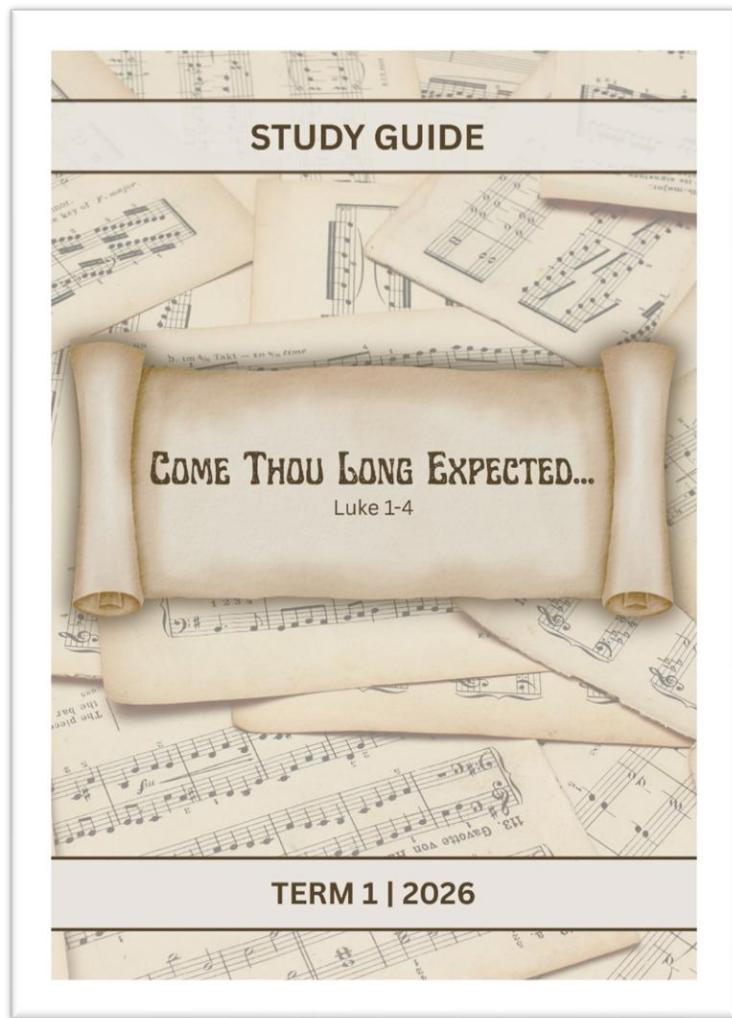


STUDY GUIDE

COME THOU LONG EXPECTED...

Luke 1-4

TERM 1 | 2026



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Welcome

Welcome to 2026! How has it begun for you? Perhaps your head is buzzing with the many things that need to be done as the year gets underway. It's the beginning of the school year, there's getting your head back into your job after the holidays, and maybe a new exercise regime. Then there's all the stuff going on in the world to get your head around. With all that's going on, we can easily live with a low-level hum in our minds. It can be hard to focus and we're easily distracted.

While that kind of distraction can feel inevitable, it can also have negative impacts on our faith. Jesus illustrates this well in Luke 10, the story of Mary and Martha. Jesus was visiting the home of Mary and Martha, and while Martha whipped herself into a frenzy "by all the preparations that had to be made" (Luke 10:40), she also grew in resentment toward Mary who was sitting at Jesus' feet listening to him. "Tell her to help me!" Martha told Jesus.

Jesus' response catches us off-guard: "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better..." (Luke 10:41-42). Martha was busy doing something good. Hosting Jesus. But her busyness was a distraction to something better. Being present with Jesus.

As we look to the year ahead, there are many things to distract us. Even good things. But we mustn't lose sight of the best thing. Knowing God through Christ. That's why it's good for us to be reminded of our vision as a church. A few years ago, we committed to...

