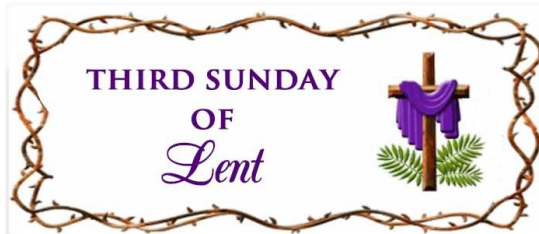




3 MARCH, 2024



Welcome

Welcome to worship, we hope you enjoy being with us.

Lectionary Readings

This week 3 March, 2024

Exodus 20:1-17
Psalm 19
1 Corinthians 1:18-25
John 2:13-22

Next week 10 March, 2024

Numbers 21:4-9
Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22
Ephesians 2:1-10
John 3:14-21

Lenten Study Group:

Our Lenten Study Group will continue on Monday nights until Easter with the final meeting on Monday 25 March. The group meets from 7.30-9pm on Zoom, please see Rev Gail for more information or to have the link emailed to you.

Congregation Meeting— Sunday 10 March 2024

We will be having a congregation meeting after church next Sunday 10th March.

This will be an Annual General Meeting and will include the election/re-election of elders and church councillors. Nominations for Elder have been received from Adrian, Ayesha, Karen S, Julie T Lola and Yvonne M. Church Council nominations have been received from Brian, Kate, Peter St, Karen S, Adrian and Peter Sch.

Leaders of each program within the congregation are invited to provide a short written report to the meeting, highlighting the activities of the group during the past year. Please have all reports to Sue by today.

We will also be considering a proposal from Church Council to make some changes to the structure of our councils to better suit our current membership. Details were included with your newsletter email last week, copies are also on the back table.



Greystanes Uniting Church

Cnr Cumberland & Eldridge Roads (P O Box 5064)

Greystanes NSW 2145

Minister: Rev Gail Hinton 0407 269 162

revgail@greystanesuniting.org.au

Office Phone: 9636 3245

Email: office@greystanesuniting.org.au

Website: www.greystanesuniting.org.au

Gail's Message

Have you ever wondered why God allowed evil to permeate this beautiful world of ours. The Apostle Paul certainly did, he writes in Romans that, creation was condemned to lose its purpose, not of its own will, but because God willed it to be so. Yet there was the hope. (Romans 8:20).

This hope, expressed in the gospel as the good news of Jesus Christ, seems to be the whole point of Creation. Perhaps we must experience evil in order to see the light and understand the concept of Christ's self-sacrificial love. The presence of evil also allows us to have a choice and to express free will. This was a risky move on God's part but as a popular song back in the 1980's proclaimed, *if you love somebody, set them free*; it is God's great love for us that grants us freedom of will.

Paul in his letters to the early church, writes about evil as something that almost hovers around us, lurking here or there, not in obvious ways but as an ether or cloud of potential that can cause us to stumble and do the wrong thing. Paul explains that we are not fighting against human beings but against the wicked spiritual forces in the heavenly world, the rulers, authorities, and cosmic powers of this dark age (Ephesians 6:12).

Most of us, even those with no particular faith think of evil in terms of individual specific sins, obvious things that we inherently know are wrong, such as murder, theft and adultery. We also have a tendency to make a big deal about that sin over there that another person is doing, without noticing our own wrongdoing.

For many centuries we have done this very well in scapegoating those with a same sex preference, it's almost as if we become fixated on the sin that cannot touch us in order to feel righteous. However as Father Richard Rohr points out sins are much more than these specifics and much more pervasive.

Richard writes, "when small, easily forgivable transgressions are labelled "sins" and equated with evil, we trivialize the very real notion of evil and divert out attention from the real thing. Paul in his letters taught that both sin and salvation are, first of all, corporate and social realities".

Father Richard concludes, "we are all guilty with one another's sin and not just our own, we are all good with one another's goodness and not just our own, my life is not just about me."

For more on Richard's meditation see: <https://cac.org/daily-meditations/evil-is-a-social-reality-2023-05-14/>