

Surf Coast Uniting Churches

Sunday 6th of September 2026



London – T. Lyndon

Introit -The peace of the earth

*The peace of the earth be with you,
the peace of the heavens too;
the peace of the rivers be with you,
the peace of the oceans too.
Deep peace falling over you;
God's peace growing in you. (Repeat)*

Welcome



Hodge, the famous cathedral cat

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.



Central Australia – T. Lyndon

Prayer – Safina Stewart

Spirit of truth, guide our hearts and our steps
 Teach us to walk together in friendship and respect
 To honor the rich cultures and stories of this land's first peoples
 May your church be a place of reconciliation, healing and justice
 A courageous community empowered by your love



Call to worship and theme

In the beginning, the Spirit of God hovered over the waters.
 And God called them good.

Come Holy Spirit and cleanse the waters.

The prophet saw a river flowing from the Temple,
 and wherever the river flowed, everything lived.

Come Holy Spirit and renew the face of the Earth.

Jesus cried out,
 “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me... Out
 of the believer’s heart shall flow rivers of living water.
 ”

Come, Holy Spirit and heal your people.

This year's Seasons of creation is based on Ezekiel 47:9-12

Swarms of living creatures will live wherever the river flows. There will be large numbers of fish, because this water flows there and makes the salt water fresh; so where the river flows everything will live
Fruit trees of all kinds will grow on both banks of the river.
Their leaves will not wither, nor will their fruit fail. Every month they will bear fruit, because the water from the sanctuary flows to them. Their fruit will serve for food and their leaves for healing

May the Word, as living water,
All: **make everything live.**

Prayer for Seasons of Creation (adapted)

Loving God, your Spirit hovered over the waters at the beginning of time
Today, we gather as part of your community of all creation,
thirsty for your grace.

We give thanks for the gift of water, the veins of our common home, that sustains the cedar and the whale, the pasture and the city. We are grateful for the local waters that nourish our homelands and our fellow creatures. We give thanks that in your well-watered garden, every drop is a sacred testament to your love.

Yet, we confess at times we've treated this gift as a mere commodity. We have choked the seas with our waste and watched the warming tides rise in judgment.
We lament the cracked earth of the drought-stricken and the salty tears of the climate refugee. Melt our frozen hearts, Lord.
Let the waters of repentance flow.

When nature reminds us of our folly, help us pray and act with love to heal the earth.
When climate change, starvation, and entire islands disappearing under the oceans and floods that come from melting glaciers that wash away entire villages and communities scar your beautiful creation help us find a way forward to heal your creation.

Lord, we are sorry Lord for the lack of love shown towards your creation
We lament how humanity has caused this cry from nature
Help us change our hearts Lord
Help those who can care, gather and work together
to speak out and stop this destruction of your creation

Lord of all Life, you promised that wherever the river flows, everything shall live.
Stir in us a calling to care for the waters — to protect the watershed, defend the rights of water and honour the dignity of the thirsty.

Lord, may your Word be a spring within us, gushing forth for the healing of the nations.

Lord, you brought forth water from the rock to sustain us in the desert.

May Christ our Lord who is Living Water refresh us for the work of restoration.
May the Holy Spirit carry us on currents of grace until justice rolls down like waters and
righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. Amen.

An Affirmation of Faith

We believe in God, who creates all things,
who embraces all things, who celebrates all things,
who is present in every part of the fabric of creation.
We believe in God as the source of all life,
who baptizes this planet with living water.
We believe in Jesus Christ, seen in the suffering one,
the poor one, the malnourished one,
the climate refugee - who loves and cares for this world
and suffers with it.
And we believe in Jesus Christ, the seed of life,
who came to reconcile and renew this world
and everything in it.
We believe in the Holy Spirit, the breath of God,
who moves with God
and who moves among and with us today.
We believe in everlasting life in God.
And we believe in the hope that one day God will put an end to
death and all destructive forces.

(Lutheran Theological College, South India, adapted)

Blessing of the water

*Prayer said as the font is filled with water.
If you are home place a bowl of water in front of you*

In the beginning, the Spirit of God hovered over the waters.
And God called them good.

Come Holy Spirit and cleanse the waters.

The prophet saw a river flowing from the Temple,
and wherever the river flowed, everything lived.

Come Holy Spirit and renew the face of the Earth.

Jesus cried out:
“Let anyone who is thirsty come to me... Out
of the believer’s heart shall flow rivers of living water.”