**Become a church that grows resilient followers of Jesus,
walking the path toward counter-cultural Christian maturity,
through sustainable Christ-centred ministries.**

We believe this captures something of our calling as a church and also as Christians.

Below is an update of where we're up to regarding our vision, and also a summary of the goals we'd like to focus on for the year ahead. Our prayer is that you'd partner with us at Redlands as we work toward these goals and become mature followers of Jesus.

In Christ

Sam, Jen, & Josh

Vision

Our focus so far...

As we've sought to become a church that grows resilient followers of Jesus, walking the path toward counter-cultural Christian maturity, through sustainable Christ-centred ministries, we've begun by focusing on two areas.



PRAYER

We want to become a church that prays more often and more deeply. We worked toward that last year by beginning two regular prayer meetings:

- A fortnightly one that meets at 8:00am on Friday mornings.
- A weekly one that meets at 4:30pm on Sunday's just before the Night Church service.

We'll be continuing these in the year ahead and encourage you to come along if you haven't yet.

“Our prayer meetings are an important provision of God our Father for his children as they gather at church...I am ever so grateful and wonderfully encouraged [by them]”
Raj - Night Church



OUTREACH

Last year we ran Taste & See again, an evangelistic course run over meals with plenty of time for discussion.

Sally (Night Church) shared the impact Taste & See had on her as she's since begun reading the Bible with Robyn (Night Church) & is a regular at the Night Church service. On top of that, Peggy's (Early Church) friend, Maki, who joined us for the second year running, has recently returned to Japan & joined a church there. All praise to God for how he's used Taste & See.

“I'd been privately reading the Bible... praying privately... and had been thinking I should start seeking out a church... I thought Taste & See is great & because maybe I need to start at the beginning...It was really good because I felt like I can ask anything.”
Sally - Night Church

Our focus for 2026...

What does 2026 hold for us? God willing, we'd like to:

- Continue to run our prayer meetings.
- Run Taste & See again.

What about you? We need people to keep committing to these prayer meetings.

Perhaps that could be you? We also need a team that can run Taste & See. We want people who can help organise and run this event from the decorations to advertising to everything else in between! Come and lend your energy to this outreach that has already helped people come to know and love Jesus.

What else could we aim to do in 2026?



OUTREACH

As already mentioned, one of our goals is to develop a team that can run Taste & See and other evangelistic events. Lots of people have helped Sam run Taste & See in the past two years, but we'd like to take a more coordinated approach. If you've got a heart for outreach, why not reach out to Sam to see if you could be involved?

In the lead up to Easter this year, you're also encouraged to invite your family and friends to a public reading of the whole of Mark's gospel. Keep your ear out for details.



HOME GROUPS

We want to get more people in Home Groups this year. It's a joy to sit with others in God's word, hearing of our joys and struggles, and carrying each other's burdens in prayer. God grows us in community. And while our Sunday gatherings are a great place encourage others and confess sin, Home Groups provide more time and scope of this.

Currently our Home Group participation levels are low - only about 30%. We'd like this to increase. To do this we aim to get more people into our existing groups and begin a new group in the Wynnum area. We'll also need to train up more leaders.

“I have been encouraged by the lives & faith of other people in my home group. Whether it's from Tim's willingness to find time to prepare each week and to ask thoughtful questions which seem to deviate from the guide (in a good way!). I'm also encouraged when I hear others share their faith and understanding of the test in question. Being sincere with others, praying together and doing it every week has been encouraging for me over the last year.”

Norm - Early Church



LEADERSHIP TRAINING/MENTORING

This year Tessa Howlett (Night Church) will be doing a kind of gap year at Redlands. Tessa finished High School last year and this year will spend time with both Jen and Sam doing some hands-on ministry and reading through some biblical/theological books. We pray this investment will deepen Tessa's faith and train her for service where God leads her in the years to come.

Here's an interview Josh had with Tessa.

Josh: What made you consider doing a gap year with us as Redlands?

