

Surf Coast Uniting Churches

Sunday 19th July 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

May the worship bless you

Introduction to Winter Sabbath

July is Winter Sabbath time. An invitation to nest, slow down, and go deeper with our faith.

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

**Open wide the window of our spirits
God, and fill us with light;
Open wide the door of our hearts
that we may receive and entertain you
with all our powers of adoration
and love. Amen**

Prayer

Most of us long for a peaceful heart, free of conflict, fear and resentment. This is a monk's prayer. We can't be like a monk, but we can nurture a monk like heart.

When we have a peaceful heart, we can be peacemakers and bring peace. That is how you shape us Lord, and we give you our thanks and praise.

We can spend a quiet moment each day, focusing on God and being quiet and still, praying. This is a monk's prayer, adapted. It's called the Telemachus Prayer (Celtic Daily Prayer, © 2015 Bk 2, The Northumbria Community trust)

This is my purpose, Lord. I'm called to a life of prayer. When I hear the bell ring, I feel summoned to prayer and worship. The sound of the bell brings my soul peace.

Search me O God, sift through my heart and root out resentment and argument. Catch every contention that attacks its tender peace.

I pause for a moment, as if the bell speaks to me, Lord, to focus on you with all my energy and strength, my life paused, just for a moment. So, I can sense your heart within me. I hear the call of the bell to stop and pause. Then your peace is within me, in my flesh and bones. The peace only you can offer all of us.

When I hear your voice in my heart, calling me to act with love, I pray to you and know, you are there for me, in every situation and disposition and place, as you are with everyone.

You, Lord, help us to bring your peace. In every breath, I know your peace. The peace of Christ in my heart, and when my courage fails, the peace of Christ in my heart, provokes change. **Amen**

Prayer of Confession

In this moment of silence, we come before the Lord, with all that's on our hearts, asking for healing and forgiveness and the grace to forgive others.

Silence

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

Responsorial Psalm

O LORD, you have searched me and known me.
You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from far away.
 You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways.
Even before a word is on my tongue, O LORD, you know it completely.

You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me.
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is so high that I cannot attain it.
 Where can I go from your spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence?
If I ascend to heaven, you are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.

If I take the wings of the morning and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,
even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me fast.
 If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me, and night wraps itself around me,"
even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is as bright as the day, for darkness is as light to you.

Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts.
See if there is any wicked way in me and lead me in the way everlasting.

Hymn 584 – Just as I am

Just as I am, though tossed about
with many a conflict, many a doubt,
fightings and fears within, without,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, poor, wretched and blind -
sight, riches, healing of the mind,
yea all I need, in thee I find,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

13:24 He put before them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field,
13:25 but while everybody was asleep an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and then went away.

13:26 So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared as well.

13:27 And the slaves of the householder came and said to him, 'Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where, then, did these weeds come from?'

13:28 He answered, 'An enemy has done this.' The slaves said to him, 'Then do you want us to go and gather them?'

13:29 But he replied, 'No, for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them.

13:30 Let both of them grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.'"

13:36 Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples approached him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field."

13:37 He answered, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man;

13:38 the field is the world, and the good seed are the children of the kingdom; the weeds are the children of the evil one,

13:39 and the enemy who sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels.

13:40 Just as the weeds are collected and burned up with fire, so will it be at the end of the age.

13:41 The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers,

13:42 and they will throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

13:43 Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Let anyone with ears listen!

Response to the Reading on PowerPoint)

Your word O Lord is a lamp to my feet
A light to my path.

Hymn 376 I know that my redeemer lives

I know that my Redeemer lives -
 what joy the blest assurance gives!
 He lives, he lives, who once was dead;
 he lives, my everlasting Head.

He lives, to bless me with his love:
 he lives, to plead for me above;
 he lives my hungry soul to feed;
 he lives to help in time of need.

He lives and grants me daily breath;
 he lives, and I shall conquer death;
 he lives, my mansion to prepare;
 he lives, to lead me safely there.

He lives, all glory to his name;
 he lives, my Saviour, still the same;
 what joy the blest assurance gives,
 I know that my Redeemer lives!

Samuel Medley 1738-99

Sermon

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



Péterfy, László. Angel of the Plains, from *Art in the Christian Tradition*, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. <https://digilib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=59696> [retrieved July 13, 2026]. Original source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Paks_Szent%C3%A9lek-templom_szobor.JPG.

Today's psalm tells us God knows us, watches us, knows our hearts and motivations and reads our thoughts and we cannot hide from God, who holds each one of us in the palm of his hand.

I remember Vladimir. I was in an ecumenical team involved in street ministry, years ago and he was sitting on a metal bench outside St Paul's Cathedral in Melbourne's CBD. Other people were sitting on the bench with us. Homeless youth, aboriginal people and people from the local boarding Houses. It was mid-winter and cold, and Vladimir was singing loudly. I heard the clink of his bottle in his coat pocket, hit against the metal bench, and just for a moment, I judged him. Then he told me, an Anglican priest had given him a bible, and he took the bible from his other pocket and began singing psalm 139, loudly. He knew it off by heart. I'll never forget how he was confident God knew him intimately and loved him.

Perhaps we all long to be fully known, loved and accepted for ourselves. We often fear revealing our brokenness and sinfulness to one another, but we don't have to. It's private between God and us and in our hearts, we know God wants us to be whole, forgiven and redeemed. That's why Jesus came.