Come, Holy Spirit and heal your people.

Thanksgiving prayer for the Waters

Almighty and ever living God, we thank you for your love in all creation, and especially for your gift of water to sustain and cleanse all life.

Christ is the living water, cleansing, refreshing, and making all things new. So now we offer our thanks for the waters that bring beauty to all that we enjoy, the wild places, the bush, the mountains, coast and the sea. We give thanks and praise for all good lands, for the trees and pastures, for our plentiful crops, and for the living water that quenches them.

(Adapted from Anglican Aotearoa NZ Prayer Book)

We praise you for giving us life through water, and for all waters everywhere. We especially praise you for the waters who sustain us in this part of our common home.

We give you thanks, Lord, for in the beginning you created us in your image and placed us in a well-watered garden. In the desert, you promised pools of water for the parched, and you gave your people water from the rock. When we did not know the way, you sent the Good Shepherd to lead us to still waters. At the cross, you washed us from Jesus' wounded side, and on this day, you shower us again with the water of life.

You bathe us in your forgiveness, grace, and love Lord. You satisfy all who thirst and You give us the life only you can give. Amen

(Adapted from All Creation Sings,
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America)

We are invited to come forward and touch the water and remember our baptism



Fairhaven – T. Lyndon

Hymn 668 TIS Touch the earth lightly

*Touch the earth lightly,
use the earth gently,
nourish the life of the world in our care:
gift of great wonder,
ours to surrender,
trust for the children tomorrow will bear.*

Shirley Erena Murray 1931-

Romans 13:8-14

13:8 Owe no one anything, except to love one another, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law.

13:9 The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery; you shall not murder; you shall not steal; you shall not covet," and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself."

13:10 Love does no wrong to a neighbour; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law.

13:11 Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is already the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers;

13:12 the night is far gone; the day is near. Let us then throw off the works of darkness and put on the armour of light;

13:13 let us walk decently as in the day, not in revelling and drunkenness, not in illicit sex and licentiousness, not in quarrelling and jealousy.

13:14 Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

Hymn 137 TIS For the Beauty of the earth

*For the beauty of the earth,
for the beauty of the skies,
for the love which from our birth
over and around us lies,
Christ, our God, to you we raise
this our sacrifice of praise.*

Sermon

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



Ireland – T. Lyndon

Someone once said to me: *You're looking for angels.* Perhaps we're all looking for angels. People filled with the kind of love and light Paul described in Romans. People who have put on Christ.

Recently my husband and I travelled through Ireland. On one occasion we asked a taxi driver for directions, and he expressed genuine concern for our wellbeing, saying, 'Jesus, Mary and Joseph.' Then he put his hand over his heart and wished us a blessing for our travels.

I felt loved by this stranger. For that moment, he was our neighbour.

Today's reading asks: Love our neighbour as yourself

Trying to stand in another's shoes isn't easy. How can we understand how someone else wants to be treated by us?

I discovered while managing a legal crisis service for six years and listening to thousands of people's stories that people want to be treated with compassion, gentleness, kindness, respect, and belong to a family, be loved, have dignity and feel secure. Perhaps most people want to be treated like this.

In today's reading Paul offers some guidelines about how to love one another.

He begins with the love commandment Jesus taught us.
"Love your neighbour as yourself."

We put on Christ when we were baptised and died to our old ways. Since that time Christ has called us to live differently and grow into this call.

Paul calls on us to "Wake up."

Life is short and Paul outlines a choice. We can choose the night and darkness or we can choose the day and light.

The lifegiving choice is to put on Christ and choose to love his way.
To wake up for the day and embrace its light in our lives.

According to Paul, the first way we love one another is to do no wrong to a neighbour.



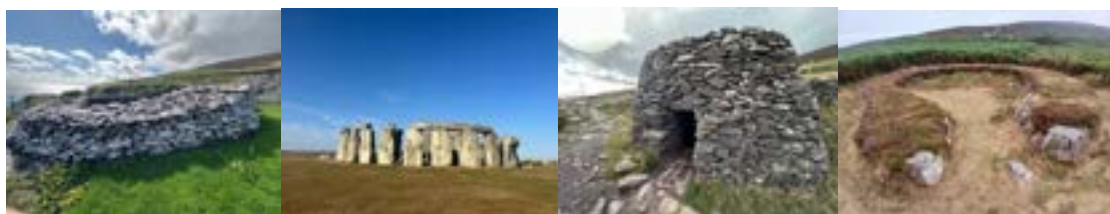
Fairhaven – T. Lyndon

Most of us have been loved. We tend to look for the light in a person's face and want to feel the warmth of their love. People who are loving are a joy to spend time with. We tend to see God in them because they are Jesus for



Ireland and England – T. Lyndon

Today we focus on loving one another by loving and caring for God's creation. Today, people are destroying our world out of greed and negligence. That is not loving humanity, or God.



