



May you have a Restorative Easter

Over the last ten years there has been an explosion of television shows and series focussed on building and furniture restoration. Shows like The Repair Shop, Fixer Upper, The Block, Flip or Flop all focus on restoring the old and bringing life to the discarded.

This Lent, join us as we learn about the greatest restoration project of all time. Over seven weeks we'll focus on God's plan for humankind – a plan for restoration, a plan for new life, a plan that was both unexpected and brilliant. Each week is themed with a title and tool for a toolbox:

1. The Great Restoration Project (Toolbox)
2. What's the plan? Setting up and Sticking to It (Carpenter's Pencil)
3. A Labour of Love – No Pain, No Gain (Sandpaper)
4. Flip or Flop?! (Spirit Level and Tape Measure)
5. Master and Apprentice (Drill)
6. Palm Sunday: An Unexpected Treasure (Varnish brush)
Good Friday: Please Help! (Cloth and Hammer)
7. Easter Sunday: Sharing Your Project with the World



This resource has been created by a collaborative team from across the Queensland Synod of the Uniting Church, to help congregations, communities and families celebrate Lent together intergenerationally. In this document you will find bible readings, themes and suggestions for prayers, videos, and activities, to assist with weekly worship preparation for the seven Sundays of Lent, Easter, and Good Friday.

This resource is also connected with the **2024 Lent Bible Reflections** which, used together, can enhance Family and Household Nurture by connecting what happens in worship on Sunday, with everyday life. The materials have suggestions for encounters with Jesus and exploring God's Big Story, while fostering intergenerational connections. The full suite of resources is available to download at <https://ucaql.com.au/plenty/discipleship/seasonal-discipleship-resources/>

What's Included?

Each week includes biblical and restoration themes to get you thinking, and an Interactive activity, featuring a Toolbox and Tools with the words "The Great Restoration Project" that can be used to create a visual and interactive part in your worship space to form a focal point for reflection during the service. Each week, a tool will be added to the toolbox as a reminder of the weekly themes, Bible readings, and restorative practice. Instructions and templates for the toolbox and tools are included at the end of this document. You might also like to find and display a piece of furniture that needs restoration, and actively restore it during the service, or during the week as you follow the prompts each week.

There is also some Liturgy including a Call to Worship, Prayers, and additional suggestions for Bible readings, Tool and Restoration Fun Facts, and a Restorative Practice to try each week. During worship we have a unique opportunity to model to those in our community what it can look and feel like to encounter Jesus, experience Intergenerational connections, and hear God's Big Story. We encourage you to lean in and explore what this means for you and your community.

Being Intergenerational

At the heart of the Uniting Church's understanding of what it means to belong to the Church is an affirmation that every member, of every age, from every culture, no matter their gender, is called to confess the faith of Christ crucified and to be a follower of the way of Jesus. Through the gift of the Spirit, every member is equipped for their discipleship and expected to use those gifts for ministry in the world, (Basis of Union, paragraph 13).

As a Christ-centred community, the Uniting Church is called to be a place where our gathered life, including worship, embraces all generations. Because of this, and the impact that Intergenerational connections have on Life-long Discipleship, these advent materials are designed specifically to help give you some easy-to-use tools to practice and model being intergenerational in your community. For more information and tools for exploring Being Intergenerational visit

<https://uniting.church/intergenerational-vision/>

What is Being Intergenerational?

- Being intergenerational involves at least two different generations **intentionally engaging together**, NOT everyone being together all the time!
- Being intergenerational involves **valuing and respecting each generation**, NOT simply focusing more on younger generations!
- Being intergenerational involves different generations **engaging together in respectful relationships** marked by **mutuality** (all benefit), **reciprocity** (all give and receive) and the **recognition that God equally values all**, NOT just being in the same space at the same time!
- Being intergenerational involves **intentional action, the modelling and deliberate cultivation** of the values, attitudes and behaviours that enhance intergenerational engagement, from all those in leadership and who have influence, NOT just those in specific roles!
- Being intergenerational is primarily about **creating, encouraging, and deepening relationships** across generations, NOT about activities, programs, or style of worship!

When thinking about making worship more intergenerational:

- Give high priority to visuals and movement,
- Include fun, excitement, and surprise!
- Provide opportunities for interaction and conversation in small intergenerational groups within the worship service, and encourage these before and after worship too,
- Provide multi-sensory experiences, including touch and taste as well as sight and hearing,
- Use language that is hospitable, invitational, inclusive and easily understood by everyone,
- Ensure explanations, invitations and directions are clear so that participants know what is expected, and that they have permission to try (or not to),
- Involve different people from a range of generations in preparing and leading, and
- Ensure invitations to programmed movement (e.g., actions, dancing, clapping during songs) are inclusive of all, respectful of different abilities, and can be modified to suit as required.

Visit <https://uniting.church/being-an-intergen-church-papers/> for more.

We pray that this resource will help you prepare worship that connects your community with the restoration we find in the gift of Jesus. If you have any questions about the resources, or how to use them, please contact the Qld Synod Mission Engagement Team at communications@ucaqld.com.au or Jess Pinkerton at Jessica.pinkerton@ucaqld.com.au.

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Week One - 18th February **The Great Restoration Project Toolbox**

Week One will start our focus on restoration. Before we think about restoration though, we first need to recognise that something needs restoring. We'll think about the places in our lives, our communities and Church that need God's restoration, and we'll open ourselves up to what God can do in those places. We'll also be challenged to think of and recognise the people or groups of people we may reject like we reject old furniture.

The Bible readings will start to introduce us to God's restorative plan for all people – a plan that shows God's ongoing faithfulness, provision, and unexpected solutions. We'll be reminded that we are part of God's Story, and that God's plan extends to us today.

[Lectionary Readings:](#) Genesis 9: 8-17, Psalm 25: 1-10, 1 Peter 3: 18-22, Mark 1: 9-15

Biblical Themes

- Introduction of God's plan
 - Covenant with Noah and all flesh on Earth.
 - Jesus – the coming of God's upside-down kingdom (Baptism and time in the wilderness)
- Wilderness precedes reliance on God's care, and provision precedes the coming of God's kingdom.
- God's steadfast love and faithfulness

Restoration Themes

- What is restoration? "The act or process of returning something to its original condition by repairing it, cleaning it, etc." The Britannica Dictionary.
- Even the most destroyed or neglected pieces of furniture and houses can be restored.
- For many people, it's easy to throw out or discard things that no longer look bright and flashy but for others, they see the potential in these objects.
- Who do we reject and overlook in society? What would happen if we saw these people as God's creation, people who just like us, who can be restored by God's transformative love?
- What parts of our lives needs restoration?
- Look at these before and after pictures. What would you have discarded? What would you have restored? <https://www.boredpanda.com/interesting-old-things-restoration/>

Interactive Activity – Restoration Project & Toolbox

This week, display a piece of furniture that needs restoration. Actively look at, and touch (if safe) the furniture imagining what the piece of furniture once looked like, and how it was used. Chat about what needs to happen for this piece of furniture to be restored to its original condition, or to a new and improved condition.

