Surf Coast Uniting Churches

Sunday 25 October 2026

A service about the Wesley Brothers

Opening Hymn 210 O for a Thousand Tongues to sing

Jesus! the name that charms our fears,
that bids our sorrows cease;
such music in the sinner's ears
is life, and health, and peace.

Welcome

May the worship bless you



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.

Call to Worship

The kingdom of Heaven
is not far from anyone
Its secrets are open
to an open heart

When I turn
I turn to You
Wherever I go
You are near

When I lie down
You are with me
When I rise up
I rise with You

Prayer

No task can be more holy than another
Heaven is close and you are always near
Love unconditional sees the hearts intention
No one's approval matters, except Your own
Praise from others, or their distain
these are nothing to me

In Your love is my complete security
Close to Your heart
As a plant soaks up the moisture from a well-watered ground, reaching up and knowing the smile of the sun
So let Your tender mercies come to me
that I may deepen, love and grow strong in Your love

Prayer of Confession

Moment of quiet contemplation where we bring before God what's troubling our hearts

Silence

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

209 And can it be that I should gain –the words are about Charles conversion

Long my imprisoned spirit lay
fast bound in sin and nature's night:
thine eye diffused a quickening ray -
I woke; the dungeon flamed with light!
My chains fell off, my heart was free,
I rose, went forth, and followed thee.

Readings

Leviticus 19:1-2, 15-18

19:1The LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 19:2"Speak to all the congregation of the Israelites and say to them: You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy. 19:15"You shall not render an unjust judgment; you shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great: with justice you shall judge your neighbour. 19:16You shall not go around as a slanderer among your people, and you shall not stand idly by when the blood of your neighbour is at stake: I am the LORD.
19:17"You shall not hate in your heart anyone of your kin; you shall reprove your neighbour, or you will incur guilt yourself. 19:18You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against any of your people, but you shall love your neighbour as yourself: I am the LORD.

Matthew 22:34-40

22:34When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, 22:35and one of them, an expert in the law, asked him a question to test him.
22:36"Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?" 22:37He said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' 22:38This is the greatest and first commandment. 22:39And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.'
22:40On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

Puppet Madness – What's Singing got to do with it?

Hymn 442 All Praise to our redeeming

All praise to our redeeming Lord,
who joins us by his grace,
and bids us, each to each restored,
together seek his face.

Sermon

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

When John Wesley began his spiritual journey, he was on a quest to obtain personal holiness. He thought this was the only way he could have a relationship with God.

John and his brother belonged to a group at Oxford, known as the Methodists, who practised a methodical way of life. They aimed to obtain personal holiness. They were known as a priggish group, who were horrified at what was happening in the world around them. They were determined to save their own soul.

They thought if they weren't holy, they couldn't promote holiness in others. John Welsey remained on this quest for fourteen years.



Perhaps some of us may think we have to be perfect, for God to love us. The truth is God loves us no matter what. We can't earn God's love.



It's important to trust in the slow work of God. Plato once said: *Never discourage anyone who continually makes progress, no matter how slow.*

Sometimes it seems as we just don't understand Gods ways. Spiritual growth is slow, often at a pace where we're not aware of inner changes and transformation.

Perhaps this was part of the Wesley brother's journey.

One evening, on the 24th of May 1738, John Wesley unwillingly went to a society meeting at Aldersgate Street, London. This is a photo of a plague at Aldersgate Street that remembers this special event.



Someone was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle of Romans at the society meeting and while he was describing the change God works in the heart through faith in Christ, John Wesley felt his heart strangely warmed. He realized he could trust in Christ alone for salvation and salvation was not obtained by his own efforts. He felt assured God had taken away all his sins and saved him.

Perhaps some of us beat ourselves around because of past mistakes and spend our lives and energy trying to be perfect and holy, like John Wesley did.

Todays from Leviticus is about being holy and has a long list of things we don't do to our neighbour, such as unjust judgment, favouritism, slander, hate, vengeance and bearing grudges and not stepping in to help them when they are in danger.



Here is a Leunig man lamenting the ways of the world and everyone else's mistakes, including his own failures. His dog listens quietly. The man wants to be punished and ask's his dog to bite him. The dog knows the man's heart is breaking and gives him what he needs. Love.

When John Welsey's heart was transformed, it was a deep spiritual experience. Afterwards John Welsey's life changed dramatically. His life was founded on the gift God granted him, when he experienced conversion. Afterwards John Wesley shared what he experienced with his brother Charles and found out Charles had had the same experience when he was sick in bed with Pleurisy.

Conversion was a turning point for John Welsey. For most of his life, he had directed his spiritual and mental energy on himself, brooding on the state of his soul and trying to improve it. After conversion, he was set free and his energy was directed towards others.

He hoped they would find the same spiritual freedom as him. He realised holiness was linked with practical charity towards others.

