

“Hearts Overflowing”

May 3, 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.”

This week you will want to have a **glass full to the brim with water and a larger bowl to hold the glass.**

Don't forget to begin sharing your **Hurts & Hallelujahs** in the comments section of our Live Post

SPEND TIME

Gaye:

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.

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,	Heartbeat of Creation,
help us to take this time	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.

Let's 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]

Opening Song to Join Our Voices As One

NCH 563

We Cannot Own the Sunlit Sky

1 We can - not own the sun - lit sky, the moon, the wild - flowers
 2 When bod - ies shiv - er in the night and, wea - ry, wait for
 3 God calls hu - man - i - ty to join as part - ners in cre -

grow - ing, for we are part of all that is with -
 morn - ing, when chil - dren have no bread but tears, and
 a - ting a fu - ture free from want or fear, life's

in life's riv - er flow - ing. With o - pen hands re -
 war - horns sound their warn - ing, God calls hu - man - i -
 good - ness cel - e - brat - ing. That new world beck - ons

ceive and share the gifts of God's cre - a - tion, that
 ty to wake, to join in com - mon la - bor, that
 from a - far, in - vites our shared en - deav - or, that

all may have a - bun - dant life in ev - ery earth - ly na - tion.
 all may have a - bun - dant life in one - ness with their neigh - bor.
 all may have a - bun - dant life and peace en - dure for - ev - er.

BREAK BREAD

Blessing the Meal

Danny White (VIDEO):

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 this “repeat after me prayer”...

Danny White (AUDIO):

**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.**

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.

Although... please save a bite and a sip for our Sacrament of Holy Communion a bit later!!

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

Breaking Open the Word with Scripture

Gaye: 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 recognize this Shepherd who takes care of them as they hear his voice.

Laura Ettinger-Harwell (VIDEO): 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*

Tithes & Offerings

Robyn Firth

Sing My Way Back

Gaye:

There are so many ways to live life to the fullest right now—or, as another version of the scripture calls it—“living life abundantly.” Being together, either physically or virtually, is one important way for us in this moment. Perhaps we can keep up some of our “connection habits” we have exercised well beyond our time of isolation.

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

Laura Ettinger-Harwell (VIDEO):

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*

Gaye:

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.

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

Our hearts overflow with the grace and guidance we know from the Shepherd and we want that goodness for everyone. Glad and generous hearts overflow with love in so many ways.

Message

Action Response

Maribeth Peiniger (VIDEO):

Our response today is to place our worry 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.

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 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?

Breaking Open our Hearts with Prayer

Glenn: 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.

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...

Let us take another breath of Spirit.

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.

As our "Amen" let us share together the **Lord's Prayer**

Breaking Open our Community with Sacrament

As we gather here today in the sight of God
to join in Holy Communion,
know we are only a screen width apart.

The God of all creation is not beholden
to the bounds of time or place.

God transcends our physical distances
and parts the veil between us,
so that we may be together in this mystical space.

Through God and the mystery of Holy Communion,
we become one creation, one body, one church.

Join with me now in acknowledging our togetherness.

At the wedding feast, Jesus proclaimed
“My time has not yet come.”

Yet persuaded by his beloved mother Mary,
he turned water into wine.

I ask you now to collect what elements you may
to serve as your bread and fruit of the vine,
knowing that prevenient grace will justify your choices
in the sight of God.

The table is set. Let us proceed.

God is with you.

It is good to be joyful as we give thanks to You, Holy God.

You created us in your image and gave us life with your breath.

Your love does not falter, even as we neglect that love.

You liberated us from our bondage,
and continue to ease our burden.

With joy, and with all of Creation, we proclaim:

Repeat after me... Holy, Holy, Holy...

God of Power and Grace...

Heaven and Earth are full of your glory ...

Hosanna in the highest...

You are Holy God, and blessed is your Child Jesus

Your Spirit descended upon him so that he could

proclaim good news to the poor

heal the sick, feed the hungry,

cavort with sinners, and liberate the captive

His life gave birth to the church through a new covenant

one born out the Holy Spirit

whose power dwells within us today.

On the night in which he gave himself over,

Jesus took bread,

gave thanks to you, God, and said,

“take, eat, this is my body which is given for you.

Do this in remembrance of me.”

After dinner, he took the cup,

gave thanks, and said,

“This is my lifeblood of the new covenant,

poured out for you and for many.

Drink from it in remembrance of me.”

In remembering the mighty acts of Jesus,

we offer ourselves as a living witness

proclaiming the mystery of faith:

Repeat after me... Christ has died...

Christ has risen...

Christ will come again...

Pour out your Spirit on all those gathered together
in this Holy space of time and intention,
and on the gift of these elements
Make them be for us the body and love of Jesus Christ,
that we may be the body of Christ and love of all for the world
Your Spirit makes us one with Christ and one with each other
It binds, blends, and multiplies us,
as we minister to the world, as one beloved community of faith
singing your praises on Earth and in Heaven
until we feast at the divine table in perfect harmony

This bread is made from many grains from many fields,
yet was formed into a single loaf.
Because there is one God

We, though many, and in many places, are one body
Join us as we partake in the body of Christ, in remembrance of him.

The Body of Christ given for you

This fruit of the vine is made by many hands,
from many places, yet pours freely.

Join us as we share in this blessing of the cup of the new covenant.
The cup of blessing poured out for you and for all

Eternal God, thank you for this mystery of faith,
where you have given yourself to us.

May we go into the world strengthened by your Spirit,
in a spirit of generosity, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

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, 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 dance and let our hearts overflow!!

Dance Party Song

Stevie Astley

This Little Light of Mine
(Quarantine Version)

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. My love 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 feel short of love, peace or comfort? Make your own plan today.

Gaye:

Just as an example... we've decided, here, to create a "Feast of Abundance Box."

Find a box or grocery bag to collect food donations for the next few weeks. Use markers or paints to decorate it with symbols of love. Include messages and intentions like "straight from the heart" or "feast of love." Go through your pantry and take out things you wish to donate.

The next time you go to the grocery store, intentionally purchase items to add to your food donation collection. When you place any items in the box/bag, say a prayer of thanks for those that prepared it, and a prayer of goodwill for those who will eat it.

And as we blessed our meal in worship, bless this also - hold it and say "grateful!" Then, whenever we are cleared to come back to sanctuary worship, bring the box to our Food Pantry!!!

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

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1p7EQX4cskU>

God’s Great Dance Floor by Chris Tomlin