Thousands of years before Christ came ancient people lived close to nature and used natural resources in a way that didn't tend to destroy creation. These are the remains of an old fort, Stonehenge, a beehive hut and circular huts from an ancient village.



In an area known as the Cotswolds there are people who still embrace some of the old ways or live close to nature, such as this village with a creek running through it and a house with a thatched roof.

There are local and global movements for rewilding, fertilising the land with natural fertilisers, projects for cleaning up plastics and fishing nets from the ocean, banning plastics, recycling, building using natural products, creating new reefs, education, and many more initiatives. Pray for them. Get involved.



This is a stone tower built in Oxford over 1000 years ago to house a chapel, and people still worship and pray in it. When we visited, a group of people were holding a bible study and were very aware that they were meeting in the oldest building in town.

Paul calls for us to wake up. Life is too short and we can't afford to sleep through it. We are called to leave a legacy that blesses others. Let us pray for God's creation and for those suffering when nature fights back against its destruction.



The way forward is to put on the armour of light, the armour of Christ and be filled with the light of God's spirit and love. Be guided by the Spirit and Jesus' teachings. Read the bible and pray, every day. Stay close to God and nurture your relationship with God. Love one another as yourself. When our time comes, all we have is God and our legacy of how we have blessed others.

Paul called for us to walk decently in the light. When I was in Ireland, I heard the story about the potato famine and how no one really came to the rescue of over one million people who starved to death. Great injustices were done. I invite you to explore the story. These are some of the houses where people starved to death. There are people going hungry in our country. We must not ignore them.



We must put on the Lord Jesus Christ and embrace Christlike behaviour, in how we treat each other. We must live in the day and the light.



These are old Roman shoes and plastic shoes. Perhaps the Roman soldiers who wore these shoes used violence to rule over and subdue people. The plastic shoes find their way into the ocean and break down and end up inside the stomachs of whales, dolphins and turtles, who starve to death.



Whose shoes will you stand in? We need to pray about our daily choices and their impact upon God's creation and others lives, especially our children's. We need to put on Christ, try to stand in his shoes and try to see things his way.



Since humanity began its journey with God, we have looked at God's creation with wonder and awe. We have looked up at the night sky and seen the glory of the milky way and got in touch with how small we are in the universe. We have sought out and named sacred places to be close to God. We are made for God and for creation.

Let us never lose our ability to seek out God and look at God's creation with wonder and awe. This is something technology and AI can never give us.

Let us put on Christ and use all we have, to fight for and save God's beautiful creation. Let us love our neighbour by loving God's creation.

Quiet moment



Holy Island, Wales

Hymn 135 TIS All Things bright and Beautiful

*All things bright and beautiful,
all creatures great and small,
all things wise and wonderful -
the Lord God made them all.*

*The wildflowers in their beauty,
the mountain ranges tall,
the billabongs and rivers,
and friendly birds that call,*

*All things bright and beautiful,
all creatures great and small,
all things wise and wonderful -
the Lord God made them all.*

Offering Prayer

God, whose 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; for the sake of your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ.

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

The Prayers of the People



NASA

Prayers for World Peace; Climate change; the Church;
Food and water security; AI and water use
Bird Flu and wildlife; Family and those facing medical treatment

Hymn 658 TIS I the Lord of Sea and Sky

I, the Lord of sea and sky, I have heard my people cry
All who dwell in dark and sin, my hand will save.

I who made the stars of night, I will make their darkness bright.
Who will bear my light to them? Whom shall I send?

*Here I am Lord; is it I, Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night;
I will go, Lord, if you'll lead me.
I will hold your people in my heart.*

Blessing



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 755 You shall go out with Joy

You shall go out with joy and be led forth in peace,
and the mountains and hills shall break forth in singing.
There'll be shouts of joy, and the trees of the field
shall clap, shall clap their hands,
and the trees of the field shall clap their hands,
and the trees of the field shall clap their hands,
and the trees of the field shall clap their hands,
and you'll go out with joy.

Steffi Geiser Rubin 1950-based on Isaiah 55:12