



Our mission:
**KNOWING
CHRIST AND
MAKING HIM
KNOWN**

GOLDEN GROVE LUTHERAN CHURCH

www.gglf.org.au

Our goal:
**Care, Communicate,
Connect so that people
may know CHRIST.**

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21st December 2014—4th Sunday of Advent

WELCOME to all worshipping with us today

Greetings to any visitors here with us. We are pleased to have you join us and we trust you have felt welcomed and pray the Holy Spirit may enlighten and empower us with the message shared with us today .



Tea & coffee is available in the Fellowship Centre following morning service

Please feel welcome to join us.

Before worship

Christmas is Giving

This is one of those statements which is such a cliché. The retail industry wants us to believe that, so that we buy up big to give for Christmas. For many children (and adults) that is all that Christmas is about (the Christmas presents.) But it's God who is the great Giver at Christmas time.

The readings this morning tell us that in giving us the Christmas story: the announcement to Mary by the angel, the birth of Jesus and announcement to the shepherds and the coming of the wise men. It is all about giving- God giving to us, at Christmas time.

Have you ever pondered what is God's Christmas present to you? **What does God give you personally at Christmas time?**

Isn't it the message that **God comes** into your very life too? As He came to Mary: You too are "highly favored"; to the new couple; to the shepherds and to the wise men.

Isn't it the realization that God uses **the simplest things** to achieve the most profound? A young woman, a baby, a manger... water, bread and wine, the Bible.

Isn't it the wonderful **memories** of Christmases pastwhich the sounds and smells of Christmas evoke?

Isn't it the assurance that God **has come to deal with your sins**. You are indeed forgiven- and you are able to forgive and get on with life?

Isn't it feelings of **joy, peace and love?** – It is not only in the celebrations but they are the fruit of the Holy Spirit in your life- which are somewhat deeper than that.

Isn't it that **sure hope?** He has come.... and He promises he won't leave you. You don't need to be afraid. (Words spoken a number of times by the Christmas angels.)

Isn't it the anticipation that He can and will do **the most unexpected things** in your life? Who would have expected the long awaited Messiah to come in this form? Aren't you continually surprised by the way God comes through?

Then.... aren't you prompted to give some expression of that love back to Him?

Prayer: Thank you so much Father for Christmas and what You make it mean for me. May I respond in the most appropriate way to show my gratitude to You. Please give me that release and that trust to do just that. Amen.

Pastor Leon



Readings for today

Luke 1:26-38
Luke 2: 1-20
Matt. 2: 1-12

Worship Opportunities

Today	9.30 am 6.30 pm	Carols & readings service Full dress rehearsal of Christmas Eve drama
Wed 24th Dec Thurs 25th Dec Sun 28th Dec	7.00 pm 9.30 am 9.30 am	Christmas Eve drama Christmas Day worship with HC Contemporary worship



Family Friendly Worship

At Golden Grove, we love **everybody** to be involved in worship.

Please encourage children and visitors to join in the singing and prayers, and to stand and sit at appropriate times when they are able. This is best done by leading by example!

For our 'little ones' - Quiet bags & busy books are available for worship time from the children's area inside the church.

The "Kids at Heart" team run a special time for children in the foyer area during the sermon. That way, the children have some time with their parents during the morning services, and also a little bit of time to learn about our God and what He means to us through artistic activities with their friends. All children are welcome to join in this time. It is not appropriate for unattended children to play in the foyer at any time during the service. Please ask an usher if you require assistance, or speak to a "Ministry Leader" if you would like to help young families during worship times.

Thank you for worshipping with us!

Pastor's Column

This morning we have a special carols and readings service, where the children will be acting out readings, no sermon but instead "reflections" on each of the readings.

We'll also have an opportunity to respond to what God has done and is doing for us by giving through the special "**Christmas is Giving**" offering.

You will be able to do this during the singing of one of the carols. (It is extra to the normal Sunday offering. If this has caught you by surprise we are giving you another opportunity to give next Sunday.)

As I have been letting you know over the last few weeks, this offering is based on Christmas being a time of giving. God gave us our Lord Jesus, as **John 3:16** put it "*For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son....*" And He invites us to respond to his gift to us with our giving.

The giving will go towards our ministry at Golden Grove Lutheran Church ("the Budget").

I have encouraged you to use an envelope that you have marked with "*Christmas is Giving*". As I said last week, this is only for statistical purposes. *Give in whatever form you desire.*

I am glad the **Korean Community Church** could join us again this morning. Welcome and I pray that you continue to feel comfortable with us.

Don't forget about joining us in **decorating the Christmas Tree** this morning and **stacking up the chairs** after worship (for the carpet cleaning) **THIS EVENING**. If you are available please join us on Wednesday (Christmas Eve) at 9am to put them back.

Instead of our Salt Factory service tonight you can attend our "dress rehearsal" of "**The Busy Inn-Keeper.**"

I reckon it's a **good idea to attend** the dress rehearsal because I believe it will motivate you to invite your friends and neighbours to the play on Christmas Eve (at 7pm).

You could use the **Christmas play flyers** available in the foyer to invite/remind people about the play.

Worship on **Christmas day** is **9.30am.** - as normal. The theme for the address is: "**How do you respond to the unexpected?**" (based on Luke 2:8-20) I plan to continue that theme next Sunday by looking more closely at Luke 2: 22-35.

I have received **CALLS from Karlsruhe-Saddleworth Parish (3/12/14)** and (most recently) **from Berri parish (13/12/14).**

Please pray for me as I deliberate on whether I should accept either of these calls (and leave our congregation at Golden Grove) or continue here.

