

**Surf Coast Uniting Churches**  
**Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2026**  
 Fourth Sunday of Easter



*Notices while June plays music for us*

**Introit recorded song**  
**Our God is a God who makes friends**  
**Our God calls us to make friends**

**Welcome**  
 May the worship bless you

**Acknowledgment**  
 This land is God's land and God's Spirit dwells here. We acknowledge the Wadawurrung people,  
 traditional custodians of this land under God.  
 We commit ourselves again to working for reconciliation in this land.

**Call to Worship**  
 O Lord, you are our shepherd  
**You lead us beside still waters,**  
**where we find rest and peace for our soul**

O Lord, we follow you with trust and hope  
**You bless us in the way you care for and love us**

**Prayer**  
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Lord, loving God, you are always with us,  
 during all of life's ups and downs, its joys and sorrow.  
 You lead us like a shepherd, keeping watch over us  
 loving us and offering us life abundant.  
 You provide stillness for our soul and comfort in our heart,  
 as you lead us and give us spiritual food for the journey.

You lead us out into the day and bring us home at night.  
 You are with us sheltering us from the storms of life,  
 carrying us through the tough times.  
 You lead us close to God and into God's kingdom,  
 into eternal life, love and peace.  
 You call us home when we stray. You heal and forgive us.  
 You accept and love us through all times

Lord, You call us forward into true life, and fulfillment.  
 Because of You we can sing the song you have for each one of us.  
 Lord, You bless each one of us, all the days of our life.  
 We give you our thanks and praise,  
 our loyalty and love.

You are our good, kind and loving shepherd. Amen

### **The Peace**

The Peace of the Lord be with you  
**And also with you**

**YouTube - The King of Love my Shepherd is**

### **Reading John 10:1-10**

“Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. <sup>2</sup>The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep.

<sup>3</sup>The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. <sup>4</sup>When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice.

<sup>5</sup>They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers.” <sup>6</sup>Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

<sup>7</sup>So again Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep.

<sup>8</sup>All who came before me<sup>[a]</sup> are thieves and bandits, but the sheep did not listen to them.

<sup>9</sup>I am the gate.

Whoever enters by me will be saved and will come in and go out and find pasture.

<sup>10</sup>The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

### **Young at Heart**

The story of Hugless Douglas and the big sleep  
 Discussion with puppets – Grandpa and Poppy and a sheep  
 Why sheep Grandpa?

### **Hymn 659 The Lord is my shepherd**

The Lord is my shepherd, and I want to follow  
 wherever he leads me, wherever he goes.  
 Over the mountains, the waters and by-ways,  
 valleys and highways he’s waiting for me.

*I want to go to meet him there,  
 to lay myself down in his love.  
 The Lord is my shepherd and I want to follow  
 wherever he leads me, wherever he goes.*

And while on the journey to where we are going  
 he promised to be there to help us along,  
 and over the mountains we’ll walk on together,  
 to know all the wonders he’s given to me.

*I want to go to meet him there,  
 to lay myself down in his love.  
 The Lord is my shepherd and I want to follow  
 wherever he leads me, wherever he goes.*

### Sermon - The Good Shepherd

*In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, amen*



*Images from Revised Common Lectionary*

There are many images of shepherds, men and women caring for sheep. I grew up with sheep and often cared for them, I can understand why Jesus told so many stories about us being like sheep. We do need a lot of care. Perhaps Jesus chose sheep, to speak about how much he cares for us.

One of the images on the screen is of a tiny shepherd in a large landscape, that looks like a desert. The shepherd is caring for sheep, leading them to still waters and green pasture and caring for them as Jesus cares for us.

I went to boarding school as a child. My best friend was Susie, and I'd spend holidays at her family's sheep farm. One day we needed to move around a thousand sheep from one paddock to another paddock, just up the road. We were on horses and my job was to carry a newborn lamb, over the saddle. As the dogs guided the sheep, we rode alongside them and the lambs mother walked beside me, calling out for her lamb every few minutes, as the lamb called back to her. It was like this all along the road, until we reached the paddock and were inside. When I lifted the lamb down to the ground and reunited it with its mother, the little lamb joyfully skipped around its mother as she called it to her side.

