

Worship Resource for Sunday June 7

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 for those who wish to join in with others using Zoom.

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



UNRAVELED
SEEKING GOD WHEN OUR PLANS FALL APART

Preparing for Worship

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

Each week while we gather for worship in our homes, together yet apart, we'll share our worship time 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. 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 heart stone (see below), your study journal and extra paper to write on and something to write with.
- Make sure you can see a **colour** version of this week's artwork: *The Heir* by Hannah Garrity on page 9.
- 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. 'Father, I Adore You'. <https://youtu.be/Ph-ZBiETB0>
2. 'Celebrate the Lord of Love' <https://youtu.be/C-bMTrk1B04>
3. 'Holy, Holy Holy' <https://youtu.be/JwuDSw-9cUQ>

Beginning this Sunday we are beginning a new series that explores how we can press onward even when our tightly-knit plans unravel into loose threads.



Households associated with Athelstone Uniting Church have received a **study journal** to go with this series. It includes original artworks and reflections to help in personal devotions or with a small group.

The file is available on request for those who wish to print out a copy. (Please contact Carol – office@athelstonechurch.org.au).

Heart Stone

As we continue to worship at home in this ungathered way, we invite you to continue to use a “heart stone,” or you might prefer to call it a “worry stone”. This is a stone you can hold on to when you are feeling anxious or worried. It can be used for personal devotions and for our worship services.

If you haven’t done so yet, choose a stone that is large enough to hold in your hand. Find some time to clean it with a brush paint then paint or draw a heart on it.



Psalm 62: 5-8 - “Yes, my soul, find rest in God; my hope comes from him. Truly he is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will not be shaken. My salvation and my honor depend on God; he is my mighty rock, my refuge. Trust in him at all times, you people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge.

Psalm 19:14 - May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.



Worship

This service uses resources from the unraveled series by A Sanctified Art.

Other sources are developed by Rev Linda Driver or acknowledged within the text below.

With thanks to Di Curtis and Meg Edwards for their creative input.

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.

Introduction

Do you ever feel a sense that your life is unraveling... getting out of control... falling apart? As you look what is happening in the world, do you wonder the same?

Beginning this week we are beginning a new series that explores how we can press onward *even* when our tightly-knit plans unravel into loose threads.

In our unraveling, sometimes life surprises us with unexpected joy, love, and hope—with a new beginning we couldn't have imagined. Sometimes we need to be unraveled for God to be able to work in and through us.

Let us begin the holy unraveling by centering ourselves.

Spend Time

As we gather, across space and time
and connect, in spirit,
take in a deep breath and remember that wherever you are,
it is the same air that we are all breathing,
the same Spirit who breathes life in to and through us.

Even though we are physically apart right now, we are still connected in the communion of the Spirit.

Pick up your heart stone. Feel the roughness, the smooth places, the strength and the weight of the stone.

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 stone is in our hands right now,
is how close *Love* is to us always.

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

Let's take one more deep breath. In and out.

Light candle

Light your candle then put it in a safe place nearby and set your heart stones next to it.



Call to Worship
In worship,
may we be as welcoming as Sarah and Abraham, who were quick to serve the stranger.

In faith,
may we proclaim that nothing is too big for God.

In moments of holy surprise,
may we laugh with deep abiding joy.

For God is in the holy surprise.
God is in the winding path.

And God is in our presence today.
Let us worship Holy God.¹

You are One, O God, and you are Three.

You are majesty and mystery.

Make us ever in your image, we pray.

Make us one.

Make us "we".

Amen²

Praise

Let's sing '**Father, I Adore You**'. Play this link if you are able <https://youtu.be/Ph-ZBiETB0>

Here are the lyrics to reflect on:

Father I adore You	Jesus I adore You	Spirit I adore You
Lay my life before You	Lay my life before You	Lay my life before You
How I love You	How I love You	How I love You

CCLI Song # 26557 Terrye Coelho
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Break Bread

Blessing the Meal

One of the features of this time of worshipping at home has been our sharing of a meal together as we worship.

We gather at our table this day, giving thanks for all the people who have contributed to our meals

¹ Liturgy by Sarah Are | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

² The Abingdon Worship Annual 2020

every day and every week in our series: farmers, market gardeners, supermarket workers, those who cooked it, or brewed it and those who will clean afterwards. Let us bless our meal by praying ...

