

**Surf Coast Uniting churches
Sunday 10th May 2026**



RCL



Hymn 703 As pants the deer

*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-

Welcome & Happy Mother's Day

May this day be a happy day



Acknowledgement

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

Unlock your hearts
God wants to come in
Unlock your lives
God needs a home

Swing wide all the doors
God's children need shelter
**Easter rolls the stone and
nothing can be shut anymore!**

Prayer © T. Lyndon

Loving God,
You draw us into Yourself and embrace us.
You have made us your own child,
and have embraced us as kin.
You love us with an everlasting faithful love.
You move within our being and
Your Spirit comforts and guides us,
all the days of our life.
We give you our thanks and Praise.

Jesus, our Lord,
You reveal the truth to us and raise us up into new life,
You make us whole and holy and heal us.
You carry us through life's challenges
and comfort us.
You reveal God's love to us and bless us.
We give you our thanks and praise.

Holy Spirit,
You reveal the truth to our hearts,
and dwell within our soul.
You fill us with God's love
and help us be in union with God.
We give you our thanks and praise.

Loving God, Lord Jesus and Holy Spirit,
you are a mystery we cannot fully grasp,
yet we know you in our hearts.
You make us complete and whole.
In You we live and move and have our being. Amen

Confession

We are invited to bring all that's on our hearts to the Lord in this moment of silence and to ask for healing, forgiveness and the grace to forgive others.

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

The peace

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

Hymn 217 Love Divine all loves excelling

*Love divine, all loves excelling,
joy of heaven, to earth come down,
fix in us thy humble dwelling,
all thy faithful mercies crown:
Jesus, thou art all compassion,*

*pure unbounded love thou art;
visit us with thy salvation,
enter every trembling heart.*

Readings

Acts 17:22-34 NRSV update

²²Then Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, "Athenians, I see how extremely spiritual you are in every way. ²³For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, 'To an unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. ²⁴The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, ²⁵nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things. ²⁶From one ancestor^[a] he made all peoples to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, ²⁷so that they would search for God^[b] and perhaps fumble about for him and find him—though indeed he is not far from each one of us. ²⁸For 'In him we live and move and have our being'; as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we, too, are his offspring.'

²⁹"Since we are God's offspring, we ought not to think that the deity is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of mortals. ³⁰While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance, now he commands all people everywhere to repent, ³¹because he has fixed a day on which he will have the world judged in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead."

³²When they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some scoffed, but others said, "We will hear you again about this." ³³At that point Paul left them. ³⁴But some of them joined him and became believers, including Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them.

John 14:15-21

14:15 "If you love me, you will keep my commandments.
14:16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever.
14:17 This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him because he abides with you, and he will be in you.
14:18 "I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you.
14:19 In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live.
14:20 On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.
14:21 They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me, and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them."

Hymn 407 Breathe on me breath of God

Breathe on me, breath of God,
fill me with life anew,
that I may love all that you love
and do what you would do.

Sermon

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



T. Lyndon

John Phillip Newell wrote:

*Whichever way we turn, O God, there is Your face
in the light of the moon and patterns of the stars
in sacred mountain rifts and ancient groves
in mighty seas and creatures of the deep*

*Whichever way we turn, O God, there is Your face
in the light of the eyes, we love
in the salt of tears, we have tasted
in weathered countenances east and west
in the soft skin glow of the child everywhere*

*Whichever way we turn, O God, there is Your face,
there is Your face
among us.*

God is close to us. In God we live and move and have our being.

This is what Paul said to the Athenians, in Greece, while standing in front of the Areopagus, the building where laws were made and kept. Paul, a Pharisee, an educated elite like them, who spoke their language and knew their philosophers and poets. Intelligent, well educated, wealthy people. He appeals to them to hear him out and affirms their spirituality, how they are deeply spiritual and worship and have faith in the unknown God. The God he is speaking about.

He also confronts them for having altars and statues and shrines and idols, of the unknown God and asks them to turn away from this practice, of making God into idols. Repent, he says to them.

Paul declares we don't serve God. God serves us. We are God's children. God gives us life.

We fumble about, trying to know God, when all along God is close to us and part of our being, of who we are as a people who belong to God.

They must change their ways or Jesus will judge them, Jesus the one who God raised from the dead.

Some of those who were listening scoffed at God having raised Jesus from the dead.

Some of those who listened to Paul, wanted to come again and listen some more.

Some believed and became Christians. Dionysius and Damarius joined Paul in forming a new church in Greece.

In the beginning there were mixed responses and the church began as a small community, but it grew over time, as Paul and members of the church told their story to the community and shared their faith in the unknown God.

Sometimes we fumble about trying to know God, who is often beyond our reach. Yet, God is close to us, to our very being, and who we are in God. Each of us is known by God.

This is a photo of a heart made out of seaweed, by a woman on Mount Martha beach. It must have taken her hours to make it. She smiled at me when I walked onto the beach, happy with her creation, her statement of love. God is love. We yearn to be loved by God and feel close to God, yet, God is close to us, always and God always loves us, forever.

I've always loved Psalm 84.

*³ Even the sparrow finds a home
and the swallow a nest for herself,
where she may lay her young,
at your altars, O Lord of hosts,
my King and my God.*

*⁴ Happy are those who live in your house,
ever singing your praise.*

Even a sparrow finds a home, close to God.



T. Lyndon

Sparrows need love. They are tiny in an immense world, that has its challenges. We all want to find a home where we feel loved and accepted, where we belong, where we feel embraced and secure. We have this profound longing in our heart to be close to God and fragility.

Paul once said, we are like cracked vessels, yet we hold this great treasure within us.



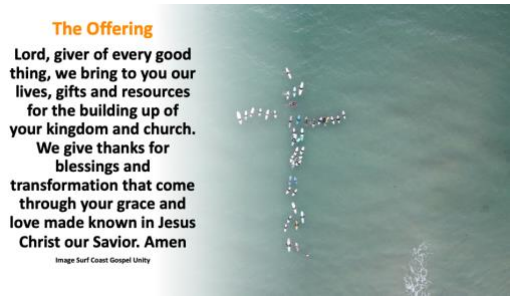
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The treasure is God's Holy Spirit and the light of Christ, that's bursting to break out of our hearts. God is in us and always there for us.

We do not need to fumble about looking for God.
God has already found us and made a home in us.
We may feel fragile and broken at times. God doesn't worry about our fragility.
God made us and loves us, as we are, for ourselves.

In God we live and move and have our being.
The light of Christ, of the Holy Spirit, fire, wind and living water, is within us. The light shines out of our eyes. We can see God in one another.

The Lord be with you



Prayers of the People/Candle Prayers

Prayers for peace, families, mothers, all those doing it tough.

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

Communion

Hymn 459 In Christ there is no East or West

*In Christ there is no east or west,
in him no south or north,
but one great fellowship of love
throughout the whole wide earth.*

Sending

Lord of life, you walk this journey with us and through us

Lead us Lord, lead us on

Journeying within, and wrestling with the world

Lead us Lord, lead us on

Lead us to risk, to grow, and to tread the path you have opened for us

Lead us Lord, lead us on

Let us rejoice that everyplace is your place

Lead us Lord, lead us on

Hymn 778 Shalom be with 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.*

