

# Worship Resource for Sunday May 3

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), a journal or paper to write on and something to write with.
- **This week you will also need** a glass full to the brim with water into which you can drop your worry stones. Please the glass in a larger bowl to contain the splashed water. If you are worried about the paint or marker on your stones coming in contact with water, you can use different, plain stones or marbles or whatever you have on hand.
- 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).

*Psalm 23* by Stuart Townend: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pN4tPkX0MG0>

*Overflow* by TobyMac: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TJ5eoPIJoQ0>

## 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](http://www.worshipdesignstudio.com/series) by Dr. Marcia McFee and a weekly worship resource by Rev Cheryl Wilson. 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. We have an abundance of days to celebrate new life. The early church shared the abundance they had 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)

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.

## Break Bread

Blessing the Meal

Today we will speak of the pastures of well-being that Christ, the Shepherd, desires for the flock. Let us give thanks for the well-being of being together and the abundance of our table. Let us pray:

Shepherding 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!**

Breaking Open the Word with Scripture

Jesus used the metaphor of a shepherd several times in his ministry. We will hear a song using the most famous instance from Psalm 23 later in our worship. In this passage from the Gospel of John, the sheep know that the Shepherd really cares about them and offers what they need—good, abundant, green pastures to eat in. They recognise this Shepherd who takes care of them as they hear his voice.



*I assure you that whoever doesn't enter into the sheep pen through the gate but climbs over the wall is a thief and an outlaw. The one who enters through the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The guard at the gate opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. Whenever he has gathered all of his sheep, he goes before them and they follow him, because they know his voice. They won't follow a stranger but will run away because they don't know the stranger's voice." Those who heard Jesus use this analogy didn't understand what he was saying.*

*So Jesus spoke again, "I assure you that I am the gate of the sheep. All who came before me were thieves and outlaws, but the sheep didn't listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief enters only to steal, kill, and destroy. I came so that they could have life—indeed, so that they could live life to the fullest.*

- John 10: 1-10 (Common English Bible CEV)

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

### Reflection 1

Life – living life to the fullest..

What does living life to the fullest look like when life is so very different right now?

Let's first look at what Jesus might have meant by this expression, *living life to the fullest*.

Back in 2012, this passage was part of the inspiration behind the theme that Reverend Professor Andrew Dutney chose while he was President of the Uniting Church. This is what Andrew said about this passage:

““Life Overflowing” is the theme for the thirteenth Assembly of the Uniting Church (July 2012).

The expression “life overflowing” is drawn from John 10:10: variously translated,

*“I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly”* (NRSV),

*“I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full”* (NIV),

*“My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life”* (NLT).

The tricky word to translate is *perisson* which, used adverbially as it is here means something like: over and above, more than necessary, to excess.

“Abundantly” is a very good translation but is a term that is not common in the English conversation of Australians. It seemed too “in house” to me [for a theme]. I suggested to my colleague in New Testament studies that “overflowing” might be a reasonable alternative to “abundant”. She replied, “I thought about something like: ‘to the brim’, but you actually want it to mean ‘to the brim and over!’ (like when I pour a beer...) It’s even more than you need.

Overflowing is accurate, I think. Life to the brim and beyond.”

The theme of “life overflowing” commends itself for several reasons.



John 10:10 is, of course, a much-loved text in itself. But the theme of God's gift of and sovereignty over life is central to the Biblical witness. God's breath or Spirit gives life to human beings and every living thing (Genesis 2:7, Psalm 104:29-30).

The Law is given as a call to "choose life" (Deuteronomy 30:19).

Christ is proclaimed as "the bread of life" (John 6:33-35) and "the word of life" (1 John 1:1-2), and following him together is true life (Romans 6:4, 8:6; Colossians 3:3-4).

The vision of the consummation of God's mission is of "the river of life" and a whole avenue of "the tree of life", for the sake of which Adam and Eve had been expelled from the garden (Revelation 22:1-2; Genesis 3:22-24)."<sup>i</sup>

Jesus comes to give us life to the fullest – life overflowing – to the brim, and over.. Life overflowing..

This next scripture is an extended version of our theme scripture for our Easter Season series and shows us how the early Christians, some of whom had to gather in secret and isolation, were supporting one another "abundantly."

*The believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, to the community, to their shared meals, and to their prayers. A sense of awe came over everyone. God performed many wonders and signs through the apostles. All the believers were united and shared everything. They would sell pieces of property and possessions and distribute the proceeds to everyone who needed them. Every day, they met together in the temple and ate in their homes. They shared food with gladness and simplicity. They praised God and demonstrated God's goodness to everyone. The Lord added daily to the community those who were being saved.*

- Acts 2: 42-47 (Common English Bible CEV)

## Reflection 2

There may be days when it doesn't feel like it, but.. there are many ways to live life to the fullest right now – or, abundantly, or to the brim...

Being together, either physically, with those in our household, or connecting virtually, is one important way for us in this moment.

This image of the early Christian church that we just heard described reminds us of the importance of community. It is at times like this that we are challenged to lay aside our own rights and expectations for the needs of others, and the common good.

