

Worship Resource for Sunday June 14

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

The service starts on page 2. First, let's get ready.

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

Each week while we gather for worship in our homes, together yet apart, and we'll share our worship time over a meal or snack.

- 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.
- 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.
- Your meal could be your breakfast or a light snack with a cuppa or juice.
- Make sure you can see a **colour** version of this week's artwork: *Step Into the Swell* by Lisle Gwynn Garrity on page 7.

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. 'Still' https://youtu.be/0gF8_8ypzVA
2. 'I Will Sing The Wondrous Story' <https://youtu.be/nAcpYr9I6Tk>
3. 'For Everyone Born' <https://youtu.be/tqpdZq6TAfo>



There is also a YouTube clip:

<https://youtu.be/2BKMX9AzJOA?t=6864>

(Play from 1:54:25 to 1:58:10)

We are in the second week of the **unraveled** series which 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).

As we continue to worship at home in this ungathered way, we invite you to continue to use a **“heart 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. Use a stone large enough to hold in your hand and draw a heart on it. (*Psalm 62: 5-8*).

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, including Communion, 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 at what is happening in the world, do you wonder the same? In this series we are encouraging each other to 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

God, you are a God of invitation.

You invited Abraham to follow you.

You invited the disciples to drop their nets.

You invited the children to draw near.

You invited Peter to walk on water.

You invited the tax collector to dinner.

You invited the Samaritan woman into eternal life.

Just the same, you invite us to live lives of faith.

Give us the strength to say yes.

Let us worship good and holy God. Amen¹

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

Song

Let's sing 'Still'. *Play this link if you are able* https://youtu.be/0gF8_8ypzVA

Hide me

now
Under Your wings
Cover me
Within Your mighty hand

Chorus
When the oceans rise
And thunders roar
I will soar with You
Above the storm
Father You are King
Over the flood
I will be still and know
You are God

Find rest my soul
In Christ alone
Know His power
In quietness and trust

CCLI Song # 3940963

Reuben Morgan

© 2002 Hillsong Music Publishing Australia

For use solely with the SongSelect® Terms
of Use. All rights reserved. www.ccli.com

CCLI Licence # 132496

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 every day and every week: 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 ...

Creator 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

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 about Peter sinking in the water... he takes one step onto the water and begins to sink. Let's listen to how Peter's confidence unravels right there in the wind and the waves.

Bible reading - Matthew 14:22-33 New International Version (NIV)

Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone, and the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it.

Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear.

But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."

"Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water."

"Come," he said.

Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!"

Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?"

And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

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

Reflection

For many of us, this story would be so familiar. How often have we heard it read, followed by preaching about faith.. faith to trust Jesus and walk on the water.. and not sink like Peter?! If we have enough faith, we are able to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus and walk confidently toward him. Sound familiar?

I want to share some thoughts with you that might help you see more in this story..

To start with, I used to think that Jesus was telling Peter off: "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?" But then, I saw a video which changed the way I heard this text.

This video is quite dated now, the style, the quality, the acting – but it is the way Jesus is portrayed that really got my attention. Watch the video now and listen particularly to Jesus' tone of voice..

Play YouTube clip: <https://youtu.be/2BKMX9AzJ0A?t=6864>

(Play from 1:54:25 to 1:58:10)

Did you notice? Jesus wasn't telling Peter off, he was laughing.. and it wasn't a laughing-at-Peter's-misfortune-or-disbelief kind of laugh, it was a warm familiar laugh full of love and fondness for someone he knows so well. Do you know the kind of laugh I mean? The kind when you love someone, when you know them so well, when you know their strengths and their weaknesses, when you can anticipate what they will do - and you laugh with great fondness when they try something and it doesn't go quite right. It is a laughing-with kind of laugh, not a laughing-at kind of laugh.

We do it when we watch our children learn and grow. Hugh, our Grandson, will be 2 next month. He has taken his time getting mobile. To begin with he developed his own unique wonky kind of crawl, then he discovered he could reach more by being up on his feet walking along the furniture. He loved it when Paul and I offered him our hands and held him as he walked around.

A few weeks ago, we were delighting in his efforts to walk by himself. He'd take a few tentative steps then head off at speed for something he wanted on the other side of the room. Then he'd get the wobbles or realise he was walking and not crawling, and he'd allow his legs to fold up underneath him as he would drop back to a crawl – the safe and familiar way of moving from one point to another. As we watched we'd proudly remember the progress he had made to get to that point. We were fully there in that moment, encouraging him, laughing with him, celebrating each step. We knew it would just be a matter of time before he was up walking by himself, with confidence.

