



Faith Bible Study Guide

For the Week of April 7, 2024 - 2nd Week After EASTER SUNDAY

“Wandering Heart: “Here Is My Heart”

Be still [2 Minutes]: As you hear these Centering Words, let us greet each other, greet the Holy Spirit, and begin with 1 minute of silence, breathing in the breath of God and allow the group to open themselves to the Holy Spirit today:

CENTERING WORDS: *Here's My Heart* by Rev. Sarah Speed

Here's My Heart

As a child I made a nativity set for my mother—
pinch pot clay, uneven angel wings,
hair made with the help of a garlic press,
Joseph's staff rolled out like I was God
and it was an earthworm.

There was nothing beautiful about it,
nothing whispering of talent,
but I made it for my mother!

So I wrapped
that questionable piece of art in a box
and gave it to her
like I was handing her a Picasso.
Here, mother,
you carried me in your womb.
You bandaged my knees when I fell.
You made soup when I was sick.
You rocked me to sleep as an infant
and sewed my costumes by hand.
In return, I made you this haphazard nativity!

And in my childlike mind,
I thought that the small white lamb,
molded from a lumpy piece of clay,
could somehow make us even,
could somehow balance the scales,
could somehow pay her back.

And bless my mother,
because in her grace,
she smiled and she displayed that
hodge-podge nativity set
on the mantel
as if it were her pride and joy.

(I believed that it was.)

Maybe that's the way it is with God.
I say, Here's my heart
and God smiles.

And God takes it.

And despite the ragtag nature of my
human-hearted faith,
whatever I can give always ends up on
God's mantel.

Whatever I can give always calls for
pride and joy.

OPENING PRAYER: Prayer for Illumination

God of second chances
and God of new life,
we have spent our days wandering.
Like Peter, we have had milled about
through nearly every state of faith.
We have had courageous days
and convicted days,
learning days
and questioning days.
We have had days where we run to you,
days for diving out of the boat,
days for deep joy,
and days where the pain of the world feels too close to bear.
So as we bring our wandering hearts to you,
we ask that you draw us in.
Allow this story to spark something new in us.
Allow this story of grace to give us pause
and pull us in.
We are listening.
Amen.

****Artist Statement at end of Bible Study**

Be the Word: New Testament Scripture – Scripture Lesson: John 21:1-19

Later, Jesus himself appeared again to his disciples at the Sea of Tiberias. This is how it happened:² Simon Peter, Thomas (called Didymus[Ⓜ]), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, Zebedee's sons, and two other disciples were together. ³ Simon Peter told them, "I'm going fishing."

They said, "We'll go with you." They set out in a boat, but throughout the night they caught nothing.⁴ Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples didn't realize it was Jesus.

⁵ Jesus called to them, "Children, have you caught anything to eat?"

They answered him, "No."

⁶ He said, "Cast your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some."

So they did, and there were so many fish that they couldn't haul in the net. ⁷ Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It's the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard it was the Lord, he wrapped his coat around himself (for he was naked) and jumped into the water. ⁸ The other disciples followed in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they weren't far from shore, only about one hundred yards.

⁹ When they landed, they saw a fire there, with fish on it, and some bread. ¹⁰ Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish that you've just caught." ¹¹ Simon Peter got up and pulled the net to shore. It was full of large fish, one hundred fifty-three of them. Yet the net hadn't torn, even with so many fish. ¹² Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." None of the disciples could bring themselves to ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord. ¹³ Jesus came, took the bread, and gave it to them. He did the same with the fish. ¹⁴ This was now the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead.

¹⁵When they finished eating, Jesus asked Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?”

Simon replied, “Yes, Lord, you know I love you.”

Jesus said to him, “Feed my lambs.” ¹⁶Jesus asked a second time, “Simon son of John, do you love me?”

Simon replied, “Yes, Lord, you know I love you.”

Jesus said to him, “Take care of my sheep.” ¹⁷He asked a third time, “Simon son of John, do you love me?”

Peter was sad that Jesus asked him a third time, “Do you love me?” He replied, “Lord, you know everything; you know I love you.”

Jesus said to him, “Feed my sheep. ¹⁸I assure you that when you were younger you tied your own belt and walked around wherever you wanted. When you grow old, you will stretch out your hands and another will tie your belt and lead you where you don’t want to go.” ¹⁹He said this to show the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. After saying this, Jesus said to Peter, “Follow me.”