God of Trinity, three in one, one in three,
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

Throughout this worship series we will explore stories of unraveled shame, identity, fear, grief, dreams, and expectations. These are stories where God meets us in the spiraling, unraveling our plans—and us—into something new. Today we will hear the story of Sarah and Abraham . Listen to how Sarah’s disbelief unraveled into the laughter of joy.

Bible readings

Genesis 18:1-15 New International Version (NIV)

The Lord appeared to Abraham near the great trees of Mamre while he was sitting at the entrance to his tent in the heat of the day. Abraham looked up and saw three men standing nearby. When he saw them, he hurried from the entrance of his tent to meet them and bowed low to the ground.

He said, “If I have found favor in your eyes, my lord, do not pass your servant by. Let a little water be brought, and then you may all wash your feet and rest under this tree. Let me get you something to eat, so you can be refreshed and then go on your way—now that you have come to your servant.”

“Very well,” they answered, “do as you say.”

So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah. “Quick,” he said, “get three seahs of the finest flour and knead it and bake some bread.”

Then he ran to the herd and selected a choice, tender calf and gave it to a servant, who hurried to prepare it. He then brought some curds and milk and the calf that had been prepared, and set these before them. While they ate, he stood near them under a tree.

“Where is your wife Sarah?” they asked him.

“There, in the tent,” he said.

Then one of them said, “I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife will have a son.”



Now Sarah was listening at the entrance to the tent, which was behind him. Abraham and Sarah were already very old, and Sarah was past the age of childbearing. So Sarah laughed to herself as she thought, “After I am worn out and my lord is old, will I now have this pleasure?”

Then the Lord said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh and say, ‘Will I really have a child, now that I am old?’ Is anything too hard for the Lord? I will return to you at the appointed time next year, and Sarah will have a son.”

Sarah was afraid, so she lied and said, “I did not laugh.”

But he said, “Yes, you did laugh.”

Genesis 21:1-7 New International Version (NIV)

Now the Lord was gracious to Sarah as he had said, and the Lord did for Sarah what he had promised. Sarah became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the very time God had promised him. Abraham gave the name Isaac to the son Sarah bore him. When his son Isaac was eight days old, Abraham circumcised him, as God commanded him. Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him.

Sarah said, “God has brought me laughter, and everyone who hears about this will laugh with me.” And she added, “Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age.”

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

Reflection

Today is Trinity Sunday in the Church's liturgical year, as we consider the revelation of God as Father, Son and Spirit. In reflecting on this concept, we are reminded again that we can never fully imagine or comprehend the divine mystery. Names and images describe aspects of God's character, but never completely capture the true essence of God.

A helpful way to depict God as three in one is to explore the image of community. The Greek term *perichoresis* is sometimes used to describe this. The word comes from *peri*, meaning "around" and *chorein*, meaning "to give way" or "to make room". In this image, God is a community of three persons, entwined in a divine dance, in such close relationship with each other that they are one. The trinitarian God is not only substance, but relationship, into which we too are invited.³

The three mysterious visitors in today's story are thought of by many as a manifestation or a revelation of God. Did you notice the language that is used? Sometimes they are referred to as One - singular (*The LORD appeared... My lord...*) and other times as Three – plural (*three men.. he saw them... they answered...*)

Like other times when God appeared to humans in the Bible, there is a mystery and blurriness about the description. The visitors appeared in the blistering heat of the midday desert sun. When Abraham first

³ Rev Cheryl Wilson, Ascot Park Community Uniting Church

spotted them, peering out from his shelter into the brightness, the air must have been dusty and hazy. Was this a revelation of God? Or angels visiting on behalf of God? Whatever the case they / he had a special message for Sarah.

I'm jumping ahead.. did you notice Abraham's reaction? On seeing these visitors, he recognised something in them and did not want them to pass by. He went all out to convince them to stay, promising 'a little' water and something to eat, then going to extravagant lengths to provide the most generous of hospitality – asking Sarah to make bread from scratch, selecting a precious calf to eat.. One didn't go to such effort for just three random strangers passing by. Abraham recognised something special.

Back to Sarah.. she had just rushed around to prepare this meal for the three mysterious visitors. She would have been hot and tired, as she listened from the shade of the awning of the tent.

