Surf Coast Uniting Churches

Sunday 18 October 2026

Introit – 699 A New Commandment (anon)
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. (Repeat)

Welcome
May the Worship Bless you



Acknowledgment

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

Listen to God's breath within, it is fluttering over our belief
We are a happy resurrection people
The world seems upside down now: The Spirit has pushed its way through
We are joyful resurrection people
The World is upside down now: Death's despair has been replaced by joy!
We are hilarious resurrection people
The world is upside down now: We can say with conviction, our God is an awesome God!
We are lighthearted and ecstatic resurrection people. Let's celebrate God!

Prayer of Confession

We are invited to spend a moment in quiet contemplation and bring before God whatever is troubling our hearts

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

Prayer of adoration and invocation

Prayer – Behold, I am doing a new thing among you (adapted)

Mark A Rideout, Before the Amen Edit. M.C. & M.I. Tirabassi © 2007 The Pilgrim Press

Loving God, we give thanks to you
For you are doing a new thing amongst us
It springs forth to vision and brings forth your peace
It makes wilderness places an oasis
Where hope blossoms and your light increases

Loving God, we give thanks to you
Because of you we can forget our pain past, and set aside old ways
We can embrace new thinking and do things your way
We can love you with our heart, soul and mind
Live justice and find renewal in Jesus.

Loving God, we give thanks to you
Because of you a river flows where nothing once flourished
We feed the roots of mighty mustard trees that place us near the source of your love for us
We are blessed by every new planting and its growth
We have become disciples who commit to stay on the path you are leading us on

Loving God, we give thanks to you
Because of you we can discern your wisdom
And from others we can hear the Christ-bearing word
Who are transparent in witness
honestly heard by open hearts

Loving God, we give thanks to you
You are doing a new thing amongst us
New ministries strengthened by our joint prayers
Fresh seasons unfolding, shared hopes beholding
Lord, our spirit delights in you.
Come Holy Spirit, Come. Amen

Introduction and Hymn 153 God is love. Timothy Rees 1874-1939, was a Welsh Anglican Bishop of Llandaff, Wales and a theologian and hymn writer, let us sing his hymn God is love

God is love, let heav'n adore him;
God is love, let earth rejoice;
let creation sing before him,
and exalt him with one voice.
God, who laid the earth's foundation,
he who spread the heavens above,
and who breathes through all creation
God is love, eternal Love

Readings

Exodus 33:12-23

33:12Moses said to the LORD, "See, you have said to me, 'Bring up this people,' but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. Yet you have said, 'I know you by name, and you have also found favor in my sight.'

33:13Now if I have found favor in your sight, please show me your ways, so that I may know you and find favor in your sight. Consider, too, that this nation is your people."

33:14He said, "My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."

33:15And he said to him, "If your presence will not go, do not bring us up from here.

33:16For how shall it be known that I have found favor in your sight, I and your people, unless you go with us? In this way, we shall be distinct, I and your people, from every people on the face of the earth."

33:17The LORD said to Moses, "I will also do this thing that you have asked, for you have found favor in my sight, and I know you by name."

33:18Moses said, "Please show me your glory"

33:19And he said, "I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you the name, 'The LORD,' and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. 33:20But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for no one shall see me and live."

33:21And the LORD continued, "See, there is a place by me where you shall stand on the rock, 33:22and while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by 33:23then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back, but my face shall not be seen."

Matthew 22:15-22

22:15Then the Pharisees went and plotted to entrap him in what he said.

22:16So they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and teach the way of God in accordance with truth, and show deference to no one, for you do not regard people with partiality.

22:17Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to the Caesar, or not?"

22:18But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, "Why are you putting me to the test, you hypocrites?

22:19Show me the coin used for the tax." And they brought him a denarius 22:20Then he said to them, "Whose head is this and whose title?" 22:21They answered, "Caesar's."

Then he said to them, "Give therefore to Caesar the things that are the Caesar's and to God the things that are God's."

22:22When they heard this, they were amazed, and they left him and went away.

Introduction Hymn 164 The great love of God Daniel Niles 1908-70 was a Sri Lankan Methodist pastor, theologian, evangelist, hymn writer, president WCC and a founder of East Asian Christian Conference, let us sing his Hymn The great love of God

The Great love of God
is revealed in the Son,
who came to this earth
to redeem every one.

Sermon – Give to God what is God's.

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



In today's gospel the Pharisees maliciously plot to entrap Jesus, but there is only one problem.

When the Pharisees try to set Jesus up by sending their disciples and Herodians to flatter him, then create a dilemma for him, where he will be discredited publicly in front of everyone, their plan backfires.
There are two important facts, the emperor was considered a God where his image was on a denarius, and the people hated the tax. He couldn't criticise the emperor, he'd risk his life from the Romans, and he couldn't criticise or approve of the tax, for he'd lose credibility with the people.

