

From Our Pastor: Jonathan Button

Jonathan can be contacted at j.button@bigpond.com.

I am available in the event of emergencies at any time, but other than that would appreciate not receiving calls on Wednesdays, where possible, as this is my day off.

Church Telephone Number: 8251 4298

This Week's Roster

31st December, 2023

Next Week's Roster

7th January, 2024

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|------------------|-----------------------|
| Preacher: | James |
| Leader (am): | Andrew |
| Leader (pm): | ***** |
| Welcome: | Ray |
| Manager: | John |
| Reader: | Brunetta |
| Musician: | Brunetta |
| Morning Tea: | Ken & Owen |
| Audio Desk (am): | Ruan |
| Audio Desk (pm): | ***** |
| Camera : | Lucinda |
| Computer (am): | Rykhardt |
| Computer (pm): | ***** |
| AV Editing: | Rykhardt |

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|------------------|-----------------------|
| Preacher: | James |
| Leader (am): | Rykhardt |
| Leader (pm): | ***** |
| Welcome: | Andrew |
| Manager: | John |
| Reader: | Barrie |
| Musician: | Brunetta |
| Morning Tea: | Joy & Tina |
| Audio Desk (am): | Ruan |
| Audio Desk (pm): | ***** |
| Camera : | John |
| Computer (am): | Lucinda |
| Computer (pm): | ***** |
| AV Editing: | Rykhardt |

Philippines Sponsorship Jars

Thank you for your generosity that enabled us to send the three sponsored children some extra money to buy something for Christmas.

A member of the congregation, with her/his kind and generous donation, has enabled an amount of \$200 to be sent to enable Pastor Luciano to distribute food and gifts to all the families and spread a little Christmas cheer.

Please note that the jars will not be out for the next three weeks, and once again many thanks for your donations.

Sandy and Trevor Walker

Golden Grove Gazette

Keeping in touch with the G.G.U.C. family

www.goldengroveuniting.org.au

Sunday, 31st December, 2023

First Sunday after Christmas

Preacher:: **Dr James Ross-Naylor**

Theme: **Pierced Souls** :

Gospel Reading: **Luke 2: 22.40**



Mission Statement: We are a Gospel-driven, connected, generous church family, mission-minded and outwardly focussed.

OUT WITH THE OLD, IN WITH THE NEW

Welcome to 2024. Do you view this year as 'just another year' or do you believe the past years are stepping stones in our lives that help us grow spiritually? Certainly, it is important for us to learn from our past and to incorporate the wisdom we have obtained to help us in the future.

Isaiah (58:11) teaches us: "The LORD will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail." We can look into the New Year with fresh eyes filled with faith, trust, and hope.

The Psalmist (39:7) states: "But now, Lord, what do I look for? My hope is in you." And petitions God (25:5): "Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Saviour, and my hope is in you all day long."

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We can look ahead with faith and expectation for what the Lord has for us. There is also a kingdom principle in Luke 6:38: "Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."

Facing the year ahead, let us entrust ourselves again to our great loving God, share His love with those around us, and walk into each new day with unflinching confidence in His faithfulness.

(Reverend Gordon)

Minister's Leave Arrangements

Jonathan will be on leave from 26th December to 22nd January. This comprises two weeks of annual leave and two weeks of study leave. Please contact Cath McKechnie or Neil Larcombe regarding any ministry needs during that time.

A Giving and Generous Church

We would like to show our deep appreciation to you, the GGUC congregation, for your abiding generosity throughout 2023. For your regular Sunday provisions for the needy in our community we are deeply indebted. You have given wonderful support to the Christmas hampers (sixteen hampers in total), the contents of which were considerably enhanced by our dear friends and neighbours at Estia. You have also been generous with your weekly offerings and your donations to the painting fund. And, you have devoted an inordinate amount of time and energy to the well-being of our much loved place of worship. May God continue to bless our church family.



JANUARY JOINS US WITH JOY

- New Year's Eve: Sunday, 31st December
- Sunday Morning Worship: Sunday, 31st December: 10.00 am
- New Year's Day: Monday, 1st January
- Thursday Morning Prayers: Thursday, 4th January: 8.00 am to 9.00 am
- Working Bee: Saturday, 7th January: 8.00 am
- Sunday Morning Worship: Sunday, 8th January: 10.00 am
- Thursday Morning Prayers: Thursday, 11th January: 8.00 am to 9.00 am

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Silent Night?

(from "The Word for Today")

Sat, 23 Dec 2023

'You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus.' Luke 1:31

We have sung the words of the Christmas carol, Silent Night, since infancy. But those words don't actually come from Scripture. Silent Night was a poem written by an Austrian priest in 1816. The words conjure up a serene picture of the happy couple watching their newborn baby. It's not likely, however, that there was silence. After an exhausting journey on a donkey, Joseph and the very pregnant Mary didn't check into the master suite of the Bethlehem Grand Hotel. They begged the use of an animal shelter, complete with the clatter and scents of barnyard animals – anything but silent! Ask any mother about giving birth. Even with the help of modern pain-reducing medicines and sterilised environments, the bravest woman rarely remains silent while giving birth. For Mary, Joseph, and Jesus – this was hardly a silent night! 'Oh, Holy night': of all the nights in history, this was the most holy. God set in motion His eternal plan to come to earth as the Redeemer of lost people. 'For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation' (2 Corinthians 5:19^{NLT}). Jesus came to take on Himself the sins of doomed humanity, so '... that we might become the righteousness of God in Him' (2 Corinthians 5:21^{NKJV}). It doesn't get any holier than that! 'All is calm, all is bright': on that holiest of nights, our spiritual and moral darkness was forever dispelled by Jesus, the Light of the World. And our fears as lost sinners were replaced by the peace and joyful assurance that we are His eternally forgiven people.