

Some thoughts...

This resource was initiated by St. Andrew's Haney United Church, Maple Ridge, BC and their minister, the Rev. Richard Bott.

It was created to help with our growth in our collective discipleship, as represented in the acronym UNITED:

- Uplifted through daily prayer.
- Nourished in weekly worship.
- Informed through daily conversation with scripture.
- Taking God's love to others through service.
- Engaged in spiritual relationships.
- Donating back God's gifts of time, talent & treasure.

A number of participants in the life of the congregation noted how difficult it was to find a community with whom they could worship, when they were away from home. For some, it was because they vacationed in areas that were remote from communities with churches, while for others, time was often spent in countries and cultures where finding worship gatherings in English was extremely difficult.

The "Nourished in Weekly Worship" resource is here for these in-between times, when we can't easily worship with the larger community. Twenty such services have been created, spanning the liturgical calendar.

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ST. ANDREW'S HANEY UNITED CHURCH

Do you really love me? (an Easterzide Reflection)

Nourished in Weekly Worship
(A resource for when you can't
gather with a worshiping
community.)

Created by:
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If you are worshipping alone, please read both parts out loud. If not, invite someone to speak the "One" part.

Gathering Time:

If you have a candle or can make a fire, do so. Then take a moment in silence, to gather yourself. This is a special time – a time when you are intentionally turning your thoughts towards the presence of the Divine.

Call to Gather:

One: The leaders of the community had believed that his death would stop his dangerous message.

All: But God had other plans.

One: Those who sold their way of control and peace enforced with a sword and cross as the way to God's promised kingdom had trusted that Jesus' death would bring them peace and prosperity.

All: But God had other plans.

One: We dance at the edge of Easter sinking in to our hearts.

All: Our mourning turns to dancing as we contemplate the meaning of the empty tomb.

One: And dance we shall, as the power of God's love sinks in!

All: And dance we shall as our hearts and our lives are transformed by the thought – the knowledge – that God's love is stronger even than death!

One: Something indeed has happened! We feel Jesus with us still!

All: Come, let us take this time to really participate in God's continuing message of love - for us, for others, for all God's creation!

Opening Prayers:

All: God of new life, Easter life, draw us so close to your love that, like our sisters and brothers of so long ago, we too can not help

but live transformed lives. Place in us a burning desire for deep, connected, relationship with you. With your unconditional love, break through our fears of a vulnerable relationship with you. Help us to draw close. In the name of Jesus. Amen.

Song of Praise

(See 'Suggestions')

Prayer Before the Scripture::

One: Holy One, open our hearts and minds to these words of our ancestors in the faith.

All: May your Spirit-Breath give them new life, revealing you in their beauty, even in spite of the baggage they may carry in our world and in our hearts. Amen.

Scripture:

Two readings from the gospel according to John. The first, background from chapter 13 verses 36 to 38, and the second, main reading from chapter 21 verses 12 to 19:

Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, where are you going?" Jesus answered, "Where I am going, you cannot follow me now; but you will follow afterward." Peter said to him, "Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you." Jesus answered, "Will you lay down your life for me? Very truly, I tell you, before the cock crows, you will have denied me three times.

Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." Now none of the disciples dared to ask him, "Who are you?" because they knew it was the Lord. Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. This was now the third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my lambs."

A second time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Tend my sheep."

He said to him the third time, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" And he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep. Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go." (He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.) After this he said to him, "Follow me."

One: Hear the witness of God's people!

All: Alleluia! Amen!

Questions for Reflection:

(Please feel free to use these questions as "starting points" for an exploration of the text... but don't worry if you go off in other directions!)

Peter was told that he wasn't ready to follow all the way, even though he wanted to. How ready are we?

Three times, Peter denies knowing Jesus. Three times, the risen Christ offers Peter a chance to profess his love. Then Christ re-asks Peter to follow him. Have you ever been given such a gracious second chance to undo something?

Can we respond as fully to Christ's call to take up his ministry, his Way, if we shy away from his invitation to feel God's unconditional love of ourselves? Of others? Of all creation?

What does Jesus ask Peter to do after each affirmation of love? Given the actual ministry of Jesus, what might this mean for us? Is this to be taken literally? Is this to be taken spiritually? Is it both? What does Jesus ask of those who follow him?

If we really love God through Christ, what are we willing to do to follow Christ's Way? What are we not willing to do? What do you think Jesus really asks of us?

Are we trying to cultivate a deeper relationship with Christ, or are we satisfied with being acquaintances?

Song of Praise (See 'Suggestions')

Prayers of the People:

You are invited to place your cupped hands into your lap. As each sentence is read, you are invited to bring to mind people, places, or events that fit those words.

Imagine the Earth as seen from space, now sitting in your hands.

Tiny. Fragile.

A gift from God without whom nothing would be possible.

All our existence happens here.

All our wars.

All our peacemaking.

All our watching of sunsets.

All our growing. All our dying.

All that we are thankful for.

All that we regret.

All who need our prayers for help and support.

All who have reasons to celebrate.

Imagine Christ holding the Earth with you.

Imagine the Spirit enfolding the both of you as you hold the Earth and all that it holds.

To his question "Do you love me?" you are invited to reply "You know that deep down I love you. Help me to love you more. Help me to love all that you love."

Give the Earth, and yourself, back to Christ, saying "Hear our prayers, and in your love, answer."

Jesus' Prayer:

God – our Father and Mother,

who art in heaven,

hallowed by thy Name.

Thy kingdom come,
thy will be done on earth,

as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread

and forgive us our trespasses

as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil.

for thine is the kingdom, the power,

and the glory – forever and ever. Amen.

Silent time:

Take a few moments to contemplate what you've shared this day. Pour those thoughts and feelings and questions and hopes into God's love. When it seems that everyone is ready, close with the commissioning and blessing.

Commissioning & Blessing::

All: We go into God's world
with our eyes open.
We go into God's world
with our hearts open.
We go into God's world
with our lives open.

**And we know God goes with us.
Alleluia!
Amen.**

Suggestions for the 'Songs of Praise':

If you aren't comfortable singing (or don't know the tunes), perhaps there is something on your iPod, mp3 player, or available CDs that would be appropriate to listen to. (Be creative!)

If you have a copy of Songs for a Gospel People (SGP), Voices United (VU), or More Voices (MV), consider finding songs in these or the following suggestions:

Jesus Calls Us O'er The Tumult (VU 562)

Worship The Lord (SGP 116, VU 401)

We have this ministry (SGP 76, VU 510)

Long Before The Night (VU 282)

What Does The Lord Require Of You?
(VU 701)

Lord Jesus, You Shall Be My Song

(Servant Song) (SGP 20, VU 641)

Psalm 42: As Longs The Hart (SGP 89)

As The Deer Pants (VU 766)

Go, Make A Diff'rence (MV 209)