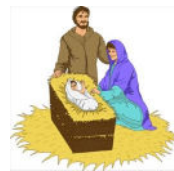




The Messenger

Advent 4
24 December 2023



Christmas 1
31 December 2023

Welcome: Peter & Raelyn Punch
Flowers: No flowers thank you
Coffee/Tea: Raelyn Punch & Kerry Lawson
Reader: Piet Speyers
Kids Church: Children will remain in the service
Church Rep: Raelyn Punch
Worship Leader & Speaker: Yoy Alberastine
Communion: Rev. Mike Fawcett

Welcome: Keith & Jaren Picking
Flowers: Judy Law
Coffee/Tea: Cliff & Averil Clark
Reader: Keith Picking
Kids Church: Children will remain in the service
Church Rep: Raelyn Punch
Worship Leaders: Raelyn Punch & Kerry Lawson
Speaker: Piet Speyers



Readings from the Lectionary

2 Sm 7:1-11,16
Lk 1:46b-55 or Ps 89:1-4, 19-26
Rom 16:25-27
Lk 1:26-38

Is 61:10-62:3
Ps 148
Gal 4:4-7
Lk 2:22-40



South Mandurah Uniting Church

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PO Box 5290 FALCON WA 6210

Website: <https://southmandurah.ucwa.au>

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E: fawcettmichael176@gmail.com

Or any member of the Leadership Team

Pastor: Yoy Alberastine M: 0421 793 562 E: yoyea1210@gmail.com

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Editor of the Messenger: Peter Punch 0427 685 908 E: prpunch@lasar.net.au
Prayer Circle Leader: Frances Davy 0488 906 280 E: 2davyfamily@gmail.com

Members of the Leadership Team: Raelyn Punch, Sherryl Smith & Andrew Telfer

Halls Head Bendigo Bank details for electronic transfers:

A/C Name: Uniting Church in Australia-South Mandurah Congregation
BSB: 633-000 A/C No: 117072207

It is optional whether you include your name as a reference for the payment.



Our Vision: "United in Christ we reach out to build loving relationships that deepen faith and enrich lives."



PLEASE NOTE:

- The Christmas Eve service starts at **6-30pm** (See details overleaf).
- Services will **NOT BE HELD** at 9-30am. Christmas Eve nor on Christmas Day at SMUC
- The service on Sunday 31st December will start at the normal time of 9-30am.

What Was Seen at Bethlehem?

I wonder what I would have heard had I been there that night. It is a question that annually haunts me. Would I have heard the choirs of angels singing or simply the sounds of barnyard animals shifting around? Would I have seen the star in the sky that night or simply two poor and very frightened kids? Would I have understood the hushed silence of the divine presence, or simply the chill of a cold east wind. Would I have understood the message of Emmanuel, God with us, or would the cosmic implications of that evening have passed me by?



I am convinced that had two people been there that night in Bethlehem it is quite possible that they could have heard and seen two entirely different scenes. I believe this because all of life is this way. God never presents himself in revelation in a manner in which we are forced to believe. We are always left with an option, for that is God's way. Thus, one person can say "It's a miracle, while another says "It's coincidence."

Certainly very few people in Palestine saw and heard and understood what took place that night. The choirs of angels singing were drowned out by the haggling and trading going on in the Jerusalem bazaar. There was a bright star in the sky but the only ones apparently to pay any attention to it were astrologers from the East. If anyone did see Mary and Joseph on that most fateful night, they were too preoccupied with their own problems to offer any assistance. More than 2000 years later you have to ask has anything changed? We can communicate in ways our ancestors couldn't have imagined and researching a subject is no further away than a few computer strokes. However, with the commercialisation of Christmas, exemplified by elderly men running around in red suits, how many people pause for a few minutes to reflect on the first Christmas or spend time helping others? Some do make a difference, but many are oblivious to the significance of the anniversary of the birth of Christ as they tuck into their Christmas roast. While we may each envision the birth of Christ differently, what is important is our acceptance and belief that Christ is the son of God. Merry Christmas.

A Prayer for Joy in Our Hearts

God, our Creator, we offer this humble prayer on Christmas Day. We come to worship with a song of thanks in our hearts—a song of redemption, a song of hope and renewal. We pray for joy in our hearts, hope in our God, love to forgive, and peace upon the earth. We ask for the salvation of all our family members and friends, and we pray your blessings on all people. May there be bread for the hungry, love for the unlovable, healing for the sick, protection for our children, and wisdom for our youth. We pray for the forgiveness of sinners and abundant life in Christ. Holy Spirit, fill our hearts with your love and power. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray. **Amen.**

Rev. Lia Icaza Willetts



A Brief History of the Carol "O Holy Night"

In Roquemaure in France at the end of 1843, the church organ had recently been renovated. To celebrate the event, the parish priest persuaded poet Placide Cappeau, a native of the town, to write a Christmas poem. Soon afterwards, in that same year, Adolphe Adam composed the music. The song was premiered in Roquemaure in 1847 by the opera singer Emily Laurey. Rev. John Sullivan Dwight adapted the song into English in 1855. The song has at times been controversial due to its popularity amongst French revolutionaries, and American abolitionists. Despite its wide spread appeal, the 19th century French Catholic church vilified the composers, Cappeau and Adams, and in 1936 the Canadian Catholic Church banned the carol.

The wide vocal range of the song makes it one of the more difficult Christmas carols to execute properly but in more recent times it has been recorded by a variety of pop, classical and religious singers.

Wikipedia (Edited)



Christmas Eve Service

There will be a special Christmas Eve Service held on **Sunday 24th December 2023**, led by Yoy Alberastine. Everyone is welcome, so invite your family, friends and neighbours.

There will be the opportunity for fellowship from **6pm**, over a cuppa and a piece of Christmas Cake.

The service will be from 6-30 to 7-30pm, followed by light refreshments. The church will remain open after the service for quiet reflection.

There will **not be a Christmas Day service** at South Mandurah Uniting Church. The Mandurah Uniting Church, 156 Pinjarra Rd, Mandurah, will be holding a Christmas Day Service, from 9-30am.



God Will Be Home For Christmas

In a very real sense, none of us are home for Christmas tonight. Because being home for Christmas, in the truest sense, would mean that we were with the One who loves us more than our imagination will allow us to understand. Our earthly life is like the nomadic experience of living in a tent.; it's just temporary. We're all just passing through on the way to our true home.

But even more than all that, Christmas is not just about Mary and Joseph coming home to Bethlehem and finding no room. It's not even about our own desire for homecoming. It's about God coming home. We couldn't go to God, so God came to us. When we hear, "I'll be home for Christmas," we hear Bing Crosby or whatever contemporary artist has done the song so well that it stands out in our memory. When Luke hears the song, it is God who is singing.



Johnny Dean, 1999 (Edited)

Pastoral Care

For pastoral care or spiritual guidance please contact:

Rev. Mike Fawcett

M: 0412 243 677

E: fawcettmichael176@gmail.com

OR Any member of the leadership team (their names are overleaf)



Estelle Telfer Thursday 28 December

God Bless and warm wishes

To you upon your birthday



A very warm welcome is extended to any visitors. We trust that you will be blessed during this time of worship and invite you to fellowship with us after the service.



On behalf of the Leadership Team of South Mandurah Uniting Church, thank you for your support during the past year. We hope you enjoy a Joyous and Holy Christmas with your friends and families, and wish you a Happy and Healthy 2024.

Raelyn