

Worship Resource for Sunday May 24

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 below), 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."
- **For this week you should have received resources in your creative space care pack. This week we can make a stained glass 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).

For everyone born - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tqpdZq6TAfo>

Open the eyes of my heart - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wutmEjdbedE>

Celebrate the Lord of Love - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C-bMTrk1B04>



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!”.



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 have been celebrating Easter for an entire season and next week, Pentecost, is the last week of the Easter Season. But just like Jesus has been reminding his disciples since the resurrection, this is not the end of his presence with the world, but the beginning of how we will carry his heart within ours. And so it is. As we gather together today, and every time that we gather together—physically, virtually, in small groups or simply together in our memory of one another, Christ is still with us::

*“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 stones next to it (*not too far away!*). As we do this let's listen to the song 'For everyone born' - *Play this link if you are able*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tqpdZq6TAfo>

Verse 1

For everyone born a place at the table
For everyone born clean water and bread
A shelter a space a safe place for growing
For everyone born a star overhead

Chorus

And God will delight when we are creators
Of justice and joy compassion and peace
Yes God will delight when we are creators
Of justice justice and joy

Verse 2

For young and for old a place at the table
A voice to be heard a part in the song
The hands of a child in hands that are wrinkled
For young and for old the right to belong



Verse 3

For everyone born a place at the table
To live without fear and simply to be
To work to speak out to witness and worship
For everyone born the right to be free

Shirley Erena Murray

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Break Bread

Blessing the Meal

We are witnesses to the power of drawing together for the sustenance that our bodies and our hearts need. So let us bless our meal by praying this “repeat after me prayer”... God, our Host
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!

Breaking Open the Word with Scripture

Today we commemorate the moment when the disciples witnessed Jesus’ leaving this physical world. He had spent some quality time with them, helping them understand more about their faith and the continued mission that they must now carry on in the world. He asked them to encourage people to a change of heart—to believe in hope and life and love that was his message on earth. As we often do when we take our leave from someone we love, Jesus blessed his followers.

Bible reading 1 - Luke 24: 44-53

Jesus said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the Law from Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures. He said to them, “This is what is written: the Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and a change of heart and life for the forgiveness of sins must be preached in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. Look, I’m sending to you what my [Abba, God] promised, but you are to stay in the city until you have been furnished with heavenly power.”



He led them out as far as Bethany, where he lifted his hands and blessed them. As he blessed them, he left them and was taken up to heaven. They worshipped him and returned to Jerusalem overwhelmed with joy. And they were continuously in the temple praising God. - Luke 24: 44-53

We have been reading some of the apostle's letters that circulated among the early churches. They read these letters as they gathered for meals, just as we have been doing. Here is an excerpt from a letter sent to an early Christian community. We can imagine it being written for us, as a community that needs prayers, that needs a spirit of wisdom.

Bible reading 2- Ephesians 1: 15-23

Since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people, this is the reason that I don't stop giving thanks to God for you when I remember you in my prayers. I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Sovereign of glory, will give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation that makes God known to you. I pray that the eyes of your heart will have enough light to see what is the hope of God's call, what is the richness of God's glorious inheritance among believers, and what is the overwhelming greatness of God's power that is working among us believers. This power is conferred by the energy of God's powerful strength. God's power was at work in Christ when God raised him from the dead and sat him at God's right side in the heavens, far above every ruler and authority and power and angelic power, any power that might be named not only now but in the future. God put everything under Christ's feet and made him head of everything in the church, which is his body. His body, the church, is the fullness of Christ, who fills everything in every way. - Ephesians 1: 15-23

To be the "body of Christ" as the church is to see the world through the eyes of Jesus—to see through the eyes of love. As Christ's body here on earth, we try to create the same conditions of love that he did while he was here on earth. We hope that "the eyes of our hearts" can be continually opened, as the disciples' were that day of Jesus' ascension, so that we can be the best representation of his love here on earth. Perhaps we can see "ascension" with Christ as an "elevation" or "heightening" of our gratitude and of our commitment to do good in the world.

Action Response – Reflection

What does it mean to you to look through the eyes of your heart?

I invite you to reflect now on what you think about when you wake up in the morning..

Do you lay in bed and begin to make an endless list of things you hope to accomplish for the day?

Do you hit the snooze button a few times to try and get some more sleep?

Maybe you get up the moment you wake and head straight to the kitchen to make coffee?

How ever you begin your day, have you ever considered starting with gratitude? It might sound strange, but what if we started out our days opening the eyes of our hearts and thanking God in prayer or song or journaling about the things we are grateful for? Especially on the days when we might not feel like being grateful or thankful. Starting our day with thankfulness and gratitude can change our attitudes, our outlook and how we share love with those around us.



