

"LIVING TO SERVE"

(OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF GSGC DEC 2023)

Good Shepherd Gospel Church

நல்ல மேய்ப்பன் கவிசேஷ சபை



CHRIST CENTERED CHRISTMAS

When you think about Christmas, what do you picture?

It might be a gift you received or gave or twinkling lights on a tree, but its likely that your favourite memories of the season are more about family tradition and activities. Maybe you picture your kids dressed up in nativity costumes or building gingerbread houses together. May be you hear your favourite Christmas hymn or feel the warmth that comes from spending time with loved ones. Christmas tradition can vary widely from family to family, but they bring us closer together and remind us of what's really important. The best traditions are those that are not only fun but also fill our hearts with love and also fill our hearts with love and remind us of our saviour.



Peace be with you

DECEMBER SCHEDULE

- Nov 17 to Dec 16 - Special fasting prayer
- Dec 16 - Christmas Carol service (6:30pm onwards)
- Dec 25 - Christmas service (10am onwards)
- Jan 01 - New year service (10am onwards)
- Sunday Service (Bilingual: Tamil & English) - 10am to 12:30pm
- Fasting prayer - every 1st sat of the month (9:30 am to 1:30pm)
- Bible study - every Thursday (6:30pm to 7:30pm)
- Youth meeting - 2nd Saturday of every month (10am to 12pm)
- Ladies prayer meeting - 2nd Friday of every month (10:30am to 12:30pm)
- Kids Class - Every Fridays (4:30pm to 6:00pm)



Birthdays:

16th Dec - Mrs Benedicta Jose

20th Dec - Mrs. Sasi Roche

Anniversaries:

02nd Dec - Mr. Anand Prince & Mrs. Reena

15th Dec - Mr. Roche & Mrs. Sasi Roche

May your day be filled with joy and wrapped in the grace of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Oh come let us adore him...

Oh come let us adore him..

Oh come let us adore him...

CHRIST THE LORD.



Journey of Budding Church to a Big Family



Our calling towards Christ ministry started since Aug 2005. When we knew a call to ministry is essentially a call to serve God, His Gospel, His people, and His world, it was God's plan to bring us as a missionary to Southampton. This calling of God was confirmed through the word Isaiah 41:8-10 and was reiterated through another word 2 Samuel 7:16

Initially gatherings were held in a house every month to praise and worship God with few known members. From 07Jan2007, the ministry was established as a church called "Good Shepherd Gospel Church" with 7 adults and 5 kids. I totally surrendered to God to do a full-time ministry from 22Jul2011. The "motto" of the church is Evangelism, and the "vision" is to make disciples and to generate church leaders.

We are now so glad that there are 2 churches established in South coast out from our church. Throughout these years we have moved on from various rented places to gather and worship and now we gather every Sundays at "Lordswood Community Centre" which is in Lordswood, Southampton.

Now we have almost 70 to 75 members including kids who are eagerly participating in all church activities to worship HIM, glorify HIM and extend HIS kingdom. Being a Pastor I truly look forward to what God has planned for us and for the ministry.



Since the ministry was started, I'm being a pastor's helpmate longed for bringing kids towards HIS ministry. Though I had this thirst towards kids' ministry I didn't have any idea of implementing the plan, but His grace carried me to help kids grow in Christ.

Now God has enlarged our kids group to 30 who are in various groups like Beginner 1 (4-6 years), Beginner 2 (7-9 years), Junior (13-15 years). We do have almost 5 teachers who are leading our kids to expand HIS ministry. Our teachers teach our children through zoom every Fridays 4:30 to 6:00 pm and at every gathering.

Here at our gatherings, we praise and worship God, teach them Bible stories, teach them how to pray for others. Each kids share their testimony to show what God has done in their daily lives, memorize and recite Bible verses. Kids within their capability actively participate in any given work that is towards HIS ministry.

We as a teacher of kid's ministry are happy to hear testimony from parents who share telling their kids can differentiate good and evil. This has made us feel like that the Lord has moved in our kid's lives. He has answered prayers beyond anything we could have imagined. Now as a parent, teachers of kid's ministry be faithful to declare that... (Psalm 78: 4-7) ... **"We will not hide them from their children we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, HIS power, and the wonders he has done..... so that they should set their hope in God"**.

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

UNDERSTANDING HEART

Greetings to you all in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ:

1 Chronicles 22:12

May the LORD give you discretion and understanding when he puts you in command over Israel, so that you may keep the law of the LORD your God. Here David imparts statutes to Solomon emphasizing the importance of wisdom, understanding and the responsibility towards Israel. The significance of the heart as a vital organ becomes evident as God seeks the heart of His people stressing their love for Him with at most sincerity which is a very first important commandment that God gave us **Deuteronomy 6:4 Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.**

Despite God's emphasize on understanding, warns about the deceitfulness of the heart as in Jeremiah (17:9-10). David, acknowledging this prays for a purified heart in Psalms (51:10). Jesus, in Matthew 5:8, underscores that only those with pure heart can truly perceive God.

