

Worship Resource for Sunday May 10

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."
- **This week you will also need** an empty cup or glass and an empty plate. Place this on a white or multi-coloured cloth or serviette. Cover the cup/glass and plate with another serviette or tissue.
- 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).

1. *Nothing Can Trouble (Nade te Turbe)* Taize Community: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=go1-BoDD7CI>
2. *Jesus is the Rock* by Phil Driscoll <https://youtu.be/Gyzm4mWqYgE>

Or *Jesus is the Rock* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pYt6VYcPMTM>

3. *Now May the Peace of the Lord be With You* by Graham Kendrick. This is at the end of the recording of the TV special, *Virtual Prom Praise 2020 - A Festival of Hope*: <https://youtu.be/eKN011ExApQ> Play just from 1:19:50 until 1:23:40



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 continue with our Easter Season because Easter isn't just one day. Today we hear Jesus say "do not let your hearts be troubled." The early church knew that Christ went before them to prepare a place and so they prepared a place for each other 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 stones next to it (*not too far away!*).

Break Bread

Blessing the Meal

When we listen to the Gospel text today, we will hear images of the house that God has prepared for all. Jesus says that when we remember him and know him in our hearts, we know God. As we sit around this meal in our houses, because we ask Jesus to be with us, we sit in that house of God in Spirit with all others as well. Let us pray:

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

The Psalm today mentions something we have been using throughout this Easter Season—our rocks. If you have a hand free, hold on to your rock now.

God is described many times in the Bible as a rock—as something that is a solid foundation and a shelter in times of distress. Hear the trust of the writer even as hard times are upon them.

*I take refuge in you, Lord.
Please never let me be put to shame.
Rescue me by your righteousness!
Listen closely to me!
Deliver me quickly;
be a rock that protects me;
be a strong fortress that saves me!
You are definitely my rock and my
fortress.
Guide me and lead me for the sake of
your good name!*

*Get me out of this net that's been set for
me
because you are my protective
fortress.
I entrust my spirit into your hands;
you, Lord, God of faithfulness—
you have saved me.
My future is in your hands.
Don't hand me over to my enemies,
to all who are out to get me!
Shine your face on your servant;
save me by your faithful love!*

- Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16 (Common English Bible CEV)

Reflection 1

Psalm 31 is a psalm of lament, and a prayer for help. There is a sense of trust and hope in the Lord who is firm and secure in the midst of trouble and turmoil.

It seems, in Australia, that the worst of our health crisis has passed, for the moment at least. However, the future remains uncertain.

As the social restrictions are gradually lifted over the next few weeks and months, what will happen??

Will this coronavirus spread again?

What might it mean for workplaces, schools, leisure activities?

How do we rebuild our economy?

What lasting effects will this have on our society?

And what about the rest of the world, where the effects of this coronavirus continue to devastate?

In all these concerns, we find trust and hope in God who is firm and secure. God is faithful in all things, and to God we entrust our lives and our future. Our times are indeed in God's hands, and we find strength and security in God's love.

Rev Cheryl Wilson
Ascot Park Community Uniting Church



Our future is in the hands of Love, in the heart of God. Jesus, as God-in-the-flesh, helps us to know that we are in the house and family of God. He called God “Abba”—in intimate name that a child would call a Parent in the language Jesus spoke. God was not distant, but a Parent, a Father, who loves tenderly, protects faithfully, and wants us to know intimately. Hear Jesus comfort the disciples, who are distressed at the thought of living life without him:

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going.”

Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?”

Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.”

Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.”

Jesus answered: “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves. Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

- John 14: 1-14 (NIV).

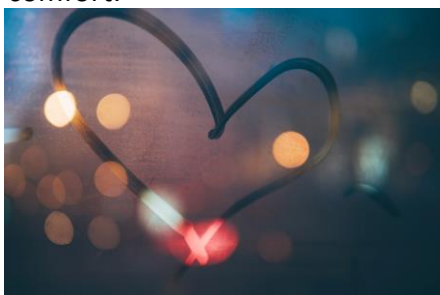
This is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God

Reflection 2

Jesus himself cried out to God. He used words from the Hebrew scriptures - his holy texts, and what we read today, “into your hands I commit my spirit.”