Of course I am open to you talking to me about these calls and my current call here to Golden Grove.

REACHING OUT THROUGH PRAYER

The opportunity for this prayer is now in recess until the end of January

Remember In the meantime if you would like someone to pray with contact one of the Reaching Out through prayer team (Luke Wachtel, Jon & Leanne Schiller, Paul & Nadia Napier.)

HELP NEEDED

Decorating the Christmas Tree



This morning after worship we would like to decorate our church Christmas tree and need helping hands to share in the fun of decorating the tree. If you can stay for a little while to help would be great.

Thank you

Stacking chairs



This evening help would be appreciated in moving back and stacking the chairs in preparation for the annual steam cleaning of the carpets in the Worship Centre & Fellowship Centre planned for tomorrow 22nd Dec 2014.

Packing of Christmas Eve give-aways



Anyone around **Monday 22nd December** between **2.00 – 4.00 pm** you are invited Alison Ahrens' house to help with packing little give-aways for Christmas Eve.



Join us for our Family Celebration with Choir and Carols as children and adults tell the story of

**'The Busy Innkeeper'
and his life changing adventure**

**On Christmas Eve
Wednesday 24th December at 7pm
or come along to the Premiere TONIGHT at 6:30pm**

**What is the joy stealer in your life?
Could being busy cause you to miss out?**

Written by Margey Knapp & Produced by Dawn Rutter & Sue Fielke

Worship times for post Christmas & January 2015

Please note that on Sunday 28th December and during January there will only be ONE SERVICE held at 9.30 am.

Graham Pfeffer's Installation in Biloela QLD

At this stage Graham Pfeffer's Installation at Biloela will be happening on 8th Feb 2015 . If anyone is intending to travel up there for this occasion, please let Daniel Dutschke know ASAP in case there is opportunity to pool/share travel arrangements with interested parties.

RosTers for Next Sunday : 28th December

PA + Opening/Closing up	Power-point	Music Group	Greeters / Ushers	Readers	Children's Address ----- Kid's Craft	Devotion for Bulletin ----- Prayers	Assistants with HC	Flowers	Church Cleaning
	Judith Whaites	Hybrid band	Davidson Dabinett	Fielke	Ps Leon ----- L Friedrich	M Knapp ----- Ps Leon		Barbara Robertson	Shrowder Thiel



Sydney Hostage Drama

Martin Place in Sydney is about as close to the heart of modern Australia as you can get. It's a short sloping mall in the centre of our largest city. The Reserve Bank, Channel 7, and the Cenotaph major business and institutions vie for space. At the top are the NSW law courts and parliament, and at the bottom is the busy shopping strip of George Street. Down below, trains rumble through the underground station. By day, business people stride purposefully, shoppers throng, and tourists gawk, and by night the homeless and destitute seek shelter in alcoves and doorways.

Now Martin Place is known for something else – a terrible ordeal that strikes at the heart of our security as Australians. Yesterday a man with a gun entered a shop and held 17 staff and customers hostage. Seventeen hours later three people were dead: a lawyer, the shop manager, and the gunman. The trauma, analysis, and repercussions will go on. It's ugly and it feels so wrong.

We have seen things like this before – Port Arthur Tasmania (1996), NCA Adelaide (1994), Hoddle Street Melbourne (1986), and Sydney Hilton (1978). Each time is as raw and painful as the last. Now there is the spectre of international terrorism, although the truth about that is not yet known. The gunman didn't seem coordinated or tied in with any particular movement, but it's early days yet.

Once the initial shock is over, how will we respond?

Our first response can be of deep sadness for those who have been traumatised and those who have died, as well as their families, loved ones, colleagues, and friends. The circles of pain will be profound, and will continue for many years. As a community and as individuals we should do what we can to support these people.

Another response can be of sincere gratitude for people, like the police, who put their lives at risk. When danger strikes they are there to protect us. Without their willing service we could not walk our streets with confidence. We thank God for the many who serve in this way.

Some people will want to be angry and seek revenge wherever they can find it. This is the most damaging response. If we succumb to it, it will tear us apart from within. No-one wins – not us, nor those on whom revenge is enacted. Anger will not make our society safer. It will only escalate the cycle of violence. If the Cronulla Riots of 2005 showed us anything, they showed us that.

The modern world is a much smaller place than it used to be. It is our duty to live together in this world as best we possibly can. People are still people. Each of us has the same need for security, shelter, and protection. Christian, Muslim, atheist, agnostic – God has placed us all here and not one of us has the right to exclude the other.

In his day Jesus Christ was also familiar with a pluralistic world. Religions and empires jostled for attention. Violence was commonplace. It was a dangerous world in which he taught a radical response:

You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. (Matthew 5:43–45 (NRSV))

Do not assume that the other person is your enemy – you might be surprised. Society, and we as individuals, will be judged by how we welcome the stranger, and how we protect the defenceless. This is a time for us to make a difference, and not only preach the love of Christ, but also to practise it. The sad, bitter, devastating actions of a misguided man in Martin Place cannot stop us doing what we know has to be done. If the death and trauma he caused is to mean anything, let it make us stronger, more determined, and more ready to love and serve, as God himself has loved and served us.

ROSTERS—The worship service rosters for the period January–February 2015 have been prepared and emailed to all helpers. The rosters are also available to view or print from our website. Please remember to check your emails and look for when you are rostered and if you need to make any swaps **please record those swaps on the master copy in the church foyer.**

"Time Out—... God calls"—Australian devotions for a year. There is one copy of the new 2015 devotional book available in the Admin Office at a cost of \$22. If anyone would like to purchase this please contact Judith. Of course more can be ordered if required.

