

Garden Gleechings

January 2023

A monthly publication of the Garden Community Church

Church Board Installation Service

On January 1st we installed new board members. Steve Crist was installed as Elder, and we re-installed, for their second 3-year term, Bryson Huxman, as Deacon, and Gary Huxman as Treasurer. Thank you to all of our board members for their faithful service at GCC. Special Thank you to Abe Schmidt for his faithful service the past 6 years on the Elder Board. Please continue to lift up all the men on the church board as they seek God's will in leading our church into this next year.



Organization of the 2023 Church Boards

Elder Board:

Scot Loyd—Chairman
Larry Friesen—Vice-Chairman
Steve Crist—Secretary
Rob Hiebert

Deacon Board:

Bryson Huxman—Chairman
Art Huxman—Vice-Chairman
Mel Graybill—Secretary
Dennis Morrison

Full Board:

Larry Friesen—Chairman
Rob Hiebert—Vice-Chairman
Mel Graybill—Secretary
Gary Huxman—Treasurer

IT'S A BABY BOY

JOHN FORD

| * DATE * | * TIME * | * WEIGHT * |
|------------|----------|-------------|
| 12.21.2022 | 8:40 pm | 7 lbs. 4 oz |

Parents: Kevin & Kim Kohls
Big Sisters:
Karlee & Harper



January is always a good time for a reset of goals for the new year. Have you thought of adding **READING** as one of your new goals to reach new ideas and actions for your life? Books provide all kinds of benefits! Fiction allows one to escape into a world of fantasy. Christian Living books give help and hope for growing in your Faith. Biographies give a window into the lives of many faithful Christ followers. There are many books on Parenting and Marriage which also give great advice and counsel.

During our Winter term the Adult Library is offering a **WINTER READING CHALLENGE**. Twelve different reading genres are included in the challenge. The challenge will be finished at the end of April. **The book list will be found on the check out table in the Library.** We encourage you to read through the whole list. If this seems overwhelming to you, simply try to read *one* of the listed books for each of the three months. At the end of April, turn in your book list even if it is only partially completed. Hopefully this might be the encouragement you need to step into the library and see the variety of books that are available for your enrichment. There just might be a prize waiting for your participation!

During the month of **February** we will be featuring books on the **Parent-Child relationship**. We have been adding new books to this area. **Two newly added highlighted books to consider . . .** *Raising a Modern Day Knight* by Robert Lewis and *Giving your Words the Lifegiving Power of a Verbal home for Family Faith Formation* by Sally and Clay Clark. You will find these Parenting books and many others, located on the display table to make it easier for a selection. Finding time to read during the season of parenting is sometimes elusive. We however want to encourage each set of parents to find one book from our display table to read together. Use this as a springboard for conversation to build better parenting actions.

The **Children's Library** will be featuring the **theme - Love in Action - during the month of February**. A variety of books on showing love and kindness will be highlighted during this time. Our table activities always enhance the learning focus for the month.



Vonnie's Views

Last fall when I brought my outdoor plants inside for the winter, I placed them in the guest bedroom to bask in the sunny south window. Normally, when I do this I set a reminder on my phone to water the plants (because they can easily be forgotten in the guest room!). I forgot to set the reminder and around Christmas, I ventured into the guest room to find my lovely peace lily completely wilted, leaves limply hanging over the edge of the flowerpot. I thoroughly drenched the drooping plant's dry soil. Happily, in a few hours, the leaves perked up. But over the next few days, I saw evidence of the plant's near-death experience! Quite a few leaves turned brown and crispy, other leaves developed brown tips. Several buds dried up. After a thorough trimming, the plant looks better. (And there is now a reminder on my phone to water my plants!)

It's January; there is most of a brand-new year stretching ahead for us. What does an arid plant have to do with a new year? Trying to face a new day, a new month, or a new year without a well-watered soul means you will become like my withered plant! We cannot leave our souls un-watered and expect to thrive!! When we go through a dry season after failing to prioritize time in Scripture, we might "perk up" when watered with the living water—but damage is incurred.

In 2022, I wrote a monthly snippet of what I was reading as I journeyed through the Bible with two friends. Last year completed my third successive reading through the Word of God. The value in this is that I am gradually getting a fuller view of the unity of Scripture and of the overarching story of God's pursuit of sinful man through redemption. I'm starting to remember where things are in the Bible. This Bible survey—repeated year after year—has been one of the most beneficial practices I have undertaken. I'm taking my fourth journey through the Bible with a friend in 2023.

A Bible survey is very important—but it needs to be supplemented by deeper exploration. What do I mean by that? We also need to study, meditate on, and memorize the Word of God. Fine, but where are we supposed to find time to get all of that done?? Here's how it works for me; your approach might be completely different. My Bible reading takes about 20-30 minutes of my morning. It's non-negotiable that I start my day with coffee in my cup and my Bible on my lap.

