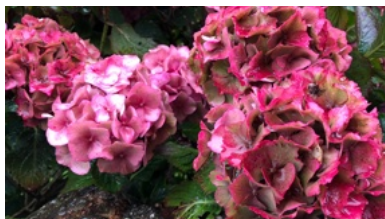




Surf Coast Uniting Churches

Sunday 20 September 2026



Introit – 768 Praise God

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

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

Celtic Daily Prayer © 2015 The Northumbria Community Trust

Blessed are the pure in heart

May we see God

Streams of Living water will flow from your heart

We believe in you

Your heart is where your treasure is

May we store up treasure in heaven

Love the Lord your God with all your heart

Show us where we are half-hearted

When you speak it's easy to see what's in your heart

Give us a new heart

Declaration of faith

**We believe in the Father who looks at the heart
We believe in the Son who knows what's in our hearts
We believe in the Holy Spirit, who searches our hearts**

Prayer of Confession – invitation to congregation

You are invited to spend a moment in quiet contemplation and bring to God whatever's troubling your hearts

Silence (30 seconds)

Hear then Christ's words of grace to us
"Your sins are forgiven"

Thanks be to God

Prayers for Season of Creation



Today we focus on faith and food

Loving God, we thank you for giving us water.

Without it we would not live or grow food.

We give thanks to you for food, which satisfies our bodies needs

Loving God, you give us your spirit, which satisfies our souls needs

You promised we shall never be thirsty or hungry again

Food, water and faith

We trust you lord to provide what we need for the journey.

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This is a song to the Holy Spirit

Lord, Holy Spirit,

You are the sun who shines on the little plant

You warm him up gently, you give him life

You raise him up to become a tree with many leaves

Lord Holy Spirit

You are the mother eagle with her young

Holding them in peace under your feathers

On the highest mountain you have built your nest

Above the valley, above the storms of the world

Lord Holy Spirit,
You are the kind fire which does not cease to burn
Consuming us with flames of love and peace
Driving us out like sparks to set the world on fire

(James A Baxter from Celtic Daily prayer (adapted) © 2015 Northumbria community trust)

We give you thanks for sending your Spirit, Lord
We hold fast to the unity of your Spirit
In the bonds of heavens grace
We are bound together
By the Love of Christ

(Celtic Daily prayer (adapted) © 2015 Northumbria community trust)

Loving God, you call us forth as your people to care for creation
You have led us day by day, as we have listened to your voice.
You called us to rebuild this ancient ruin, and restore your city walls
You have fed us with the finest wheat and manna from the skies
When we began our journey together, we were strangers
We hardly knew each other's names.
Now we are brothers and sisters
And we will never be the same.

As we built, brick by brick, we discovered the cornerstone
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. Amen

Gerry Touhy, Celtic Daily prayer (adapted) © 2015 Northumbria community trust

Loving God, we give you our thanks and praise
You give us our daily bread
You give us water
You give us life, faith and living water.
We thank you Lord.

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We finish with a prayer Bev Boxshall as part of the devotions for Torquay Church meeting

Creator Spirit, we thank you for the beauty of the natural world, with all its diversity and complexities

We pray today, for our waters – rivers, creeks, waterfalls, gorges, and billabongs on which our lives depend, and for which we have a duty to protect. Amen

© 2026 Bev Boxshall

God of Creation (All Together) Played to Morning has broken)

God of creation, gentle life giver
 Present at birth and all through our days
 Author of sunrise, song in the night sky
 Here in this place, we offer our praise