L: The Word of God for all people

P: Thanks be to God

Be present: [Being mindful of others and sharing time]

1. Take a deep breath. How is it with your soul?
2. Have you ever been on a MISSION trip/event/project or attended/participated in a mission activity? How about a SOCIAL JUSTICE trip/event project? Is there a difference? (*Prompt: Think about the differences between FEED/TEND and LAMB/SHEEP*)
3. What are you passionate about? What are things you would “lay your life down for” (so to speak), as in speak out against or about, OR stand up for to protect/defend/share solidarity with?

Be rooted: [Bible Study]

Theme Connections

Though Peter’s story does not end with the conclusion of the gospels, we finish our series with Peter’s encounter with the risen Christ. In this final week, we come full circle with Peter. He has dropped his nets, walked on water, professed his faith, been rebuked, received footwashing, denied Jesus, and run to the tomb. And now, Jesus once again meets him at the shoreline where Peter is casting his nets. Jesus offers abundant nourishment and also a new command: “Feed my sheep.” Then he turns to Peter and asks three times, “Do you love me?” It’s as if Jesus says, “Here’s my heart,” which washes over Peter’s three denials like a healing balm. No matter how far we wander, may we entrust our hearts to God. No matter if our faith is strong or weak, what we can give is our love.

1. According to John’s Gospel, Jesus has appeared to Mary Magdalene (John 20:11-18) and to the disciples (John 20:19-23). And yet, this story begins with Simon Peter saying, “I am going fishing,” and many of the disciples join him (John 21:3).
 - Are they taking a break from ministry?
 - Are they still confused and disillusioned?
 - Are they returning to what they know in order to find a “new normal”?
 - Are they uncertain about what to do next?
 - With Jesus gone, do they need to generate some income for themselves and their families?

2. Notice the parallels in this story to the events of Holy Week. Jesus calls the disciples “children” (John 21:5) just as he did on the night he washed their feet (John 13:33). Jesus feeds them around a charcoal fire (John 21:9) which mirrors the one Peter stood by when he denied Christ (John 18:18, 25). Jesus breaks bread and serves it to them (John 21:13) just as he became like a servant, washing their feet during the Last Supper (John 13). By coming to the disciples on the beach, he has kept his promise to not abandon them (John 14:18-19).
 - Do you think the disciples now “remember” all that Jesus had told and shown them?
 - Is this when they finally see the events of the past few days with clarity?
 - Do they finally understand?
3. Read this story alongside Luke 5:1-11. Note all the similarities you see. Note any differences.
 - Does Peter receive a new calling in John 21:15-19?
 - Or is it a renewal of his initial calling to be “fishers of people”?

Commentary on John 21:1-19 | by Dr. Karoline Lewis

In this fourth resurrection appearance in the Gospel of John, Peter has decided to go back to his day job—fishing. At daybreak, Jesus, the light of the world, appears to the disciples on the shore of the Sea of Galilee and his presence leads to an abundant catch of fish. It is in this abundance, in this moment of grace upon grace (John 1:16), that the disciples recognize Jesus. Coming ashore, they find that Jesus has made breakfast for them, a meal of bread and fish, which would have recalled the abundance of the feeding of the five thousand. Jesus, the bread of life, comes to his disciples to call them once again to the work of the harvest (John 4:31-38). With the reference to Nathanael of Cana (John 21:1), we are meant to recognize this scene as a second call narrative for the disciples—a call to do greater works than these (John 14:12) because Jesus will ascend to the Father. It becomes our call story as well—how will we offer witness to the world of the love of God in Jesus after the events of the arrest, trial, crucifixion, and resurrection? How will our testimony sound different on this side of the empty tomb?

It is in this context that we need to hear the conversation between Jesus and Peter. There is neither shaming nor blaming, nor does Jesus forgive Peter. Instead, Jesus knows that what he will ask Peter to do is something Peter could not fathom before. Only now, in this renewal of relationship with the resurrected Jesus is Peter’s trust affirmed and Jesus’ trust in Peter confirmed. Jesus needs Peter to be the good shepherd now—to provide pasture, to protect the sheep from wolves, thieves, and bandits so that the sheep may have abundant life (John 10:10).

That’s a tall order. But how can God so love the world without us? We are not just called to do loving things, but to be the very presence of love, the “I AM” in the world when Jesus cannot be. We give our hearts and our whole selves to Jesus so that John 3:16 might really come true.