Tessa: *Hearing about what other people got out of their gap year and what I hope to learn and experience in the gap year.*

Josh. What makes you excited about the year ahead?

Tessa: *Learning more about service in the church and the importance of kid's ministry.*

Josh: How can we be praying for you?

Tessa: *A fire in my heart to dig into God's word and to prioritise it as I am still adjusting to full time work.*



CARE TEAM

The final goal we'll be working on this year is to revive our Care Team. In the past our Care Team has served people going through challenging seasons - those struggling financially or dealing with poor health. We aim to revive that ministry to better care for people and to make use of the gifts God has given to us as a church.

Things to be praying for

As you can see, by God's grace, there's a lot we'd like to be working on this year. And God gives us the privilege, by his Son and through the power of the Holy Spirit, to bring it all before him in prayer. We'd love for you to use this list in your own quiet time and with your family to pray for the church.

- Give thanks to God for his incredible grace and mercy to us in Jesus. Not only does he provide forgiveness of sins, adoption as his children, and the hope of an eternity with him, he's also gathered us into a church community at Redlands.
- Pray that we'd continue to grow in depth of relationship with God through Jesus. May we be committed to prayer, recognising the privilege it is and also our great dependence on him.
- Pray for our service together as a church. Ask that God would grow us in conviction of our gifts and his calling on each of us to use those gifts to serve his kingdom. Ask that God would give us wisdom to know best how we can serve.
- Ask that God would bless our outreach as a church. May we make the most of our relationships and opportunities with those who are not yet Christians. Ask that God would give us courage to speak the gospel and gentleness with those who disagree with us.
- Ask that God would help us as we seek to create a Taste & See team and a Care Team this year. May God gather the right people into these teams and may they be united in their ministries. Where differences of opinion do arise, pray that we'd display patience and grace with each other.
- Pray for Tessa Howlett as she begins a gap year with us at Redlands. Give thanks for the work God has done in her life in saving her. Ask that through her mentoring with Jen and Sam, that Tess would grow in her character and giftings.
- Pray for our Home Groups and Home Group Leaders. Ask that these become small communities where your word is studied, where relationships are deepened, and where we are conformed into the likeness of Jesus together. Pray that more people would join a Home Group this year.
- Pray for those struggling at church. There are many among us with physical and mental health challenges, others with difficult marriages and relationships, and still others navigating big transitions in life. May they know God's presence with them, seek his wisdom and guidance, and may we as a church know how to love and encourage each other well.

Term 3 Calendar

Here's a list of events to book into your diary for this term.

FEBRUARY

Sunday 1st Vision Sunday/Kids Church Kick Off
Sunday 22nd Newcomers Lunch

MARCH

Saturday 7th Women's Prayer Breakfast
Saturday 14th The Men's Conference
Saturday 21st Annual Congregational Meeting
Sunday 28th Reading of Mark's Gospel

APRIL

Thursday 2nd Maundy Thursday Reflective Service
Friday 3rd Good Friday Service
Sunday 5th Easter Sunday



STUDIES

Study 1

Read Luke 1:39-56

1. What jumps out to you from the passage? What's interesting? What's unusual?
2. What questions does this passage raise? What's hard to understand? As a group, circle 1-2 questions to answer together from the passage.
3. Which verse do you think says the most important thing about who God is or what God has done? What does this verse have to do with the rest of the passage?
4. Consider whether Mary, Elizabeth, or John had any choice in their place in God's plans. How is their place in God's plans a blessing? How could it have made life difficult? How should this challenge the way we think of our role in God's plans?
5. We don't tend to focus much on the person of Mary in the Bible story (compared to people like Abraham, David, etc). Why might this be the case? What do we learn about her character and example?

Application

Head: What truths from this passage do I need to understand or remember this week?

Heart: Where does this passage challenge, encourage, or confront me personally?

Hands: Who is one person God might be prompting me to pray for or share this story with? How might I take the first step towards that?

