

**Surf Coast Uniting Churches
Sunday 15th February 2026**



Introit 703 As the deer pants for the water

As the deer pants for the water,
so my soul longs after you.
You alone are my heart's desire
and I long to worship you.

You alone are my strength, my shield,
to you alone may my spirit yield.
You alone are my heart's desire
and I long to worship you.

Martin Nystrom 1956- based on Psalm 42:1-2



Welcome

May the worship bless you

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

Star-maker God

You astound us

Transfigured Jesus

You dazzle us

Life-giving Spirit

You blow our minds

You are out of this world
You are here in our lives

Prayers
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Lord God, we give you our thanks and praise

You love us with an everlasting faithfulness
you desire to make yourself known to us
in our mind and heart and soul.

Lord, you sent Jesus to reveal who you are to us,
to know you tenderly care for us.

Lord, your truth is like a lamp in the dark room of our mind
revealing who Jesus is for us.
You fulfill our hopes
for the morning star to rise in our hearts,
so we come to know Jesus.

You have sent your Holy Spirit
to help us comprehend mysteries beyond our knowledge.
Your Spirit, who inspires, guides and leads us
Your Spirit, who helps us journey from understanding in our mind
to knowing in our heart, where we can
experience union with you in our soul.

Lord God, we give you our thanks and praise.

Loving God, we come before you wanting to draw close to you
wanting no barriers between us
desiring healing and forgiveness
and the grace to forgive others.

Lord, in this moment of silence
we come before you with all that's on our hearts.

Silence

Hear then Christ's words of grace to us
"Your sins are forgiven"
Thanks be to God.

Hymn 102 Praise to the living God

Praise to the living God,
 all praise be to his name,
 who was, and is, and is to be,
 and still the same:
 the one eternal God
 before what now appears,
 the First, the Last, beyond all thought
 his timeless years!

Readings

Exodus 24:12-18

24:12The LORD said to Moses, "Come up to me on the mountain and wait there; I will give you the tablets of stone, with the law and the commandment, which I have written for their instruction."

24:13So Moses set out with his assistant Joshua, and Moses went up onto the mountain of God.

24:14To the elders he had said, "Wait here for us, until we come back to you. Look, Aaron and Hur are with you; whoever has a dispute may go to them."

24:15Then Moses went up on the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain.

24:16The glory of the LORD settled on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it for six days; on the seventh day he called to Moses out of the cloud.

24:17Now the appearance of the glory of the LORD was like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain in the sight of the Israelites.

24:18Moses entered the cloud and went up on the mountain. Moses was on the mountain for forty days and forty nights.

2 Peter 1:16-21

1:16For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we had been eyewitnesses of his majesty. 1:17For he received honor and glory from God the Father when that voice was conveyed to him by the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is my Son, my Beloved, with whom I am well pleased."

1:18We ourselves heard this voice come from heaven, while we were with him on the holy mountain. 1:19So we have the prophetic message more fully confirmed. You will do well to be attentive to this as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.

1:20First of all you must understand this, that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, 1:21because no prophecy ever came by human will, but men and women moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

Matthew 17:1-9

17:1 Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves. 17:2 And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became bright as light.

17:3 Suddenly there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. 17:4 Then Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I will set up three tents here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

17:5 While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!"

17:6 When the disciples heard this, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear.

17:7 But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Get up and do not be afraid."

17:8 And when they raised their eyes, they saw no one except Jesus himself alone. 17:9 As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus ordered them, "Tell no one about the vision until after the Son of Man has been raised from the dead."

Hymn 234 How good Lord it is to be here

How good, Lord, to be here!
 your glory fills the night;
 your face and garments, like the sun,
 shine with unborrowed light.

Sermon

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



T. Lyndon

I've heard it takes a long time for us to journey from the head to the heart.

Here's Peter, previously of the Jewish faith, now a disciple of Jesus. He knows the stories of Moses on Mount Sinai where God called out to him from the clouds and the glory of God was revealed in a devouring fire. It formed the foundation of his faith.



Image – Leunig used with permission

in ancient times people believed God dwelled on mountaintops and in clouds. People also believed God dwelled in the Temple and tents. Here's Leunig's cartoon. He's on a mountaintop waving to God.

I do understand. I've climbed mountains, seeking God, wanting to be closer to God. Usually, God finds me.



Images from Revised Common Lectionary

There are churches built in the Middle East, especially in Israel, on every place where something significant took place with Jesus. A church has been built on Mount Tabor where people believe the transfiguration took place. Perhaps they are trying to hang onto the holy moment, like Peter.



Images from Revised Common Lectionary

Jesus took Peter, James and John to the top of a mountain, believed to be Mount Tabor. Suddenly, Jesus was transfigured. His face shone like the sun and his clothes were as bright as light. Peter would have known about Moses. When Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the ten commandments the skin on his face shone. His face shone so much that when he spoke with the people he wore a veil on his face and then took the veil off when he spoke with God. Peter, James and John saw Jesus transfigured, like Moses. Keep in mind Matthew's gospel is meant for Jewish converts. They knew about Moses setting up a tent of meeting to contain the tabernacle, built for the ten commandments

tablets. We can understand why Peter suggested setting up three tents, one for Jesus, one for Moses and one for Elijah.