During prayers of confession, or a time of reflection, invite people to write down names of people (individuals or groups) who are often discarded or rejected by society. People may also like to write a prayer for these people. Place these bits of paper all over the piece of furniture.

Also, introduce the toolbox – each week we'll add a tool that will help us with the restoration of the furniture, and our lives. You could add the prayers of confession to the toolbox instead of on the restoration project.

Restoration and Tool Facts

- Toolboxes became popular in the industrial age. In 1904, Harry Gurstner, a patternmaker, made a toolchest for his personal use. It took him a year to make. His coworkers liked it and wanted him to make more. In 1906, he started his own tool chest company in Dayton, Ohio. You can read more at <https://www.ctemag.com/news/industry-news/purpose-and-history-toolbox>
- Read about the meticulously designed toolbox/chest by Henry Studley. It's not only functional, but also a work of art. How many tools can you count? <https://whyevolutionistrue.com/2018/11/27/henry-studleys-beautiful-tool-chest/>
- Look at these before and after pictures. What would you have discarded? What would you have restored? <https://www.boredpanda.com/interesting-old-things-restoration/>

Bible Reading Ideas

Genesis 9: 8-17

- Explain what a covenant is, and then encourage people to count how many times they hear the word 'covenant' during the reading (7 times). You might like to do the Auslan sign for covenant/agreement found here: <https://auslan.org.au/dictionary/words/covenant-1.html>
- Close your eyes and imagine this scene. What do you see? What do you feel? What is God saying to you through this reading.

Mark 1: 9-15

- Mark fits a lot into these seven verses. If it was a play, there'd be three separate scenes. If it was TV show, there'd be two ad breaks. Read this in three scenes, pausing to reflect on what's happening to and around Jesus. Once you've read it through with pauses, read it through with no pauses.
- Read this passage with three different voices – narrator, God, and Jesus.

Videos and Songs

- The Bible Project: Covenants <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/covenants/>

Call to Worship

Based on Genesis 9, Psalm 25, Mark 1

(from <https://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/2358/worship-elements-february-21-2021>)

God said, "I will be your God."

God has promised. God remembers. God is faithful.

God said, "I will lead you in the paths of truth."

God has promised. God remembers. God is faithful.

God said, "I will forgive you."

God has promised. God remembers. God is faithful.

God said, "My kingdom is near."

God has promised. God remembers. God is faithful.

Prayer of Confession

During this prayer, you might like to do the Auslan sign for Sorry each time the word is said. Learn the action and encourage others to sign along <https://auslan.org.au/dictionary/words/sorry-1.html>

Have the words on screen for the congregation to join in the bold responses, signing sorry as they do.

God of Creation,

You created a beautiful world - a world teeming with your creations - big and small, a world of colour, sounds, smells, and textures. A world filled with an abundance of blessings. A world perfect for all humanity.

We come to you, today, aware that we haven't looked after and nurtured your world. We have failed to realise that your creation needs care and attention. **For this we are sorry.**

We come to you, today, often not realising the pain that we've caused when we've rejected, discarded, and turned our back on your people. **For this we are sorry.**

We come to you, today, aware that so often we are focussed on our own concerns and worries that we fail to see the pain and hurt of those around us. **For this we are sorry.**

We come to you, today, knowing that we are often blinded to the restorative work that you have done, and continue to do, in our lives and those around us. **For this we are sorry.**

We come to you, today, acknowledging that there have been times and ways that you have called us to work with you for healing and restoration that we have not heeded. **For this we are sorry.**

Please give us a new understanding and realisation of your restorative power and help us be open to you working on us, and through us to bring healing to the World.

Amen

Restorative Practice

Breath Prayer

The Breath prayer is an ancient way of practicing the presence of God. It is a way to cultivate a posture of constant awareness and availability toward God. Like prayers of repetition, breath prayers can be phrases from tradition, scripture, or hymnody. We repeat these phrases with our lips, carry them in our hearts, and whisper them under our breath. Practice your breath prayer at special times when you give God your undivided attention. Continue to say your breath prayer under your breath; let it become a habit of the heart. (Companions in Christ)

You might like to use one of the following, written by Sarah Bessey, or make your own:

Inhale: Give me an imagination for healing,

Exhale: You are the Creator and Sustainer of our Restoration

Inhale: We are invited to participate in the healing of the world,

Exhale: Give me courage to say yes to your good pathway.

Exhale: I release my worry and what-ifs,

Inhale: And I welcome Your prevailing peace and holy possibilities.

Week Two - 25th February What's the Plan? Carpenter's Pencil

Week Two will focus on the often-long-term nature of restoration projects and the importance of having a project plan. We'll reflect on, and recognise, God's faithfulness in our lives, especially during tough or confusing times, and how this impacts our ongoing faith journey.

The Bible readings will continue to speak of God's restorative plan for all people, a long-term plan that was not always easy, straight-forward, or believable.

Lectionary Readings Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16, Psalm 22:23-31, Romans 4:13-25, Mark 8:31-38, Mark 9:2-9

Biblical Themes

- God's long-term plan:
 - God's faithfulness - Covenant with Abraham
 - Faith in the unseen and seemingly impossible
 - Transfiguration
 - Jesus' future suffering for our sake.
- Future generations will be told about the awesomeness of God.
 - God's faithfulness and open invitation to all

Restoration Theme

- It's important to have a plan to get the best outcome for the restoration. Not only do you need to think about the intended final restoration outcome, but you also need to understand the history of the piece of furniture/house so that you can 'stay true' to the item you are restoring.
- What does the project plan involve? How are we 'staying true' to the history of the item we're restoring?
- What is God saying to us as individuals and as a Church about our plan for restoration? How has God guided us and worked through us, and how does that impact our future plans? How are we actively restoring our lives, and the lives of people in our Church and community?
- Read about common restoration mistakes (often because planning didn't happen). <https://touchoforanges.com/blogs/news/7-common-mistakes-in-antique-wood-restoration>
- Look up restoration fails like those below. What planning needs to occur so that the restoration goes smoothly? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1JWXq8buGHk>



Interactive Activity – Carpenter’s Pencil

This week, add a Carpenter’s Pencil to the toolbox.

During the prayer of confession or reflection time use a carpenter’s pencil to add your initials to the piece of furniture (maybe the underside of a table or a part that will be covered up or stripped back). Alternatively, you could write them on paper and place them in the toolbox).

Thank God for the ways he has been faithful in your life. Say sorry for the times when you haven’t followed God’s plan. Pray for your Church – what is God saying to you about restoration?