Jesus reads the disciples and Herodians and was aware of their malice. He calls them Hypocrites, then asks them to show him the coin used for tax, a denarius and by doing so they produce a graven image, an idol in the Temple, which is against God's law.
Imagine what the people thought of that?
I'm sure they got it and realised their foolishness. and the wisdom of Jesus. They were amazed at the wisdom of Jesus and left Jesus alone and went away.

Its Jesus words of wisdom that question the hearts of all who are gathered in the temple.
Give to Caesar the things that Caesar's and to God the things that are God's.
Jesus' statement would question everyone's hearts, including ours.
Who and what are today's Caesars and what do we give to them.

What do we give to God?

The reading from Exodus offers some insights
Moses is aware God knows him and he has found favour with God. He asks God to provide a companion for the journey with the people through the wilderness. He asks God to show him God's ways so he may know God. Moses pleas for the people.
Instead, God promises to go with Moses Himself. God will be his companion. God will give him rest.

Moses seems to doubt this. He pleads and argues with God and asks God to go with the people, not just him.

God promises to go with Moses and the people. God goes with us too, especially when we journey through the wilderness.

This is when the story changes



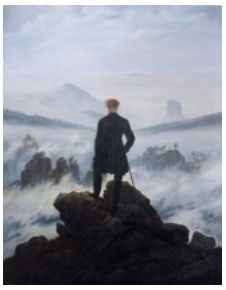
Moses wants to know God.

God agrees to make His goodness pass before Moses and proclaim his name, as: The Lord.
But God retains the prerogative to be gracious and show mercy to whomever God pleases.
No one can see God's face and live, so God asks Moses to stand in a particular place near Him and lovingly covers him with his hand, until God has passed by, then takes His hand away, so Moses can see his back.

Moses has given his very being to God. He wants to know God as he is known by God.
Jesus asked: *Give to God what is God's. Moses gave God his heart, his very being, his life.*
What do we give to God?

Perhaps the greatest commandment helps us know: *Love God with all our heart and soul and mind, and others like ourselves.*
This image of a heart seems to have a fire leaf inside it. Perhaps we can say it symbolises the fire of the Holy Spirit that dwells in our hearts.
What do you give to God?

Do you want to know God?



There's something about climbing mountains that offers a different perspective. Moses climbed Mount Sinai to be close to God and God met with him at the top of the mountain.

In love to climb mountains. I used to do it hoping to be close to God, until God found me. Up there, its silent, and sacred and I can see forever. It seems timeless, without any horizons. It's like the mind and consciousness, expands and I become aware of God. God who already knows me and myself, who wants to know God and experience union with God.

Moses wanted to see God's face.



God would not do this. He showed Moses his back, so Moses would live. It must have been wonderful. This artist has tried to portray this moment.



I wonder what it was like for Moses?

Did he feel awe?

We all see God in our own way, according to how God is revealed to us.
Perhaps some of us have bruised hearts. God can heal our heart. We only need to ask
Perhaps some of us have bruised souls. God can heal our soul. We only need to ask
Perhaps some of us have bruised minds. God can heal our mind. We only need to ask.
Moses asked God

We can ask God too



When we have God in our hearts, we have love in our hearts.
When we have love in our hearts, we have God in our hearts.

When we pray to God and want to know God and come to know God, our hearts expand to as wide as the ocean. We may come to feel compassion for the vulnerable, the hurting, the hungry, the homeless, the dying, the lost soul, those filled with bitterness over a life that has been painful and unjust. Our hearts are transformed.

The Lord be with you

So, let us spend a quiet moment, praying.

Ask yourself, what do you give to God?
What do you want from God?
Do you want to know God?

Quiet moment praying about questions

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 world peace, for all creation, for those suffering injustices, the hungry, the hurting, the homeless and for all our loved ones doing it tough now and for our own needs

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

Introduction and Hymn 232 O the deep, deep, love of Jesus Samuel Francis 1834-1925, English lay preacher and Hymn writer with Plymouth Brethren and a merchant. Let us sing his hymn, O the deep, deep, love of Jesus

O the deep, deep love of Jesus,
vast, unmeasured, boundless, free,
rolling as a mighty ocean
in its fullness over me.
Underneath me, all around me,
is the current of his love;
leading onward, leading homeward
to that glorious rest above.

Blessing

Let nothing disturb you
or frighten you.
All things are passing
God never changes.
Patient endurance attains all things
which God possesses.
Nothing is wanting
for God alone suffices. Amen

Introduction and Hymn 779 May the feet of God Audrey Podlich, 1946 -2025, Australian Lutheran pastor, hymn writer and poet, let us sing his hymn, May the Feet

May the feet of God walk with you,
and his hand hold you tight.
May the eye of God rest on you,
and his ear hear your cry.
May the smile of God be for you,
and his breath give you life.
May the Child of God grow in you,
and his love bring you home.

Aubrey Podlich 1946-