Peter was familiar with his faith practices and beliefs, just as we're familiar with ours, with the bible, churches and Uniting Church worship. Perhaps Peter understood what was happening intellectually.

I find as I'm getting older, I'm spending more time waiting and observing. It takes time to process experiences, learnings or insights and to allow wisdom and knowing to emerge. It's a long journey from head to heart.

Perhaps it isn't t easy to comprehend who Jesus is for us. Perhaps it takes a lifetime, where we wait on God, hoping we will understand in our heart.

Peter was convinced in his heart after hearing God's voice from the cloud, saying: *This is my Son, the beloved. In him I am well pleased.*

Peter, James and John were overcome with Holy Fear and awe.

Imagine hearing God's voice. You would know it's God's voice. It would touch you to the core of your soul.

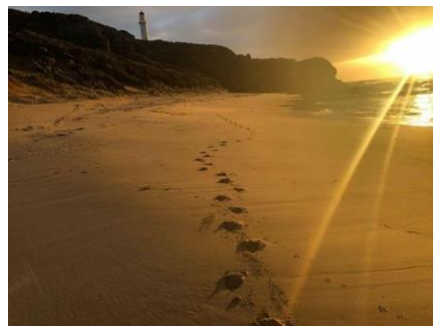
There is no account of how long Peter, James and John lay on the ground. The gospel says Jesus touched them and told them not to be afraid and not to tell others about what they saw, until after his resurrection. They most likely didn't understand at this stage anyway.

Perhaps they remained silent for a long time, while they processed what they saw.

Peter wrote his letter to the churches in Asia minor about thirty years after Jesus was resurrected. Not long before he was crucified upside down on emperor Nero's orders.

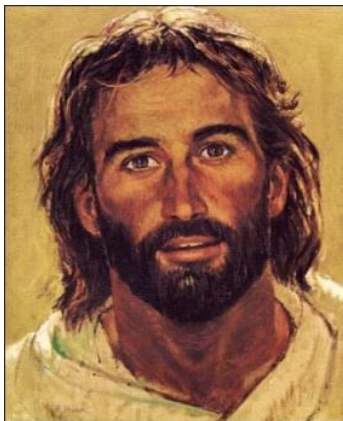
In his letter Peter speaks from the heart, telling people he was an eyewitness and heard God saying: *This is my Son, the beloved. In him I am well pleased.*

Peter wrote: What I heard and saw confirms prophecies spoken through prophet's moved by the Holy Spirit. This is not a myth. This happened. Pay attention to my eyewitness account. It is like a lamp shining in a dark place.



T. Lyndon

Perhaps Peter is saying receive my testimony into your mind and sit with it and pray until the day comes when the morning star is born in your heart.



Images from Revised Common Lectionary

All his life Peter had known one way of being and believing.

Then God spoke from the cloud and shattered all his beliefs

Something new happened to him.

God spoke from the clouds and said: *This is my Son, the beloved. In him I am well pleased.*

Suddenly he knew God was in a person and his faith was never the same again.

Has something like this ever happened to you? Has an event or something someone said to you or a profound encounter with God or a loss or prayer, changed your faith? Perhaps expanded your knowledge of God.

it took Peter many years to write about his encounter with God and Jesus. It took time for him to process his encounter and for his new belief to emerge, where he came to know Jesus in his heart.

His realization was like a lamp in a dark room, where his mind was lit up with the truth.

Finally, Jesus the morning star rose in his heart

Peters letter is to all of us. He hopes one day the morning star will rise in our hearts.

Perhaps Peters faith journey is like ours. In time in our own way, Jesus the morning star will come to rise in our hearts, and we will know him in our soul.

Deep down we will know, Jesus is of God.

The Lord be with you

Hymn 143 Immortal invisible

Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
in light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,
almighty, victorious, your great name we praise.

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

Pray for the World, for Peace, for the earth, for our nation and its leaders and for those suffering in our congregations and community

Give thanks for volunteers who risk their life for our sake.



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 628 Christ our map

Christ, our star, our map, our road
to the Father's high abode.

*In faith and hope and love
with joyful trust we move
towards our Father's home above.*

Notices and sharing

Sending

May Jesus the morning star rise in our minds

May Jesus the morning star rise in our hearts

May Jesus the morning star rise in our lives

And may God the light-maker,

Jesus the morning star,

And the Holy Spirit of fire and glory

Bless us this day and every day. Amen

Hymn 779 May the feet

May the feet of God walk with you,
and his hand hold you tight.

May the eye of God rest on you,
and his ear hear your cry.

May the smile of God be for you,
and his breath give you life.

May the Child of God grow in you,
and his love bring you home.

Words Aubrey Podlich 1946-

Music Robin Mann 1949-