More mystery was to follow: how did they know her name? and then one of them said...

"I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife will have a son." (Gen 18:10)

Imagine what a shock those words would have been to her (and to Abraham!). Over the years there had been many promises to Abraham that he would bear an heir and that there would be many descendants. No heir had come through Sarah. Now they were both elderly – menopause would have been a distant memory for Sarah! These promises by now would have seemed hopeless. To think that she could bear a child – let alone gather the strength to conceive one and to raise one – was ridiculous – inconceivable! No wonder she laughed!

The Lord somehow overheard Sarah, perhaps her outburst of laughter was louder than she thought – or perhaps ..?

He questioned her disbelief: "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" or in the New Revised Standard translation: "Is anything too *wonderful* for the Lord?"

"I *will* return to you at the appointed time next year, and Sarah *will* have a son."

Sarah denied her laughter – perhaps embarrassed, perhaps ashamed at her disbelief of what God is capable of?

The Lord was gracious to Sarah as he had said, and the Lord did for Sarah what he had promised. Sarah became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the very time God had promised him.

And they named the child Isaac, which meant laughter.

Sarah's laughter of disbelief had changed to laughter of joy.

The unraveling of their disbelief, into shock, surprise and joy, at the wonder of what God had done was marked by laughter.

Whatever is happening in your life right now, hear this:

Our prayers aren't always answered in this same way, but what we can trust is this—sometimes, even after life seems to fall apart, God can surprise us and unravel our plans with unexpected joy if we are willing to receive it.

Is anything too wonderful for the Lord? Amen



Prayer of Confession

God of unexpected joy and answered prayers,
We confess that sometimes things feel too good to be true,
While at other times we wonder if you hear us at all.
When life unravels for the worst—we blame you.
But when life unravels for the best, filling our days with holy surprise—
We tend to praise ourselves, thinking we've earned this unexpected joy.
Forgive us. Help us to see you in our midst.
And with every breath that turns into a laugh, draw us closer to you.⁴
Amen.

This is the best of all:

when we are empty, God fills us;
when we are disheartened, God is compassionate;
when we are wounded, God brings healing;
when we are confess our sin, God forgives.

In Christ, through Christ and because of Christ, our sins are forgiven.⁵

Thanks be to God. Amen

Artwork

Take some time now to reflect on the artwork “*The Heir*” by Hannah Garrity on the next page.

Take a few moments to gaze upon the image. Breathe deeply in quiet meditation as you observe the visual qualities of what you see: color, line, texture, movement, shape, form.

Now take a deeper look. What parts of the image are your eyes most drawn to?

Let's take a few minutes to do this.

⁴ Liturgy by Sarah Are | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

⁵ Declaration from Uniting in Worship 2



"The Heir" by Hannah Garrity | A Sanctified Art LLC |

As I reflect on this deeply intimate image as Sarah and Isaac gaze into each other's eyes, I see

- the joy and delight and the laughter lines in Sarah's face
- the flowing colours of red, blue and white (blood, water, milk) – images of motherhood and new life being poured out.
- I see a swirling movement around them, a dance of love – perhaps the dance of the God of Trinity - swirling in and around Mother and Child in this special moment of love.

Breaking Open our Lives with Discussion

Let's take some time now to break open our hearts by sharing our thoughts. You may wish to journal and share these thoughts with God in prayer. If you are in a household with others, you might choose to talk for a few minutes. Choose one of the following to reflect on now.

- What did you see in Hannah Garrity's artwork?
- When have you been unraveled by unexpected joy and surprise?
- Consider Gen. 18:14: "*Is anything too hard for the Lord?*" Some translations include: marvelous, wonderful, astonishing, difficult, impossible. How do these translation variations expand God's power in this passage?
- What might it look like for our disbelief to unravel into joy?

Song

Let's sing '**Celebrate the Lord of Love'**

Click here if you are able: <https://youtu.be/C-bMTrk1B04>

Here are the lyrics to reflect on:

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

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

CCLI Song # 1729097 Ed Kerr | Paul Baloche

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Breaking Open Our Hearts with Prayer

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

As we think about our own lives and of the world around us, we can think of many things, people and circumstances unraveling. Let's spend a moment in silence, bringing those thoughts before God in prayer.