In these two scriptures we see the desire of God for us to be taken care of, for us to live to the fullest, and for us to support one another in having abundant life and community, food and gladness.

The "thief" in the first passage could be anything that robs us of those things.

Sometimes the sacrifices we have endured because of our attempts to slow this virus can feel as if we've been "robbed" of our well-being.





This week, we have seen demonstrations in some countries against coronavirus restrictions, advocating the right for personal freedom. Health authorities have reacted strongly, imploring people to think of others in a continuing effort to “flatten the curve” so viral spread does not overwhelm.

In our individualistic culture, many of us can be drawn to focus on *our* possessions, *our* experiences, *our* rights.

But we can also turn that all around and see that these sacrifices are how we share goodwill and well-being with one another.

We are encouraged to follow Christ’s example of generosity, sacrificial love and hospitality towards others. Abundant life is not about abundance of food or possessions or things we want. Abundant life is found in the Shepherd’s overflowing love and grace, which fills our lives with goodness and mercy, and generously flows out from our hearts to those around us. It is then that we, as individuals and as communities, flourish and find fulfillment.

Glad and generous hearts overflow with love in so many ways.

Over the last few weeks, we have been part of this overflow. Here are just some examples:

You may have read in the newsletter about the ‘**heart tree**’ – a vision of Robyn Fry’s which was made into a reality by quite a team of creative folk from our church community, led by Meg Edwards. On Easter Sunday a ‘heart tree’ appeared next to our church sign, on the corner of Fox and Kantilla, covered in beautiful multi coloured hearts. Our hope is that people will take a heart to keep for themselves or to pass on to others. This image has been shared through social media, particularly the LOVE Campbelltown Facebook page as an image of hope. Julie-Ann Bennett, one of the administrators of the LOVE Campbelltown initiative shared a photo of our tree and said this about it:

*““A single act of kindness throws out roots in all directions  
and the roots spring up and make new trees.” (Amelia Earhart)*

Kindness is LOVE in action and a great way WE can show care, concern and consideration to other people in our local community. There are many opportunities each day to practice kindness...but don't forget to be kind to yourself too. #bekind #kindnesspandemic #gratitude #community #peopleofaction #makeadifference #bethechange #ourcityourfuture”

How wonderful that the heart tree, a symbol that came out of the creative and generous hearts of a number of people from our church, has inspired others! A gift that keeps on giving. Overflow...

Even though **Stay and Play** can’t meet together, Joy and Bruce have developed Stay and Play @ Home. They have done a fantastic job in preparing a resource package containing lots of ideas and activities for the families to continue their involvement at home so the children and parents/caregivers can be "on deck" all term!



The **Messy Church** leadership team have been in touch with the Messy Church families to see what help they need and to offer to drop off a 'care package' with some nature play ideas for the kids as well as ideas for parents and caregivers to focus on their own mental health, spiritual journey and connection to each other

Our **Pastoral Care oversight team** has been formalising and developing networks of care within our church community to help us remain connected and feel cared for.

And now... our new relationship with the **medical centre**... Our Hall is currently being fitted out to be a short-term Respiratory Clinic for COVID-19 testing. This started with an approach from Medical HQ: Would we *please* join them in helping our community? From the first approach Linda felt a strong nudge from God (perhaps it was the Shepherd's staff?) to be open to this possibility and to be willing to give sacrificially as an overflow of God's love for us. Praise God for this new partnership for the common good – one that we could not have imagined was a possibility before now!

In this time when we are unable to physically gather in fellowship and prayer, we give thanks to the Shepherd for leading us to new ways of responding to the work of the Holy Spirit - who is never absent from our church. We are so thankful for the new opportunities to show generosity and hospitality with each other and with our community demonstrating God's goodness to everyone.

### Action Response

Our response today is to place our heart stones in a full glass of water.

This glass of water, filled to the brim, symbolizes the state of grace and love that is always and already what God gives to us.

When we drop our worry and grief into it, we will see the love spill over.

Placing our feelings and trust into God's love helps us to pour out love all around us, making that love available to everyone. There is always enough to go around.

*Take some time now to drop your stone carefully into your full glass of water and watch the water overflow.*

### Prayer:

The words of this prayer are adapted from Andrew Dutney's song, written for Assembly 2012, "Life to the Brim". Let us pray:

Shepherding God,  
you offer us life to the brim - life overflowing,  
life pouring out in compassion and grace.  
Spirit of God,  
well up within us,  
bring us to life in this time and this place.

Spirit of God,  
pour out upon us,  
bring us to faith and to hope and to love.  
Spirit of God,  
strengthen and guide us,  
take us and use us till your kingdom's come.  
In the name of Jesus, the Good Shepherd,  
Amen.





## 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, Jesus talks about listening to the Shepherd, not to the things that “rob” us of our well-being.

Who or what have you found to be a “voice of the Shepherd,” giving you a sense of well-being and abundance in this time?

What things are “thieves,” threatening to rob you of a sense of calm and trust?

Or if you can’t think of something from this week, what do you have in your memory as something that offers abundance?