Study 2

Read Luke 1:57-80

1. What jumps out to you from the passage? What's interesting? What's unusual?
2. What questions does this passage raise? What's hard to understand? As a group, circle 1-2 questions to answer together from the passage.
3. Which verse do you think says the most important thing about who God is or what God has done? What does this verse have to do with the rest of the passage?
4. In verses 68-75 of Zechariah's song, which child is he singing about? Why is this surprising? How does this align with the special work God gave John the Baptist (see John 3:27-30)?
5. In what ways might we be tempted to make ourselves the focus of Christian ministry, instead of Jesus? How does the example of Zechariah and John the Baptist help us?

Application

Head: What truths from this passage do I need to understand or remember this week?

Heart: Where does this passage challenge, encourage, or confront me personally?

Hands: Who is one person God might be prompting me to pray for or share this story with? How might I take the first step towards that?

Study 3

Read Luke 2:1-21

1. What jumps out to you from the passage? What's interesting? What's unusual?
2. What questions does this passage raise? What's hard to understand? As a group, circle 1-2 questions to answer together from the passage.
3. Which verse do you think says the most important thing about who God is or what God has done? What does this verse have to do with the rest of the passage?
4. Take a moment to consider any Old Testament prophesies that are fulfilled here in Luke 2:1-21 (see 2 Samuel 7:11b-16, Isaiah 9:6-7, and Micah 5:2 if you get stuck). How do these fulfillments help us understand who Jesus is? How do they give us confidence in the certainty of what Luke has written (see Luke 1:1-4)?
5. After the angel and the heavenly hosts announced to the shepherds the birth of Jesus, we told they "hurried off" (Luke 2:16) and they "spread the word" (Luke 2:17). What's your attitude to spreading the good news of Jesus? Are you eager or unenthused? Discuss your answer.

Application

Head: What truths from this passage do I need to understand or remember this week?

Heart: Where does this passage challenge, encourage, or confront me personally?

Hands: Who is one person God might be prompting me to pray for or share this story with? How might I take the first step towards that?

Study 4

Read Luke 2:22-40

1. What jumps out to you from the passage? What's interesting? What's unusual?
2. What questions does this passage raise? What's hard to understand? As a group, circle 1-2 questions to answer together from the passage.
3. Which verse do you think says the most important thing about who God is or what God has done? What does this verse have to do with the rest of the passage?
4. Both Simeon and Anna are examples of waiting patiently for the fulfillment of God's promises (Luke 2:25,38). What characteristics stand out as they wait? How should these things characterise our waiting for Jesus' second coming (see 1 Peter 2:9 and 1 John 3:2-3)?
5. When Simeon sees Jesus he sings "For my eyes have seen your salvation" (Luke 2:30). Why is it significant that he sings "my eyes have seen your salvation" instead of "my eyes have seen the one who gives salvation"? How does the wording deepen our understanding of Jesus and what it means to have faith in him?

Application

Head: What truths from this passage do I need to understand or remember this week?

Heart: Where does this passage challenge, encourage, or confront me personally?

Hands: Who is one person God might be prompting me to pray for or share this story with? How might I take the first step towards that?

Study 5

Read Luke 2:41-52

1. What jumps out to you from the passage? What's interesting? What's unusual?
2. What questions does this passage raise? What's hard to understand? As a group, circle 1-2 questions to answer together from the passage.
3. Which verse do you think says the most important thing about who God is or what God has done? What does this verse have to do with the rest of the passage?
4. These verses are unique in the Bible in that they tell a story of Jesus as a boy instead of a baby or man. How should we interpret Jesus' treatment of his parents in light of Exodus 20:12 and his words "I had to be in my Father's house"?
5. Both in 2:51 and in 2:19, we're told that Mary "treasured all these things in her heart." Discuss what that means in light of Gabriel's message to Mary in 1:30-33. What can we learn from Mary here as she considered and pondered who Jesus is?

Application

Head: What truths from this passage do I need to understand or remember this week?