Let us continue in prayer for

- those we know who are struggling with ill health
- those we know who are facing a medical procedure soon
- the Medical HQ team as they run the COVID-19 Respiratory Clinic on our premises
- those who are expecting a baby to arrive soon
- your Church Council as they work through the many steps needed as restrictions begin to ease.
- Australians who are struggling as we enter our first recession in 29 years.
- Everyone who may be struggling to maintain their mental health in these times of isolation and change.

As images come to mind of the news coming out of the United States, we join in with the prayer from Dr Deidre Palmer (President of the Uniting Church in Australia):

Risen, Crucified God,

We cry out for justice for the family of George Floyd and for comfort for all those who mourn his death. Forgive us for the sin of racism, and the ways we fail to acknowledge that all people are equal, created in your image, deeply loved and of infinite worth.

Forgive us for our silence, and the ways we are complicit in racist attitudes and actions.

Stir in us vision, courage and determination to work for justice in Australia.

May your Holy Spirit fill us with your compassion and reconciling love, that we might walk together as First and Second Peoples in mutuality, respect and delight in our shared life and destiny together.

Help us Lord, to be part of your work of creation and renewal, weaving together strands of love for a hope-filled future.

Surprise us with unexpected joy.

Through Christ, our liberator we pray. 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.

Praise God!

It is time to praise God with the classic hymn for Trinity Sunday: **Holy, Holy Holy**

Play this link if you are able <https://youtu.be/JwuDSw-9cUQ>

Here are the lyrics to reflect on:

Holy holy holy
Lord God Almighty
Early in the morning
Our song shall rise to Thee
Holy holy holy
Merciful and mighty
God in three persons
Blessed Trinity

Holy holy holy
All the saints adore Thee
Casting down their golden crowns
Around the glassy sea
Cherubim and seraphim
Falling down before Thee
Which wert and art
And evermore shalt be

Holy holy holy
Though the darkness hide Thee
Though the eye of sinful man
Thy glory may not see
Only Thou art holy
There is none beside Thee
Perfect in power
In love and purity

Holy holy holy
Lord God Almighty
All Thy works shall praise Thy name
In earth and sky and sea
Holy holy holy
Merciful and mighty
God in three persons
Blessed Trinity

CCLI Song # 1156 John Bacchus Dykes | Reginald Heber

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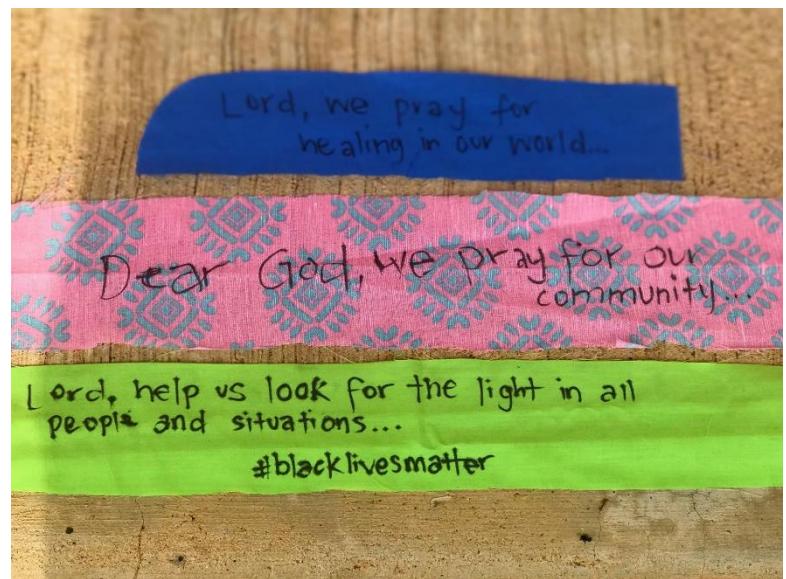
Have Goodwill

As we think of how we can respond to the story of Sarah's disbelief unraveling into joy, let us think about what action we can take for others who are in the midst of some kind of unraveling:

Please continue to give 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.

Community art project

As part of this new series, we have started an "unraveled" community art project at the Church.



We invite you to add and weave into our art project... not just a strip of fabric or yarn but you may also like to write on your strip of fabric and weave in your hopes, dreams and prayers as well...