You might like to complete this sentence, “I see abundance (in/when/where) \_\_\_\_\_.”]

Let’s take a few minutes at our tables to talk about these questions.

## Listen / Sing: Psalm 23 – Stuart Townend

Psalm 23 describes for us the Shepherd who cares for us, who leads, guides us and brings us great joy. Stuart Townend wrote this beautiful arrangement of the 23rd Psalm.

Let’s listen – or sing along. *Play this link if you are able.* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pN4tPkXOMG0>

### Psalm 23

The Lord's my Shepherd I'll not want  
He makes me lie in pastures green  
He leads me by the still still waters  
His goodness restores my soul

#### Chorus

*And I will trust in You alone  
And I will trust in You alone  
For Your endless mercy follows me  
Your goodness will lead me home*

#### Descant

*I will trust I will trust in You  
I will trust I will trust in You  
Endless mercy follows me  
Goodness will lead me home*

He guides my ways in righteousness  
And He anoints my head with oil  
And my cup it overflows with joy  
I feast on His pure delights

And though I walk the darkest path  
I will not fear the evil one  
For You are with me  
And Your rod and staff  
Are the comfort I need to know



CCLI Song # 1585970 Stuart Townend

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## 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.

Let's pray:

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

who have lost loved ones

who are sick and for those who are recovering

who are caring for loved ones who are sick at home

who are caring for persons in medical care – particularly the Medical HQ team as they prepare to run the new clinic this week

who are separated from loved ones

who are feeling alone and isolated

We pray for teachers, parents and students trying to make sense of the difficult circumstances they are in

And 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

And we pray for ourselves.

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.

## Prayer Wall

Each week we have been writing down the names of those who we wish to pray for. You can collect these prayers of your own as well as those of others in a beautiful way:

Cut watercolor paper, cardstock, or other heavy paper into pieces of different sizes and shapes. Using thin permanent markers, write who or what you are praying for. Then hold them in prayer in your heart while you watercolor over the page. Or write them onto paper cut into heart shapes. Whenever anxiety or fear comes from listening to the news, go to your wall and add to it. 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.





## 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 clap and let our hearts overflow!"**



Let's sing, get our bodies moving and clap along with TobyMac as he sings "Overflow."

Play this link if you are able: <https://youtu.be/TJ5eoPIJoQ0>

### Overflow

Clap your hands everybody  
Everybody just clap your hands

Some things money can't buy  
But a man's gotta eat  
Bread don't just fall out the sky  
And land at your feet  
I was trying to fly high  
But I ran low like I'm sittin' on E  
And my well ran dry  
'Til You came and made it rain on me

*You fill my cup up 'til it overflows  
And it's the sweetest love  
That I've ever known  
So pour it on me  
All that I need deep down in my soul  
Fill my cup up  
'Til it overflows*

They say nothin' is perfect  
That ain't true  
'Cause You came and opened these eyes  
To the glory of You  
You turned water to wine  
You make a new man of me  
And every time I'm running empty

It ain't a glass half full  
Or a glass half empty  
It's running over  
It can't fit me  
Down every side to the ground  
More than enough to go around  
So come and get it come and get it while it's hot  
Come and get it come and get it nonstop  
'Cause the only thing sweeter than a love song  
Is singing of love that goes on and on and on  
and on

CCLI Song # 7121302 Josh Miller | Shy Carter | Toby McKeenan  
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### 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?





## Rocks covered in love and hope



One idea is to make more “worry” or “heart stones” to give away. Collect a few rocks that have a surface large enough for a design and smooth enough to paint. Take these rocks –symbols of the hard things – and cover them in love and hope. Wash the rocks with soap and water, and dry them thoroughly. Using acrylic paint or permanent markers, each person can paint their rock with hearts. You can use Sharpies if you don’t want to use, or don’t have, paint. Once they are dry, leave them in places where people can see them (or give them away if you want) and feel hearts overflowed with gladness!

Please continue to collect food and other grocery donations to be passed on to Uniting Communities. If you do wish to donate any food items, Brenton Summers can either collect them from your front door or they can be left on his front door step. Cash donations will also be received with great thanks.

Brenton says:

*“Thanks to all who have dropped off food donations which are to be given to the Uniting Communities Eastern Services Emergency Relief Food Appeal. As you can see much has been donated and will be very well received. Further donations are welcomed anytime. I have also received cash donations and in particular some very generous amounts including a donation of the \$750 Covid-19 payment provided by the Federal Government as the recipients believe that they are in a better position than many others in this current environment. A big thank you to our very generous giving Church community.”*



## 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, always filling your cup to overflowing, 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. 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 #churchungathered

**Athelstone Uniting Church  
Prayer and Worship Resource**

## 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

- Illustrated Ministry resource: <https://illustratedmin.s3.amazonaws.com/weekly-resources/Easter-Week4.pdf>
- 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?

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<sup>i</sup> Andrew Dutney: [https://introducingtheuca.typepad.com/introducing\\_the\\_uniting\\_c/2010/11/life-overflowing.html](https://introducingtheuca.typepad.com/introducing_the_uniting_c/2010/11/life-overflowing.html)