I wonder if sheep don't like change much, and whether being moved from one paddock to another is upsetting. Perhaps we like to be settled, appreciate peace and stability and long for restoration and wholeness.



*T. Lyndon & Revised common lectionary*

These are images about the journey, a tunnel with light at its end, footsteps in the sand and a shepherd leading sheep. It's good to know Jesus is with us on the journey, especially during difficult times when we journey through dark valleys.

it is reassuring to know Jesus is with us at all times and never leaves our side. He protects us spiritually and strengthens us emotionally. When we pray, when we talk to and listen to God in our hearts, we find peace. Our faith offers us light at the end of the tunnel, when we believe Jesus carries us during tough times, and leads us home to safety and security.

Psalm 23 reassures us Jesus provides a spiritual feast for us, where our glass is not just half empty or full, its overflowing.



*Revised common lectionary*

There are many images of Jesus as the good shepherd, such as this African Jesus carrying a lamb, an ancient first century Jesus as the good shepherd and this image of Jesus carrying a full-grown sheep on his shoulders.



*Revised Common lectionary*

In today's gospel Jesus is the gate. He has drawn from the practice in ancient times where at night, shepherds slept at the gate to the sheepfolds and protected the sheep from thieves and wild animals. The sheepfold was a safe place for sheep to rest and find life and security. In the gospel God is the gatekeeper to the sheepfold, where the sheepfold is the kingdom of God, the place where we find life.

Today's gospel teaches us about knowing Jesus in relationships and reminds us of our desire for goodness within us and in our life and all we do.

When we follow Jesus, we hope to find this goodness and find it when we are blessed by the love and care we experience from our family and loved ones.



*T. Lyndon*

The gospel tells us Jesus leads us on the right path. Most of us don't want to lose our way and feel reassured Jesus leads us on the right path to life.



*Revised Common Lectionary*

We hear the voice of Jesus in our hearts when we pray, and this helps us to follow him.  
We follow Jesus because we trust him.



Revised Common Lectionary

We are a discerning people. We don't follow leaders who lead us astray and pretend Messiahs.  
Prayer helps us know the truth in our hearts.



Revised Common Lectionary

The good news from today's gospel is Jesus is the gate to eternal life. He leads us into the sheepfold of God, into eternal life now and always. When we come to believe in him and we receive life abundant.

### ***Moment of quiet reflection***

#### **All age shepherds' activity**

Making stone sheepfolds and a terracotta shepherd and sheep

#### **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 and Psalm 23**

- <sup>1</sup> *The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.*  
<sup>2</sup> *He makes me lie down in green pastures;  
 he leads me beside still waters;<sup>[a]</sup>  
<sup>3</sup> *he restores my soul.<sup>[b]</sup>  
 He leads me in right paths<sup>[c]</sup>  
 for his name's sake.*  
<sup>4</sup> *Even though I walk through the darkest valley,<sup>[d]</sup>  
 I fear no evil,  
 for you are with me;  
 your rod and your staff,  
 they comfort me.*  
<sup>5</sup> *You prepare a table before me  
 in the presence of my enemies;  
 you anoint my head with oil;  
 my cup overflows.*  
<sup>6</sup> *Surely<sup>[e]</sup> goodness and mercy<sup>[f]</sup> shall follow me  
 all the days of my life,  
 and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD  
 my whole life long**

**Prayers for peace, for the world and for those who are grieving and suffering from health issues**



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**Candle prayers.**

We come forward as a YouTube Song by Geoff Bullock *Have Faith in God* is played

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*As we go with God  
may the joy of the Lord  
fill our heart and our day.  
into the day*

*As we are led by Jesus our shepherd,  
may we know he is always with us  
until the end of time.*

*May we be blessed as he leads us,  
into the kingdom,  
into eternal life,  
close to God.*

*May we be filled with life and love  
as will follow him,  
all the days of our life,  
and beyond.*

**Hymn 778 Shalom be with you**

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