I study in the evening. This time commitment varies depending on what my week holds. I don't study every evening; nor do I keep a strict schedule. I'll choose a commentary of a book of the Bible to help me study more deeply over a period of months. Right now, I'm studying through Ezekiel with Derek Thomas' commentary "Ezekiel: God Strengthens." When I study through a book, I'm in no hurry. I take my time, lingering over passages and concepts. You could use your small group study as your study time or linger over the book that Pastor Craig is preaching through. You could listen to a sermon series or do a concept or word study. Make it fun, make it something you're interested in.



To meditate, I copy a verse, a paragraph, or a passage and carry it with me on a notecard or in my phone as a note that I can pull up when I'm walking or waiting at an appointment. You could tape the notecard to a mirror or your kitchen window. Meditation leads to memorization!! (Which makes it easy to "kill two birds with one stone.")

We know, more fully than ever after having lived through 2020, 2021, & 2022 that surprising and difficult things may await us in the months ahead. We might be tempted to approach the new year with apprehension. But as Christians, we should be the most hopeful people in the world because we have a living hope (1 Peter 1:3-4) Let's not let the soil of our souls grow arid as our leaves hang limp! Let's water our souls by reading, studying, meditating & memorizing the Word of God in 2023! (Email me and tell me how you will be interacting with the Word of God in 2023!)

FEBRUARY

Prayer Calendar and Memory Verse

Memory Verse: I Peter 1:8-9—Though you have not seen Him, you love Him; though not seeing Him now, you believe in Him, and you rejoice with inexpressible and glorious joy.

| Sun | Mon | Tues | Wed | Thurs | Fri | Sat |
|--|---|--|---|---|---|--|
|  <p>BECAUSE HE FIRST LOVED US.</p> <p>1 JOHN 4:19</p> | | | <p>1 Pray Wed. night activities change lives for all eternity.</p> | <p>2 Pray about how you can encourage someone. Days can be dark, cold & difficult.</p> | <p>3 Pray work in Brazil brings forth much fruit for God.</p> | <p>4 If you are at odds with anyone, ask God to help you make it right as soon as possible.</p> |
| <p>5 Worship God the Father: your Creator, Protector, Provider.</p> | <p>6 Pray for missionaries in raising their children.</p> | <p>7 Thank God for all the beauty of music and color He has placed around us.</p> | <p>8 Search your heart & seek to be pure before the Lord.</p> | <p>9 Pray we each continually grow in our understanding of God & desire for Him.</p> | <p>10 Pray chaplains in military accurately share the truth of the gospel.</p> | <p>11 Pray for technology being used by missionaries to work & reach many for Christ.</p> |
| <p>12 Worship Jesus Christ, the Son: your Redeemer, Deliverer, your Savior.</p> | <p>13 Pray God's guidance for board members & thank God for their service.</p> | <p>14 Pray Pastor Craig & teachers present the truth clearly & winsomely.</p> | <p>15 Pray for those attending Wed night that need a church family.</p> | <p>16 Pray for family members that need Jesus as Savior.</p> | <p>17 Pray we each have wisdom to know when to say no.</p> | <p>18 Pray gov't leaders would seek God & His will.</p> |
| <p>19 Worship the Holy Spirit: God indwelling you, teaching & guiding you.</p> | <p>20 Pray for hearts quick to say "yes" to the Holy Spirit and His leading.</p> | <p>21 Pray those in the workplace represent Christ well.</p> | <p>22 Pray God would remove the blinders that keep many from seeing the truth.</p> | <p>23 Pray for the weak, scared, defenseless - that Christ would be their strength & refuge.</p> | <p>24 Pray our church would be characterized by love for God & for each other.</p> | <p>25 Pray those in prison find forgiveness & healing in Christ.</p> |
| <p>26 Worship the Triune God - more marvelous and greater than we can fathom.</p> | <p>27 Pray youth would walk in wisdom & purity.</p> | <p>28 Pray for open doors & opportunities to share the gospel.</p> |  | | | |



ONE | COLLECTIVE

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!