4. The original Greek of this scripture uses two different words for “love”: *agápē* and *philō*. *Agápē* means unconditional, sacrificial, divine love; it is considered the highest form of love. *Philō* is “brotherly love” and refers to the love shared between close friends. The first two times Jesus asks Peter, “Do you love me?” he asks, “Do you *agápē* me?” and Peter responds, “You know I *philō* you.” The third time, Jesus shifts to ask Peter, “Do you *philō* me?” and Peter again responds, “You know I *philō* you.”
 - How does this affect how you read this conversation?
 - What kind of love is Peter promising?
 - What kind of love does Jesus have in mind?

5. Jesus commands Peter to “feed his lambs,” “tend his sheep,” and “feed his sheep” (John 21:15-17). The Greek word used here for “feed” is *boskó*, which means to nourish spiritually. The Greek word for “tend” is *poimainó*, which means to act as a shepherd, guarding and guiding a flock.
 - Why do you think Jesus uses shepherding imagery and language?
 - What does that mean for Peter’s ministry?
 - If you were to receive this charge in your own life, what does it look like for you to “tend” and to “feed” God’s sheep?

Be transformed: [Call to action]

Considerations for this Week

It was necessary to include this story in the Lent/Holy Week/Easter Sermon Series, even though we are in our 2nd week of Easter. It was necessary, in order to come full circle with Peter in his journey with Jesus. This week’s text could be read alongside our first text for the series (Luke 5:1-11). The parallels and connections between the two are palpable and powerful. Once again, Jesus offers Peter abundance. His journey—like ours—is not linear, but God’s grace continues to circle back to him again and again like a familiar chorus played on repeat. In this text, we primarily want to focus on Peter’s threefold redemption granted to him by Jesus’ question: “Do you love me?” We might imagine Jesus asking us the same question.

1. As we move forward in our faith journeys as Easter People and People of the Resurrection, how can we let love lead the way?
 - How can we both feed AND tend to God’s people?
 - Where do Mission and Peace & Justice intersect?
 - What does Faith do WELL? What/How could we improve upon in these areas?
2. Look closely at the artwork, Feed My Sheep by Nicolette Peñaranda and read her full-length artist statement. Pay close attention to all the Adinkra symbols she integrates into the artwork. Notice the meaning of the symbol, Akoma. While the heart symbol universally represents love, in Akan, “Nya akoma” literally means, “take heart; be patient.”
 - Does this remind you of Jesus’ charge to the disciples in Matthew 14:27?

Prayers & Concerns

Celebrations...

Yuki Lucia Matsumoto-Penton (granddaughter of Jane & Terry Matsumoto; parents: Kate & AJ born, 3/5/24)
 Daniel Hiro Yuan (grandson of Diane & Brian Fujimori; parents Nicole & David born, 3/24/24)
 Rev. Eric Iki, passed his Ordination interviews to be Ordained at AC in June (June 15 @1pm)!
 Sally & Ken’s 54th Anniversary (1/31/24)
 Kainoa Kent Barajas born to Lauren & Carlos (2/4/24) - (Great-grandma is Jane Kiyohara!)

Prayers for healing and wholeness...

*Claretta Foster	*Ralph Ichikawa’s brother, Jim (Tio)
Jack Hamada	*Alice Kajiya
The Sasaki Family; Jordan Sasaki, Sally, Ken, & Jason	*Faye Toma
Jerry Osaka	*Virginia Flood
*Victoria Dela Torre	Jason’s friend, Kaitlyn Sabedra
*Diane & Destiny Ueda-Banda	Glenn & Millie Shimizu
Audrey Goto	*Faith Tanaka
Tak and Irene Ryono	*Sam Kobayashi
	*Nancy Matsushima

Dan Yamashita

*Sumi Maruya

*Chic Miyake

*Winnie Osaki

*Postal Worker, Dexter

*Alveena Fukuhara

* Harry Lum

* Kyle Ichikawa (Ralph's son)

*Akiyamas are transitioning to a new living center

*Maxine Butcher

*Florence Uchida

*James Kawamoto

Deron Tokishi (brother of Sheri Tong)

Fred Endo (father of Sharon Ann Endo)

Ireland Bone (health & traveling mercies)

Prayers for Grieving Families...

*Nelson Mark (husband of Alice, father of Darrell, passed on 3/10/24)

*Frances Yonemori (Florence Uchida's sister, passed on 3/12/24)

*Kurt Kuniyoshi (passed 3/xx/24)

*Bing Duck Pang (father of Stanley, passed 3/11/24)

*Bernice Kashiwai (mother of Kent/Nicole Morita-Kashiwai)

*Lori Takayesu (Georgine Morita sister)

*Pat Hiroshima (Harriet Tateyama's sister-in-law)

*Takako Takao (mother of Jerry, passed 2/22/24)

*Charles Kvitky (husband of Lily; passed week of 2/11/24)

Greg Kubo (passed away on 2/3/24)

Henry Uepi Isama'u (passed on 1/24/24)

* Elaine Suzuki (Ralph's sister)

Gene LeFebvre (Andy's mentor and friend)

Rev. Margaret Finney

For our hurting world...