RCL adapted

The other day someone was speaking about being a health professional in a small town. He said, 'One mistake and everyone knows you, never forgets or forgives'. I said to him, 'It's not like that in the church. It's the only place in society where people can go when they are broken, disturbed, dysfunctional, and lost. It's the only place where they will be accepted and find a safe place to heal and experience deep conversion and wholeness. It's a place to find forgiveness and compassion.'

This is the role of the church. To welcome those who are rejected by society, the people Jesus came for, who he forgives and makes whole. The church is a place anyone and everyone can belong, let go of the past and embrace holiness.



Leunig, used with permission

Many years ago, I heard the story of a Priest. He was involved in crime and spent his time misusing power and hurt many people with his choices. One day a Priest approached him and gave him a bible, and he hit him over the head with it and threw it on the ground. The priest persevered in trying to reach out to him. One day he was having a terrible time and had sunk as low as he could. He felt lost and prayed to God. Immediately the Holy Spirit overcame him, and he cried like a baby. He said he felt like a crab without a shell. He was forever changed and went on to become a priest who ministered to prostitutes, criminals and addicts. He knew their world and language. Perhaps that's why God chose him.

The psalm speaks into today's gospel, about Jesus sowing good seed in the world. We may worry about the weeds. Most of us know what it's like to plant seeds and the frustrations when weeds grow amongst them. We can't pull out the weeds; we risk pulling out the good plants. Jesus explains his parable to his disciples who worried about weeds appearing in the field amongst the grains he had sowed or the congregations.

Jesus explained he sows good seed in the world, but there is evilness, which seeks to destroy what is good in the children of God. We have all experienced hurt from someone who prefers the darkness and hides from the light. People who have made the choice to hurt, oppress, destroy, who hurt Jesus' church and hate God. They embrace violence by choice. When I worked as a lawyer, I saw the very best of people and the very worst of people. There is evilness in the world.

I managed a Legal information and referral service for six years and took the crisis calls and met with people who came into the building. My staff handled the less challenging calls.

Over a six-year period I took thousands of calls and realised the great majority of people wanted to be treated with love and respect, to belong, be secure financially and emotionally, and reach their full potential. For those who chose the darkness, they had no remorse or self-awareness and chose not to turn to the light. Victims of crime often asked, with innocence, 'Why has this happened to me? Why has this happened to my loved one? They simply didn't understand evilness, because they didn't embrace it. Because of this, they were able to turn to God, to the light and be healed. God came for them and brought them through the darkness back into the light, just like in psalm 23.



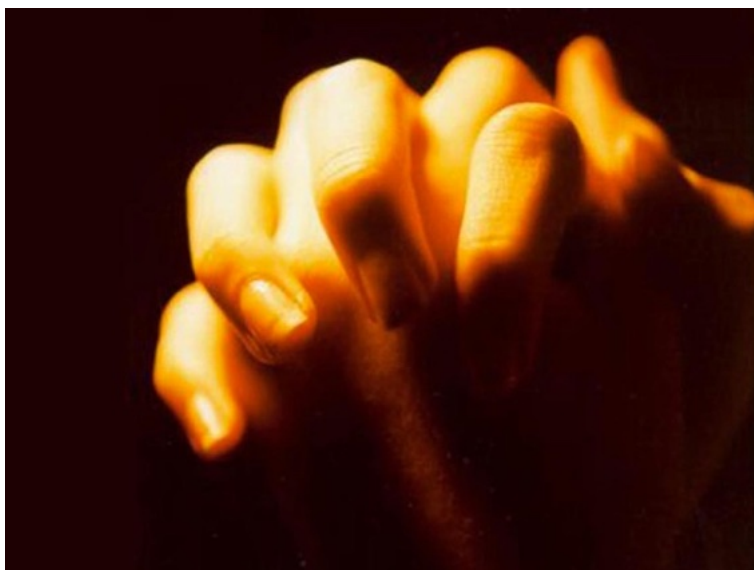
RCL

It is not our role to judge others. That's Jesus' role.
Today's gospel reveals how Jesus judges.



Stephanie Woollard

The parable is about consequences.



RCL

But there is always hope. I read on the BBC app how there is a village in Italy that was destroyed by earthquakes. Most people live elsewhere but they return at harvest time when fields of lentils grow side by side with wildflowers, blue, red, yellow, purple, and

orange flowers. It brings the tourists and they spend money in the village and this money is helping to rebuild the village.



RCL

I think of the man involved in criminal activities and how the Priest was led by God to seek him out and bring him back from the darkness and how he persevered and in the end the man turned to God.



T. Lyndon

We must avoid being drawn into the darkness and always choose God. Those of you who have been hurt, don't worry about the person who hurt you or is hurting you, hand them over to God and pray for them. Stay in the light with Jesus and grow into holiness through prayer and the Spirit. Be children of God.

The Lord be with you

Hymn 534 Love is his Word Love is his way

Love is his word, love is his way,
feasting with friends, fasting alone,

living and dying, rising again,
love, only love, is his way.

Richer than gold is the love of my Lord:
better than splendour and wealth.

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

We pray for peace in the world and an end to wars. For peace in people's hearts and healing for all those suffering from disease, and health issues, for those suffering because of climate change and those who are hungry, cold and homeless.

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

Blessings

**May the blessing of the Holy Spirit be upon you
God's love and Light within you
In all your comings and goings
May you ever have a kindly greeting
From any you meet along the road**

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.