



Greystanes Grapevine

The weekly newsletter of Greystanes Uniting Church



16 AUGUST 2026

Welcome

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

Lectionary Readings

This week 16 August 2026

Genesis 45:1-15
Isaiah 56:1, 6-8
Psalm 133
Psalm 67
Romans 11:1-2a, 29-32
Matthew 15:(10-20), 21-28

Next week 23 August 2026

Exodus 1:8 - 2:10
Psalm 124
Romans 12:1- 8
Matthew 16:13 - 20

Op Shop Sale

Our half-price sale continues at the Op Shop this week so why not drop in and grab a bargain.

We're at 37 Dell St Woodpark and open 9.30-3.30 Mon-Fri and 9-12 Sat.

Donations of good-quality items gladly accepted, sorry we cannot accept furniture or electrical items.



**Just for Fun (for a cause)
Trivia Night**

**Next Saturday 22nd August
6.30pm**

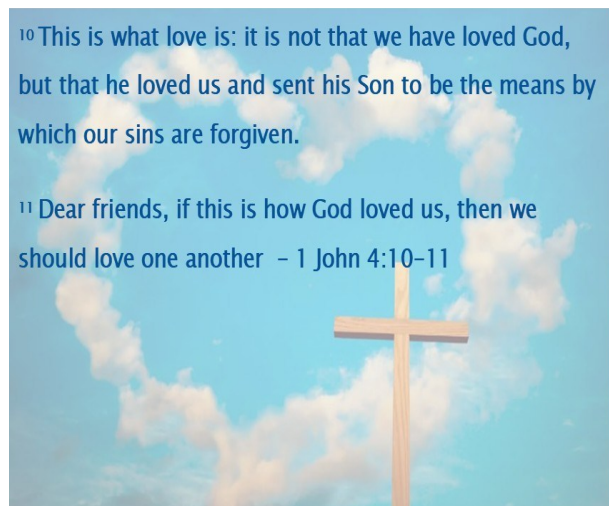
Light refreshments will be provided
Feel free to bring your own snacks

Cost: a gold coin donation gladly accepted for our Hands & Feet program

Hints: 50 cents each
Answers: \$1 each

¹⁰ This is what love is: it is not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the means by which our sins are forgiven.

¹¹ Dear friends, if this is how God loved us, then we should love one another – 1 John 4:10-11



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Rev Gail's Message

This week in worship we will hear a reading from Matthew's gospel that has been described as one the Bible's most problematic and difficult texts. Matthew records Jesus' interaction with a Canaanite woman and in the brief interchange between them Jesus appears to be rude, exclusive and snobbish. To understand what may be going on in this text we need to understand the social and cultural beliefs held by first century Jews.

The following description of social division in the time of Jesus is taken from a commentary in the NKJV Study Bible, 2016:

"The roots of social division stretched far back into Israel's history when a remnant of Jews had come home from captivity in Babylon to rebuild Jerusalem around 458 BC. Their leader Ezra had commanded the people to purify themselves from all Pagan influences and to refrain from marrying foreign born wives. Later, after centuries of Greek and Roman domination, Jews had developed a hatred for gentiles so strong that it led them to avoid any and all contact with foreigners, if at all possible. According to a Roman historian named Tacitus, Jews regarded the "rest of mankind with all the hatred of enemies". (Jews also applied this attitude to Samaritans, who were part Jewish, part gentile in their ethnicity.)

The Jews who lived in Jesus' day divided the world into two types of people-themselves and everyone else. Jews regarded gentiles as morally unclean and spiritually lost. Jews were God's people and they saw all others outside of his family. Peter expressed this attitude when the Lord sent him to meet the Roman centurion Cornelius by reminding Jesus that "it is unlawful for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation." Matthew's gospel does not shy away from showing the tension and the divisions between Jew and gentile.

Jesus was the long-awaited Christ of the Jews and the fulfilment of Old Testament messianic prophecies. But Jesus also broke down the wall of hatred and separation between Jews and gentiles. By dealing with both groups alike, Jesus shattered the established systems of his day and shocked his fellow Jews.

Racism and ethnic hatred have no place in God's plan, they originate in sinful human hearts and Jesus repudiated the evil of bigotry wherever he found it. There is no doubt God will continue to tear down ethnic and racial walls in the modern world. And as his followers, it is our job to lead the way in showing equal acceptance and love for all peoples of the world."

Sunday's gospel reading will prompt us to reflect on the places in our lives where we fall into the trap of "us and them" thinking. If it is true that God plans to tear down ethnic and racial walls, how do we as believers embody this in the way we live, act and vote?

When we polarise a particular group of people and name them as the cause of all our woes we risk being just as blind and ignorant as the first century Jews.

If Jesus, the very Jewish messianic Rabbi, could break free of the hold of cultural pressures and norms, then in His name so can we. May it be so.