Tool Facts

- Carpenter’s Pencils are used by builders, because they are suitable for marking on rough surfaces, such as concrete or stone. Their shape and lead density aid in marking legible lines with a straight edge that are clear and easy to follow with a saw blade.
https://www.desaishardware.co.za/howto_pencil.html
- The flat pencil is one of the oldest pencil types. The first versions were made by hollowing out sticks of juniper wood. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carpenter_pencil#
- The oldest surviving pencil is a German carpenter's pencil dating from the 17th Century and now in the Faber-Castell collection. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carpenter_pencil#

Bible Reading Ideas

Genesis 17: 1-7, 15-16:

- How many times does the word covenant get mentioned in this reading? (4 times). What else do you hear repeated multiple times?
- Use a pencil to write down the words or phrases that jump out at you? Share these words/phrases with people sitting near you.
- Watch the Saddleback video below

Mark 9: 2-9

- Use three readers to read this passage – narrator, Peter, and God.
- Try Engage Worship’s noisy reading <https://engageworship.org/ideas/mark-#>
- Watch the below Lumo and Saddleback videos.

Videos and Songs

- The Transfiguration, Lumo <https://www.bible.com/videos/25272-the-transfiguration>
- The Transfiguration, Saddleback Kids <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KfT5mInsr9A>

Call to Worship

Have words on screen for the congregation to join in the bold responses or use two readers.

We come today, as individuals, with many different emotions and thoughts.

Some of us come with praise on our lips.

You are welcome. You are loved. You are accepted.

Some of us come confused and anxious.

You are welcome. You are loved. You are accepted.

Some of us come fully aware of God's promises and blessings.

You are welcome. You are loved. You are accepted.

Some of us come feeling empty and unsure of the future.

You are welcome. You are loved. You are accepted.

Some of us are excited and want to share our excitement with everyone we meet.

You are welcome. You are loved. You are accepted.

Some of us are exhausted, wanting to protect and conserve the last bit of energy we have.

You are welcome. You are loved. You are accepted.

May we all know God's restorative presence today.

Prayer of Confession

God of Faithfulness,

Over and over, we have seen you at work in people and in situations.

Throughout the Bible, and throughout history, you have drawn near to your people, doing the seemingly impossible, bringing healing and restoration.

And yet, so often we fail to recognise your guiding hand on our lives, and on the lives of those around us.

So often, we fail to trust that you have a plan and choose to go our own way.

So often, we fail to see your big picture, and instead only focus on what's right in front of us.

Please forgive us for these times. Open our eyes to your healing power and prompt us to act to bring healing and love to others.

Amen

Restorative Practice

Spiritual Journey Drawing (from Companions in Christ)

Use a pencil to draw your spiritual journey. Draw a line that represents your journey, showing the ups and downs, turns, circles, or whatever pattern seems right to you. Mark particularly significant events with symbols that represent what they have meant in your faith life. You may like to add colour to express your feelings. In addition, you might like to take some time to journal or draw this week.

Thank God for being present in your life and ask God to continue to work through you and with you in the years to come.

As an alternative, use a pencil, to draw a line down the middle of a page. On the left side, name one to three aspects of your old self that you want to find the strength to “put away”. On the right side, name one to three aspects of your “new self, created according to the likeness of God” that you hope to “put on”. Share with God your desire to grow or be restored and ask for the grace to move toward your goal.

Week Three - 3rd March**A Labour of Love****Sandpaper**

Week Three will focus on the need for God's guidance and transformative power in our lives, and Churches, especially in times of pain and struggles. We'll reflect on the ways that God has been working on and through us, sometimes in subtle ways using sandpaper and sometimes in 'can't ignore' ways using a sledgehammer.

The Bible readings will show God's faithfulness and commitment to us even when we turn our backs on God. God continually draws near and shows us a better way.

Lectionary Readings Exodus 20:1-17, Psalm 19, 1 Corinthians 1: 18-25, John 2: 13-22

Other Readings: Philippians 2: 1-11

Biblical Themes

- God drawing near and helping humans to stay on track – our embodied response to God's faithfulness to us
 - Ten commandments.
 - Jesus in the Temple.
- An awareness that we need God to guide and support us.
- The foolishness of sacrificing all to gain all.
- Finding and reclaiming the true heart of worship.
- Humbling ourselves, like Jesus.

Restoration Themes

- Often it takes a long time, and a lot of 'blood, sweat and tears', to restore furniture and houses. (see Grand Designs <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7iqQYZwL-Qo>)
- Often projects require stripping back (or smashing) before the potential of the restoration is made visible.
- What do we need to strip back in our lives or Church? How do you feel about entrusting this process to God?
- Think about times in your life, or your Church's life, when it felt like God was stripping things back in readiness for what was to come.
- Think about times when God has been doing 'hard' work in your life or Church – did it feel like sandpaper? A Saw? A Sledgehammer? Or something else?

Quote

God isn't really the great theme of the Bible. God isn't really *taught* in the Bible; God is *assumed*. There's never any question that there is a Transcendent Other. The problem is *whether this God is good and trustworthy* and *how to remain in contact with this subtle Transcendence*. The path agreed upon by all the monks, hermits, mystics, and serious seekers was a path of descent and an almost-complete rejection of the ego's desire for achievement, performance, success, power, status, war,

and money. The emptiness, waiting, needing, and expecting of the path of descent created a space within where God could show Godself as good, as loving, and faithful.

Christians called this downward path, the Way of the Cross, The Desert Fathers and Mothers called it the Way of the Desert. In Philippians, Paul called it *kenosis*, the way of self-emptying: “Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and become obedient unto death, even death on a Cross” (Philippians 2: 5-8) Richard Rohr, *A Spring Within Us*, P 113

Interactive Activity - Sandpaper

This week we'll add sandpaper to our toolbox.

During prayers of confession, or a time of reflection, you might invite people to come and use the sandpaper on the piece of furniture being restored, or gently rub fingers over a piece of sandpaper.

During this time, invite people to talk to God about the things in their lives that need stripping back, or where God is at work already. Ask God to reveal the places in the Church that need stripping back, or where God is at work already.

Restoration and Tool Facts

- Sandpaper is a special thick paper with a rough, abrasive surface. Painters will often sand a wall with sandpaper before painting it. Woodworkers use sandpaper to smooth wooden surfaces, and sandpaper is also useful for removing loose paint, grit, or dirt when you're painting or refinishing something. <https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/sandpaper>
- The first recorded instance of sandpaper was in 13th-century China when crushed shells, seeds, and sand were bonded to parchment using natural gum. Shark skin (placoid scales) has also been used as an abrasive, and the rough scales of the Coelacanth are used for the same purpose by the natives of Comoros. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sandpaper>
- Sandpaper isn't made of ordinary sand – it's made of abrasive minerals like aluminium oxide or garnet that are glued onto a paper backing. <https://indianapublicmedia.org/amomentofscience/the-secrets-of-sandpaper.php>

Bible Reading Ideas

John 2: 13-22

- Before hearing the reading, give a background about the importance of the temple, and why people were selling animals.
- Watch Saddleback and Lumo videos (below)
- While reading the passage, you could play some Jewish market background sounds: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O-SFcGDdwhI> or <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qhUQeVnh86Y>

Philippians 2: 1-11

- Listen out for the words or phrases that jump out at you. What is God saying to you through this reading?

