



16 FEBRUARY, 2025

Welcome

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

Lectionary Readings

This week 16 February, 2025

Jeremiah 17:5-10
Psalm 1
1 Corinthians 15:12-20
Luke 6:17-26

Next week 23 February, 2025

Genesis 45:3-11, 15
Psalm 37:1-11, 39-40
1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-50
Luke 6:27-38

World Day of Prayer

The annual World Day of Prayer Service will be at our church on Friday 7th March at 10.00am. Morning tea will follow the service which this year is written by Christian women in the Cook Islands. All are invited to attend. If you are planning to attend and can bring a plate of food to share for morning tea, that would be appreciated.

SRE Commissioning Service

This year's SRE (Special Religious Education) Commissioning Service will be here next Saturday 22nd February at 2pm. It will be a shorter and less formal service than in previous years and will be followed by afternoon tea. You would be most welcome to attend and support those who provide SRE in our local schools.

World Vision Child Sponsorship

Today is the last day for donations for the three children we sponsor through World Vision.

If you are able to make a contribution towards the \$1700 our sponsorship costs us, it would be appreciated; you can give your gift to Karen S or transfer money direct to our bank account, the details are BSB 112 879, account number 428 172 081, please put your name and WV in the reference if possible.



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

The Old and New Covenants

In the First Century a church Father by the name of Marcion argued that the whole of the Old Testament should be discarded. Marcion taught that the "vindictive law-giving creator deity bears no resemblance to the merciful redeeming God revealed in Jesus Christ". Marcion failed to convince the wider church who rightly pointed out that God cannot be split in two or categorised as an evil God in the Old Testament and a loving God in the New.

Today most churches like our own, attest to the fact that "the Church has received the books of the Old and New Testaments as unique prophetic and apostolic testimony, in which it hears the Word of God and by which its faith and obedience are nourished and regulated (Basis of Union para.5).

Have you ever wondered why God sometimes comes across in the Old Testament as a God of Judgment instead of Grace? Marcion was deeply troubled by the judgmental God of the Old Testament because he had no understanding of its authors historical context or the level of awareness and understanding of the primitive tribal people God's word was addressed to. When God called Abraham, an agreement, or deal was struck between them. This deal, known as a covenant, was a historical piece of politics well known and widespread across the Ancient Near East used by the rulers of empires to broker peace between nations and tribes.

Essentially, God's covenant was a promise to Abraham that he would be made into a great nation, that he will be blessed, that his name will be great, that he will be a blessing to others, and that all peoples on earth will be blessed through him (Genesis 12: 1-3). God held to God's side of the deal by ensuring Abrahams descendants, the nation of Israel followed God's holy ways. After rescuing the people out of slavery God gives Moses the Ten Commandments in order to prevent the nation from being assimilated into the surrounding pagan communities. Many more instructions and rules were added to the Ten Commandments to keep Israel in line, not because God wanted to smite them when they did wrong but so that the New covenant of Grace could evolve and come to life in Jesus Christ, a descendant of Abraham or perhaps we could the penultimate descendant of Abraham (see Matthew 1).

The grace we know and receive through Christ is often referred to as the New Covenant. Paul speaks of this in 1 Corinthians, however there is nothing new about God's grace. Right from the start, God offers Adam and Eve a new way to live after they leave the Garden of Eden, giving them instructions on what to wear and how to cultivate food. Despite their sin all is not lost because God is a loving God who at the right time reveals the eternal plan of salvation in Jesus. God's grace is also apparent when God calls Abraham. Abraham is not chosen because he is such great guy who deserved God's blessings, he was called as we all are, simply because God loves us.

I hope today's Grapevine entry provides you with some background to an incredibly deep and complex issue. There is so much more to explore and understand and I welcome questions. Peace, Gail.