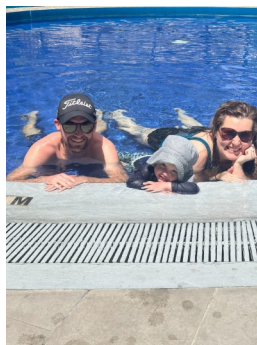
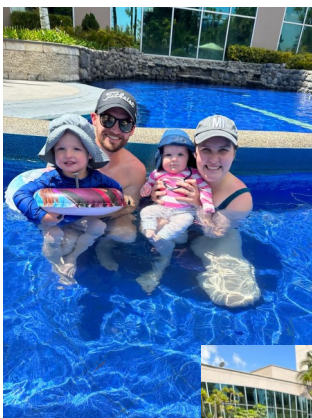
We hope this season has been filled with rest, love & joy for each one of you. We are beyond thankful for your prayers, support & donations that made it possible for us to live & serve in Ecuador another year. Hannah's family (Brad, Sandi & Sarah Miller) came to visit us for Christmas which was so great to celebrate with them in our home in Ecuador.



We traveled to the beach for family vacation with the kids and Hannah's family. Unfortunately, our trip was cut short as our first night there a group of guys broke into our cabins and robbed us. There was some physical violence and threats but we are thankful that no one was seriously injured. The loss of physical property is always difficult but the emotional side of this has been much more impactful. Since we no longer were safe, we left the beach the next day which was disappointing as we were all looking forward to our vacation there & Dakota loved the time he did get in the sand. Please pray for us as we continue to process this experience.



Once we arrived back in Quito, we still wanted to do something fun so we stayed at a hotel here for 2 nights all together. It was beautiful and relaxing. Riley had her first swim & Dakota loved the pool!





THANK YOU to all who prayed and donated toward the Amadas Christmas Parties! God showed up in huge ways. We were able to bless over 400 women in prostitution with food kits, words of encouragement, smiles, prayers and Christmas cheer. This year we also blessed 80 of their children with gifts and a special Christmas message about Jesus. It is a huge blessing to us to do this each year. One women said; "the best thing is that you always remember us, that makes us feel loved." Consistently doing this year after year builds trust and shows love.



Casa Adalia residential home closed on December 3rd. We helped the current women move into safe independent apartments. (Pictured we are praying for one of them in their new apartment). We had a celebration together of the 9 years that God used this residential ministry to bless so many people. . If you want to get the ESME ministry updates monthly to your email, click on that link and at the top left click on subscribe. Those emails have many more details and stories of what God is doing in the ministry Hannah directs.

SO MANY ANSWERED PRAYERS:

- Sweet time with Hannah's family celebrating Christmas and fun time at the hotel together.
- God continues to confirm that it was the right decision at least for now to close Casa Adalia. He has provided safe housing for all three women that were in the program at the time of closing.
- Amadas Christmas Parties were a huge blessing once again to over 400 people in prostitution & 80 of their kids!

PLEASE PRAY FOR:

- Physical health for all of us. We have all been sick so much and it is exhausting to keep parenting sick and taking care of sick kids. Hannah was in the hospital at one point because she was so sick.
- Hannah is leading a retreat for her team Jan 4-6 and team meetings 3.5 hrs each weekday from Jan 9th to Feb 3rd. The focus is to strategically rethink and redesign our ministry model. Please pray for God's guiding, team unity and wisdom for Hannah as she leads this important time.*

*Hannah is looking for 5-7 people to commit to praying daily each day of January for Hannah & her team. Please email us if you would like to know more and be part of this specific prayer covering.

We are in need of more financial support. Would you consider...

1. Giving a special year-end tax-deductible gift? **OR**
2. Starting to give or giving more each month?

We have not been able to take a salary increase since 2020. We now have 2 kids and the expenses continue to go up. We are looking to raise \$600/month or \$7200 in special gifts in order to be able to receive more each month to cover our family expenses. Please feel free to respond to this email with any questions you may have about this & we will happily answer you.

surrender

Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above; it comes down from the Father of lights [the Creator and Sustainer of the heavens], in whom there is no variation [no rising or setting] or shadow cast by His turning [for He is perfect and never changes].

James 1:17 AMP

As we look back to the last 4 years we can only surrender to God with thankful hearts as we count our blessings. We surrender in awe seeing that indeed He can and will (and has done) more than we can think or imagine. In fact, He can do more, according to His Word in Ephesians 3:20. A short summary of what we are thankful for is that He gave us a new family(a church body), two more boys, coworkers, new friends and family close by. And as we think about the new year He has given us, we can only surrender all our plans and desires to Him, looking forward to how He plans to use us for His glory and purpose. As we think of His purpose, we are certain that we were all made to know Christ and to make Him known. Everything else is a means to His end. That may sound obvious coming from missionaries, but even people called to full time ministry have to refocus on the main purpose and its significance. Otherwise we can get stuck on the process and how to measure success, losing sight of the end goal of glorifying Him and knowing Him more. We have purposed not to be driven by measures of success, but instead by the magnitude of the purpose. As we surrender our lives to God's leadership in this new year, we ask Him, and challenge you to do the same, to be used making Him known to the world. *This is also how we have been challenging the church in Mucambo: "Do you know someone who, to your knowledge, does not have a personal relationship with Jesus? Would you begin praying for them by name? Would you share your faith story with them?"*

We pray that making Christ known be your main resolution this year.



