

UNRAVEL



FIRSTTHINGS

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UNRAVEL

verb (used with object), **un·rav·eled**, **un·rav·el·ing**

1. to separate or disentangle the threads of:
a woven or knitted fabric, a rope, etc.
2. to free from complication or difficulty; make plain or clear; solve:
to unravel a situation; to unravel a mystery.
3. to take apart; undo; destroy:
a plan, agreement, or arrangement.

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"Unravel." written by Bill Woodson

It could mean falling apart. But it could also mean untangling. Or revealing. And so the notion of "unraveling" might bring to mind the imminent destruction of a beloved scarf or sock; or the impending failure of a troubled relationship. But "unraveling" can also signify restoring function to the shoelaces of those long unused soccer cleats. Or gaining insight that allows an old misunderstanding that created distance between two brothers to be resolved.

What's common to all of these scenarios (each of which is totally fictitious and have no bearing on this writer's life experience, of course), is that the process is uncomfortable, often sad, and sometimes painful. But whether the outcome is happy or tinged with sadness, when we step back to look at the larger picture, that process of unraveling is not as dark as it might have seemed in the moment. The favorite socks will be replaced by a new favorite. And a treasured relationship is far more significant than the passing disagreement that strained it.

Now, please excuse me. There's a pick-up Ultimate Frisbee game starting soon, and I'm sure that with a little more time I can get that knot out of my old cleats. And after the game, there's a phone call I need to make.



photograph by Jim Albinson

PRAYER SHAWL

As a lifelong knitter, I've done my share of unraveling. I can be a few inches or several feet into a project when I see it: the missed stitch growing into a small hole or the incorrect pattern where the knit should have been purled. I pull out row after row of yarn until I get past the mistake and can resume my work.

My husband teases that I'm a thrifty knitter, since I seem to get hours of use from the same skein by knitting stitches and then unraveling them, over and over.

In our fallen world, lives also unravel. Relationships become strained or broken. Health

declines. Careers stall and dear ones pass away. As Christians, we're called to be the hands and feet of Jesus in this world. In response, we try to comfort the "unraveled" by praying, organizing meals, running errands, and walking alongside them on their journey.

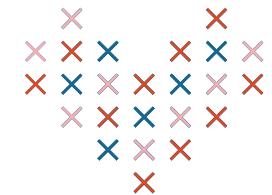
At the end of the summer, we will launch the First Covenant Prayer Shawl Ministry. This ministry, which is open to all, will make shawls – by knitting, crocheting, or other creative means – to give to those dealing with loss, sickness, hospitalization, or other difficult circumstances. We'll be meeting in the

Green Room after worship on the third Sunday of each month, together with the "Arts and Crafts" group. Though attendance is optional, it's a very enjoyable way to connect with other creators while working on our projects. Learners are welcome!

On Dictionary.com, one of the antonyms for unravel is "tie." At our monthly meetings we'll pray over completed shawls and tie a ribbon around each one before placing it in a basket that will be located in the usher's station at the rear of the sanctuary. The shawls will be available for anyone in the FCC community to give

to those who are experiencing a temporary or long-term unraveling in their life.

Our hope is that recipients will feel blanketed in warmth, prayers, and God's healing love.



For more information, please contact:

