

**Surf Coast Uniting Churches
Sunday 8th February 2026**



Introit 699 A New Commandment

A new commandment I give unto you
that you love one another as I have loved you,
that you love one another as I have loved you.
By this will others know that you are my disciples
if you have love one for another;
by this will others know that you are my disciples
if you have love one for another.

Welcome

Acknowledgement

We acknowledge the traditional Custodians of these unceded land and waters, the Wadawurrung people. We pay respect to Elders past and present. As First and Second Peoples walking together, we commit ourselves to be people of the covenant, listening, truth telling and seeking justice for all.

Call to Worship

God calls us to be salt of the earth
We will do our best to be salt of the earth
God calls us to be the Light of the world
We shall do our best to follow in Jesus' footsteps
God calls us to shine for Jesus
We will shine our light
May others come to know Jesus through us

Prayer

The ministry of God's people by Carol Dixon in Acorns and Angels Edit Ruth Burgess
(2009) Wild Goose Publications www.ionabooks.com adapted

Lord, we come before you to praise you and celebrate.
Because of you we can share in ministry together
in the task of your ministry, for the service of all.
We rejoice that you fill us all with your grace.

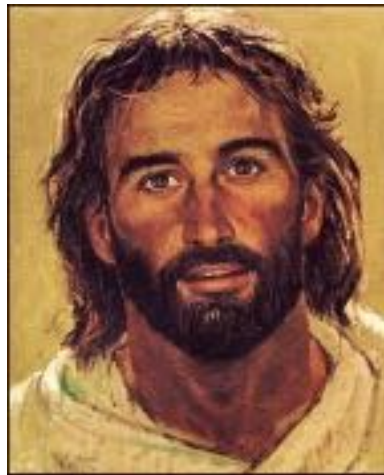
As Peter and Andrew first heard Jesus' call
then Dorcas and Lydia who worked beside Paul
and Francis and Clare, helping others to see and know God
we rejoice that together we all share in Christ's ministry.

We give of ourselves to you Lord
to be salt of the earth and the light of the world.
We listen to you in our heart as we pray,
we share together in hospitality,
We pray and preach your gospel in how we live and love,
and make our lives our worship.
We rejoice that together we all share in Christ's ministry.

Lord, our creator, we dedicate our lives and our worship to you
 We give thanks that you work through us
 to build up your kingdom of love.
 In the strength of your Spirit,
 we respond to Christ's call on our lives.
 We rejoice that we are called to work for your kingdom. Amen

Hymn 693 Come as you are

'Come as you are:
 that's how I want you.
 Come as you are;
 feel quite at home,
 close to my heart,
 loved and forgiven.
 Come as you are:
 why stand alone?



Confession

We come to Lord aware we need You with every fiber of our being. We want nothing to stand between us. We draw near to you, and as we are held, we slowly dare to look at the face of the One who holds us and know that gradually our own faces and our lives will begin to reflect your beauty.

I invite you to spend a moment in silence bringing all that's on your heart to God, asking for healing, forgiveness and a new beginning

Silence

Hear then Christ's words of grace to us
 "Your sins are forgiven"

Thanks be to God.

The peace

The peace of the Lord be with you
and also with you

,

675 Lord the light of your love is shining

Lord, the light of your love is shining,
in the midst of the darkness, shining;
Jesus, Light of the world, shine upon us,
set us free by the truth you now bring us –
shine on me, shine on me.

Readings

Isaiah 58:1- 12

8:1 Shout out; do not hold back! Lift up your voice like a trumpet! Announce to my people their rebellion, to the house of Jacob their sins.

58:2 Yet day after day they seek me and delight to know my ways, as if they were a nation that practiced righteousness and did not forsake the ordinance of their God; they ask of me righteous judgments; they want God on their side.

58:3 "Why do we fast, but you do not see? Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?"

Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day and oppress all your workers. 58:4 You fast only to quarrel and to fight and to strike with a wicked fist. Such fasting as you do today will not make your voice heard on high.

58:5 Is such the fast that I choose, a day to humble oneself? Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush and to lie in sackcloth and ashes? Will you call this a fast, a day acceptable to the LORD?