This is the kind of relationship with God that he wanted us to have. To be able to let go of our need to control the future, our anxiety about what is going to happen, which we cannot know right now, and let God comfort us.

When I (Linda) think of a loving healthy relationship between a child and their Parent, I picture outstretched arms offering comfort and protection. When a child is anxious or afraid, sick or in pain, that reassuring familiar cuddle of a parent brings immeasurable healing. Jesus uses the same language when talking about his Father in heaven. He offers us the same loving intimate relationship. It is not a perfect metaphor, as not all parents are perfect.. not all parents know how to offer love and comfort.



We can trust God – the one who protects us, the one who holds our future in his hands. Jesus reminded his disciples, and he reminds us, to trust in God when our hearts are troubled.

It is ok to be troubled, but we can also know that even while our minds may be working overtime, our hearts can rest assured in God’s love.

Steadfast love is what God shows and what we are called to offer each other.

In this way, we also are the presence of God, through Christ, so that others may know this comfort of the Divine One.

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. In this week’s scripture, we are invited to trust in God, the rock, and to take a break from worry.

Are you finding it difficult to let go of worry, to take a break?

What have you witnessed this week that helped you feel an ongoing and steadfast love that was comforting?

Or if you can’t think of something from this week, what do you have in your memory as something or someone that offered comfort?

As it is Mother’s Day, perhaps you have a special memory of when your Mother or another special person in your life offered you comfort when you needed it.

You might like to complete this sentence, “I experience comfort (in/when/where) _____.”

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

Listen / Sing: Nothing Can Trouble

The Taize Community sing “Nothing Can Trouble”. Singing these words repeated can help us feel a sense of comfort and reassurance.

Let’s listen – or sing along. *Play this link if you are able:* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=go1-BoDD7CI>

THE PEACE

Share as sign of peace with those around you – or perhaps you might like to send a text to someone!

Exchange a sign of the peace by using a nod or hands-together ‘namaste’-style gesture, with words such as ‘Christ’s peace be with you,’ ‘the peace of God’ or simply ‘Peace’ or ‘Shalom’.



Empty Hands

As we gather separately, we miss sharing together face-to-face in fellowship, we miss singing with our music team, we miss praying together, and we miss participating in the blessing of Communion - a very powerful and significant remembering of our physical and spiritual connection with Christ and one another as Christ's body. However, in this Easter Season we celebrate how the risen Christ is with us, and we affirm this in a Liturgy of empty hands.

*If you have more than one in your household, have one person read out these words and the others join in with the words in **Bold**.*

Let's begin by uncovering our cup and plate.

This earth is not our earth.

This is God's earth.

This time is not my time.

This is God's time.

This table is not my table.

This is God's table.

God's earth, God's time, God's table...

It is God our Host who provides this feast of place and time and community. Provision is already made for us all to be part of God's story. God longs for us to be at home with God and one another.

Place your hand on the table or the wall, set your feet on the floor. Recognise these spaces as being of God and for God for everything we have comes from the One source of all that is.

In this time, we rededicate ourselves and our surroundings for God's good purposes.

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Holy God, we praise you.

Let the heavens be joyful,
and the earth be glad.

We bless you for creating the whole world,
for your promises to your people Israel,
and for the life we know in Jesus Christ your Son.



Born of Mary, he shares our life.
Eating with sinners, he welcomes us.
Leading his followers, he guides us.
Dying on the cross, he rescues us.
Risen from the dead, he gives new life.

And so we praise
with the faithful of every time and place,
joining with choirs of angels and the whole creation
in the eternal hymn:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

We remember:

On the night of his betrayal, the Lord Jesus, took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and said:
Take, eat. This is my body, given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.

In the same way he took the cup, saying:
This cup is the new covenant sealed in my blood, shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.
Whenever you drink it, do this in remembrance of me.

