

## Surf Coast Uniting Churches

Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> June 2026



### Introit – 768 Praise God from whom all Blessings flow

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,  
 praise God, all creatures here below,  
 praise God above, you heavenly host,  
 praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

*Thomas Ken 1637-1711 alt.*

### 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

Let us be bold in Christ

**Let us believe in Christ**

No matter what happens

**Christ is with us and will never fail us**

### Prayer – A litany of Laughter

*Anna Shirely, Before the Amen. Edit. Tirabassi, M.C., Tiribassi, M.I., © 2007 Pilgrim Press  
 Ohio*

Loving God, when you told us to leave our old lives behind  
 to set out on a path you would show us  
 and to put out trust in you

**We laughed in our fear.**

**We thought we might get lost.**

When you told us we were special,  
 that you had chosen to bless us and lead us,  
 and bless the world through us

**We laughed in our astonishment**

**We thought we were too ordinary**

When you told us you would make us fruitful  
 that though us you would create blessings  
 numerous as the stars  
**We laughed in our doubt**  
**We thought we were barren**

But when the promise was fulfilled  
 and we held in our arms the evidence of your love  
 the power of your faithfulness  
 We laughed in our joy, out loud!  
 We laughed because it filled us out,  
 and poured out our souls –  
**And because we heard you laughing as well.**

*Moment of silence*

### **Confession**

Loving God we bring before you our fears and our doubts  
 the times we have not loved others as ourselves  
 the times we have laughed at others faith  
 the times we have not trusted in your grace.

Loving God we come before you  
 asking for a new beginning and a new heart  
 give us grace to forgive others and ourselves  
 grace to love others as ourselves  
 grace to believe, to trust, to follow your call

We spend a moment in silence before the Lord, 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.**

**YouTube Recording – Paul Kelly – Meet me in the Middle of the Air**  
[https://youtu.be/g34-nB3oym4?si=xwNRefzyJUa\\_k9a](https://youtu.be/g34-nB3oym4?si=xwNRefzyJUa_k9a)

### **Commissioning of Church Council**

#### **776 Aaronic Blessing**

The Lord bless you and keep you;  
 the Lord make his face to shine upon you,

and be gracious unto you;  
 the Lord lift up his countenance upon you,  
 and give you peace.

Aaronic Blessing

**You may now applaud and welcome your members of Church Council**

### Readings

#### Genesis 18:1-15, 21:1-7

18:1The LORD appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day. 18:2He looked up and saw three men standing near him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent entrance to meet them and bowed down to the ground.

18:3He said, "My lord, if I find favor with you, do not pass by your servant.

18:4Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree.18:5Let me bring a little bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on--since you have come to your servant." So they said, "Do as you have said."

18:6And Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah and said, "Make ready quickly three measures of choice flour, knead it, and make cakes."

18:7Abraham ran to the herd and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to the servant, who hastened to prepare it. 18:8Then he took curds and milk and the calf that he had prepared and set it before them, and he stood by them under the tree while they ate.

18:9They said to him, "Where is your wife Sarah?" And he said, "There, in the tent."

18:10Then one said, "I will surely return to you in due season, and your wife Sarah shall have a son." And Sarah was listening at the tent entrance behind him.

18:11Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age; it had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. 18:12So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "After I have grown old, and my husband is old, shall I be fruitful?" 18:13The LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?'

18:14Is anything too wonderful for the LORD? At the set time I will return to you, in due season, and Sarah shall have a son." 18:15But Sarah denied, saying, "I did not laugh," for she was afraid. He said, "Yes, you did laugh."

21:1The LORD dealt with Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did for Sarah as he had promised. 21:2Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the time of which God had spoken to him. 21:3Abraham gave the name Isaac to his son whom Sarah bore him. 21:4And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. 21:5Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. 21:6Now Sarah said, "God has brought laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh with me." 21:7And she said, "Who would ever have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age."

**Matthew 9:35-10:1 -23**

9:35 Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness.

9:36 When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

9:37 Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few;

9:38 therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

10:1 Then Jesus summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness.

10:2 These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon, also known as Peter, and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee and his brother John; 10:3 Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus and Thaddaeus; 10:4 Simon the Cananaean and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed him.