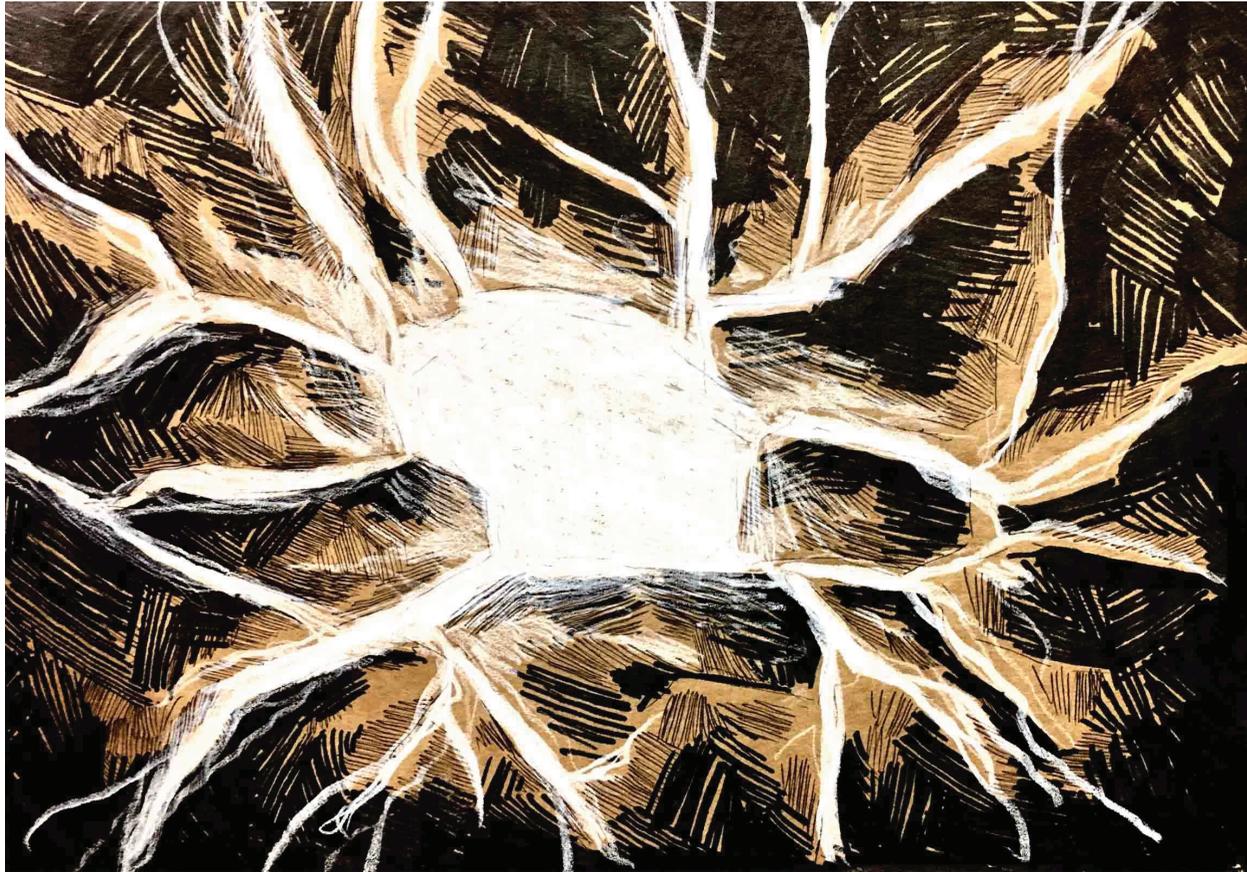
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MINISTRY

written by Kim Carlson



“OLD PATTERNS, NEW LIGHT”

drawing by Lucie Biros
colored pencil, ballpoint pen, and sharpie on cardboard

“Unravel” written by Carina Aleckson

Shame spiral
Anger grief hopes deferred
Tangled web
Daring to scratch beneath the
Obvious most visible pain to
Find grace
Mercy
Love
Gratitude
Forgiving myself
To become who I long to see

Solveigh

Unraveled

Undo all the twists and turns
Keep going until it's all
Undone. The tangled, twisted
piece of rope is about
to be unraveled.

UNRAVEL|ELI

YOU Need to
UNRAVEL The
Shoe



An Exercise from our Beloved Carma's Children's Church

Check In - How are you doing on these first days of spring?

Unravel the object on your table. This is a group effort, so all hands, eyes, brains are to be invited to be involved.

Talk a little about...

- What were the challenges of unraveling?
- ◆ What were the invitations?
- What does it remind you of in your life?
- ◆ Where are the times where you experienced something like this?
- What does it show us about being a Christ follower?

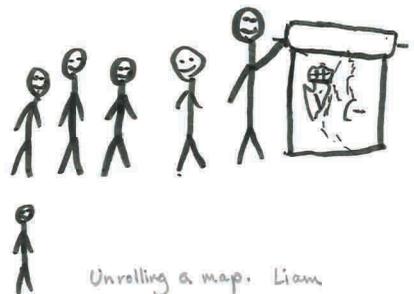
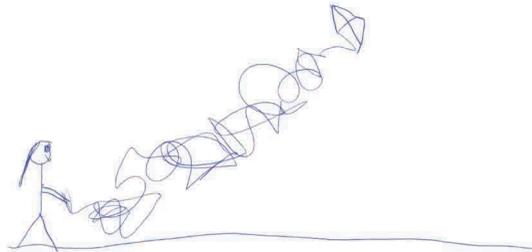
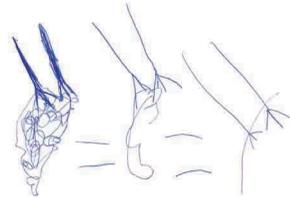
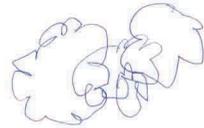
Then have the kids work together and they can draw a picture, write a poem, or story about something about unraveling.