Videos

- Jesus Clears the Temple, Saddleback <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WLOVY5FD6wA>
- Gospel of John 2, Lumo <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=34RthjBwc4U>

Call to Worship

Based on Psalm 19 (Message Bible) adapted from <https://teaandtheology.com/psalm-19-call-to-worship/>

Have words on screen for the congregation to join in the bold responses or use two readers.

Congregation: Look! Listen! (add actions, if desired)

Leader: God's glory is on tour in the skies, God-craft on exhibit across the horizon.

C: Look! Listen!

L: *The revelation of GOD is whole and pulls our lives together.* The signposts of God are clear and point out the right road.

C: Look! Listen!

L: The life-maps of God are right, showing the way to joy. The directions of God are plain and easy on the eyes.

C: Look! Listen!

L: *God's reputation is twenty-four carat gold, with a lifetime guarantee. The decisions of God are accurate down to the nth degree.*

C: BUT WAIT, there's more**C: Look! Listen!**

L: God's Word is better than a diamond, better than a diamond set between emeralds.

C: Look! Listen!

L: God's Word warns us of danger and directs us to hidden treasure.

All: These are the words of our mouths. Accept them, O God.

Prayer of Confession

During the prayer of confession, play the sound of sandpaper rubbing <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DUNhgmFGA4E> or have someone use sandpaper on the restoration item.

Have the words on screen for the congregation to join in the bold responses or use two readers.

Oh God, we cry out to you today, aware of our many shortcomings and failures.

We fill our lives with things that distract us from being the people you call us to be.

Forgive us and strip back those distractions. (listen to sandpaper)

We grumble and complain and fail to see your love and grace.

Forgive us and strip back our complaints. (listen to sandpaper)

We follow our own selfish desires rather than loving those around us.

Forgive us and strip back our selfishness. (listen to sandpaper)

We neglect those who are struggling, ignorant of their pain and suffering.

Forgive us and strip back our ignorance. (listen to sandpaper)

We strive for power, success, and achievement rather than humbling ourselves before you.

Forgive us and strip back our pride. (listen to sandpaper)

You are the Lord, our God, who continues to form, mould, and restore us.

Please continue your work in us and remind us of your presence.

Amen

Restorative Practices

Nature Walk

Go for a nature walk and look at the beauty of the tall trees. The trees have weathered storms, fires, floods, human interaction and are still standing strong. Breathe in God's beautiful creation and be aware that God has been here long before the trees came into being and continues to be present. You might like to feel the roughness of the bark and think of the tough things in your life, and then feel the smoothness of the leaves, and thank God for being continually present with you during the good and the tough times.

Body Prayer (Richard Rohr, A Spring within us, P 249)

Julian of Norwich (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Julian_of_Norwich) experienced severe bodily pain when she was thirty years old. It was during her illness that she received visions, which she later recorded in Revelations of Divine Love.

Try this Body prayer based on the words from the Order of Julian's motto:

AWAIT (hands at waist, cupped up to receive): Await God's presence, not as you expect, hope, or imagine, but just as it is in this moment.

ALLOW (reach up, hands open): Allow a sense of God's presence (or not) to come and be what it is, without meeting your expectations.

ACCEPT (hands at heart, cupped towards body): Accept as a gift whatever comes or does not come. Accept that you are not in charge. Accept the infinity of God's presence, which is present whether you are aware, or not.

ATTEND (hands outstretched, ready to be responsive): Attend to those actions that God invites you to take from this stance of openness.

Week Four - 10th March **Flip or Flop?! Spirit Level and Tape Measure**

Week Four will focus on God’s continual love and support despite our sin, brokenness, whinging, and lack of faith. We’ll reflect on the times that God has ‘levelled’ us after we’ve gone our own way. We’ll also reflect on the things in our lives, and in our Church and communities, that are broken, and what our response is to that brokenness. Will we ignore? Will we re-commit to helping restore? Will we re-prioritise?

The Bible Readings will remind us, like last week, that God doesn’t give up on us and we will hear many stories of how people have been saved and redeemed.

Lectionary Readings Numbers 21: 4-9, Psalm 107: 1-3, 17-22 (or read all), Ephesians 2: 1-10, John 3: 14-21

Other Readings: Psalm 23

Biblical Themes

- God’s love and support despite our complaining, sin, brokenness, and lack of faith.
- Faith Stories of being redeemed and restored. (read more of Psalm 107)
- God constantly reaching out to save us.
- Invitation to join in God’s work of loving redemption of the World.
- Don’t whinge (or else!)

Restoration Theme

- There is often a time in restoration projects when you wonder if it’s worth it – is the project going to be a flop? In TV shows like Flip or Flop and Fixer Upper, there is usually a moment when the restoration team needs to re-assess – the floor isn’t level, there is major damage in the roof, or there are large areas of hidden mould. The restorers need to consider: Is it worth the effort? Do we keep going despite the set-back (hoping for a good flip) or do we discard the project (flop)?
- You need to name the brokenness (the disaster, the mess) before you can move on and re-commit to the restoration. Don’t hide it or whinge about it – give it to God!
- What are your broken places? What’s broken in your Church? What’s broken in your community?
- Look at the things in your life, and the life of your Church – what are you re-committing to in the restoration process? What do you need to let go of so that you can focus on other restorative practices?

Quote

Our affluent culture expects that there is a way to fix almost anything that is broken – broken bodies, broken hearts, broken possessions. It is difficult for many of us to see brokenness as a part of life.

Within the tradition of the Native American Medicine Wheel, life is seen as a circle, as a whole incorporating birth and death, the peaceful dawn and the thundering storms, wholeness, and

brokenness. From the northern direction of the Medicine Wheel come the storms of life. It is the storms that bring us courage, wisdom and compassion. Our lives would not be whole without the storms. Richar Rohr says, “The place of the wound is the place of the healing. The place of the break is the place of the greatest strength”. Our Christian faith affirms this – that Christ’s wounds are the place where God’s healing touches each of us.

Perhaps the task for us today is to begin to see the gifts of our broken places. To find the opportunities to believe in the mystery of Christ’s death, “to put our finger in the wound of Christ, our own wounds, and the wounds of each other” (Companions in Christ (Leader's Guide), P 125 quoting Richar Rohr, Breathing Under Water)

Interactive Activity – Spirit Level and Tape Measure

This week add a Spirit Level to the toolbox.

During prayer of confession (see below), have someone use a spirit level on the piece of furniture.

This week, also add a tape measure to the toolbox.

There is a saying ‘to take measure’.

- to have or get a good understanding about what is needed to defeat or deal with (someone one is competing against). (Merriam-Webster Dictionary)
- to take action; do things to accomplish a purpose (Collins Dictionary)
- To evaluate someone or something; to judge the qualities of someone or something (The Free Dictionary)

Take ‘measure’ of what is going on in your life and Church. What needs more attention or less attention, and/or what needs to be completely changed to bring restoration?

