



Greystanes Grapevine

The weekly newsletter of Greystanes Uniting Church



6 AUGUST 2023

Welcome

Welcome to church this morning, we hope you enjoy being with us.

Lectionary Readings

This week 6 August, 2023

Genesis 32:22-31
Psalm 17:1-7, 15
Romans 9:1-5
Matthew 14:13-21

Next week 13 August, 2023

Genesis 37:1-4, 12-28
Psalm 105:1-6, 16-22, 45b
Romans 10:5-15
Matthew 14:22-33

Community Prayer Dinner

The annual Cumberland Prayer Dinner is on Tuesday 29 August at 7pm at Merrylands RSL. The speaker will be Rev Sam Abalo from Living Word Worship Centre and tickets are \$50. RSVP by August 14 to hmf@hlncl.org.au or 9896 2514.



Welcome Simon

Today we have the pleasure of the company of Rev. Simon Hansford, Moderator of our NSW/ACT Synod as our guest preacher. Simon steps down from this role in September and we look forward to his message

Vale three of our friends

Siale Kefu passed away last Sunday after a lengthy battle and we convey our sympathy and prayers to Lola and her family and many friends across the world. Thanks to the many folk who assisted with his funeral on Friday and Saturday.

Gay Dale who was a member and Elder here and worked in our OOSH centre during the 1980's and 90's passed away last Friday. Our sympathy to daughter Sarah and her family. Contact our office for 14 August funeral details.

Eric Heyman, Elizebeth Prants's father passed away on Wednesday and we all pass our thoughts, sympathy and prayers to Liz, Peter and their family at this sad time.

Elder's Invitation to Communion off site.

If for any reason you miss our monthly communion service, which is generally the fourth Sunday of the month, please reach out to Gail or any of the Elders to request the Sacrament of Holy Communion at home or in hospital.



Greystanes Uniting Church

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Gail's Message

Kaye and Adrian have been visiting many churches around the country in their travels and have sent us some thoughts on church life in remote locations. In many ways these churches are the same as us, and their experiences give us food for thought as we move forwards with our future planning. Gail.

The Grass isn't always Greener.

We sometimes look at other churches and wonder why we don't have a Sunday School with 100 kids and a thriving youth group anymore. Did we do something wrong? Were we selfish or too insular? What can we do to make Greystanes Great Again? Well, we can't just turn the clock back. Society is different now. Church isn't fashionable and people don't have time. Sporting commitments, shopping, or just relaxing take precedent over going to church. Perhaps Church was meeting a need before that people fulfil elsewhere now.

Adrian and I have been to multiple Uniting Churches in the past couple of years, in NSW, South Australia, Western Australia and more recently, in Queensland. Most have been coastal but some in large regional areas such as Toowoomba or the Sunshine Coast and occasionally in the middle of nowhere, like Ceduna or Broome. In every one of them, we have lowered the average age, and we are no longer young. Very few had any children. Only about half had a minister. Most of the congregations were smaller than ours. Everywhere we went, we were welcomed and asked to morning tea. So it seems that Uniting Church congregations are aging. But are they dying? Some are. At one church, we felt they were hanging on by the skin of their teeth and praying for continuing existence. But many are not. The ones that were most alive, not necessarily with high numbers, were ones where they were a loving community in themselves, but also served their wider community.

We have been challenged to consider the purpose of the church and what a successful church looks like.

We are looking forward to returning to our home church, where we feel loved and are given opportunities to share God's love with others. It may not be a super church but we think we are on the right track.
From Middle Ridge Uniting Church's (Toowoomba)newsletter-

We rejoice in meaningful relationships with God, ourselves and the community. Living out our values of Faith, Love, Courage and Gratitude.

We are encouraged that we too share this purpose. See you next week.

Adrian and Kaye Pearson