10:5 These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: "Do not take a road leading to gentiles, and do not enter a Samaritan town, 10:6 but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. 10:7 As you go, proclaim the good news, 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.' 10:8 Cure the sick; raise the dead; cleanse those with a skin disease; cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment.

10:9 Take no gold, or silver, or copper in your belts, 10:10 no bag for your journey, or two tunics, or sandals, or a staff, for laborers deserve their food.

10:11 Whatever town or village you enter, find out who in it is worthy, and stay there until you leave. 10:12 As you enter the house, greet it. 10:13 If the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it, but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you.

10:14 If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet as you leave that house or town. 10:15 Truly I tell you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town.

10:16 "I am sending you out like sheep into the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves.

10:17 Beware of them, for they will hand you over to councils and flog you in their synagogues, 10:18 and you will be dragged before governors and kings because of me, as a testimony to them and the gentiles. 10:19 When they hand you over, do not worry about how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you at that time,

10:20 for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.

10:21 Sibling will betray sibling to death and a father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death, 10:22 and you will be hated by all because of my name. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

10:23 When they persecute you in this town, flee to the next, for truly I tell you, you will not have finished going through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes."

## Hymn Christ be our light



### Sermon

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



Icon by Annette Packett

This is called Restoration Song and it's from my daily devotional:  
*Celtic Daily Prayer, © 2015 The Northumbria Community Trust UK*

God called forth a people, and we responded to His call, 'Rebuild this ancient ruin, restore my city walls.'

He has led us day by day, as we listened to his voice

When we started, we were strangers  
we hardly knew each other  
Now we are brothers and sisters  
and we will never be the same

As we built, brick by brick, we discovered the corner stone  
and as we let Him mould and fashion us, He built us up in love

Now, we have seen, and we have heard, that the Lord our God  
is great,  
for a wilderness has been transformed, into His holy place.

It's not easy being a Christian – we do our best, but we don't often see the fruit of our effects or any results we expect

God is at work in ways we do not understand. Yet, we do not journey along and at the end of the journey, we are never the same.

God promises fruitfulness and it takes time

The work of the Spirit goes deep into our soul, and often we don't know of it until we look back in old age, like Sarah and Abraham.

Sarah and Abraham were promised fruitfulness and they doubted. Sarah laughed.

This is portrait of an elderly woman by Tiepolo in the 1700's.



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One day the promise to Sarah and Abraham was fulfilled. Sarah had been barren most of her life and perhaps people looked at her with pity. Perhaps people laughed when she said, 'I will be fruitful in my old age.'

Then the promise was fulfilled and Sarah had a child who she named Isaac, which means laughter. Now she could laugh with joy

Abraham and Sarah could invite others to celebrate their fruitfulness and laugh with Joy with them, for in their old age they have been fruitful

The fruits of the Spirit take time to grow  
 The fruits of anything that is spiritual grow slowly over time  
 Because its deep sustaining and life changing growth

Christians have followed the Lord for centuries. They began the journey as strangers with others and ended up being brothers and sisters.

This is a true story that appeared in The Age business section, on May 25<sup>th</sup> this year.

As a young man Scott wanted to be something bigger  
 He wanted to be rich  
 He started a cosmetics company that grew into a 4.2 billion company  
 Despite his success he was miserable

One night at party at his home in the Holy Hills with expensive cars and rich guests, he looked around and questioned everything, asking: What is life all about? What's the point of all this money? I die? Is this why we are created? Is this why I'm here?

He had a mystical experience where he experienced the presence of God and saw himself as he was. This touched him deeply and he told everyone to leave and left his house and never returned. His house felt like a place of sin.

He spent time crying in a hotel room. He knew he wasn't the man his parents created him to be, after growing up in a catholic family. He spent time searching and getting in touch with a call he felt, when he was 10 years old.

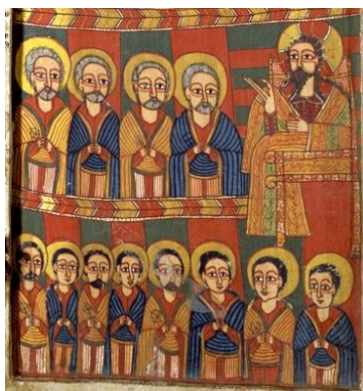
He began a new journey. He repented about bringing others to vanity and realised it was the opposite of what God wanted for him.