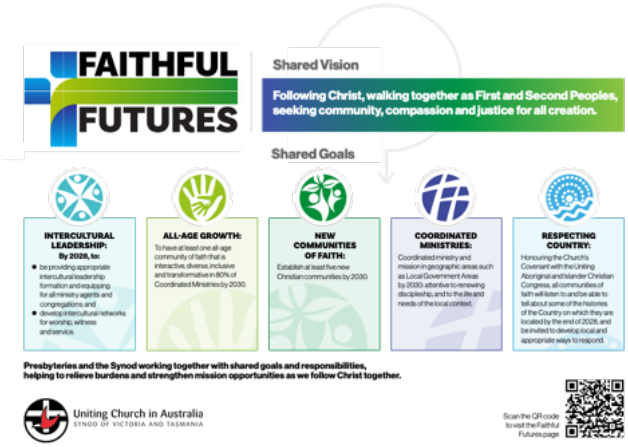


Charles Wesley experienced depression. He knew the depths and heights of feelings and experiences of God, and this is reflected in his hymns. He realised its God's initiative to release us from our burdens and sins. He experienced being born again, a vast inward change within him through the Holy Spirit's transformation of his heart. He came to know this led to him seeing and hearing the things of God and led to salvation and holiness, the ability to know God.

It takes time to grow into God's grace. Perhaps we all hope our hearts are slowly transformed by the Holy Spirit where we come to love God with all our being. Where God is secure in our heart.

This is the perfection of love Charles Wesley wrote about in his hymn, Love Divine.

Out of a desire to love and serve God, the Uniting Church has been praying for new directions for several years and from this prayer has emerged Faithful Futures. This is a poster of Faithful Futures goals. Aireys Inlet and Bellbrae have been embracing ministry which involves the goal, respecting country, with speakers at community meetings at Aireys Inlet and the Prayer Garden at Bellbrae.



When Torquay decided to embrace All Age Worship, we began the journey towards embracing the Faithful Futures goal of All Age Growth.

All-age growth

To have at least one all-age community of faith that is interactive, diverse, inclusive and transformative in 80% of Coordinated Ministries by 2030.

If we continue to embrace this goal to have an all-age community of faith, it won't happen overnight. It will happen slowly, step by step and that's the best way forward.

Linda put this poster on Facebook a few weeks ago. I'm sharing it today. John Wesley realised holiness is linked with practical charity towards others. Making a positive difference in the community and showing God's love for all people.



During our visioning and strategies session, it became clear many people at Torquay have pastoral and practical gifts and the congregation's main strength in ministry, is hospitality.



Hospitality and inclusivity, creates community. Hospitality is not just about food. Yes, food helps break down barriers between people and brings people together. Hospitality is also a radical hospitality of the heart, where congregations open their hearts to the community.

During our strategies session we spoke about the 300 people from the community who use Oak Tree Place every week. We are offering them a Christmas lunch during early December. We are using our God given gifts to reach out to them.

John Wesley spent fourteen years focused on his own internal needs. Then he experienced conversion and his heart went out to all people.

We can do what John Welsey did. We can offer practical charity to others through meals and our All-Age worship.

All Age worship can multi-sensory. It is inclusive, where we welcome people of all ages, some of whom don't speak the same worship and music language as us and belong to a culture who

communicate through interaction, feelings and immersion. They can teach us new ways, and we can teach them new ways. We can learn from one another.

May we all experience the whisper of God's grace in our hearts, warming our hearts like the Wesley brothers experienced. May we use our God given gifts to bless others and leave a legacy that witnesses to the love of God in this place.

The Lord be with you

June plays reflective music during craft activity

Craft activity where we write messages about how we love our neighbour
Discussion and sharing message and stories about our neighbours and how we have loved them or been loved by them

The Covenant Prayer – John Wesley

I am no longer my own, but yours
Put me to what you will
Place me with whom you will
Put me to doing, put me to suffering
Let me be put to work for you
Or set aside for you
Praised for you or criticized for you
Let me be full. Let me be empty.
Let me have all things, let me have nothing
I freely and fully surrender all things
To your glory and service
And now, O wonderful and Holy God,
You are mine and I am yours
And the covenant which I have
made on earth
Let it also be made in heaven
Amen

217 Love Divine all Loves Excelling - During the hymn people place their message on the tree of life

Love divine, all loves excelling,
joy of heaven, to earth come down,
fix in us thy humble dwelling,
all thy faithful mercies crown:
Jesus, thou art all compassion,
pure unbounded love thou art;
visit us with thy salvation,
enter every trembling heart.

Offering prayer

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

Prayer for world peace, healing of the earth, less violence, for the hungry and homeless,
for our loved ones and our own needs.

Candle prayers and prayers for Helen Haines as we sing Hymn 211 Jesus lover of my soul

Jesus, lover of my soul,
let me to thy refuge fly,
while the nearer waters roll,
while the tempest still is high;
hide me, O my Saviour, hide,
till the storm of life is past;
safe into the haven guide,
O receive my soul at last.

Other refuge have I none,
hangs my helpless soul on thee;
leave, ah! leave me not alone,
still support and comfort me:
all my trust on thee is stayed,
all my help from thee I bring;
cover my defenceless head
with the shadow of thy wing.

Thou, O Christ, art all I want,
more than all in thee I find,
raise the fallen, cheer the faint,
heal the sick, and lead the blind.
Just and holy is thy name,
I am all unrighteousness;
false and full of sin I am,
thou art full of truth and grace.

Plenteous grace with thee is found,
grace to cover all my sin;
let the healing streams abound,
make and keep me pure within:
thou of life the fountain art,
freely let me take of thee,
spring thou up within my heart,
rise to all eternity.

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!

Hymn 571 Forth in your name O Lord, I go

Forth in your name, O Lord, I go,
my daily labour to pursue,
you, Lord, alone resolve to know,
in all I think, or speak, or do.