Reflecting on Jesus teachings in parables (Matthew 16:9; Matthew 24:29), His disciples were puzzled. Jesus reproached their lack of understanding (Matthew 15:16 Are you still without understanding?), revealing God's desire for comprehension among His children.

Understanding involves knowledge's proper application, rooted in the fear of the Lord. **The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding** (Proverbs 9:10). This makes clear that understanding is in and with God.

Consequences of not understanding:

Failure to grasp God's teachings leads to the following:

1. *God's presence is away* – Adam and Eve sinned and hid themselves from God's presence (Genesis 3:8-10).
2. *Blessing is away* – Moab and Ammon became cursed because of Lot being unaware of what happened (Genesis 19:33-35).
3. *Repentance is away* – The words in Matthew 13:15 "and I would heal them," indicates that understanding and repentance bring about spiritual healing and reconciliation with God. Therefore, the inability or unwillingness to understand creates a significant barrier between individuals and God, reinforcing the idea that comprehension and receptivity to spiritual truths are crucial for a meaningful connection with the God.
4. *Word is taken away* - The parable of the sower (Matthew 13:13-15) elucidates that without understanding, the evil one snatches away God's word.
5. *Brightness is away* – Psalm 82:5 states lack knowledge and understanding. The verse "They do not know, nor do they understand" suggests a deficiency in wisdom or discernment. The metaphor "They walk about in darkness" shows a state of spiritual or intellectual blindness, a lack of guidance or moral clarity.

God Seeks understanding individuals: THE LORD LOOKS DOWN UPON MEN AND CHILDREN IF THERE IS ANY WHO UNDERSTANDS GOD (Psalms 14: 2, 3).

In order to gain understanding it is essential to keep the following things in mind:

1. *Through His presence* – Acquiring understanding is through God's presence (Proverbs 8:14) **ask for it:** it seems like you're emphasizing the importance of seeking wisdom and understanding through prayer, drawing inspiration from the biblical story of David and Solomon 1 Chronicles 22:12. The idea is that, rather than solely asking for material wealth or physical strength, it is valuable to seek understanding and wisdom, as these qualities enable one to apply knowledge effectively. Teaching children the importance of prayer for understanding aligns with the idea of instilling spiritual values and virtues from a young age, encouraging them to seek not only knowledge but also the wisdom to use it responsibly. **Enjoy understanding:** It is indeed accurate that true clarity dawns upon us when we comprehend deeply, resonating within our hearts. In our life's journey, we often prioritize utilitarian values, yet this emphasis is destined to evolve. Realizing genuine happiness necessitates a departure from the narrow focus on utility alone. Our persistent lack of understanding has led us down diverse paths. It is crucial to recognize that the magnitude of one's existence is a divine choice. Embracing the understanding of our limitations is the gateway to true joy. Example: Drawing inspiration from biblical figures, we find Moses, whose emphasis on the 'promiser' outweighed the allure of the promised destination (Exodus 33:15). He declared his unwillingness to proceed if the promiser's presence didn't accompany them. Similarly, David, a renowned king, grasped the profound truth that eternal happiness emanates from God's presence (Psalms 84:2, 3, 10).
2. *Through His Precepts:* "In Psalms 119:104, the profound declaration echoes: I gain understanding from your precepts; therefore, I hate every wrong path.' (Amen!) Isaiah 28:9;26 assures us that God will instruct and enlighten us. Psalms 119:105 beautifully illustrates, Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path. Additionally, Psalms 119:130 emphasizes the illuminating power of God's words: 'The entrance of Your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple.' May we find wisdom and clarity through these divine teachings.
3. *Through His Promiser:* 1 Corinthians 2:12 states that the Holy Spirit is the promise of the Father and the Son (Acts 1:5; John 14:16). The advice is to submit to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, as it will refine us like gold during testing. Job, despite not fully understanding, trusted that God knew (Job 23:8-10), and the love of Christ ensures an inseparable connection (Romans 8:36). Job 32:8 emphasizes the spirit in man and the understanding from the Almighty's breath.

Ultimately, understanding God's love surpasses all. Life begins with our plans but ends with understanding that only God's plan prevails. In teaching our children, we should emphasize praying for understanding, recognizing it as a gift from God. May we seek, pray for, and cherish an understanding heart. Amen.

Your **TEST** will become
your **TESTIMONY**

Praise be to God.

In May 2023, my husband's company informed that they do not have any upcoming projects to assign and gave him 3 months' notice, indirectly asking him to search for a new job externally. We were staggered to hear such a news as it is a very difficult to seek a job in UK within a short span of 3 months with sponsorship.

