

## “With Glad Hearts”

April 26, 2020

Preparations: **making a meal or snack, a candle,** and a **“worry stone”** for each person. For kids there are **handouts of hearts** you can print out to doodle and color every time they hear the word “heart.”

### SPEND TIME

**Gaye:**

We continue with our Easter Season because Easter isn't just one day. It is the message of God's desire for us to live fully every day. The early church practiced their hope 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.

### **Opening Act of Centering Our Hearts as One**

**Gaye:**

We are going to center our hearts as one to begin.  
Let's take a deep breath together *[everyone breathe together]*.

I invite you to place your hand on your heart and  
let's lightly tap together in a slow heartbeat rhythm

*[Do this for a bit and then continue speaking as the heartbeat tapping continues]...*

Holy Living God,  
help us to take this time

Heartbeat of Creation,  
to center 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.

*[the heartbeat tapping fades away]*

Hear this assurance from God: *sing to the tune of **Amazing Grace***

**Be still, O heart, you're not alone,  
your beat is shared with me.  
Come now, and calm, and center 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**]*

**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.**

Let's light our candles now and set our heart worry stones next to it.

*[Light the candle/candles you have on your table and put your stone(s) around the base of it]*

# I Come to the Garden Alone

1 I come to the gar - den a - lone, while the dew is still on the  
 2 He speaks, and the sound of his voice is so sweet the birds hush their  
 3 I'd stay in the gar - den with him, though the night a - round me be

ros - es; And the voice I hear, fall - ing on my ear, the  
 sing - ing; And the mel - o - dy that he gave to me with -  
 fall - ing; But he bids me go; through the voice of woe his

*Refrain*  
 Son of God dis - clos - es.  
 in my heart is ring - ing. And he walks with me, and he  
 voice to me is call - ing.

talks with me, and he tells me I am his own, And the

joy we share as we tar - ry there, none oth - er has ev - er known.

## BREAK BREAD

### Blessing the Meal

*Danny White (VIDEO):*

We're going to share a story today about another meal that Jesus attended. Because it happened in an unexpected way, listen for how people didn't recognize him at first.

It took sitting down to the table for people to realize that Christ was with them still. Every time we gather around a table, we can recognize that Christ is with us, inside each one of us every time we love each other by sharing food together. Let us pray this prayer of blessing together...

*Danny White (AUDIO):*

**Holy and surprising 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.**

*Gaye:*

And now I invite you to pick up a plate of food or a cup on the table and let us say the one word that is at the heart of the matter in every blessing we do at our tables, repeating after me...

“Grateful!”      **“Grateful!”**

Let us begin to “break bread” while we “break open the Word”  
in our scriptures.

*[begin to eat as the next scriptures and thoughts are shared]*

## **Breaking Open the Word with Scripture**

**Gaye:**

Here is how the story of Jesus' surprise visit on the road and at the dinner happened. Imagine yourself walking down the road and a stranger comes along...

**Lyn Ettinger-Harwell (VIDEO):**

On that same day, two disciples were traveling to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. They were talking to each other about everything that had happened.

While they were discussing these things, Jesus himself arrived and joined them on their journey. They were prevented from recognizing him.

He said to them, "What are you talking about as you walk along?" They stopped; their faces downcast.

The one named Cleopas replied, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who is unaware of the things that have taken place there over the last few days?"

He said to them, "What things?"

They said to him, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth. Because of his powerful deeds and words, he was recognized by God and all the people as a prophet. But our chief priests and our leaders handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him. We had hoped he was the one who would redeem Israel. All these things happened three days ago. But there's more: Some women from our group have left us stunned. They went to the tomb early this morning and didn't find his body. They came to us saying that they had even seen a vision of angels who told them he is alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found things just as the women said. They didn't see him."

Then Jesus said to them, “You foolish people! Your dull minds keep you from believing all that the prophets talked about. Wasn’t it necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and then enter into his glory?”

Then he interpreted for them the things written about himself in all the scriptures, starting with Moses and going through all the Prophets.

When they came to Emmaus, he acted as if he was going on ahead.

But they urged him, saying, “Stay with us. It’s nearly evening, and the day is almost over.”

So, he went in to stay with them. After he took his seat at the table with them, he took the bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them.

Their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he disappeared from their sight!

They said to each other, “Weren’t our hearts on fire when he spoke to us along the road and when he explained the scriptures for us?”