ESME!

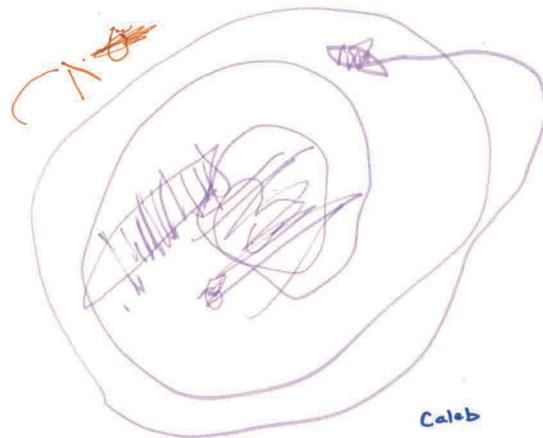
This is a butterfly untying its shoe.



Nadia



Unrolling a map. Liam



Unraveling is Hard

Because there are a bunch of knots in it

Because it's dark

I don't know

Because it's all the same color

I don't know

Usually they are the same color but sometimes not

Solving problems

If there are different colors it is easier to unravel

If it was all a different color

Bring a flashlight

When you unravel stuff things won't get tangled

You can undo it to make it into something else.

You
untangle

A poem by
Nadia, Caleb, Ezra
Edwin, Ayla & Violet



"Community" written by Bethany Johnson

Where me is actually me and you are actually you

Not the perfect, spiffed up model of you that's portrayed to the world

Where your talents, gifts, and strengths are not found threatening

But can be cherished and nurtured and blossom

Where your weaknesses and falterings don't create space for judgment, shame and blame

But invite compassion and healing and care

Where change isn't expected or pushed

But forms naturally as a gradually blossoming flower in its own time

Where beliefs,

thoughts,

ideas

and dreams

are openly and honestly shared and listened to

Where you are known, seen, and believed

Where there's no one "right" way

Where Jesus is heard, walked with, and paramount

Where somehow, in an incomprehensible way, people are drawn in and experience God

That's my idea of community

We Drew a Map of the World

written by Rachel Dyrud

I cannot read maps. I get lost in malls. I suffer almost-panic when I'm called upon in the passenger seat to be the navigator. There is a disconnect in my brain between the world I see in front of me and the flat, impersonal scratches one sees in an atlas or by way of dear, helpful Google Maps. It's a mess for me and my mind experiences the prospect of unraveling that mess with a loathing that's hard to describe to the map savvy. I've always preferred directions in written form. Turn left at the stop sign. Turn right when you take the exit. If you feel the need to draw a picture, you can assume I'll be late.

A common first project for Peace Corps volunteers, especially for those tasked with teaching, is the world map. You have a grid to work from and together with your students, their parents, any number of curious

on-lookers, you slowly begin to sketch the world. In training, I was skeptical of my ability to spearhead anything resembling a map. And while I had a shiny new bachelor's degree, I worried I'd confuse the country names in some disastrous, offensive way. But I needed a project. I needed a way to get messy with my students, connect with the boys in a silly way, and carve out time with my shyest girls, as we wondered how cold Antarctica must be.

This experience strikes me now with a rib-crunching blow. These were students whose families loved me when I was all alone in a country very different from my own. They always knew I was a Christian. They knew I covered my hair out of respect, not out of any deep understanding of their religion. They knew I fasted for Ramadan out of curiosity, not devotion. They took care of me because of their innate goodness, the joy that permeated their homes, the warmth that made them quick to give and quick to smile, and their faith, which taught them to love and show kindness to strangers. This is what I know of Islam. This is what I know to be true.