Restoration and Tool Facts

- A spirit level, bubble level, or simply a level, is an instrument designed to indicate whether a surface is horizontal (level) or vertical (plumb). https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tape_measure
- The spirit level, as we know it today, is said to have been invented in the mid-1600s by the wealthy Frenchman Melchisedech Thevenot, who had studied science during his life; however, they did not become popular until the 1700s. Read more at <https://tenrandomfacts.com/spirit-level/>
- No one knows how old spirit levels really are. However, it is known that the Romans used water filled tanks as primitive spirit levels when building their famous aqueducts. <https://www.hultafors.com/articles/the-history-of-spirit-levels>
- One of the first documented tape measures arrived on the scene in 1829 and was patented by James Chesterman. This first tape measure was made of steel from the left-over wire that was used for hoop skirts. <https://hausoftools.com/blogs/news/the-history-and-origin-of-the-tape-measure>
- Did you know that on nearly every measuring tape, you’ll find a small slot on the end hook. It’s there to grab onto the end of a nail or screw. <https://www.ustape.com/hidden-features-of-measuring-tape/#>

Bible Readings

Numbers 21: 4-9

- Give some context for this reading – what has happened before? It definitely isn't the first time the Israelites have grumbled. And it's not the first time God has had to intervene.
- When do you grumble and whinge? Practice saying some phrases together using your most whingey voice - "Are we there yet?", "But I don't want to go to the shops!", "It's not fair!" etc. During the Bible reading, invite people to use this voice to say verse 5. You might like to practice the verse together before listening to the reading.

Psalm 107: 1-3, 17-22 (or read all)

- If you have time, read the whole Psalm, and invite the congregation to say the repeated phrase "Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress." Have the words on screen.
- If you were to write a verse for this Psalm about yourself, what would you say?

John 3: 14-21

- You might like to read John 3: 1-13 to give this reading some context. Darken the room to set the context for the reading (Nicodemus and Jesus) and read in hushed voices.
- Use Engage Worships Interactive Reading (John 3: 1-17)
<https://engageworship.org/ideas/nicodemus-interactive-version>
- Watch the Lumo video – see below.
- Use the restorative practice on John 3:16 (see Easter Sunday)

Videos and Songs

- You Restore My Soul, New Wine Worship <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UyhprYTErk>
- Broken Vessels [Hillsong Lyric video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fiyYoe678yI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fiyYoe678yI)
- Lumo: John 3:1-21 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gECGNeSz6pk>

Call to Worship

Based on a prayer written by Beth Merrill Neel <https://holdfasttowhatisgood.com/liturgy/>

As we gather this day, each of us brings something to worship

We bring the burdens of the week.

We bring prayers of hope, and prayers of anguish.

We bring our voices, our offerings, and our questions.

We bring our faith, tattered or whole as it may be.

We bring all this to each other and to God, whom we worship today.

Prayers of confession

Adapted from Richard Rohr (A Spring within us)

During this prayer, invite people to lean to the side for when things are off-kilter, and then sit upright or centred for when we acknowledge God's transformative love. Have the words on screen for the congregation to join in the responses and lean as directed.

Loving God,

Lean to the side: When we're off-kilter, we feel that we're unlovable.

Centre: With you, we know that we're infinitely loved.

Lean to the side: When we're off-kilter, we feel that we don't have enough.

Centre: With you, we know that we have everything we need.

Lean: When we're off-kilter we can feel stupid – that we have nothing to offer the World.

Centre: With you, we have the mind of Christ.

Lean: When we're off-kilter, we feel selfish and stubborn.

Centre: With you, we are humble and open to serving others.

Lean: When we're off-kilter we feel worthless.

Centre: With you, we know that we're precious, and that you love us.

Amen

Restorative Practices

Lectio Divinia: From Companions in Christ, P 91

Use Lectio Divinia to Read Psalm 107 (NIV). Lectio Divina (Latin for divine reading) is a pattern for prayerfully reading scripture. Use the following sequence to guide your reading:

Lectio – Slowly read the passage. Read it as though you are hearing it read to you. Read it silently and aloud. Experiment by reading it with different emphases and inflections.

Meditatio – Mull over the text; internalise the words. Listen for the phrases that stand out for you as you read the passage. Turn them over in your mind. Reflect on why these words catch your attention, what they bring to mind, and what they mean for you today. Jot down meaningful words, noting associations, reactions, feelings, or challenges.

Oratio – Turn your meditation from dialogue with yourself to dialogue with God, which is prayer. Share with God in all honesty your reflections, questions, or feelings. Offer your thanksgiving,

confession, petitions, or intercessions as they arise within during your dialogue with God. Listen for God's response and inner nudging.

Contemplatio – Rest your mental activity and trust yourself completely to God's love and care. Relax in God's presence. Pick a phrase from the text to which you can return again and again as you keep your attention on God. Allow this prayer-phrase to sustain your presence with God throughout the day.

Or

Read Psalm 107 (NIV). This Psalm, like many other Psalms, tells faith stories of people. If you were to add a stanza to the Psalm based on your faith story, how would it read? Choose a way that suits you to portray, express, or picture your story. Be creative; let the Spirit guide you.

Week Five -17th March**Master and Apprentice – Drill**

Week Five will focus on the importance of mentoring and spiritual guidance. We'll reflect on the people who have provided spiritual guidance to us over the years and reflect on how we've mentored or provided spiritual guidance to others.

Our Bible readings will help us reflect on how God guides and teaches us as individuals and as humankind. We'll reflect on what God has taught us or shown us over the years, and what God might be teaching us this Lent.

Lectionary Readings Jeremiah 31:31-34, Psalm 51:1-12, Psalm 119:9-16, Hebrews 5:5-10, John 12:20-33

Biblical Themes

- God's new covenant - "I will put the law within them and write it on their hearts. I'll be their God and they will be my people."
- Jesus, the High Priest.
- Asking God to teach wisdom, and to create a clean heart within us.
- What does it mean to serve and follow?
- Restoration requires dying for new life to emerge.
- We wish to see Jesus.

Restoration Themes

- There's a lot of value in having a mentor or master to guide, demonstrate, teach, and encourage when taking on a restoration project.
- Different people offer different skills and there's always something new to learn. Check out The Repair Shop video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r0tpFmcChPs> What experts do you see?
- It's important that we train up the next generation of restorers <https://www.cbsnews.com/video/program-at-st-peters-basilica-teaches-new-generation-how-to-restore-ancient-treasures/>
- Consider who has mentored, guided, and taught you God's ways, and who has introduced you to Jesus.
- Who have you spiritually mentored, guided and taught?
- What do you think God is drilling into your life?

Interactive Activity – Drill

This week add a drill to the toolbox.

Apart from being a tool, the word Drill also means:

- an activity that practises a particular skill and often involves repeating the same thing several times. (Cambridge)
- A drill is a way that teachers teach their students something by making them repeat it many times. (Collins)

During the service, take the time to reflect on the things that have been ‘drilled’ into your heart by God or by spiritual mentors over the years. Who has helped you go deeper with God?

After the Bible Readings or message, write on hearts the things that God or spiritual mentors have taught you over the years. On the other side of the heart, write the names of people who you have mentored over the years OR how you might like to support others in their spiritual journey.

