Surf Coast Uniting Church
Sunday 22nd November 2026 - Christ the King Sunday

Welcome Video – Jesus wants me for a Sunbeam

Jesus wants me for a sunbeam,
To shine for him each day,
In every way try to please him,
At home, at school, at play.

Refrain:
A sunbeam, a sunbeam,
Jesus wants me for a sunbeam;
A sunbeam, a sunbeam,
I'll be a sunbeam for him.

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

Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth.
Serve the LORD with gladness; come into his presence with singing.
Know that the LORD is God.
It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people

Prayers
Loving God you open the eyes of our hearts
and help us perceive the hope you have called us to embrace
You have called us to know the greatest of your power
over the lives of all who believe.
You have put all things in heaven and on earth
Into Jesus hands who is the head of the church.
Loving God, we give you our thanks and praise. Amen

Loving God, you send your Holy Spirit upon us,
To empower us as the church.
For each one of us Lord,

are living stones of a spiritual building
serving you by loving others.
Loving God, we give you our thanks and praise. Amen

You Lord sent the Holy Spirit upon us
to move our hearts with compassion,
to help us serve you by loving others.
We do our best to serve you Lord,
by offering hospitality, practical help and pastoral care,
to all who come.

Lord, Your Holy Spirit empowers us to go out into the community
to welcome the stranger,
Clothe the naked,
Feed the hungry and satisfy the thirsty,
Care for those who are sick.
Support prison chaplains and those who visit prisons
and charities who provide practical help.
Loving God, we give you our thanks and praise. Amen

You Lord help us do this
in the strength and power of our Lord Jesus Christ.
You help us serve you with courage and faith,
Where we come together, as the body of Christ
to serve you with love and compassion.
Loving God, we give you our thanks and praise. Amen

Recorded song – Fall on me – Andrea and Matteo Bocelli

Short reflection about the song: Fall on me

This song portrays several things
The love between a father and son, remembering that Andrea is blind.
The reassuring presence of a parent watching over a child
Light falling on them from God above offering direction during times of uncertainty
Divine grace
God as the perfect Father

Reading - Matthew 25:31-46

25:31"When the Son of Man comes in his glory and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. 25:32All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, 25:33and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left.

25:34Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world,

25:35for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, 25:36I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.'

25:37Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food or thirsty and gave you something to drink?
25:38And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you or naked and gave you clothing? 25:39And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?'

25:40And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it to me.'

25:41Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'You who are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels, 25:42for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink,25:43I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.'

25:44Then they also will answer, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison and did not take care of you?'

25:45Then he will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.' 25:46And these will go away into eternal punishment but the righteous into eternal life."

Parable Plays

A play about loving a woman and her son who are begging outside a supermarket
(This is common in Melbourne)

Hymn 629 When I needed a neighbour

When I needed a neighbour, were you there, were you there?
When I needed a neighbour, were you there?
And the creed and the colour and the name won't matter,
were you there?

Sydney Carter 1915-Words and music by permission Stainer & Bell, London

Sermon

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

Context is everything.

As you witnessed with the play today, many families are doing it tough and now unemployment is increasing, which will make it even tougher for families this Christmas.

I wonder how we respond to those in need and how loving others means we are loving Jesus

I invite you to spend a moment contemplating this picture that is based on today's gospel. It was painted in the 15th century by Pieter Brugel and is called the seven acts of mercy. It may be a small village. Our discussion later in this service will focus on this painting.



Florence Nightingale responded to one of the verses in today's gospel.



Born in Florence, Italy, to a wealthy British family and named after the city, Florence felt called to care for people who are suffering, when she was sixteen. She chose to defy her parents who wanted her to marry a wealthy man. She chose to train to be a nurse, considered to be low class occupation.

During the war in Crimea in 1854 she joined 38 volunteer nurses at a British Hospital in Turkey. This hospital was overcrowded, rats were running everywhere, it had overflowing sewers, and a lack of supplies. Florence realised this was causing more deaths that wounds, through typhus, cholera, and dysentery. She introduced strict sanitation measures, made sure bandages and water were clean, there was ventilation and good nutrition, and she walked through the wards at night with a lamp, checking on the wellbeing of the men. The men called her the lady with the lamp.