Readings

Exodus 16:2-15

- 16:2 The whole congregation of the Israelites complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness.
- 16:3 The Israelites said to them, "If only we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat and ate our fill of bread, for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."
- 16:4 Then the LORD said to Moses, "I am going to rain bread from heaven for you, and each day the people shall go out and gather enough for that day. In that way I will test them, whether they will follow my instruction or not."
- 16:5 On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather on other days."
- 16:6 So Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites, "In the evening you shall know that it was the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt,
- 16:7 and in the morning you shall see the glory of the LORD, because he has heard your complaining against the LORD. For what are we, that you complain against us?"
- 16:8 And Moses said, "When the LORD gives you meat to eat in the evening and your fill of bread in the morning, because the LORD has heard the complaining that you utter against him--what are we? Your complaining is not against us but against the LORD."
- 16:9 Then Moses said to Aaron, "Say to the whole congregation of the Israelites: 'Draw near to the LORD, for he has heard your complaining.'"
- 16:10 And as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the Israelites: they looked toward the wilderness, and the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud.
- 16:11 The LORD spoke to Moses, 16:12 "I have heard the complaining of the Israelites; say to them, 'At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall have your fill of bread; then you shall know that I am the LORD your God.'"
- 16:13 In the evening quails came up and covered the camp, and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp.
- 16:14 When the layer of dew lifted, there on the surface of the wilderness was a fine flaky substance, as fine as frost on the ground.
- 16:15 When the Israelites saw it, they said to one another, "What is it?" For they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, "It is the bread that the LORD has given you to eat.

Matthew 20:1-16

- 20:1 "For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard.
- 20:2 After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius for the day, he sent them into his vineyard.

20:3When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace,
 20:4and he said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.'
 So they went.

20:5When he went out again about noon and about three o'clock, he did the same.

20:6And about five o'clock he went out and found others standing around, and he said to
 them, 'Why are you standing here idle all day?'

20:7They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You also go into the
 vineyard.'

20:8When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, 'Call the laborers
 and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.'

20:9When those hired about five o'clock came, each of them received a denarius.

20:10Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them
 also received a denarius.

20:11And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner,

20:12saying, 'These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who
 have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.'

20:13But he replied to one of them, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree
 with me for a denarius?'

20:14Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you.

20:15Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious
 because I am generous?'

20:16So the last will be first, and the first will be last."

Hymn 106 Now thank we all our God

Now thank we all our God
 with hearts and hands and voices,
 who wondrous things has done,
 in whom the world rejoices;
 who from our mothers' arms
 has blessed us on our way
 with countless gifts of love,
 and still is ours today

Sermon - Food and faith

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

My husband and I were walking through the mall in Glasgow, and we saw this man cutting another man's hair. The man receiving the haircut may have been disadvantaged in some way. The irony of the situation wasn't lost on me. The man was receiving a haircut in front of upmarket shops such as Chanel and Dior.



RCL

In today's reading from Exodus God hears the Israelites complaining. They are on a long journey. There is no food and it brings about a crisis in faith. God understands their struggles and provides food, just enough for the day, so the people learnt to trust God to provide their daily bread, and some meat.



RCL

We also have the story of the day labourers, who earn only enough to cover the cost of food for the day for their families and themselves. The labourers learn about God's grace, unmerited love that cannot be earned, and God's generosity to all. A group of day labourers are asked to work for a set sum for the day and they agree to it, during different times of the day. Those who were too old, or ill or injured or disabled. Those who couldn't work hard, wouldn't have been chosen. They are the last to be asked to work, late in the day. They were happy to work and didn't even ask how much. When the time came for the day labourers to be paid, it was this last group who were paid first, and they received the same amount as the first group. It didn't matter how long they worked. God was generous and everyone was paid the same. The first group thought this was unfair, for they did most of the work.

The point of this story is not on how much work is done. It is about God's mercy and generosity to all. What's in the heart counted more. The first group were grateful for God's generosity and grace shown to them. They were grateful, had the right attitude. The last group were ungrateful. They received what they agreed to, but they desired more, because they thought they worked harder and sacrificed more. They forgot they are day labourers and only received enough for the day. What would they do with the extra money, hoard it? They experience a crisis of faith, where they are not willing to live day by day and trust God to provide.