Look at your empty plate

In this empty plate we choose to see the world's hunger.
We remember that millions of people, this day, lack bread for Communion, bread for breakfast, bread for life.
We acknowledge that we ourselves hunger, this day, in ways that no earthly bread can satisfy.

Hospitable God,
meet us in our unmet hungers – and help us to put our abundance at the service of the poor.

Look at your empty cup

In this empty cup, we choose to see the world's thirst.
We remember that millions of people, this day, lack wine for Communion, fruit for juicing, water for life.
We acknowledge that we ourselves thirst, this day, in ways that no earthly cup can quench.

Hospitable God, meet us in our unmet thirsts – and help us to put our fullness at the service of the empty.

For Jesus said: 'Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.'
(Matthew 5:6) **In the name of Christ, Amen.**



Pour out the Holy Spirit on this empty plate and this empty cup,
that they may be for us – even in their emptiness – the body and blood of Christ
so that we may take his Life into our lives,
and be taken and blessed, broken and given for the world.

Lift up your empty plate

It is Christ who is the bread of life,
Who satisfies the hungry heart.

Lift up your empty cup

It is Christ who is the cup of hope,
Who revives the thirsty.

Place your cup and plate on the table

The gifts of God
for the people of God.

Hold out your empty hands

In faith and hope, we hold out our empty hands...
**In these empty vessels and in our empty hands,
we celebrate the mystery and wonder of the empty tomb.**

In our hands and in our hearts, we leave space for resurrection, for new life, for new meaning.
We hold the sorrows, prayers and hopes of the world before You, O God.
May Your Spirit flow among us and beyond us, drawing us into loving and caring for Your world.
Amen

Rev Amelia Koh Butler: *The Sacrament of Empty Hands*
<https://ameliakoh-butler.blogspot.com/p/the-sacrament-of-empty-hands.html>

Breaking Open Our Hearts with Prayer

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.

On this Mother's Day, we give thanks for mothers and other special people in our lives who have nurtured and loved us, comforted and protected us, helping us become who we are called to be. We grieve for those who cannot be with their Mums today, or those who did not have the gift of a healthy relationship with their Mum.

We give thanks for the joy of parenting and pray especially for those we know who are expecting a child. We grieve with those who have not been able to have children of their own or who have lost a child. For all those who find Mother's Day difficult, Lord, bring them comfort.

Gathering our prayers and praises into one, let us pray as our Saviour taught us:

**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.**

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.

Prayer Wall

A reminder that last week we suggested you might like to gather your written prayers and create a prayer wall – perhaps gathering your notes into the shape of a heart, or writing on heart shaped pieces of paper. Spend a little time at your prayer wall each day. Continue to add to the wall, slowly forming a large heart in which you hold all of these prayers.



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 Phil Driscoll as he sings “Jesus is the Rock.”

Play this link if you are able: <https://youtu.be/Gyzm4mWqYgE>

Or you might remember this song with actions, “Jesus is the Rock” Together in Song #669

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pYt6VYcPMtM>

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. My heart is overflowing with love for you.”

What can we do to create more well-being in our household, in our family, in our relationships with those we cannot be with right now? How can we offer abundance to those who are working so hard right now? How can we offer abundance to those who feeling short on calm?

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. If you live in the Campbelltown area, 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: **GodBoxes**.

Athelstone folk, do you remember last year when we had our unBusy series? We made GodBoxes. Do you still have yours?

If you don't have a GodBox, you could make one... find an empty tissue box or a noodle box or similar and decorate it with hearts.

Then write down any anxieties you have that feel too big to handle, that feel overwhelming. Or write down those things you can't figure out quite yet, such as a problem you don't know what to do about at the moment. Place it in the box and hand it over to God. Use your GodBox to hold your worries and fears, those things that are weighing you down. Letting go of them for just a while can often help free our minds to discover a new way to look at it.

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!**

Peace

Let's end with Graham Kendrick singing a blessing from the concert, Virtual Prom Praise 2020 - A Festival of Hope. *Now May the Peace of the Lord be With You*

<https://youtu.be/eKN0I1ExApQ> Go to 1:19:50 until 1:23:40

Later, you might like to watch the whole festival.



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?

