



31 DECEMBER, 2023 - 21 JANUARY, 2024



Welcome

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

Rev Gail on leave

Rev Gail will be on leave from 1st January until 21st January. If you have any pastoral needs during that time, please contact Sue or one of the elders.

Office Hours in January

Sue will be working reduced hours for the first two weeks of January, so please either leave a message on the office phone or ring her mobile if you need her.

**This newsletter is
for Sundays
31 December
2023 to
21 January, 2024**



Lectionary Readings for January 2024

This week 31 December, 2023

Isaiah 61:10—62:3
Psalm 148
Galatians 4:4-7
Luke 2:22-40

January 7, 2024

Genesis 1:1-5
Psalm 29
Acts 19:1-7
Mark 1:4-11

January 14, 2024

1 Samuel 3:1-10, (11-20)
Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18
1 Corinthians 6:12-20
John 1:43-51

January 21, 2024

Jonah 3:1-5, 10
Psalm 62:5-12
1 Corinthians 7:29-31
Mark 1:4-20

January 28, 2023

Deuteronomy 18:15-20
Psalm 111
1 Corinthians 8:1-13
Mark 1:21-28

Christmas Bowl

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the Christmas Bowl retiring offering. We are still taking donations for a few more weeks if you would like to contribute, or you can donate on-line at <https://christmasbowl.actforpeace.org.au>



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Rev Gail's Message

From New Year's Day I will be taking three weeks leave. It is an odd thing being an ordained person because we never really leave our work place; the nature of faith and calling means that our work is who we are and visa versa.

As I contemplate this I realise that this applies to all believers, our faith should shape us whether we are at work, or at play, on holidays or simply doing chores around the house. Perhaps it is easier to just be a "Christian" on Sunday for an hour or two if you are not the person up the front in the white Alb and stole?

When I think back to my earlier church days I know this to be true. Praise God that as we mature so does our lived experience of faith. In this last Grapevine Entry for 2023 I invite you to contemplate two of Howard Thurman's poems. Thank you for being the most wonderful congregation a minister could pray for. God bless you and keep you. Rev. Gail

When the Song of the Angels Is Stilled

When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and the princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flocks,
The work of Christmas begins:
To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among people,
To make music in the heart.

<https://www.poemhunter.com/poem/when-the-song-of-the-angels-is-stilled/>

"Memories Crowd Upon Us," from Thurman's Meditations of the Heart.

Memories crowd upon us as we look back over the (year) just passed:
Many high hopes – many dreams unfulfilled;
Many blunders made and, in the sharpness of our anguish,
We would turn back the wheels of time and try again.
Many joys that were unanticipated;
Many little graces by which our faith in ourselves and in life
Is lifted up and strengthened –
Much for which we need to be forgiven;
Much we need to forgive.
All around us, our Father, there are reminders of Thy Presence in our midst:
Pangs of conscience,
A spontaneous impulse to do the kind and gracious thing,
The sensitiveness to another's needs,
The great burden of anguish which we feel as we look out upon the world.
Teach us, O living Spirit, the wisdom to lay ourselves
Bare to Thy scrutiny – that we may reflect Thy life
In the dark places of our minds, hearts and desires;
That we may know Thy courage – and the grounds of Thy hope
for the children of men.

<https://www.bu.edu/thurman/meditation-memories-crowd-upon-us/>