Japan Earthquake / Volcanic Eruption in Sakurajima (near Kagoshima)

People of the Holy Land

Families rebuilding after natural disasters

Election year

Covid (and for those who are sick, ailing, in need of God's love and healing)

The United Methodist Church (General Conference)

And Know that He is God: Commission & Benediction

Wandering Heart Affirmation of Faith

We believe in a God who shows up in our lives—
surprising and catching us off-guard in the best of ways.

We believe in a God who cares for God's people—
a shepherd who longs for her sheep to be fed and tended.

We believe in a God who took on flesh—
a God whose love changed the world as we know it.

We believe that this here-and-now God invites us out of the boat,
calling ordinary people like Peter, like us, into a life of service and community.

And so we give our hearts. We give our whole hearts and nothing less. Amen.

****Feed My Sheep**

by Nicolette Peñaranda

Inspired by John 21:1-19

Yarn and paper collage on canvas

Feed My Sheep holds a special place in my heart as it is inspired by the text a dear friend of mine used for their ordination. This piece reminds me of their long and complicated journey that led them to the priesthood, much like Peter. As a mixed media artist, I wanted to try something I've never done before—perhaps the silliest decision someone with a deadline could make.

This entire piece¹⁵ (with the exception of the three hearts) is made of yarn. For some reason, the feeling of a sheep's wool kept sticking out to me everytime I read this text. We refer to Jesus as both el Cordero de Dios¹⁶ and the shepherd. So why not lean into sheep imagery? I thought the piece would be more vibrant for Easter in contrast to the pieces I created for Lent. This would really take viewers on a spiritual journey while studying Peter.

This post-resurrection story concludes the wandering for Peter so the subject of this piece sits in front of the Adinkra symbol, Nkyinkyim, ¹⁷ for life's twisted journey.

We have seen the ins and outs of his ministry as he accompanies Jesus, which brings us to this dialogue between the two. Peter is asked three times if he loves Jesus, which to all he replies in the affirmative. In this piece, the two of them are portrayed as sheep, Peter being at the right hand of Jesus. The sheep are branded with Agyinduwura¹⁸ at the center of their chests. They carry with them a symbol of loyalty and faithfulness. They are loyal to Jesus, faithful to the promise of salvation, and accepting of their duty to carry the Good News with them to the people of Christ. The face of each sheep is the symbol Kokuromotie¹⁹ to represent cooperation and harmony. Jesus asking Peter to feed his sheep demonstrates the faith that Jesus has in Peter to do this work. This value of cooperation is also present in the Mpatapo-shaped²⁰ flowers in the field. They are symbols of peace, forgiveness, and reconciliation. Remember, Peter denied his relationship with Jesus several times before Jesus was executed. Above the sheep sits Kojo Baiden.

²¹ God has traditionally been represented as the sun in various cultures, which brings us to this omnipresent symbol operating as such in this piece. And to the left we see Akoma, ²² or hearts. While we interpret the heart as love, it is also a symbol for endurance and patience. Peter gets to this point by maintaining goodwill and faith in the message of Jesus. He stumbled through the journey and at times caused more harm than good, but Christ was also patient with him.



Here's my heart. Here are the things I care about so deeply. And you—someone who makes mistakes, doesn't follow directions, and sometimes even betrays me—you are so loved and trusted enough to keep this good work going even after I'm gone.

This is a message to all of us. It doesn't matter how poorly you may think of yourself or how others may view you. To Christ, you are beautifully and fearfully made. And Christ believes in you in spite of it all.

—Rev. Nicolette Peñaranda

15 The original is a 24" x 48" canvas.

16 Spanish for "Lamb of God."

17 View the symbol and learn more about it here: adinkrasymbols.org/symbols/nkyinkyim/

18 View the symbol and learn more about it here: adinkrasymbols.org/symbols/agyindawuru/

19 View the symbol and learn more about it here: adinkrasymbols.org/symbols/kokuromotie/

20 View the symbol and learn more about it here: adinkrasymbols.org/symbols/mpatapo/

21 Also known as Abode Santann. Learn more here:

adinkrasymbols.org/symbols/abode-santann/