

## 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

### Opening our Eyes (an Eastertide Reflection)

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

Created by:  
the Rev. Richard Bott  
St. Andrew's - Haney United Church  
Maple Ridge, BC

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

### Gathering Time:

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: When we went to the tomb,  
**All: our eyes were closed by grief.**  
One: When we sat in the upper room,  
**All: our eyes were closed by fear.**  
One: When we walked the long road,  
**All: our eyes were closed by confusion.**  
One: But, then, our eyes were opened -  
**All: by the calling of our name,  
by the words, "Peace be with you,"  
by the breaking of bread.**  
One: And when our eyes were opened -  
**All: we saw the Risen One.**  
One: In this time together,  
in this time of worship,  
**All: may our eyes be opened.  
May we see Christ  
in our neighbour,  
and may our neighbour  
see Christ in us.**  
One: So we say, "Alleluia!"  
**All: Alleluia!**  
One: So we say, "Amen!"  
**All: Amen!**

### Opening Prayers:

**All: Open our hearts, Love Divine,  
open our minds.  
Open our lives  
and our souls,  
and our loves.  
In this place,  
help us to see -  
your Presence in all creation,  
your Life alive in our hearts,  
your Passion,  
moving the world.  
Open our eyes, O God!  
In your Name and your Love  
we pray. Amen.**

## Song of Praise

(See 'Suggestions')

### Prayer Before the Scripture::

One: We come to the text,  
**All: ready to listen.**  
One: We come to the words,  
**All: ready to hear.**  
One: We come to the Spirit,  
**All: ready to be in conversation.**  
One: May the words of our mouths,  
and the meditations of our hearts,  
be acceptable in your sight,  
Loving God!

### Scripture:

A reading from the gospel according to John chapter 20 verses 19 to 28:

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Religious Authorities, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.' After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.' When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.'

But Thomas (who was called the Twin\*), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, 'We have seen the Lord.' But he said to them, 'Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.' A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.' Then he said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.'

Thomas answered him, 'My Lord and my God!'

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!)

Why were the disciples gathered in "the upper room" with the doors locked?

What do you think they were waiting for?

Does Thomas' response to their experience make any sense to you?

How much do we wish for the certainty of the resurrection that the disciples gained?

Is there a difference between "believing" and "knowing"? What do you "know" about the Christ? What do you "believe" about the Christ?

Does this story speak to your life right now? How?

## Song of Praise (See 'Suggestions')

### Prayers of the People:

You are invited to place your cupped hands into your lap.

Take a moment to imagine a person you know who is in need of help and support. Imagine placing their name and face into your hands. Let them represent all people and places that need God's love.

Take a moment to remember a time in which you did not live out God's love. Recognize that God loves us, no matter what – and that it is important to offer those things we do that come between us and others, and between us and God. Imagine placing this time in your hands. Let it represent all such time in life.

Take a moment to think about something for which you are truly thankful. Place the image of that, along with the thankfulness into your hands, letting it represent all for which you are thankful in your life.

Imagin all these things together, then raise your cupped hands saying, "God, 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* consider:

Teach me, God, to wonder (36)  
Seek ye first the kingdom of God (83)  
As longs the heart (89)  
Morning has broken (103)

If you have a copy of *Voices United*  
consider:

We Meet You, O Christ (183)  
You Tell Me That the Lord is Risen (185)  
Now the Green Blade Rises (186)  
or other Easter hymns (155 to 187)

*In the Public Domain:*

### Open My Eyes, That I May See

Open my eyes, that I may see  
glimpses of truth thou hast for me;  
place in my hands the wonderful key  
that shall unclasp and set me free.  
*Refrain: Silently now, I wait for thee,  
ready, my God, thy will to see.  
Open my eyes, illumine me,  
Spirit divine!*

Open my ears, that I may hear  
voices of truth thou sendest clear;  
and while the wavenotes fall on my ear,  
everything false will disappear. *Refrain.*

Open my mouth, and let me bear  
gladly the warm truth everywhere;  
open my heart and let me prepare  
love with thy children thus to share. *Refrain*

(Clara H. Scott, 1895)

### Jesus Christ is Risen Today

Jesus Christ is risen today,\*  
all creation join to say;  
raise your joys and triumphs high;  
sing, O heavens, and earth reply:

Love's redeeming work is done,  
fought the fight, the battle won.  
Lo, our sun's eclipse is o'er!  
Lo, he dwells in death no more!

Lives again our glorious King:  
where, O death, is now your sting?  
Once he died, our souls to save:  
where your victory, O grave?

Sing we to our God above,  
praise eternal as God's love;  
praise our God, ye heavenly host,  
praise the Son and Holy Ghost.

(\* Each line is followed by "hallelujah".)

(v1-3 – Charles Wesley, 1739; v. 4 – Lyra Davidica, 1708)

### Christ is Risen from the Dead

Christ is risen from the dead,  
glory, hallelujah!  
Christ is risen from the dead,  
glory, hallelujah!  
Jesus Christ is risen, glory  
hallelujah!  
Jesus Christ is risen, glory  
hallelujah! (*Repeat from beginning.*)

(Hasidic folk melody.)