Suzanne Guthrie has a similar thought about the way Jesus spoke to Peter. She writes: *“Jesus’ response to Peter is often described as a rebuke, but I hear the comment differently. Playfully, Jesus compliments Peter, “Why did you doubt, ye of little faith? You had it!” Like a parent teaching a child to ride a two-wheeled bicycle, you let go and the child sails off in perfect balance. But in a moment of self-consciousness, he falters and falls. The parents calls out, “You did it! You were doing it! You can do it!” I remember those milestones of praise and encouragement, wonder, pride and celebration – even the bandages and icepack over well-earned wounds. And, not longer after, the child forgets ever learning to ride the bike as he and his friends tear off at dizzying speeds to explore a much-expanded world. (I wonder why Jesus didn’t insist that Peter try one more time?) Jesus meets Peter’s panic with an outstretched arm and the gentle encouragement of a loving parent. “Look! You transcended the deep. You see, your faith can move mountains! Why did you doubt?” Peter may not remember how he walked on the water, but he will remember how he was saved.”²*

Nadia Bolz-Weber writes: *“... we seem to always focus on Peter walking toward Jesus when the whole story is about how much Jesus walks toward them, reaches toward them ...and then even gets in the boat with them. We might see the moral of the story as “you should have so much faith that you can walk on water toward Jesus” but the truth of this story is that Jesus walks toward us. The truth of the story is that my abundance of faith or lack of faith does not deter God from drawing close. That even if you are [overwhelmed, unraveling],*

² Suzanne Guthrie: “Fear Not, You Are Mine” in Abingdon Creative Preaching Annual 2014. p171

scared to death and sinking, you can say “Lord, Save Me!” and the hand of God will find you in even the darkest waters.

Perhaps this is not so much a story of the heroes of the faith making their way to Christ but of Christ drawing near to you in the midst of fear.”³

Our life can be marked by things that unravel us, make us doubt ourselves and lose confidence. Our life as a Christian disciple can be marked by one life lesson followed by another, as we grow and mature in our faith. Whatever we are facing, Jesus is with us, each step of the way, reaching out his hand with a loving smile.

Whatever you are facing, be encouraged by these words from Isaiah 43:

“Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters I will be with you and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. (Is 43:1b-3a RSV)

Or from the Message paraphrase:

“Don’t be afraid, I’ve redeemed you. I’ve called your name. You’re mine. When you’re in over your head, I’ll be there with you. When you’re in rough waters, you will not go down. When you’re between a rock and a hard place, it won’t be a dead end—Because I am God, your personal God, The Holy of Israel, your Savior. (Is 43:1b-3a MSG)

On Thursday, Paul, spent the afternoon with Hugh. When he came home, Paul told me that Hugh was up, walking and running confidently – crawling is now a thing of the past. It won’t be long before he’ll be wanting to ride a bike, I’m sure!

As we think back to Peter.. the good news is that right there in the midst of the wind and the waves, Jesus steps toward him and offers his hand.

When we are sinking in doubt and uncertainty, let us remember the outstretched hand of God.

Amen

Artwork

Take some time now to reflect on the artwork below *“Step Into The Swell”* by Lisle Gwynn Garrity. 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.

³ Nadia Bolz-Weber:

<https://www.patheos.com/blogs/nadiabolzweber/2011/08/hello-world/>



"Step Into the Swell" by Lisle Gwynn Garrity | A Sanctified Art LLC |

As I reflect on this image, I sense

- the feeling of being overwhelmed as the huge wave builds straight ahead (it must have been noisy out there!) I'm not a 'boatie' – so I wonder if others would feel a sense of exhilaration?
- the lack of clarity in the turbulence it is creating
- the sense of hope in the calmer water in the distance
- the beauty of the moonlight reflecting off the water
- the 'safety' of the boat – it seems solid, broad, secure
- I wonder where Jesus is in this picture? And where am I?

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 Lisle Gwynn Garrity's artwork?
- What has unraveled and/or is unraveling in this story?
- If you were to place yourself in this scene, where would you be?
- During seasons of uncertainty, how do you release anxiety and practice trust?

