



**7 APRIL, 2024**

## Welcome

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

## Lectionary Readings

**This week 7 April, 2024**

Acts 4:32-35  
Psalm 133  
1 John 1:1- 2:2  
John 20:19-31

**Next Sunday 14 April, 2024**

Acts 3:12-19  
Psalm 4  
1 John 3:1-7  
Luke 24:36b-48

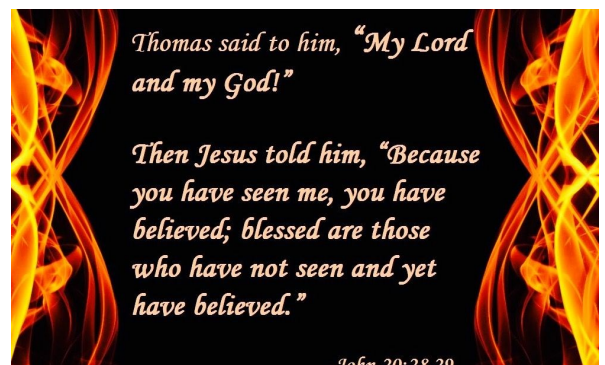
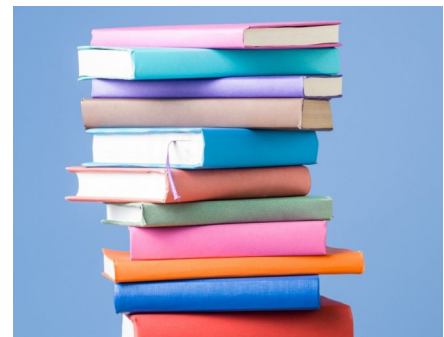
## Plastic bags for Hands and Feet

We are looking for some extra plastic shopping bags such as you used to get at Woolies or Coles to pack the food in at Hands and Feet. If you have some spare bags you could donate please drop them in or bring them to church in the next week or so.

## Book Sale—Next Saturday

We are having another Book Sale next Saturday 13th April from 9-12. There will be a wide range of pre-loved books, all for \$2 each.

All money raised will go to Hands and Feet to help support their work providing free fruit and veg to 3300 families each week across Australia. See Kaye if you would like to be involved.





### **Greystanes Uniting Church**

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## **Out of the Darkness of Life, Easter Breaks In!**

In John's story of Jesus (John 20:19-31) we read of disciples locked away from the world, with solid walls and locked doors. Into this room of doubt, grief, pain and loss, the Risen Christ appears, saying 'Peace be with you' before showing his scars and breathing the Spirit into them. They are given the commission to go into the world and be people of reconciliation, of forgiveness and peace.

There is no immediate power or triumph but still cautious fear as they continue to live and operate in a hostile world that killed Jesus. They had their own conceptions of Messiah, conceptions girded by power, politics, armies, might. They wanted a Messiah who would bring political and military glory to Israel and liberate them from the Roman rule. They wanted a Messiah who would be a king like David, surrounded by splendour and glory, triumph and might and they would delight in the reflected glow of this Messiah – and all would be well, once more!

I suspect that this is the kind of Messiah/Christ we mostly want but as I've grown and lived and re-read the wonderful stories at the heart of Easter faith, I realise that all of this is antithetical to Jesus' own ministry, life, and teaching. The Risen Christ gently appears in vulnerable and desperate places to speak of peace in the midst of chaotic pain and struggle, grief, and loss. It is a peace of 'Presence', where we are held in the arms of Divine love and grace, often administered through the love of other people and creatures. It is a message that says we are not alone in the world and despite the danger and threat, the pain and despair, the grief and confusion, we are not alone and the One who was buried in the tomb lives in a new and mysterious way, we call resurrection – that new life and hope is with us, holds us and gently transforms us as it grows within us. We are opened to the experience of rising into a new thing, a new way of being, a new spirit that is grounded in the wisdom path of love, justice and peace. As fear is dissipated through love and hope grows, we grow in faith and courage. We are enveloped by community and learn a new way of being that is life-giving for you and the world.

Still, we hide, like disciples of old. We hide in our fear or pain and feel the cold tentacles wrap around our being and wonder what will be? How can we survive? It is in this very darkness that the gentle flickers of Love's flame are brightest and most warm. God is in the midst of our struggle, our darkness, our lives and brings hope. It isn't a flimsy, deluded hope in 'something'?

It is hope that grows from Love, the deep, profound power at the heart of everything. It is the hope that is realised in the stories of a Risen Christ, the crucified one present in our midst, in the mystery and wonder of life and beauty, wonder, awe and loving experiences. It is the hope that is present in those who have journeyed through deep pain, loss, grief, and powerlessness and stand with strength and faith, able to love and reach out through their own woundedness to bring life and hope to others. It is the hope that has existed in the heart of God from the very beginning. It is Easter. - Rev Geoff Stevenson