



**Parramatta
Mission**



**uniting
church**
in Australia,
Synod of NSW & ACT

OUR NEWS

3rd January

2021



A Church-Based Community Transforming Lives

***Our Values* Grace, Inclusion, Dignity, Faith & Hope**

**Congregational life @ Westmead & Parramatta, Hospitality,
Community and Mental Health Services across Greater Sydney,
Central Coast, Hunter and Mid-North Coast**

**Parramatta Mission acknowledges that all of our work and
our 36 sites are on the land of traditional owners.**

**We pay respect to the traditional custodians of the land on
which we gather, and acknowledge Elders past and present,
and emerging leaders.**

From the Interim Lead Minister

Christmas 2B • 2021

John 1. 1-18

Love in all directions

John's Gospel does not begin with a pregnant Mary and Joseph without a place to stay. There are no angels, silent nights, shepherds or wise travellers from the east! The story begins with images familiar to the people in the many cultures who lived in John's communities at the end of the First century.

One image for non-Jewish people was about God and the intimate, inner relationships within God. The creative Word, the Logos, is part of this inner relationship, turned toward God.

Yet, John also wants his readers to see that this intimacy and dynamism was not just *for-itself* but was also turned outward, toward and into the world. God was not just a self-sufficient divine being. Francis J Moloney in his commentary on John writes:

[This] Word broke into the human story ... and made life an ongoing possibility. The appearance of the Word of life brought light. The light that is life broke into the human story ...

The entry of Jesus into human history signals the loving desire of God's being to release greater possibility at every level of life. God's Being is in God's Becoming, as Eberhard Jungel wrote.

Bill Loader informs us that another image or theme underlies John's notion of Word/Logos, that of Wisdom, the feminine aspect of God.

...[this] is the myth of Sophia or Wisdom. Already hailed in Proverbs 8 as God's close companion, almost consort, but primarily as God's child and delight, Wisdom became the focus of reflection in many streams of Jewish thought. Some developed the theme of Wisdom as God's agent in creation. From an image praising God's wisdom in creation it became a story: Wisdom was God's companion in creation.

John's introduction hints that God's Wisdom meets us in our world, not in the heavens, even if we reject, deny or avoid it. This Wisdom is pictured in Proverbs as walking the streets, waiting at the strategic points in city life, luring us into a transformative life.

Loader continues: "God's Wisdom was closely associated with God's Word and, in some circles, very explicitly with the Law, the Torah."

John's Gospel seeks love in all directions, seeking to invite us into unfathomable transformative life at all levels:

John's gospel ... draws on almost the full range of the myth: creation and the created order, God's wisdom seeking a place to dwell and God's wisdom as God's word. Later in the gospel we will find other creative use of images commonly applied to God's Law, like light and life, bread and water

Romans 16: 25-27, in the language of Paul, ventures close to this by suggesting that God is the mystery of the world who is disclosed in the coming and story of Jesus.