They got up right then and returned to Jerusalem. They found the eleven and their companions gathered together.

They were saying to each other, “The Lord really has risen! He appeared to Simon!” Then the two disciples described what had happened along the road and how Jesus was made known to them as he broke the bread. - *Luke 24:13-35*

**Tithes & Offerings**

**Stevie Astley**

***Easy to Love You***

**Gaye:**

After Christ was no longer with his disciples in the flesh, several letters began to circulate, making the rounds to the early Christian communities. This one is from a letter called “First Peter” that is recorded in our New Testament. It reminds people that the story of Jesus is about new birth for all people, and we are to be seeds of God’s life-giving love.

**Lyn Ettinger-Harwell (VIDEO):**

Christ was chosen before the creation of the world, but was only revealed at the end of time.

This was done for you, who through Christ are faithful to the God who raised him from the dead and gave him glory. So now, your faith and hope should rest in God.

As you set yourselves apart by your obedience to the truth so that you might have genuine affection for your fellow believers, love each other deeply and earnestly.

Do this because you have been given new birth—not from the type of seed that decays but from seed that doesn’t.

This seed is God’s life-giving and enduring word.

**Gaye:**

Jesus’ table ministry was a preeminent way that he showed and shared a depth of love unseen in his time. He ate and spent time with those considered unworthy of his attention. Even in his post-resurrection appearances, it was in the breaking of bread that he was “recognized”—perhaps because so many times in his ministry, it was at tables that he invited people to open up and share “straight from the heart”—getting right to the heart of the matter. As we gather this day, we remember that, at the heart, his message was unconditional love. To offer ourselves “straight from the heart” is the seed he planted in us, and this is the growth we must continue to nurture. **Message**

## Action Response

### *Maribeth Peiniger (VIDEO):*

I invite you put both hands on your heart,  
close your eyes for just a moment,  
and think about a message of love.

Then reach out and connect your hands with those who are with you, around or across the table. If you are alone, reach out your hands to your sides and imagine two people on either side of you who you want to offer love to right now.

You can reach out with text or call later to let them know you were thinking of them at this moment. In this moment, we just let this gesture plant more seeds of love, straight from the heart

## Breaking Open our Lives with Discussion

### *Augusta Fleming (VIDEO):*

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 shared with people straight from his heart.

What have you found yourself saying to people “straight from the heart” in the last few weeks that you didn’t say as much before?

Have you heard or seen something this week that felt loving?

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

Let’s take some time at our tables to talk about this question.

We’ll take a couple of minutes to chat.

*For instance, Let’s complete this sentence, “I see Love shared (in/when/where) \_\_\_\_\_.*

## Breaking Open our Hearts with Prayer

### **Gaye: Hurts & Hallelujahs**

**Glenn:** 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 say out loud *[or in chat/comments]* 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.

*[pause and allow people a minute to do so]*

We also want to call to mind, the people we cannot name, whose names we do not know. But we know they need our prayers and God's comfort.

For those who have lost loved ones...

For those who are sick and 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 those who are helping and are so very tired...

For those who are struggling to find friends, food, and comfort...

For those who are afraid...

*[add other categories as feels right]*

Let us take another breath of Spirit as our "Amen."  
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. **Lord's Prayer**

## PRAISE GOD!

**Robyn Firth (VIDEO):**

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, in your chair, or 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. And let’s start with this affirmation,

**Robyn Firth (AUDIO):**

**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!**

**Robyn Firth (VIDEO):**

Let’s get to the Heart of the Matter!!  
Dance Party!

*[start the music and jam out]*

**Dance Party Song**

**YouTube???**

***Straight from the Heart***

**Bryan Adams “Straight from the Heart”**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ebtjgK8NNU>

Sheet music: <https://www.musicnotes.com/sheetmusic/mtd.asp?ppn=MN0089813>

## HAVE GOODWILL

**Stevie (VIDEO):**

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. I love you straight from the heart."

What can we do to create more love in our household, in our family, in our relationships with those we cannot be with right now?

How can we offer love to those who are working so hard right now?

How can we offer love to those who feel short of love, peace or comfort? Make your own plan today.

**Benediction** *(based on Psalm 16)*

**Gaye:**

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, whispering "Peace be with you,"  
guiding and directing your path.

So do not live in fear, but in joy.

Take heart! This is the heart of the matter.

**Amen.**

**Postlude Jam**