Surf Coast Uniting Church
Remembering our loved ones – All Saints Service
8 November 2026

Kumbaya my Lord

Kumbaya my Lord, Kumbaya
Kumbaya my Lord, Kumbaya
Kumbaya my Lord, Kumbaya
O Lord Kumbaya

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

I sought the Lord and he answered me
He delivered me from all my fears
O taste and see that the Lord is good
Happy are those who take refuge in the Lord

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

Prayers and poems

My Secret Place by Joy S. Chellew, for those who are grieving
In Search of peace Poetica Christi press

There is a hidden chapel in my heart
where disarray is set apart

I sometimes tiptoe in
pray, and ask for peace
to ease the loss of you
to soothe away the pain
refresh old memoires again.
You are there and not by chance
I bring you in with me.
No circumstance, not life nor death
can separate, you see.
I see your face, hear your laugh,
Recall the happy things we said and did –
Cherished remembrance of the life we led
My friend, my husband lover.
Thus in this secret place,
I find a joy of things we shared.
I recognize the preciousness of you
The quiet ways you cared.
Here with us amid this love
Stands Jesus Christ our Lord.
Confident, you take His hand.
Without a word you smile and leave.
I understand
I also leave this secret place
Grieve a little less.
A gentle smile I can't erase.
No-one knows where I have been
Just you…and me….and He who is unseen.

Prayer – T. Lyndon

Lord, we thank you for being there for us
for breathing the Spirit of your love into our hearts
for the living waters that soothe our tired soul
and for you, Lord, who fill us with your peace
and with hope for tomorrow. Amen

Prayer by Joyce Rupp - from May I Walk you home (adapted)
For those who are caring for the dying or someone with a serious health issue

Spirit of peace,
You know how worry and fear
can take over and hound
our tranquility.
Today, I place my loved one,
with all her or his worries and fears
in your caring hands.
I place myself and my concerns

in your caring hands, as well.
Calm our hearts and minds.
Encourage us to face what troubles us.
Help us each to let go of what we fear;
To breathe your peace
through our anxious hearts,
and deepen our trust
in your abiding presence. Amen

Candle prayers



Song Don't be afraid
"Don't be afraid, my love is stronger,
My love is stronger than your fear.
Don't be afraid, my love is stronger,
And I have promised to be always near."

Readings
Psalm 34:4-10, 22

34:4I sought the LORD, and he answered me and delivered me from all my fears.
34:5Look to him, and be radiant, so your faces shall never be ashamed.
34:6This poor soul cried and was heard by the LORD and was saved from every trouble.
34:7The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him and delivers them.
34:8O taste and see that the LORD is good; happy are those who take refuge in him.

Matthew 5:1-12

5:1When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he sat down, his disciples came to him.
5:2And he began to speak and taught them, saying:
5:3"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
5:4"Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.
5:5"Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.
5:6"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.
5:7"Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.
5:8"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.
5:9"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.
5:10"Blessed are those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

5:11"Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.
5:12Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Sermon **– Remembering our loved ones**

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

All of us treasure our photos of loved ones and special times in our lives, our memories of heartfelt moments in our life.



These are photos of my great grandfather James McIntosh who lived in Yackandandah. He liked his pipe and very hot tea. Apparently, I've taken after him, not with smoking a pipe, but with liking very hot tea.

The other photo is of a baby who lived for ten days. He had such a strong personality and gave so much love to his parents and received so much love from them. His presence and what he gave will be remembered, by so many who came to know him. He taught me a life is not valued for how long we live, but by how much love we give to others.

Both died, one old, one young, and their families grieved deeply.

When we lose our life partner a huge hole is there in our life. It's like part of us is missing. The deep bond remains, the memories, the joys, the sadness, the challenges, the love are all woven into our story. They can't be replaced. They are part of us. They are precious to us.

Today's gospel, the Beatitudes, from Matthew 5 talk about grief. It says: "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted." How are we blessed? How are we comforted?



I was a volunteer with an organisation many years ago that was a house for men dying of HIV Aids and I met Ross and we became friends. When the time came for him to die, I felt drawn to going the Alfred to visit him. When I arrived, his family were gathered around his bed, and friends had flown in from cities and towns all over the country. He had his favourite

Brett Whitely painting of Lavender Bay on the wall and was sedated with Morphine. I shared about walking around an old barge and falling into Lavender Bay and he laughed. I was wearing a fluffy soft mohair jumper and felt his mum rubbing her fingers through the wool on my sleeve. It must have felt comforting. She told me she and her husband were members of a Uniting Church. Ross passed away peacefully, surrounded by his loved ones. Many people die this way. Peacefully. Surrounded by loved ones.

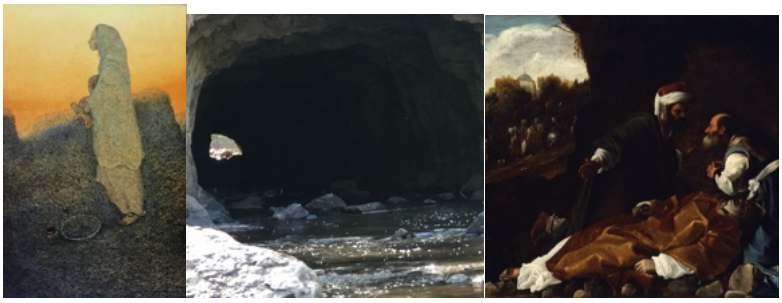
Perhaps death is entry into a deep form or peace, beyond our comprehension, peace we cannot find in this world and the crossing over at death, from here to there, from this life to the next life, is like crossing over a sacred threshold. Like we are born we also go through the process of dying, which includes changes to our breathing.