This week, invite some experts to come and work on the piece of furniture during the service. They might explain what they are doing, how they do it, and have others work alongside them.

Restoration and Tool Facts

- A drill is a power tool that's used for making narrow holes or sometimes for pushing screws into wood or other hard material. <https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/drill>
- The first drill with an electric motor was invented by two Australians, Arthur James Arnot and William Blanch Brain, in 1889. <https://kids.kiddle.co/Drill>
One of the first (if not the first) drill to be invented was the bore drill. This device was invented in Egypt sometime around the year 3000 B.C. The next drill to be invented was the auger drill. This drill can still be found in use today and was invented in the Roman ages. <https://ronixtools.com/en/blog/history-of-electric-drills/>

Bible Reading Ideas

Psalm 51: 1-12

- Read the Laughing Bird translation <https://laughingbird.net/index.php/occasion/b22/2024-03-17/>
- What words jump out? What wisdom do you want God to plant in your heart? What do you think would happen if you spoke these words to God, “Renovate me from the inside, O God; rebuild my heart and rewire my brain; install in me a new fault-free operating system.”

Hebrews 5: 5-10

- Read a couple of different translations of this passage maybe including the Laughing Bird translation. <https://laughingbird.net/index.php/occasion/b22/2024-03-17/>
- What do you hear about God and Jesus’ relationship and about what it means to follow? How would you feel if God tapped you on the shoulder and said to you “You’re it, child. Today I name you.”? (Verse 5 LB).

John: 12: 20-33

- There are a number of characters in this reading - The Greeks, Philip, Andrew, Jesus, God, the Crowd, and the writer (John). Have different people, or different sections of the Church, read each section.
- Watch Perfect Little Gentlemen John 12 video (below)

Jeremiah 31: 31-34

- Review what you've learnt about covenants in the past weeks. Count how many times the word 'covenant' is said during this passage (4 times). What is God saying about covenants in this passage?

Videos and Songs

- Create in Me a Clean Heart <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1RsrSrmivv0>
- John: 12:20-33, Perfect Little Gentlemen <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HM6lvj-MZyo>

Call to Worship

Have different voices of ages and genders from around the Church say each line. Print and highlight the words for each person, and either give them a microphone, or have them say it loud enough that all can hear.

1: Come, young and old.

2: Come, energetic and weary.

3: Come, master teacher and student.

4: Come, thinkers and creatives.

5: Come, clean and dirty.

6: Come, extroverts and introverts.

1-3: Let's worship together, let's learn together,

4-6: Let's share together and listen together,

All: And let's reflect on God's goodness and guidance in our lives.

Prayer of Confession

Based on a prayer written by Beth Merrill Neel, <https://holdfasttowhatisgood.com/liturgy/>

During this prayer you might like to have a drill being used in the worship space, or use this audio of a power drill <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sH7GyUvDytU>. You might also like to do a drilling hand action whenever you hear and say the word drill.

O God who loves us, we come to you with our confessions.

So often we come to you at a loss – at a loss for the right words, the right deeds, the right feelings. We know all is not right, but we cannot say with certainty what is wrong.

Drill into us your teachings and guidance so that we may know a better way and make things right.

So often we forget people, or we toss them aside – the difficult ones, the needy ones, the ones that are hard to spend time with, the ones who confront us.

Drill into us your teachings and guidance so that we may know a better way and make things right.

We look around and there are deep divisions between us and others. There are too many who live in poverty and fear. There are too many horrific stories, and not enough hopeful ones.

Drill into us your teachings and guidance so that we may know a better way and make things right.

Forgive us and turn us around from that which destroys toward that which heals and brings joy.

Amen

Restorative Practice

Make the time to talk with someone who gives you spiritual support and/or guidance. What support or guidance do you need from them at the moment? Thank them for the role they've played in your life.

Palm Sunday 24th March **An Unexpected Treasure – Varnish Brush**

Week Six will focus on God’s love for us, and the inner beauty and treasure of each person. We’ll reflect on the treasures that God has revealed in us and how we use that treasure to benefit others. We’ll be challenged to think about the unexpected people who God has used to positively shape our lives, people we may have ignored, people we may not have considered to be deserving of God’s grace and restoration or people who we may have considered as ‘less spiritual’ than us.

The Bible readings will focus on the unexpected or unusual arrival of the promised King and people’s reaction to that. We’ll be reminded that God continually restores and creates new life in unexpected ways and situations.

[Lectionary Readings](#) Psalm 118: 1-2, 19-29, Mark 11: 1-11 or John 12: 12-16

Biblical Themes

- Praise for what God has done in restoring and creating new life from rubble and decay.
- An unexpected King and arrival and people’s reaction to that.
- The stone that the builder rejected has become the cornerstone (Ps 118: verse 22).

Restoration Theme

- Sometimes in a restoration project, an unexpected ‘treasure’ will appear or be found – lovely timber floors, a majestic old door, a mosaic, or literal treasure like coins, gold, or jewellery. Suddenly, the restoration project has new life and meaning, and great care is taken to look after the unexpected treasure and make it a feature for all to enjoy.
- What have been the unexpected treasures that God has revealed in you, or others? How do you share that treasure with others?
- What are some of the unexpected treasures that have happened in your Church or community? How has God/Jesus surprised you?

Interactive Activity - Varnish Brush

This week we’ll add a varnish brush to our toolbox.

During reflection time, spend some time varnishing (if your project requires this) and as you do, enjoy seeing the beauty of the timber come to life. Thank God for being a God who restores individuals, humans, and situations. Pray for your Church and community that you’ll be open to the unexpected ways that God works, or the unexpected people who God works through.

Restoration and Tool Facts

- Ancient Egyptians used reeds with crushed ends, their own hieroglyphics depict people painting quite frequently.
- By the 15th century, quills were the favoured style of brush using soft hairs or bristles.

- Fun fact: the end of a brush is called the bristle is because they used to be made exclusively from the bristle of hogs, pigs, and boars, all noted for their particularly rough hair. <https://primetimepaint.ca/blogs/news/a-brief-history-of-the-paintbrush#>.
- Old painting kits, estimated to be around 100,000 years old, were discovered in a cave in modern South Africa.
- Paintbrushes are usually made by clamping **bristles** to a **handle** with a **ferrule** and are available in various sizes, shapes, and materials. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paintbrush>

Bible Readings

Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29

- The congregation can join in with the repeated phrase: **O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his steadfast love endures forever!**
- In this Psalm, the people are thankful for many things – God has answered me, God has given us this day, God gives us light, God is good. If you were to write another verse, what would you be thankful for?
- Listen out for the ‘Hidden Treasures’ throughout this reading.

Mark 11: 1-11 or John 12: 12-16

- Engage Worship Responsive Reading, Dave Hopwood <https://engageworship.org/ideas/palm-sunday-responsive-reading>
- Engage Worship Interactive Reading, Bob Hartman <https://engageworship.org/ideas/palm-sunday-interactive-reading>
- Watch the Saddleback and Lumo Video readings (below).