Florence was responsible for many lives being saved. The death rate was reduced from 42% to 2%. Florence kept statistics which she gave to the British government, and this influenced future hospital care. She also used donations, to found a training school for nurses. Florence

was one person who made a difference in the lives of those who needed care when they were suffering from illnesses, injuries and diseases.

Today's gospel was written after the destruction of the Temple and during the time Christians were persecuted. Jesus was counselling his disciples and teaching them about how to love others during troubled times, when many people's hearts had gone cold and they had stopped loving others.

The scene is the last judgment when all people from all kingdoms and nations will be judged for their deeds during their lives. Jesus rules over these kingdoms and nations. He is king of all creation and eternity, and over all that is in heaven and on earth. We remember this today, on Christ the King Sunday.

Today's gospel has Jesus dividing all people into two groups.

First, he speaks to those who were loving. He sums up their deeds. The group of people don't remember the times they'd loved. They didn't keep track of their deeds or make a connection between their acts of love caring for Jesus. Jesus affirms them and explains how they cared for him. He rewards them. They can enter the kingdom of heaven, a kingdom of love, for God is love.

Jesus then speaks to the group who didn't love, who were not aware of the times they didn't love others. Jesus lists all the times they didn't care and reveals the connection between not caring for others and not caring for him. He exiles them to hell with the devil where they are punished.

This gospel may have made sense to a persecuted people. Perhaps it motivated them to love others and take the greatest commandment, seriously and consider the consequences of not loving.

Perhaps it helped them see Jesus in the needy and love them more. Perhaps the gospel helped them understand how to love Jesus

We may not live in the same context as the first disciples, or Florence Nightingale or the community during the 15th Century.

However, we are called, like them, to come to know and love Jesus in others.

Our recent visioning and strategies sessions at each of our three congregations of Surf Coast revealed how each of our churches has a charism and gifts in how to love Jesus in others and support those who love them.

For example, the Torquay choir.



I heard that many years ago Betty Ralph suggested Torquay Uniting have a choir. At first some members thought it wouldn't happen. But a choir was formed. I heard Julie Andrews became involved years later and was supportive. Today there is still a choir at Torquay who sing and inspire our congregation so they may better worship, love and serve Jesus, this congregation and the community.



Our recent visioning and strategies revealed many people at Torquay have gifts for hospitality, pastoral care and helping things happen in practical ways. Many are gifted at Torquay to organise hospitality and care for members of the congregation and community. When we consider the acts of love Jesus speaks of in today's gospel, we care for the hungry and thirsty and lonely when we offer the Christmas lunch. This church welcomes the stranger by being inclusive, we provide clothing to those who need it, by supporting the Op Shop, and are planning to provide tents and foam mats to rough sleepers. Perhaps we could even offer financial support to prison chaplains and charities supporting prisoners.

All this helps us love the Jesus we come to know and love in others.

God calls each one of us to continue to do our best to live out today's gospel,
in everyday life, in all we do.

The Lord be with you

Video – You have called us

Discussion
Sharing stories: How does loving others, care for Jesus?

Craft making while June plays for us

We make a patchwork quilt out of cardboard squares about ideas and ways we or our church can live out today's gospel

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 those who are hungry, thirsty, naked, ill, lonely, alone, a stranger and in prison.

Candle prayers while June plays for us



Blessing

God, who is love, fill our hearts
Christ Jesus, who is the new life, inspire our hopes
The Holy Spirit, who is life giver
Spur us to deeds of compassion. Amen

Hymn 217 Love divine, all loves excelling– Just verse 1

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.

Attributes

Butterworth, James. Florence Nightingale as the Lady with the Lamp, from Art in the Christian Tradition, a project of the Vanderbilt University Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. https://act.library.vanderbilt.edu/artworks/57335 [retrieved November 17, 2026]. Original source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Florence_Nightingale_as_the_lady_with_the_lamp._Oil_painting_Wellcome_V0017994.jpg

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