Why did Jesus tell his disciples this story? They had left all to follow him, family, career, community, friends, security and safety, and has risked their wellbeing for Jesus. Theirs was a costly love. Here is Jesus even last-minute ministry counts. The last are first because of their gratitude and attitude. What's in the heart counts most. Why are we following Jesus? Why are we doing ministry and for whom?



Used with permission

Here is Leunig's little man standing under a starry sky with his hand held out, ready to receive. It's a gesture of trust. Remember the prayer after communion. My hands were empty and you filled them. We can trust God to love and care about us.



T. Lyndon

We are social, and interdependent. We love our families and we love our food. Family and food go together. My happy moment is when I've cooked a dinner for my family and we are all seated at the table. I say a Christian grace and my daughter-in-law says a Shinto grace. Anglo, Chinese, Japanese and Eurasian. Rice and gratefulness, food and faith, water and joy. It is our families we love and work for and sacrifice for and we need one another. Imagine the effect on my grandchildren's faith and identity when we have these meals and express our gratitude for one another, for faith and food.

I don't know if you've seen Maslow's pyramid of human needs. We need the basics before we look for other needs to be met. Food, water and shelter. Then safety, which includes family, love and belonging. In a world where a small number of people hold most wealth and the number of people without the basics keeps increasing

We may ask, is this fair? The gospel questions this and values what's in our hearts. Our trust and gratitude when we receive from our wonderful planet, when God draws from creation to care for us.

I used to volunteer in the CBD, offering a listening ear to visitors to a church.

I'd go for lunch at Collins Street Baptist church where interns, lawyers like me, homeless and people who lived in boarding houses and refuges sat around a big wooden table. The interns would cook for us. Georges was next door and sent over gourmet sandwiches. As we ate and drank, with gratefulness, God's grace was at work.

Many people are subsistence farmers in PNG. Dry weather is producing frost in the mountains. When the morning is frosty and the sun comes up, it burns the crops. The rivers are shrinking. How will people survive?

We cannot eat food without water. Our water security is being threatened by climate change, pollution, drought and now, AI. Rivers are drying up. We must fight to protect our water. This summer will be hot, and we will need water to drink and grow food and fight wildfires.

We need to work together to protect our water. Look for people who are legitimately protecting water, in this country and internationally. Find out more about how our water systems are managed and protected.

We are called to witness to God's love for creation. That means getting back to basics such as protecting our water and doing our best to care for water systems. Water allows us to have food and faith. The basics of life. Gods' wonderful gift of creation to us.

Quiet moment

Hymn 418 She sits like a bird



RCL

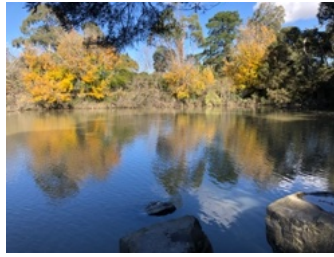
She sits like a bird, brooding on the waters,
hovering on the chaos of the world's first day;
she sighs and she sings, mothering creation,
waiting to give birth to all the Word will say

John L Bell 1949-and Graham Maule 1958-

Offering

Lord, as your Spirit moved over the deep, we thank you for the gift of water. The waters on the Earth, and under the Earth, the waters above us, and within us. Make us mindful of the care of all the planet's waters, that it may richly sustain life for us and for those who come after us. Accept the first fruits we offer here. Bless and multiply these gifts to our nurture and the care of your creation and church for the sake of your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ.

Prayers of the People



Prayers for our water systems, oceans, rivers, creeks, waterfalls
 Prayers for those who are hungry and thirsty
 Prayers for those suffering and 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

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

Brian Kerry Boniwell 1949- (based on Psalm 23)

Blessing

Go in peace, as people of God made Christ's own through the waters of baptism. In the
 power of the Holy Spirit. Alleluia! Alleluia!

Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia!

778 Shalom to 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.

Elise Shoemaker Eslinger 1942