When I think of Islam, I think of paint. I think of a wall in a rundown youth center that slowly resembled the world. I think of tea and laughter. I think of friends who walked me home after a long day. I think of warm bread, mint, cumin, and heaps of golden couscous on Fridays. I think of cool hands on my hot forehead, when I was too sick to get out of bed. I think of babies held and kisses on cheeks and the gut-deep chuckle of old men. And I think of goodbyes.

The recent executive action against refugees, against Muslims, against immigrants in total, has me thinking of that map. How arbitrary those lines seemed once we sketched them on the wall. Some I knew to trace the line of a river, of a mountain range, some soft demarcation made by God. But most I knew to be the creation of men. As if the line built a home, built a place worth living, built space with some superior context. The lines felt unnecessarily powerful, and so unfair. Maybe I should forgive my mind for its inability to unwind that madness. Maybe my mind fights the lines on purpose, maybe the confusion is a gift.

To see my country, my combination of lines, deepen those divides, draw them with such hatred, wrap them in religious and cultural superiority and call them "security," only strengthens the feeling I had 15 years ago that the lines must be among the darkest of God's heartbreaks. The God I believe in loves without any care of the lines we're born between. God drew the world, drew the color, drew the mountains and rivers full of life, drew the perfection of Eden and the wood of the cross, drew the people that would wander every inch of creation, drew faces of every shade, voices of every pitch, bodies of every strength, minds of every depth, drew love. We drew the map.





"Unravel to Come Together"
photograph by Jim Albinson

twist and weave

wind and wrap

over and over

layer after layer

wind and wrap

over and over

over and over

distorting shape, size and character-

what was,

isn't gone,

merely hidden

an unexpected silver lining to the added bulk:

support

and with it

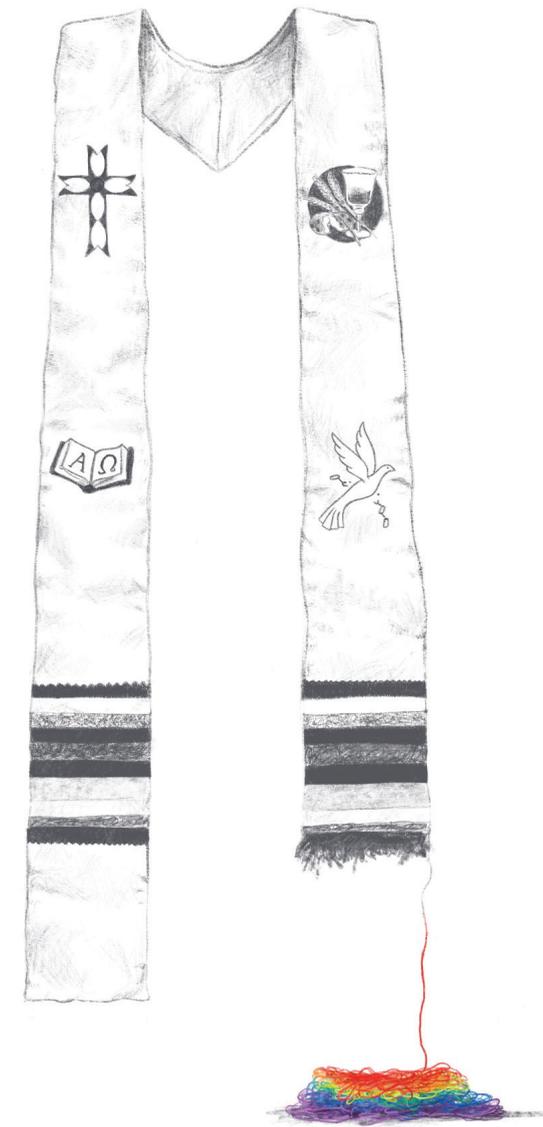
healing

through time, a metamorphosis takes place

and the cast

is no longer needed

it's time to unravel.



Contributing Voices

Bill Woodson

Jim Albinson

Kim Carlson

Lucie Biros

Carina Aleckson

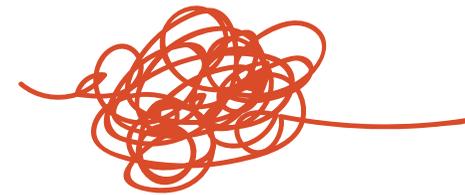
Carma & our Beloved Children

Bethany Johnson

Rachel Dyrud

Heather Albinson

Lisa Albinson



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