He went to see a vocations director, a priest and turned up in a Hugo Boss suit and driving a Mercedes, ready to deliver his pitch. The priest told him, "We have a lot of work to do."

After he was ordained late May this year in California. He said, 'I have never been so happy.'

Imagine how his parents feel.....

All of us have hopes for our children. We do our best to introduce them to Jesus and Christianity, often without results in our lifetime.



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We are like the apostles – sent out to plant seeds in hearts and to trust in the journey. Called not to worry and to hold things lightly as we journey with Christ.

We may not see any signs of faith in our loved ones in our lifetime but It's not for us to harvest. We are not called to control God or the Spirit or to save the world. That's for Jesus to do.

We are called to plant seeds in hearts and believe God is faithful and loves us.



Our recent All Age services haven't brought new people into the church, yet. However, they have been life-giving and fun for us, and many people know about our craft activities and puppet madness.

On our Surf Coast Facebook there have been 807 views for the first All Age April service and so far, 266 views for the Pentecost service. Who knows what seeds this has planted in hearts.



The recent campfire church service at Aireys Inlet didn't draw members of the community to the service, but it powerfully ministered to those who came and who shared their stories. The music was loud and all the community passing by heard it and saw church was different to what they knew. It was joyful and the music was profound – songs like Let it be; Stand by me and Paul Kelly's song Meet me in the Middle of the Air played loudly. There have been 542 views on the Surf Coast Uniting Churches Facebook and more than a hundred members of the community passed by when we had the service. This plants seeds, in hearts. Who knows what will happen over time.



Our services at Bellbrae, such as worship in the garden, the pets blessing and our Sunday worship and the blessing of the garden are planting seeds in hearts. Like the recent congratulation on our Surf Coast Uniting Church Facebook for Graeme Stockton, his OAM and contributions to conservation and founding the Surf Coast Environment Group and

support for Maxine with planting advice in the garden which received responses from many people on Facebook.

Social media is how people communicate with one another today. Why not as a Christian do what Christians have done over the centuries? There were scrolls, buildings, outdoors, books, then TV and now social media. There were harps and drums and now we use organs which were used in English pubs and Wesley wrote music for them as they were adapted for churches. We need to move with the times, as the church always has and always will, as we build, brick by brick, as we discovered the corner stone and as we let Him mould and fashion us, as he builds us up in love

My point is we are witnessing to our faith in different ways, and we need to trust God and believe our ministry will be fruitful by being voices in the wilderness and through loving one another, as Christ loves us.

We can trust in the slow work of God.

### **Quiet moment**



### **The 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**

Prayers for peace, for those suffering because of wars and persecution, for the homeless in winter, those struggling with the cost of living, the destruction of our environment, the death of fish and mammals due to plastics, and for all those mistreated due to discrimination.

### **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 681 Lord let me see**

Lord let me see, see more and more,  
 see the beauty of a person, not the colour of the skin,  
 see the faces of the homeless with no-one to take them in,  
 see discouragement because she'll never win:  
 see the face of our Lord in the pain:  
 Lord let me see.

Lord let me love, love more and more,  
 love the loveless and the fragile, help them be what they can be,  
 love the way that I would like them to be looking after me;  
 for to know you is to love them and be free,  
 and in love Jesus Christ will be found:  
 Lord let me love.

Ross Langmead 1949-

### **Notices and Sharing**

#### **Blessing**

May we be blessed with peace and comfort  
 May we do our best to be compassionate, gentle and humble  
 May we see God and be filled with God's Spirit  
 May we go out into the world to preach the gospel of love in all we do, as we strive to be  
 God's peacemakers.

#### **Hymn 473 Community of Christ**

Community of Christ,  
 look past the Church's door  
 and see the refugee, the hungry,  
 and the poor.  
 Take hands with the oppressed,  
 the jobless in your street,  
 take towel and water, that you wash  
 your neighbour's feet.

Shirley Erena Murray 1931-