Perhaps when we lose a loved one, we inhabit the margins of two worlds. One world where we had someone close to us and lived as family, partners, friends, and another world, where our loved one is not there anymore. Perhaps we spend time on the margins of both worlds, grieving, looking back, not ready to look forward, or embrace new circumstances or choose or make decisions. We may feel numb, raw, and vulnerable. We may feel the most grief at night when we are alone without a partner, or alone without our parent, child or friend. We may feel the same at the dawn of a new day. There are times when only God is there in the darkness of grief and only God can offer us comfort.

During times like this it may help to search for bible passages that bring comfort and help ground us. Usually the psalms, because they have all possible feelings in them. Perhaps reading psalms and prayers can bring comfort during times of loss and grief.

We can be afraid when we are grieving. Afraid of a lot of things. There are days when we feel flat and have no energy, we are alone and we feel lifeless.

Perhaps during the saddest times in our life turning to God can offer comfort and strength and finding bible passages that speak into my loss and pain, may lift our spirits, where our tears are less.



There is light at the end of the tunnel. We can find peace and happiness when we take refuge in the Lord. We can come through our grief and sadness, in our own time, when we are ready. The sun can shine again.



Isaiah 41:10 works well during anxious times; “Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be afraid, for I am your God; I will strengthen you; I will help you.”

Sometimes fear and anxiety can get a grip, and make our stomach feel tight and give us brain fog. It’s hard to think straight, when we’re afraid. Uncertain times can make us feel anxious.

Have you ever found it hard to sleep? Your mind is going round and round and you’re worrying about the same thing over and over and your mind won’t stop thinking. That’s the time to get up, read your bible or bible app, and look for verses that offer comfort and peace, then have a cuppa and then go back to bed. It’s a recipe for a good sleep afterwards, instead of lying there, looking at the roof and worrying.

Some of us may be caring for others with serious illnesses or who are dying and feel anxious and afraid for them, especially when they are suffering. Asking others to pray for our loved one can bring a sense of relief and comfort.

Some of us may be feeling anxious and afraid for ourselves, because we are facing an operation or medical procedure or a difficult situation. When we ask others to pray for us, we see God at work when our prayers answered in a way where we find peace and comfort. Someone usually visits or calls at the right time or the difficult situation is resolved, sometimes in surprising ways.

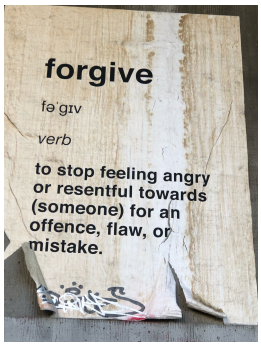
My great grandfather was a mayor of a small country town and his son, my grandfather, got called up to fight during WWI. He was sent to Gallipoli, got the Spanish flu and recovered in the UK and then was sent to the trenches in France, where he was ordered to make men get up out of the trenches and run towards the guns, where they died. All the time he was away, my great grandfather kept a photo of him in his bible, in between psalm 46 and 47. He prayed for him for four years and read the psalms and he came home. He got married and had a family. You may have family stories like this one.



We remember those who have loved us and helped us find refuge in God. We can find comfort from one another.



We can reach out to others and allow others to care for us. We can choose to belong to a church family, where we feel comforted by belonging. We can ask others to pray and find comfort and courage, when they pray for us.



This sign was made from paper and was a concrete column beside the entrance to the University of Melbourne for years. Sometimes we can be hurt deeply by someone who has died and it's hard to forgive them. They hurt us, wounded us and we are left with anger and unresolved issues.

Most of us cannot go through life without being hurt. The expectation all funerals celebrate happy relationships and people who have contributed love makes the pain deeper when we did not feel loved by someone who has died.

Anger can fill our hearts and fester and make us feel bitter. The grief is often deeper. We cannot resolve things and go back and confront the person. It is harder to grieve for someone who wasn't loving.

These are the times to reach out to those who love us and can grieve with us.

Forgiveness can be part of the grieving process. The day of letting go of anger comes slowly and when it does, we can, in our own time, we can pick up the pieces of our life and rebuild it, so we can continue to live and love.

I remember the story of a woman whose father had wounded her deeply. He was dying of cancer, and it was eating away at his body. Seeing him dying so painfully shifted something in her and she gave him a holding cross. He held it tightly until he died and was buried with it. In some ways, both were redeemed by God. Perhaps the unfinished business of forgiveness was finally settled.

We can heal. Grief can become integrated into the wonderful tapestry of our life. It's not the only part of the story. It's part of our story that shapes us. It is when our grief is woven into our entire story and has some meaning, that we come to know we are ready to journey on.

Until that time we need love from others, their comfort, care and prayers until the day comes when we feel a sense of resolution, acceptance and peace.

The Lord be with you

Quiet moment with reflective music

Song - Stand by me

When the night has come
And the land is dark
No I won't be afraid
Oh, I won't be afraid
Just as long as you stand, stand by me

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 the world, peace and environment, the hungry, the homeless and the hurting
Those who are suffering and need operations and medical treatment, our loved ones and 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

Hymn 93 - Praise the Lord, you heavens adore him

Praise the Lord, you heavens adore him;
praise him angels in the height;
sun and moon, rejoice before him,
praise him, all you stars and light.
Praise the Lord, for he has spoken,
worlds his mighty voice obeyed:
laws, that never shall be broken,
for their guidance he has made.

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 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