Take a strip of fabric (or some yarn) and tie it to the end of the previous fabric strip, or tie it to one of the ribbon spokes, and continue the weaving pattern of going over and under in a circular pattern..

*"This project helps us embody the promise of the great weaver - that our loose ends can be woven into something new, something beautiful."*⁶

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: Gracious God, Holy Trinity, we offer these gifts and ourselves as instruments of your ever-new creation. Amen

Announcements

Communion

It has been some time since we have been able to gather and share Communion together and we don't know yet how long it will be before we will be able to gather face-to-face and share in this special meal.

So... Linda is going to offer Communion in a different way: online!

You are therefore invited to join in for worship via Zoom next week (Sunday June 14 at 9.30am) and join in a time of Communion as part of the service.

We encourage you to prepare now for this:

We ask that you provide your own bread and juice or wine.

For those who do not have access to Zoom, here are some things to consider: have a chat with Paul Driver (0428-161-918) about whether you can make use of any of the technology you already have and have a practise before Sunday OR consider gathering with one or two others in their home.

For those of you who do have access to Zoom: If you have a large enough screen and room to gather*, please consider inviting someone to join you. If you need help getting more volume out of your device, Paul may be able to help. Members of the Pastoral Care Oversight Team can help make connections if you don't know who to ask.

* remember that SA Health advises: Gatherings (such as entertaining at your house) are limited to 20 people (indoor or outdoor). Must not exceed more than 1 person per 4 square metres. 1.5 metres physical distancing must be adhered to. Children of any age are included in total the number of people. Please stay home if you are unwell.

⁶ Lisle Gwynn Garrity | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

Study Journal

This week we invite you to spend time reflecting further using your study journal. Turn to “Sarah Laughs”, on pages 3 to 6. (See page 2 of this resource for more details about the Study Journal.)

Benediction (2 Cor 13:11,14 NIV)

Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice! Strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Amen!

Candle

Extinguish the candle and watch the light change from a flame to smoke, like God’s Spirit that we carry with us now.

Spreading Joy

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

Worship Playlist

Here is a collection of songs you may like to listen to as you continue on in worship this week

Holy, holy, holy <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JwuDSw-9cUQ>

Father I adore you <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9bdid2HFk0c>

Glorify thy name <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QltVKW6wXdo>

King of kings <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Of5IcFWiEpg>

How great is our God <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wDgmJFw6F64>

This is how we overcome <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4BDTdLqBdNo>

All things are possible https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x_NcescDvdQ

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

Joy of the Lord <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x3gLeCiMJql>

Free to dance <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cP5YEdp11BE>



Further Worship Ideas

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

- 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

NEW Contemplative resources

- You might like to try going for an intentional prayer walk around your community:
<http://www.gungahlinuniting.org/?p=5369&fbclid=IwAR28tWeqlqfxcNPaZMlpYJ99AUGapmXrMVQPMiOjSQKeT-y8fVsf4rn0fKI>
- Prayers and Meditation Resource from Stillpoint Community: <https://stillpointsa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2017/11/Living-from-the-Stillpoint-Oct-17-mod.pdf>

Reconciliation Week

- Campbelltown Council resources including a video to watch. If you look carefully, you'll see our Wirra! <https://www.campbelltown.sa.gov.au/community/reconciliation>
- Reconciliation Week resource from Common Grace:
https://www.commongrace.org.au/nrw2020_childrens_resources
- Dusty Feet Mob have kindly given permission to share their video 'This Story's True'.
<https://tallstoreez.com/project/2019/dusty-feet-mob>
Dusty Feet Mob are an inspirational Aboriginal dance group based in Port Augusta. The group is instrumental in encouraging young people to learn Australian culture and grow confidence.

NEW World Environment Day 2020: Bushfires Prayer and Action

For World Environment Day (June 5) this year, Uniting Earth is asking us to pray for people and environments impacted by the ferocious bushfires of last spring and summer, and respond by taking action together on climate change.

- A video prayer is available here: <https://youtu.be/4gixVy648ww>
- You can find out more about the Uniting Church's climate campaign and how to get involved here: <https://www.unitingearth.org.au/at-your-fingertips/>
- Additional bushfire prayers and FAQs about bushfires and climate change are available here: <https://www.unitingearth.org.au/bushfire-resources/>
- More information about World Environment Day can be found here:
<https://www.worldenvironmentday.global/>