Song

Let's sing **'I Will Sing the Wondrous Story'**

Click here if you are able: <https://youtu.be/nAcpYr9I6Tk>

I will sing the wondrous story
Of the Christ who died for me
How He left the realms of
glory
For the cross on Calvary
Yes I'll sing the wondrous
story
Of the Christ who died for me
Sing it with His saints in glory
Gathered by the crystal sea

I was lost but Jesus found me
Found the sheep that went
astray
Raised me up and gently led
me
Back into the narrow way
Days of darkness still may
meet me
Sorrow's path I oft may tread
But His presence still is with
me
By His guiding hand I'm led

He will keep me till the river
Rolls its waters at my feet
Then He'll bear me safely
over
Made by grace for glory meet
Yes I'll sing the wondrous
story
Of the Christ who died for me
Sing it with His saints in glory
Gathered by the crystal sea

CCLI Song # 2328610

Francis Harold Rawley | Rowland Hugh Prichard

© Words and Music: Public Domain

For use solely with the SongSelect® Terms of Use. All rights reserved. www.ccli.com

CCLI Licence # 132496

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.
- those struggling with mental illness, addiction, chronic pain and other health conditions
- the Medical HQ team as they run the COVID-19 Respiratory Clinic on our premises.
- those who are expecting a baby to arrive soon
- those facing financial hardship through a reduction or loss of paid work
- those seeking employment
- those who are working through major change in their life.
- those feeling the loss of things they have had to give up due to COVID-19 - including those who were looking forward to going away on special interstate or overseas trip
- our Church Council as we continue to make course corrections with each new announcement as the COVID-19 restrictions continue to ease.
- Those working for a just recovery in Australia as we move beyond COVID-19 restrictions and seek to apply our learnings in the current recession environment.
- every volunteer who is helping to serve those who are in great need of food, shelter and clothing right now.
- the healing of racial tensions worldwide, including here in Australia, and an end to racial inequality and racist attitudes.
- Members of our UCA South Sudanese faith communities here in Australia and our church partners, the Presbyterian Church of South Sudan amid renewed outbreaks of violence in that country's ongoing internal conflict.

We pray for ourselves:

Wherever we face uncertainty, fear and doubt, we ask that you empower us with the courage to take your outstretched hand and step forward. **Amen**

Through Christ 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.

Song

Let us sing 'For Everyone Born' *Play this link if you are able* <https://youtu.be/tqpdZq6TAfo>

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*

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

Chorus

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

Chorus

CCLI Song # 4065414 Shirley Erena Murray
© 1998 Murray, Shirley Erena (Admin. by
Hope Publishing Company)
For use solely with the SongSelect® Terms of
Use. All rights reserved. www.ccli.com
CCLI Licence # 132496

Have Goodwill

As we think of how we can respond to the story of Peter being unraveled by uncertainty, let us think about what action we can take for others who are in the midst of some kind of unraveling. How can we 'reach out our hands' to offer love and support to others?

Uniting Communities Eastern Services Emergency Relief Food Appeal

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 so generously been donating goods and cash.

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. Please use the sanitiser provided.

*"This project helps us embody the promise of the great weaver - that our loose ends can be woven into something new, something beautiful."*⁴

⁴ Lisle Gwynn Garrity | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

GodBox

Write down those things (the stormy waters) that are threatening to overcome you or unravel your trust and certainty. Name them as a way of releasing their power over you. Write these things on paper and place in your God Box or write in your journal. You may know of someone else who is struggling – perhaps you could make a GodBox for them?

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: Generous God, you reach out to us with hands of love. We offer these gifts and ourselves and ask that they be used to extend that offer of love and care for all of creation. Amen

Study Journal

This week we invite you to spend time reflecting further using your study journal. Turn to “Peter Sinks In The Water”, on pages 7 to 10. (See page 1 of this resource for more details about the Study Journal.)

Benediction

As you go into a new week, know that whatever is happening for you, and whatever unraveling might be happening for you:

God blesses you with strength for the journey;
Jesus lifts you up from the raging waters of life;
the Spirit guides you with dreams and visions of a glorious tomorrow.

Here these words:

“Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid. I am with you.”

Trust that the love and presence of God are with you.

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

You rescued me	https://youtu.be/wXzYYGMdxWk
I will sing the wondrous story	https://youtu.be/mv8wo-t6C1l or https://youtu.be/nAcpYr9I6Tk
Jesus lover of my soul	https://youtu.be/C5jxwHjC6Xk
You love has lifted me	https://youtu.be/tZ4xkBNRwXc
Praise the name of Jesus	https://youtu.be/Kdja-1cBopM
Still	https://youtu.be/0gF8_8ypzVA
The Stand	https://youtu.be/kV5iZBTNYrk
Shout to the Lord	https://youtu.be/y78aKBa917l
For Everyone Born	https://youtu.be/tqpdZq6TAfo

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

Contemplative resources

- You might like to try going for an intentional prayer walk around your community: http://www.gungahlinuniting.org/?p=5369&fbclid=IwAR28tWeqlqfxcNPaZMlpYJ99AUGapmXrMVQP_MiOiSQKeT-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>