy up, let’s decide to send some energy out to the world that needs it! What message does the world need? Perhaps you will decide to create a way to let more and more people know the message of Christ, “You are not alone. I am here. I love you straight from the heart.”

What can we do to create more love in our household, in our family, in our relationships with those we cannot be with right now? How can we offer love to those who are working so hard right now? How can we offer love to those who feeling short on love, peace or comfort? We encourage you to make your own plan today.

Feast of Love, Straight from the Heart



You could find a box or shopping bag to collect food donations for the next few weeks. Use markers or paints to decorate it with symbols of love. Include messages and intentions like “straight from the heart” or “feast of love.” Go through your pantry and take out things you wish to donate. The next time you go to the supermarket, intentionally purchase items to add to your food donation collection. When you place any items in the box/bag, say a prayer of thank for those that prepared it, and a prayer of goodwill for those who will eat it.



Our donations will go to Uniting Communities, care of Brenton Summers. Brenton says:

“For many years now, the Athelstone Uniting Church congregation has been a great supporter of the Uniting Communities Eastern Services Branch Emergency Relief program through its donation of food items.

One of the casualties of not meeting as a Church family due to the Covid-19 restrictions, has been the loss of those food donations.

Since the commencement of the Covid-19 pandemic, many people/families within our community have suffered a reduction or a total loss of their income due to restrictions put in place, resulting in the number of people seeking assistance increasing dramatically.

At the moment, I am not able to provide counselling assistance as in the past, but I have been in regular contact with the manager at Uniting Communities to keep in touch. Although restricted services can only be provided now, the requests for food assistance has increased and the need for food donations remains.

If you wish to donate any food items, I can either collect them from your front door or they can be left on my front door step. Cash donations will also be received with great thanks.

Some good news: This week I was able to secure a \$1,000.00 donation from The Rotary Club of Morialta for the emergency relief program. This money will be used to purchase Coles “food vouchers” which can be issued to those in need and will provide the opportunity for those people to select food items of their choice from Coles in addition to receiving a food parcel.

Benediction

(based on Psalm 16)

As we close this time together, remember:

God is always with you. No matter what you face, no matter what trials or hardships come your way, God is right beside you, offering love straight from the heart, guiding and directing your path.

So, acknowledge your fear and your worry and know it is as true and holy as any feeling, including joy and hope and love.

Take heart! This is the heart of the matter.

Let the people say, **Amen!**

We'll get through this!

Let's finish by listening to this new song: *Get Thru This* from Tony Covay feat. Rai Jackson & Face. Time for more dancing? <https://youtu.be/pPYR0h-Oyo>

Spreading Joy

For those of you who are on social media, please take a photo of your lit candle and post it online.

#churchconnected #churchscattered #churchgathered



Further Worship Ideas

Here are some more ways that you can connect with God's Word:

- The Synod of South Australia has published a full list of online congregations and resources. <https://sa.uca.org.au/documents/resources-board/Being-the-Church-in-Ungathered-Times.pdf>
- The Assembly are live-streaming services: <https://assembly.uca.org.au/news/item/3158-livestreaming-on-assembly-platforms>
- Morialta Uniting Church have a weekly worship service on YouTube. Click here for more information: <http://www.morialtauca.org.au/virtual-church/>
- Pilgrim Uniting Church Services for 9.30am and 11am are now live streamed here: <https://pilgrim.org.au/services/index.php>
- Tune in to radio station 1079 Life *Together on Life*, Sunday 10am. Join 1079 Life's Kit for music and a message or two from great local pastors each Sunday. <https://1079life.com/>
- Songs of Praise – a TV show with inspiring hymns and songs, together with uplifting stories of faith from around the UK and beyond is available on ABC TV and ABC iview
Here is the Easter Sunday program: <https://iview.abc.net.au/show/songs-of-praise-easter-sunday>
- "A Sermon For Every Sunday" website has produced a worship service outline to use with others at home. Click here for a link to the resource. It also includes a link to sermons to listen to: <https://mailchi.mp/asermonforeverysunday/this-weeks-sermon-1744145?e=e9aed2be77>

Worship and other Creative Ideas for Children and Families

- The Worshipping with Children Ministry site has newly posted resources for Children's worship at home. <https://worshippingwithchildren.blogspot.com/2020/04/worshiping-at-home-on-april-19-2020.html>
- Have you gone for a bear hunt in the neighbourhood yet? Can you pray for the homes that you pass as you go?