Videos and Songs

- Hosanna (Praise is Rising), Paul Baloche <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GCXHH1t6EB8>
- The Triumphal Entry, Saddleback Kids <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z-39h0xYqdE>
- Gospel of Matthew 21: 1-22, Lumo: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4hR62e1pYG4>

Call to worship

Based on Psalm 118. You may like to wave a palm branch or a ribbon, every time you hear and say the word **rejoice**. Have the words on screen for the congregation to join in the responses in bold.

Leader: Whether we come with palm branches of joy, or tissues of sadness,

Congregation: This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

L: Whether we come with anticipation or anxiety,

C: This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

L: Whether we come with understanding or questions,

C: This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

L: Whether we come in a new car or on a donkey

C: This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

L: Whether we come as part of a group, or as an individual

C: This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

L: Come, let's worship God and remember this special day – a day full of twists, turns and surprises.

Prayer of Confession

In the excitement of Palm Sunday, with waving branches, crowds of people, and shouts of Hosanna,

It's easy to forget to be still and listen to you, God.

In the busyness of life, with jobs to do, meals to cook and people to look after,

It's easy to forget to be still and listen to you, God.

With all the flashing lights, traffic noise, and hum of machinery,

It's easy to forget to be still and listen to you, God.

With the constant bombardment of news about wars, floods, fires, violence, and abuse,

It's easy to forget to be still and listen to you, God.

As we sit in silence, please bring to the front of our minds those areas of our lives, and of our Church, that need polishing, cleaning, and restoring.

Pause for a time of Silence.

God, we are sorry for all those times when we have failed you, for the times that we've failed others, and for the times when we've failed ourselves. Please continue to work on us to reveal the treasure within us.

Amen

Restorative Practice

Reflecting on the gift of God's Grace (Companions in Christ)

Read Ephesians 1: 1-14. The opening of this letter is like a downpour of blessings and treasures. Pay attention to the expressions of praise and prayer, allowing the many spiritual blessings with which God has blessed us to soak into the soil of your mind and heart. Which aspects of what God has done for us in Christ are most important for you? What remains a mystery for you? Take time to offer your praise to God and to list other ways God has blessed and sustained you with grace.

Good Friday - 29th March **Please Help! - Cloth and Hammer**

Good Friday will focus on the importance of community, and of asking for help. We'll reflect on the times when we've asked for help, when we've pleaded with God, and when people from Church have helped and supported us in times of distress. We'll also reflect on the times when people have failed to help us, or when we've failed to support others in need.

The Bible readings focus on the suffering that Jesus went through and how people either helped or abandoned Him. We'll reflect on the life-giving help that God has given us, and continues to give us through Jesus, and what that means to us as individuals and as a Church.

Lectionary Readings Isaiah 52: 13-53: 12, Psalm 22, Hebrews 10: 16-25, Hebrew 4: 14-16, 5: 7-9, John 18: 1-19: 42

Biblical Themes

- Please help! Who helps and who abandons/betrays?
- Betrayal, forsaken, pain and suffering – where is God?
- It is finished.
- Abandonment of Justice.
- Real emotions with God (Psalm 22 moves from grief, to trust, to praise).
- Covenant – source of eternal salvation.
- Restoration of relationship with God not through others but through direct relationship with God.
- Message of hope and surrender for everyone.
- “Our hearts sprinkled clean from evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water” (Hebrews 10:22).

Restoration Theme

- As talked about in week 3, restoration is often a long and tiring process, and sometimes towards the end, or any time, exhaustion can hit, and you'll wonder if you'll ever complete the project. You'll wonder if you have the strength to continue. You'll doubt your ability to successfully finish the project. It's at this stage, that it's great knowing that you have people that you can call on to help. People who will give you energy and spur you on. People who will be by your side even if they don't know how to restore. People who will drop everything to help you finish.
- Who have you called on for help in your darkest hour? Did those people help? How did they help?
- When have you cried out to God for help?
- Who have you helped and supported? When have you not helped someone?
- How does your Church provide help to others (within the Church and in the community)? When have we let others down?
- What does Jesus' death on the cross, and the restoration of relationship with God, mean to us?
- Read Old Turtle and the Broken Truth, Douglas Wood
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=26byBtwjpy4&t=9s>

Interactive Activity – Cloth and Hammer

This week, add a cloth and a hammer to the toolbox.

The cloth represents:

- God's cleansing power through Jesus (Hebrews 10:22).
- Jesus clothes that were divided.
- Jesus body wrapped in cloth.
- Temple Curtain torn (though not in the readings).

The project is finished, now it needs a good final clean. During prayers of confession or reflection, use a cloth to clean and polish the restored piece of furniture – how has God cleaned you? What needs cleaning in your life?

AND/OR

Hammer nails into a cross and think of the people (or situations) who seem to be forsaken. Cry out to God on their behalf – Please God!

Restoration and Tool Facts

- Hammers are tools used primarily to imply a sharp force on to an object, often to force an item into another. They are often used to secure nails, shape metal or apply components, as well as crush and destroy objects.
- Hammers have been used since the Stone Age. The first hammers were made without handles. Stones attached to sticks with strips of leather or animal sinew were being used. The hammer was used for building, food, and protection <https://wiki.kidzsearch.com/wiki/Hammer>
- There are over 40 types of hammers. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hammer>
- Rags were likely the first cleaning cloth, made from scraps or old pieces of clothing or other cloth, likely cotton or linen. <https://aawiping.com/blogs/news/the-history-of-a-rag-where-do-they-come-from>
- Today, microfibre is widely used, due to its high absorbency, dirt trapping efficiency, electrostatic charge, durability, reduced cleaning time, effort, and water use. <https://www.microfiberwholesale.com/blogs/blog/secret-science-behind-microfiber?igTg=9c995629-2bdb-4705-b293-ac4bcd4bc101>
- After the industrial revolution, traveling rag merchants would collect used clothing and textiles to return to factories, a great example of early recycling efforts. <https://brotex.com/history-of-wiping/>

Call to Worship

Use two voices or have the words on screen for the congregation to join in the responses in bold.

In the shadow and the uncertainty of the cross,

We come to you, and you bring light.

In the thirst and the pain of the cross,

We come to you, and you bring comfort.

In the fear and the cries of the cross,

We come to you, and you bring peace.

In the staring and the gloating of the cross,

We come to you, and you bring love.

In the loneliness and exhaustion of the cross,

We come to you, and you bring rest.

We come to you for you are our God

And we are your people.

Prayer of Confession

Based on a prayer by Beth Merrill Neel <https://holdfasttowhatisgood.com/liturgy/>

During this prayer you might like to give everyone a nail and a piece of cloth or use this audio of a hammer <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nY6MTdmFCcE> pause for the actions.

