



19 APRIL 2026

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

Lectionary Readings

This week 19 April 2026

Acts 2:14a, 36-41
Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19
1 Peter 1:17-23
Luke 24:13-35

Next week 26 April 2026

Acts 2:42-47
Psalm 23
1 Peter 2:19-25
John 10:1-10

Name Badges

The new name badges have arrived, if you ordered one, please collect it from the nametag board at the back of the church.

Volunteers wanted

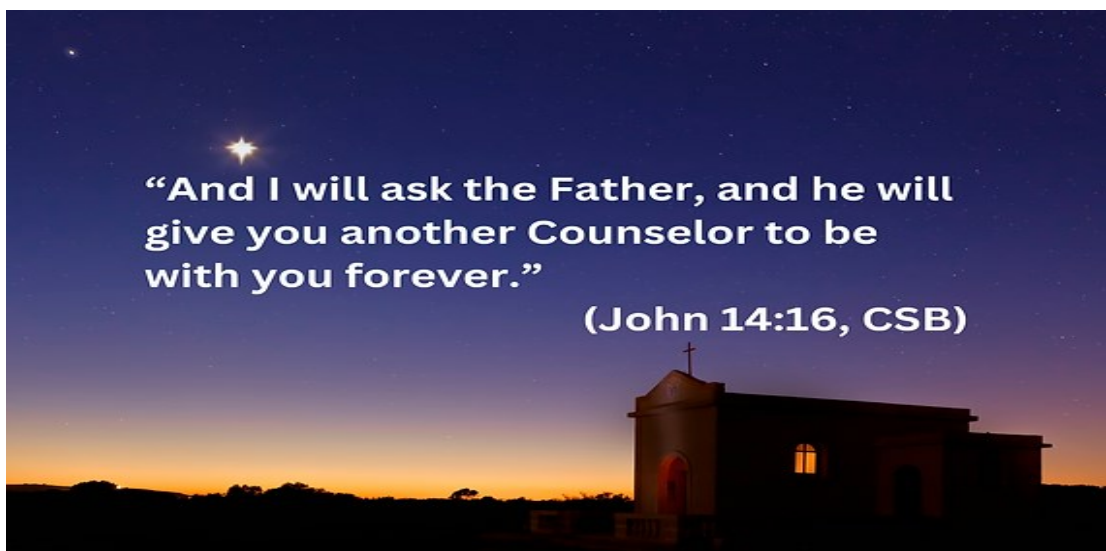
We are still looking for some volunteers who could take some tins of old paint to the Chemical Cleanup on Saturday 2 May, 9-3.30 at the Cumberland Council Works depot in Foray St West Guildford.

Alternatively, if you would prefer to book a Problem Waste pickup at your home, we can arrange to deliver the paint to you if necessary.

Please see Sue if you are able to help.

“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever.”

(John 14:16, CSB)





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In last week's Grapevine we went back through time to the late 4th Century when the 27 books of the New Testament were agreed upon by the bishops of both Eastern/Greek (Orthodox) and Western/Latin (Catholic) branches of the church. The Greek churches did not consider *Revelation* worthy of inclusion but in the end accepted its place in the canon, due to the work of the Bishop of Alexandria, Athanasius, who encouraged compromise. Other ancient writings would also have been considered such as *The Gospel of Thomas*, which was "discovered by farmers near Nag Hammadi, Egypt, in December 1945. Scholars speculate this gospel along with other works were buried there in response to a letter from Bishop Athanasius.

Most scholars place the composition of *The Gospel of Thomas* during the second century, while some have proposed dates as late as 250 AD and others have traced signs of origins to 60 AD. What was it about this book that deemed it unworthy of a place in the New Testament you may wonder. Much of this gospel sounds just like the texts of Matthew, Mark and Luke, here is an example:

Jesus said, "You see the mote in your brother's eye, but you do not see the beam in your own eye. When you cast the beam out of your own eye, then you will see clearly to cast the mote from your brother's eye."

Here is another Extract from *The Gospel of Thomas*, which does not seem to have the same tone, merit or clarity as the gospels we know and love so well:

Jesus said, "I took my place in the midst of the world, and I appeared to them in flesh. I found all of them intoxicated; I found none of them thirsty. And my soul became afflicted for the sons of men, because they are blind in their hearts and do not have sight; for empty they came into the world, and empty too they seek to leave the world. But for the moment they are intoxicated. When they shake off their wine, then they will repent."

The Gospel of Thomas begins with the following introduction:

These are the secret sayings which the living Jesus spoke and which Didymos Judas Thomas wrote down.

This introduction alone was of concern to church leaders during Bishop Athanasius' time. In the first few centuries AD splinter groups and sects of Christianity developed their own way of understanding God based on secret knowledge. These groups come under the banner of Gnostics, which in Greek means "knowledge" or "awareness. They developed their ideas based on a number of sources including oral and written traditions of Jesus' sayings, the works of Plato, Judaic end times writings, speculation on divine wisdom and ancient Greek mystery religions. Scholars suggest that some of Paul's writings warn against this type of fake gnostic teacher. Given the number of writings that early church Fathers had to consider we can give thanks to God for the way the Holy Spirit guided the discernment process. Next week we will look at how the 27 books of the New Testament came to be written in the first place.