We discussed this situation with pastor, and he prayed for us. As a family we also clung with Jesus and prayed.

After numerous rejections exactly 3 months later my husband was offered a position in a company by the pure grace of God. We as a family are thankful for HIS abundant mercy and miracle in our life.

Bro Anand & Sis Reena

what's happening

Ho ho ho!! Merry Christmas!! Here we are again at this Christmas time so buckle up. This is the wonderful time filled with happiness, love and affection as we received a perfect gift from above '*Baby Jesus*'

Bells are jingling, stars shining, trees decorated, all homes are lighted up and here at GSGC our Little stars are getting ready for Christmas carol.

They are enthusiastically getting prepared for the special occasion and eagerly waiting for the big day.

Please don't forget to join us on this special day, Christmas Carol service which is on 16th Dec 2023!!



"Let mealtime be a cheerful, happy time. As we enjoy the gifts of God, let us respond by grateful praise to the Giver".

Fellowship meal at GSGC has provide an opportunity for church members to share ideas of good nutrition, strengthen friendships, and celebrate God's goodness. Even in the days of Israel there was a coming together for feasting and socializing.

Our member of our family volunteers themselves and schedule is put up each volunteer has a turn. They prepare a variety of dishes for the members of Church to enjoy after each service. After the Church service we have volunteers arranging tables and chairs for kids and Adults. Kids and Adults are practiced taking sufficient food and here at GSGC we do not encourage wasting of food. Kids are encouraged to sit together along with few adults who supervise them. We do have serving team who warmly serves the food. Each family takes their turn to serve the cooked meal and ensure the dishes and kitchen used is clean and tidy for next use.

We warmly welcome all who joins our service to take part in the meals.

Did you Know?? SOME FACTS ABOUT CHRIST'S BIRTH

Mary Was Virgin

*"Behold, the virgin shall be with child and give birth to a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel"—which, when translated, means, "God with us." – **Matthew 1:23***

Jesus Was Born in the Same Village as King David

*"He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing it and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever" - **Isaiah. 9:7***

Jesus Birth Came after 400 Years of Silence from God

During this 400-year period, several nations overtake Israel. Israel successfully rebels against some (i.e., the Maccabean revolt) but by the time Jesus arrives, Romans had occupied Israel. Like their 400 years in Egypt, the Israelites wanted a Saviour. No wonder they clamoured for Jesus to topple Rome, just as the Red Sea had toppled the Egyptians.

Jesus Was Probably Not Born in December

*While Christmas has been celebrated on December 25 for nearly 1700 years, Jesus was not actually born in December. In fact, he was not born in winter at all! In the year 336 AD Emperor Constantine established Christmas to be on the winter solstice, which is December 25. However, Jesus most likely had a spring birth, thanks to the mention in **Luke 2** of shepherds abiding in their fields. During springtime, sheep gave birth to lambs, hence why they would stay out at night as well in case a night birth occurred.*

The Wise Men Were Not There

Many of you might have heard that the wise men did not appear during the night of Jesus' birth, no matter what nativity scenes may try to tell you. In fact, it took them about two years to make the trek from their homeland to Judea, when they approached Herod. This means they did not see Jesus until he'd reached the age of two. Hence why Herod tries to kill children around that age.

The wise men were pagan priests.

The Magi mentioned in the Gospel of Matthew were astrologers from a priestly class in the land of Persia (Iran), skilled in interpreting omens, dreams, and stars. In the Old Testament, Daniel spent 70 years exiled among magi from the east. These wise men may have travelled well over 1,000 miles by camel caravan to see the newborn King of the Jews. "In those days, a new star in the sky was often believed to herald the birth of a significant person in the land over which the star had shone".

Gifts Of Magi Were PROPHETIC

- *The gold is a symbol of Christ's kingship on earth.*
- *The frankincense is a symbol of Christ's deity.*
- *The myrrh as a symbol of death. (Myrrh was traditionally used as an embalming oil)*

Dreams Played Key Role in Protecting JESUS

*And having been warned [by God] in a dream not to go back to Herod, the magi left for their own country by another way. – **Matthew 2:12***

Jesus is for everyone.

*Jesus came for the foreigners, the outcasts, the despised, the rejected, the imperfect, the sick, the broken, the weak, the weary, the depressed, the needy, the criminals. He came for sinners. God so loved the whole world that He sent His only Son to seek and save the lost (**John 3:16**). He will not reject or despise anyone who turns to Him but freely offers His grace and forgiveness to anyone who believes and accepts it.*

BIG THANK YOU FOR ALL LENDING HANDS!!

We thank you all for being a part of Donor in Church's charity towards Nanban trust.

We also thank all who lent their support towards Bharath's cancer treatment.

CALL FOR DONARS/ VOLUNTEERS



*Donate
to
Church Building Fund*