Could we begin to see things differently with new eyes of gratitude? How do we see things around us in a heightened way? When our level of love goes up, our level of appreciation and gratitude goes up as well. Not just in our own lives but how does a renewed love and gratitude flow from us and help us to create the same conditions of love that Jesus did while on Earth? How can we share our love and make Jesus present in our lives and to the people we connect with?

Breaking Open our Lives with Discussion

Our theme scripture says, “they ate their food with glad and generous hearts.” One way we can be glad and generous is to share about how we are finding strength, hope, love and peace in these days. This is part of “breaking bread” with each other as we break open our hearts to one another as well. Let’s share today about a new way of seeing with our hearts, with an eye of heightened gratitude.

What are you grateful for at this moment?

What do you want to “elevate” in your commitment to make the world a better place?

Let’s take some time at our tables to talk or journal about these questions.

You might like to complete this sentence, “I have an elevated sense of gratitude for _____.”

Breaking Open Our Hearts with Prayer

As we prepare let’s listen to our next song ‘Open the eyes of my heart’

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

Open the eyes of my heart Lord

Open the eyes of my heart

I want to see You

I want to see You

To see You high and lifted up

Shining in the light of Your glory

Pour out Your power and love

As we sing holy holy holy

Holy holy holy

Holy holy holy

Holy holy holy

I want to see You

Paul Baloche

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We are going to spend some time in prayer for others.

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.

As we continue to pray, hold out your empty hands

Lord, we pray for those we know – and those we don't know who...

- ... have lost loved ones
- For those who are sick and for those who are recovering
- For those who are caring for loved ones who are sick at home
- For those who are caring for persons in medical care
- For those who are separated from loved ones
- For those who are feeling alone and isolated
- For teachers, parents and students trying to make sense of the difficult circumstances they are in
- For those who are helping in so many ways and are so very tired
- For those who are struggling to find friends, food, and comfort
- For those who are not safe in their own homes
- For those who are afraid
- For ourselves.

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

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 clap and
let our hearts be free from trouble even for just this moment!”**

Let's sing, get our bodies moving and clap along with 'Celebrate the Lord of Love'

Play this link if you are able <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C-bMTrk1B04>



Celebrate The Lord Of Love

Chorus

Trade your heavy heart for a heart of joy
Celebrate what God has done
Join the song of praise as we gather here
Celebrate the Lord of Love
Jesus is our Lord He is reigning here
We declare His kingdom's come
Darkness has to flee in His holy light
Celebrate the Lord of Love

Verse

All creation sings hear the oceans roar
Let the earth proclaim that Christ is Lord

Ed Kerr | Paul Baloche

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Have Goodwill - Spread Joy

In previous weeks we have suggested:

- making heart stones to give away,
- offering support to neighbours by using one of our Self Isolation postcards (download here: <https://athelstonechurch.org.au/members-2/forms/>)
- and giving to the Uniting Communities Eastern Services Emergency Relief Food Appeal. Please continue to gather food and other grocery donations. Brenton Summers can either collect them from your front door or they can be left on his front doorstep. Cash donations will also be received with great thanks. Thank you to all those who have donated goods and cash so far. You have been extraordinarily generous! A wonderful witness of love overflowing.

Here's another idea: **Stained glass hearts**

You will have received resources (if you haven't let us know) for this week in your creative space care pack.

This week we can make a stained glass heart.

You will have a heart outline on black card and coloured cellophane*. You will also need scissors and sticky tape for this activity.

Cut out the heart, the inside as well, so that you have a black outline of a heart. Then use the cellophane, cut the pieces smaller as desired, and use the sticky tape to stick the cellophane to the edge of the heart and pieces together to create a stained glass look.

Once completed you can hang your heart in a window so that the sun shines through as a reminder to look at the world with the eyes of our hearts.

(*If you don't have these items, find some tissue paper or cellophane and black or dark card.)

(If you have the resources to make extras, it would be great to hang some in the church windows to bring a smile to our neighbours and Medical HQ folk!)



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"

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, ready to hold you, to be a rock for you, 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!**

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 Centre for Music Liturgy and the Arts has a **collection of Resources** available here: <https://www.cmla.org.au/resources/worship-in-times-of-isolation/>

Including **Prayers, Poems and Guided Meditations** and

Worship with your backyard: <https://www.cmla.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Worship-With-Your-Backyard.pdf>

Worship on the sofa: <https://www.cmla.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Sofa.pdf>

- The Assembly are **live-streaming services:** <https://assembly.uca.org.au/news/item/3158-livestreaming-on-assembly-platforms>
- 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>

Worship and other Creative Ideas for Children and Families

- The Worshipping with Children Ministry site has resources for Children's worship at home. <https://worshippingwithchildren.blogspot.com/2020/04/worshipping-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?