There is pain in the world, O God;

And we numb it (Hammer a nail, or gently poke a nail into your skin)

And we ignore it. (Hammer a nail, or gently poke a nail into your skin)

And we make it worse. (Hammer a nail, or gently poke a nail into your skin)

And sometimes we cause it (Hammer a nail, or gently poke a nail into your skin)

Rub away the source of the pain, we pray:

Rub away the source that is evil, (rub with a cloth)

Rub away the source that is hatred, (rub with a cloth)

Rub away the source that is pride, (rub with a cloth)

Rub away the source that is ignorance, (rub with a cloth)

Rub away the source that is apathy. (rub with a cloth)

Forgive us our part in the pain of the world. Heal us, heal all, and make us whole.

Amen.

Restorative Practice

Asking for Forgiveness

This week, ask God to bring to mind anyone who you may have neglected during their time of need. Spend some time with God reflecting on that person and situation.

Take the time, during the week, to talk to, or write to that person asking for forgiveness.

Easter Sunday - 31st March **Sharing your Project with the World**

Easter Sunday will focus on the celebration of God's restorative power, in the past, now, and into the future. We'll reflect on the ongoing part we have to play in this amazing story of God's restoration.

The Bible Readings will focus on the culmination of God's great restoration project and what that means for us. We'll be challenged to share and preach about Jesus and the difference he made to our lives.

Lectionary Readings Isaiah 25: 6-9, Psalm 118: 1-2, 14-24 (same as week 6), 1 Corinthians 15: 1-11, John 20: 1-18, Mark 16: 1-8, Acts 10: 34-43

Biblical Themes

- Peter shares about Jesus and commands the people to preach to others about Jesus. Paul proclaims the good news of Jesus. Mary went and told the disciples what had happened. Who are we telling?
- Our role is to bear witness to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Sacrificial love has made possible the redemption of all things and the creation of new life.
- This is what we've waited for.
- It's God's work, not ours.
- Faith in sacrificial love leads to revelation and redemption.
- The reaction to Jesus' resurrection.
- It's not the end of the restoration, it's just beginning.

Restoration Themes

- The Restoration project is complete. Now what? Who are you going to show? Who will get to appreciate it and enjoy it?
- There are always more restoring projects, what's next for you? Who needs to know about God's restoring love? Who can you share God's restoration story with?

Interactive Activity – The Finished Product

During the service, take the time to look at the finished product. Walk around it, touch it, smell it, and appreciate the hard work that has gone into this restoration project. Think about how you would explain this restoration project to other people. Then, think about how you would explain God's great restoration project to others. What is easiest to explain? Why?

Bible Readings

Mark 16: 1-8

- Darken the Church and sit in silence, remembering Good Friday. When ready, slowly turn the lights on (sunrise) and start the reading. Invite people to put themselves in the reading, what emotions do they feel throughout?

John 20:1-18

- Read with multiple voices: Narrator, Mary, Angel, and Jesus.
- Use Mary's Monologue and John's. <https://www.commonword.ca/ResourceView/82/14151>
- Watch the Lumo video (see below)

Acts 10: 34-43

- Have the reader dress up as Peter and speak to the congregation like Peter was speaking to the people around him. Emphasise verse 42 which is the theme of the day.
- Use Peter's Monologue. <https://www.commonword.ca/ResourceView/82/14151>

1 Corinthians 15: 1-11

- Have the reader dress up as Paul and speak to the congregation while writing a letter. What words or phrases stand out to you?

Videos and Songs

- Risen, Shawna Edwards <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xCQsK1t9EKY>
- Outrageous Love, Krissy Nordhoff <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=stGmBcwmDMQ>
- John 20: 1-18, LUMO <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KWDUpelqKhc>

Call to Worship

During this call to worship, whenever you hear the word **alive** and **work**, you might like to join in with Auslan signs. Teach and practice the signs together. <https://auslan.org.au/dictionary/words/alive-1.html> and <https://auslan.org.au/dictionary/words/work-1.html>.

Leader: There were nails, there were cries, and there was pain,

Congregation: But today is Easter Sunday and hope is alive

L: There was confusion, there was guilt, there was darkness,

C: But today is Easter Sunday and hope is alive.

L: There were tears, there was sadness, there was fear,

C: But today is Easter Sunday and hope is alive.

L: When all seemed lost,

C: God was at work.

L: When all seemed broken,

C: God was at work.

L: When all seemed finished,

C: God was at work -

L: Restoring and Resurrecting!

All: Today is Easter Sunday. Hope is alive and God is still at work.

Prayer or Confession

God of Restoration,

Today we praise you with Alleluias!

Today we see and feel the excitement of the empty tomb.

Today we enjoy time off.

But so often, once Easter Sunday is over, we forget...

We forget and fail to trust in you.

We forget and fail to love others.

We forget and fail to thank you.

We forget and fail to acknowledge you.

We forget and fail to tell others of who are you and what you've done for us and all your people.

Please forgive us for not living as restored people.

Remind us again of your faithfulness and your mercy, as we seek to live our lives with faith, hope and love.

Restorative Practice

John 3: 16 in Four Ways (This Practice comes from 'Companions in Christ', Page 152 choose one or a few of these to practice in small groups during the service.

"Head" Spirituality

Read John 3: 16. Think about what this verse means. Paraphrase the verse in a sentence or two that capture the essence of its meaning for you. Then write a prayer to God that expresses your thoughts about what God has done for us and why we need what God has given to us.

"Heart" Spirituality

Read John 3:16. List several people you love and those you have difficulty loving. Read the verse slowly for each person on your list, personalising this verse as an expression of God's love for him or her. Include yourself. Pause to add your prayer for each person and to pray for what you need in order to love that person. Notice any changes in you as you affirm God's love for the person. Decide how you are going to express God's love and your love to the people on your list. Record your experience.

"Mystic" Spirituality

Read John 3:16. Repeat this verse prayerfully as a way of focusing on God. Open your spirit to the loving attitude of Jesus Christ who allowed himself to be given for our salvation. Give yourself to the flow of God's boundless love for the whole world, a love that flows in and through you. As people and situations come to mind, bring them into the flow and allow them to be washed in God's boundless love. Finally, carry some part of John 3:16 with you in your daily activities as a way of practicing openness to God's love.

"Active" Spirituality

Read John 3: 16. Today you will not be seeking to understand, feel, or contemplate the love described in this verse. Rather, be a living prayer today, an expression of God's sacrificial love. As you are able, take a walk through your house, your workplace, or your neighbourhood. Bless everyone and everything you see with the words, "For God so loved the world..." Where do you see a need for God's love? Consider what Jesus would do in that situation and choose a way to embody God's love in action.



THE GREAT RESTORATION PROJECT

TOOLBOX AND TOOL TEMPLATES

Included here are copies of the toolbox and tools that can be printed and used in worship and at home. There is both a colour, and black and white option, for you to choose what might suit your community.

You might also like to print these in a larger size, to use as up-front visuals, or you may like to use 'real' tools and a toolbox.

Instructions

1. Print pages, single sided in Colour (p2-5) or Black and White (p6-9) as desired.
2. Cut out toolbox, including white space under handle if possible.
2. Fold along black line, and staple or glue edges together to form your toolbox.
3. Each week, cut out the next tool, or tools, and add to your toolbox.
4. Use the prayer prompts in worship or Bible reflections to add prayers each week.

