Heart: Where does this passage challenge, encourage, or confront me personally?

Hands: Who is one person God might be prompting me to pray for or share this story with? How might I take the first step towards that?

Study 6

Read Luke 3:1-20

1. What jumps out to you from the passage? What's interesting? What's unusual?
2. What questions does this passage raise? What's hard to understand? As a group, circle 1-2 questions to answer together from the passage.
3. Which verse do you think says the most important thing about who God is or what God has done? What does this verse have to do with the rest of the passage?
4. Look at the detail of 3:1-6. How do these historical and Old Testament references fit with Luke's goal for Theophilus given in 1:1-4? How would such details give Theophilus "the certainty of the things you have been taught"?
5. How would you describe John's preaching in these verses? How is he preparing "the way of the Lord?" Given the direct nature of his preaching, how is John proclaiming "the good news to them" (3:18)?

Application

Head: What truths from this passage do I need to understand or remember this week?

Heart: Where does this passage challenge, encourage, or confront me personally?

Hands: Who is one person God might be prompting me to pray for or share this story with? How might I take the first step towards that?

Study 7

Read Luke 3:21-38

1. What jumps out to you from the passage? What's interesting? What's unusual?
2. What questions does this passage raise? What's hard to understand? As a group, circle 1-2 questions to answer together from the passage.
3. Which verse do you think says the most important thing about who God is or what God has done? What does this verse have to do with the rest of the passage?
4. Read Psalm 2 and Isaiah 42:1-4. How do these passages help us understand what Jesus' baptism (3:21-22) is about? What does it teach us about Jesus and what he came to do?
5. Luke's genealogy of Jesus includes David (3:31), Abraham (3:34), and Adam (3:38). What does Jesus being born in their line teach us about him and what he came to do?

Application

Head: What truths from this passage do I need to understand or remember this week?

Heart: Where does this passage challenge, encourage, or confront me personally?

Hands: Who is one person God might be prompting me to pray for or share this story with? How might I take the first step towards that?

Study 8

Read Luke 4:1-13

1. What jumps out to you from the passage? What's interesting? What's unusual?
2. What questions does this passage raise? What's hard to understand? As a group, circle 1-2 questions to answer together from the passage.
3. Which verse do you think says the most important thing about who God is or what God has done? What does this verse have to do with the rest of the passage?
4. How is Jesus' experience in 4:1-2 like Israel's experience in Numbers 14:34-35? What are the differences in their experience?
5. Consider how the devil tempts Jesus in these verses. Why might he have chosen these temptations? What might that teach us about how the devil tempts us? What is Jesus' weapon in fighting temptation?

Application

Head: What truths from this passage do I need to understand or remember this week?

Heart: Where does this passage challenge, encourage, or confront me personally?

Hands: Who is one person God might be prompting me to pray for or share this story with? How might I take the first step towards that?

Study 9

Read Luke 4:14-44

1. What jumps out to you from the passage? What's interesting? What's unusual?
2. What questions does this passage raise? What's hard to understand? As a group, circle 1-2 questions to answer together from the passage.
3. Which verse do you think says the most important thing about who God is or what God has done? What does this verse have to do with the rest of the passage?
4. Here is Jesus' first sermon recorded in Luke. Initially, the audience "spoke well of him" (4:22). But as Jesus continues, their attitude changes - "All the people in the synagogue were furious when they heard this" (4:28). What does Jesus say that changes them? What is he uncovering in the human heart that is so difficult for people to digest?
5. How are Jesus' miracles in 4:35, and 4:39-41 evidence of the truth of Jesus' sermon in 4:18-21? What kind of authority is Jesus displaying? How is that authority both a comfort to us but also a challenge?

Application

Head: What truths from this passage do I need to understand or remember this week?

Heart: Where does this passage challenge, encourage, or confront me personally?

Hands: Who is one person God might be prompting me to pray for or share this story with? How might I take the first step towards that?