We already pray for you as a family but would like to pray more specifically and "sharpen one another" (Proverbs 27:17). We would love to get connected with you through WhatsApp and/or MarcoPolo.

Avant

 **CAFÉ & GRAÇA**
SACIANDO O CORPO E A ALMA

Joshua & Camila Goossen



January 1, 2023

Dear Garden Community Church,

Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. Isaiah 43:19

Yesterday I finished reading the book of Isaiah. There are many interesting and encouraging verses among all the prophecies of destruction and exile. Denise and I have had several discussions as whether these verses apply to us or not, and as most of these are addressed to Israel, they certainly make us think of the Lord's goodness even after affliction and we find application and encouragement for us in our lives.

As we face a new year, what new things does the Lord have for us even if we might feel like we have been coming through a wilderness or a desert, like almost a year of war and waiting? In Isaiah and throughout Psalms, we find many assurances that the Lord is with us and numerous calls to praise Him. Living in Airbnb apartments exposes one to different things, one of which we experienced was bed bugs (thankfully a mild case.) During Christmas we were reminded through this little incident how much the Lord Jesus laid aside to take on human form, humbling Himself to come down to earth knowing full well the indignities and sufferings He might experience to become our Savior! It makes our little misadventures seem pretty insignificant, doesn't it? As we face this year, we know that He goes before us and may we be people of praise for all He has done and for who He is to us, our Blessed Savior and Lord!

Today, New Year's Day, we move into a new apartment here in Tbilisi, Georgia for the next two months. The war still continues in Ukraine and although we would like to get back there for a few months this year to help them print the first Bible on the new press, we don't know exactly when or how that will work out. Meanwhile, we have Brazilian friends coming to work here in the beginning of February so we hope to help them get settled in a little. We will also continue helping the team here with various things that they are involved in.

Thank you for your involvement in the ministry the Lord has called us to and we do wish you a Happy and Blessed New Year!

In His Grip,

Joe & Denise

January 5, 2023

Dear Friends at Garden Community Church,

Hard to believe 2022 is history! Where did the time go? And yet, what a year!

We are so thankful to the Lord for His incredible kindness towards us over this last year, and know that in 2023, He will remain the same.

This fall saw Rachel and I in the Faroe Islands for a 2-week visit. It was 11 years since Rachel visited last time, so it was high time for her to visit friends and family again. We had the benefit of being there at the same time Philip, Natalie, Louis and Timon were there. 2 weeks was too short, but we had many opportunities to speak in churches while visiting.

After the trip to the Faroe Islands, I made trips to Missouri and England to participate in events at the mission's training centers. It was a privilege to spend time with students who are at the stage where they need to decide on which country and ministry they see the Lord directing them towards. In late October and November I was gone for 3 weeks for leadership meetings, a leadership conference and other meetings in Thailand. It was very encouraging to again spend time with coworkers we had not had the opportunity to interact with in person due to the travel restrictions.



2023 started out with another son happily married! Caleb and Joy just wanted a small family wedding, and that worked out well, since they only had about seven weeks to plan everything, after getting engaged in November. Two of Caleb's brothers, with their families, already had plans to be here in early January, so Caleb and Joy planned their wedding date to be able to include them. Sadly, Philip and family had to postpone their travels at the last minute, so they missed out on this special occasion. We would appreciate prayers for Caleb and Joy as they start out married life together.

Daniel, Krissy, and Zephaniah arrived in Nebraska on Jan 2nd, and they will head back to Indonesia on Jan. 10th. Then a week later, we are hoping Philip, Natalie, Louis and Timon will arrive in Omaha and spend till March 25 in the U.S., when they head back to Papua New Guinea. Right now there is a snag for Natalie because of the "vaccine mandate" and we would appreciate your prayers concerning that.

Late March I also hope to go to PNG for meetings and trust I also can visit the believers in Mangseng where we used to work. It has been quite a few years since my last visit, but earlier this month I spoke with several of the men from the Mangseng church as they were in town for a conference for church leaders/teachers. In the church they have been experiencing ups and downs, but overall, they were encouraged and were very thankful for the conference they attended.

Thank you so much for your prayers and support during 2022. The calendar is from the aviation arm of Ethnos360. I serve as a board member for Ethnos360 Aviation. It is a great privilege to see how aviation assists ministry in remote places.

May God richly bless you in 2023. Happy New Year!

Peter & Rachel

Peter and Rachel Hansen