58:6 Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?

58:7 Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

58:8 Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you; the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard.

58:9a Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, "Here I am."

58:9b If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil,

58:10 if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday.

58:11 The LORD will guide you continually and satisfy your needs in parched places and make your bones strong, and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water whose waters never fail.

58:12 Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in.

Matthew 5:13-20

5:13 "You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything but is thrown out and trampled underfoot.

5:14 "You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid.

5:15 People do not light a lamp put it under the bushel basket; rather they put it on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house.

5:16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

5:17"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill.

5:18For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished.

5:19Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

5:20For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."

Young at Heart – The story of This little Light of mine

"This Little Light of Mine" is a widely recognized 20th-century American gospel song and folk spiritual, often attributed to Harry Dixon Loes around the 1920s, who wrote it for children.

It's inspired by Matthew 5:14-16 and urges followers not to hide their light under a bushel but to let it shine to glorify God.

In the 1950s and 60s, the song was transformed from a Sunday school tune into a powerful anthem of resistance and solidarity, famously sung by activists like Fannie Lou Hamer.

The song's simple, powerful lyrics emphasize personal, persistent action ("Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine") against darkness, serving as a universal song of hope, solidarity, and, often, a call for justice.

Song: This little light of mine

This little Light of mine
I'm going to let it shine
Oh, this little light of mine
I'm going to let it shine.

Sermon

in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, amen



Jesus chose everyday things such as salt and light to illustrate deep spiritual truths.

Salt can be so intense it burns our skin. Like salt at the dead sea, which no one wants to get in their eyes. It burns them.

The dead sea is around 160K from Galilee, which is several days journey by foot or donkey. Even further from Nazareth. There was a flourishing trade of salt along the silk road and salt was used to preserve food. Most people knew about salt. Salt is still an important part of our lives and most of us are familiar with it.

Households were lit by dozens of little pottery oil lamps. Light is crucial to everyday living, in ancient times and today.

There are sayings about salt and light. Salt of the earth. Light of the world. Both images and sayings speak of identity and behavior. Of integrity. Inner dispositions and outer actions matching. Jesus knew people well and how to communicate Gods ways.



I've heard many people describe communities and individuals as "*Salt of the Earth*"
We know the saying describes people as honest, hardworking, reliable and humble.

You may have heard the story about the 13-year-old boy who swam through rough seas to save his mother and siblings who were swept out to sea. His name is Austin Applebee. His mother, siblings and Austin set out into Geographe Bay, WA, wearing lifejackets and in two paddleboards and a kayak. Unfortunately, the wind changed and it got rough. They got into trouble when one of the paddleboards turned over and Austin's mum sent him to get help in the Kayak. It got so rough Austin had to abandon the Kayak and take off his lifejacket so he could swim. This is a boy who failed his holiday swimming program. What got him through this ordeal was his love for his family and girlfriend and positive thinking about what gave him happiness and most of all, prayer.

It took Austin four hours to get to shore and then he had to run two kilometers to get to his mum's phone. He rang 000 and they were rescued. He is considered a hero.

Most Australians love stories like this. Most of us have a story like this that's part of our life's narrative.

Austin was able to push through his personal limits and fears, to save his loved ones. His story witnesses to the power of love, perseverance, courage and prayer. It can give us hope. Perhaps his

act of bravery will shape his life and relationships, and Austin will become an individual who is considered as salt of the earth.

His story is dramatic. Most stories take time to be shaped by everyday actions. For example, how we care for our loved ones, strangers and communities.

The first part of Isaiah challenges us to think about integrity, where our inner dispositions and motivations need match our actions.

The reading speaks of actions such as sharing our bread and resources with others who have very little, being there for others or helping to lighten or remove other people's burdens. Doing this can fill us with the light of Christ where our light shines in the darkness and other people give glory to God.



This is an image of a man holding a lamp. Lamps give light in a darkened world. Jesus is the light of the world. He encourages us to follow in his footsteps and become the light of world.

It's not about drawing attention to ourselves. It about revealing the light of God within us to the world so we may lead others to God.

Jesus depends on us to be light of the world. That means not hiding our light.

