



**1 OCTOBER 2023**

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

## Lectionary Readings

**This week 1 October, 2023**

Exodus 17:1-7  
Psalm 78:1-4,12-16  
Philippians 2:1-13  
Matthew 21:23-32

**Next week 8 October, 2023**

Exodus 20:1-4, 7-9, 12-20  
Psalm 19  
Philippians 3:4b-14  
Matthew 21:33-46

## Ladies Bible Study

Ladies Bible Study will meet this Tuesday afternoon at 3pm in the chapel. This week's study will be number 3 Looking Within (John 14: 15-31).

## Plastic Shopping Bags

We are looking for donations of plastic shopping bags, like you get at Woolies or Aldi, for those Hands and Feet clients who forget their bags. If you have any bags you no longer need, please bring them to church and leave them in the meeting room.





### **Greystanes Uniting Church**

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## **Gail's Message**

### The Book of Exodus

If I told you that we were all going on an amazing journey together to an amazing destination, where do you think we will end up? Disneyland, Bali, a five star resort in the tropics, perhaps you thought I meant heaven, the ultimate destination? Think of the place here on earth you would most like to visit and pretend we are setting off. We will all be incredibly excited, perhaps this journey with an amazing destination takes us away from all our current troubles, the anxieties that have enslaved us will no longer control us, we will be free.

We assemble and head off and after 40 hours you ask, 'excuse me, when do you expect we will arrive?', after forty days of travelling you ask, 'when are we b\*##! ^ going to get there?', after four years of travelling, you get nasty, and state, that you wish you'd never left, saying "we should have stayed at home with all our troubles, instead of this unknown journey that never seems to end".

If you know your Old Testament well you will immediately recognise that the premise above replicates the experience of God's people journeying out of slavery and then wandering the desert for forty years in the Exodus. Commentors tell us that the journey from Egypt to Canaan by foot takes about 11 days, so why the long delay? Well, we read in the Book of Numbers, that the people became anxious, terrified of entering occupied territory within the first few weeks, so they rebel and then God decrees that those who have rebelled will die in the wilderness, "every one of you twenty years old or more who was counted in the census and who has grumbled against me (Numbers 14: 28-29).

It would be easy to read this as a simple crime and punishment story, however people being people, the odds of rebellion were pretty high, and the forty years of wandering was destined to happen and thank God it did because it became and remains a rich learning ground. We, along with the ancient Israelites, learn that first, God will meet our needs even when things seem to go from bad to worse, secondly, God's time is not like our time, God takes us on the best route not the shortest, and thirdly that God forgives us and rescues us even when we dance around the golden calf of our own egos (see Exodus 32:1-4).

There are many other lessons to be gleaned from the Exodus story however, on a deeper level, I believe that the Exodus story reads as a metaphor for the Christian journey throughout life. Chew on that for a week or two and I will explain in my next Grapevine Entry. Peace, Gail.