Jesus speaks of the city built on a hill not being hid. Perhaps he meant Jerusalem which was lit up by thousands of lights and people were drawn to it because of the Temple where they believed God dwelled.

Jesus taught us our body is the temple for God's Spirit, and we are lit up by the light of the Lord. This is not a light we hide from the world.

We are called to show the world what God does in us and through us. We shine and people see God in us, and they are drawn to God.

We are encouraged to share our stories of what God is doing in us, for us and through us. Not to draw attention to ourselves, but to God.

A colleague encourages members of her congregation to share their stories about God at work in their lives. Perhaps their stories inspire others and give them hope in God. Perhaps we could try this, from time to time. If you have a good story, please write it down and share it in our book.

People follow Christ because of what they see in us and our actions. As Australians we tend to dislike people who brag about themselves and say: *Look at me*.

Paul encouraged people to brag about Jesus and say: *Look at God*.

Perhaps this is Jesus' message for us today. To humbly follow our Lord and do our best to love like him, so we shine our lights out into a dark world.



We are the people of God on the way, the body of Christ. We shine together, like the people in this image.

The reading from Isaiah 58 gives us hints of possible ways of moving ahead as the church. Perhaps it's a wakeup call.

Isaiah calls out loudly: *Look!* Then says don't do this, don't go through the motions of putting on a good show of your faith and not live it out. Embrace compassionate justice for others, in your everyday actions.

The reading from Isaiah encourages us to act with integrity, where our faith matches our actions. Then God will work through us to rebuild the church and restore it to its glory days. Then we join in with God and become part of God's plans for humanity.

We might say: *I'm too old and limited by time, energy and money. How can I contribute and make a difference.*

During the Torquay visioning day someone suggested beginning a prayer group. Perhaps they know we can achieve very little through our own efforts.

Prayer is the engine of ministry and mission. Without prayer, nothing much happens. However, when we pray, we open ourselves up to God taking over and running the show.

God is not limited by time, energy and money.

We are serving God and it makes sense to have a good healthy relationship with God through prayer where we listen to God and are led by God and are filled by God's Spirit who guides and empowers us.

Those who think they are too old - can pray.

Nothing much happens without prayer. if you don't believe me, read the bible and the history of the church. You will come to know amazing things happen when we pray.

Today's good news is an invitation to pray for Jesus Church, the body of Christ and for each one of us who is on the journey together, as God's people on the way.

Step by step, day by day, thinking positively, exercising our faith and hope, loving others as Jesus loved us, with compassionate justice for all, and trusting in the slow work of God.

The Lord be with you

Song - They'll know we are Christians by our love

We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord
 We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord
 And we pray that our unity will one day be restored
 And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love.
 Yeah, they'll know we are Christians by our love.

We will work with each other, we will work side by side
 We will work with each other, we will work side by side
 And we'll guard each person's dignity and save each person's pride
 And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love
 Yeah, they'll know we are Christians by our love.

Offering

Lord, giver of every good thing, we bring to you our lives, gifts and resources for the building up of your kingdom and church. We give thanks for blessings and transformation that come through your grace and love made known in Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen

Prayers of the people

The Lord's prayer

Our Father in Heaven, hallowed be your name,
 your kingdom come, your will be done,
 on earth as in heaven.
 Give us today our daily bread.
 Forgive us our sins as we forgive
 those who sin against us.
 Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.
 For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen

Hymn 687 God gives us a future



**God gives us a future, daring us to go
into dreams and dangers on a path unknown.
We will face tomorrow in the Spirit's power,
we will let God change us, for new life starts now.**

Notices and sharing

Blessing

Chris Polhill, Acorns & Angels, Edit. Ruth Burgess,
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Living flame of love
Touch our hearts with your bright fire
May we be alight with your passion and love
May we shine our light, so others may find their way to you
May each of us be salt of the earth
Living our lives where we reflect your grace.

Hymn 778 Shalom to you now

Shalom to you now
Shalom my friends
May God's full mercies bless you my friends
In all your living and through your loving
Christ be your Shalom, Christ be your Shalom
Elise Shoemaker Eslinger 1942