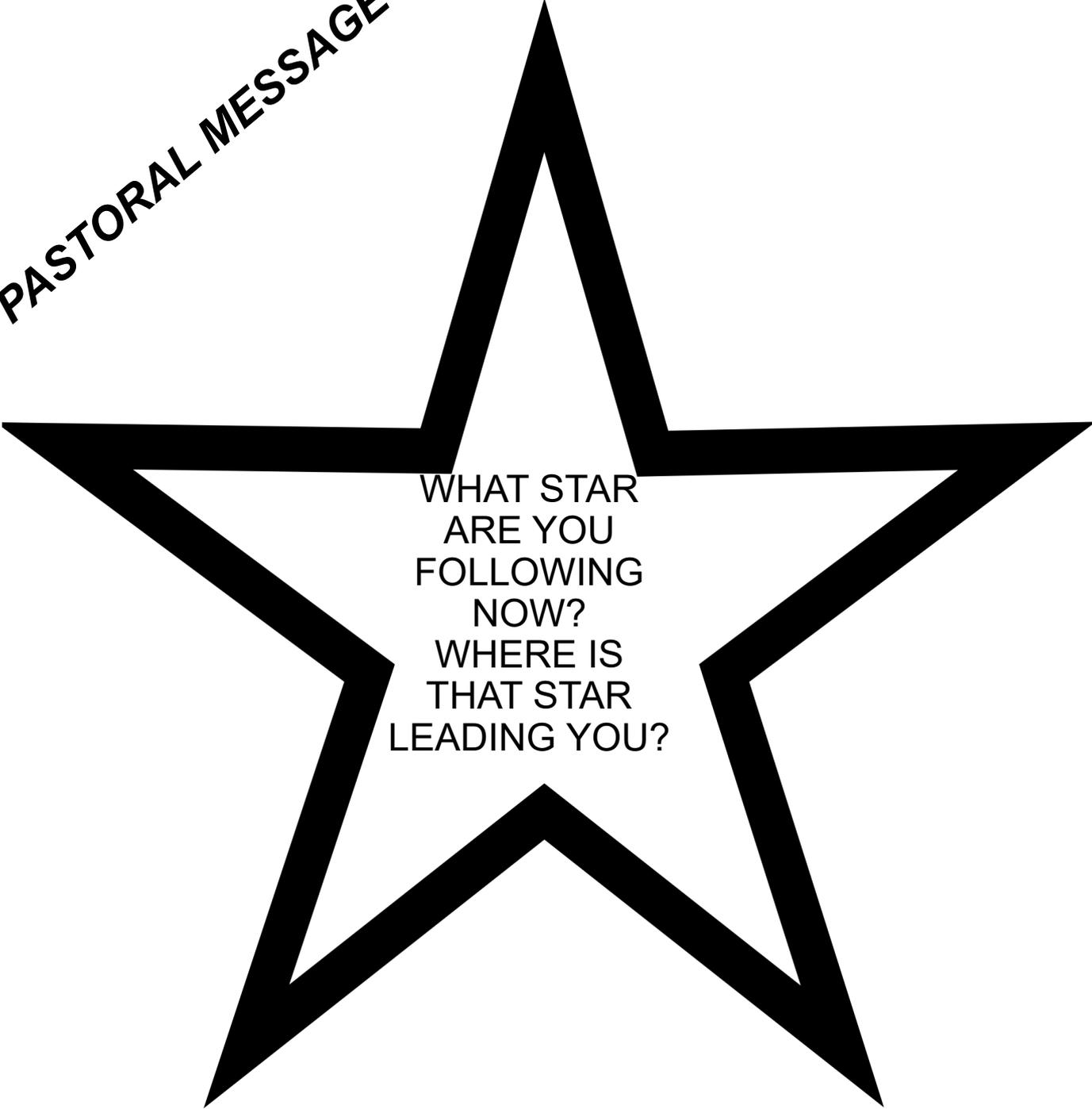
Elizabeth A Johnson, attempts to write about “God as the mystery of the world” in her chapter *Gracious Mystery, Ever Greater, Ever Nearer*, (46) describing the work of the great Catholic theologian, Karl Rahner:

It may be winter when luxurious foliage no longer clothes the trees of piety. But the bare branches enable us to see deeper into the woods. There we glimpse the gracious mystery of God, whom we cannot manipulate either conceptually or practically, but who abides as the Whither of our questing being. The question facing us, Rahner urges, is which do we love better: the little island of our own certitude or the ocean of incomprehensible mystery? The challenge facing us is whether we will suffocate in the tiny hut of our own shrewdness, or advance through the door of our knowing and acting into the uncharted, unending adventure of exploration into God, whose silent immensity we can trust absolutely and love through care for this world.

As we enter 2021, may we glimpse the gracious mystery of God, experiencing God’s compassionate being as ever greater, ever nearer, and express love in all directions, in our lives and in and out of Parramatta Mission.

Vladimir Korotkov

PASTORAL MESSAGE



WHAT STAR
ARE YOU
FOLLOWING
NOW?
WHERE IS
THAT STAR
LEADING YOU?

Foster your faith this week

Gn 1:1-5

Ps 29

Acts 19:1-7

Mk 1:4-11

Prayer Points

The people of Parramatta Mission invite you to pray for

Our Community

- We give thanks that some small gatherings are starting to take place. We give thanks for welcoming cafes and the disciplines we have learnt to help keep us all safe
- We give thanks for coffee, tea, muffins and spiritually encouraging conversations.

PM Westmead

- We pray for chaplain Sarah and the ministry at the Children's hospital, for the teams and guests at 175 and Wesley Apartments, for those who are contemplating life changes, for those who grieve, especially Karen, Kath and Amelia. We pray for the researchers and health care responders at Westmead WSU campus.

PM Korean Faith Community

- We pray for the Korean community in Western Sydney and for Rev Hyung Goo and Hannah.

PM Leigh Memorial

- We pray especially for those whose health is not the best. We ask for calmness for people having treatments for illnesses and for the courage of their carers
- We particularly remember - Betty E (who is doing well and singing along to Songs of Praise on Sunday mornings) Himmi and family, Liz and family and Jolame.
- For those who are experiencing anxiety around home, work or life changes, we pray for supportive community. We continue to pray for those unable to gather, community members who are unwell, people who are unable to work and those who are lonely or depressed.

PM Fijian

- We pray for those who are going through transitions from school to beyond.
- We pray for the Synod Pulse Team and Ofa's role as a newly commissioned Pastor in the Team, resourcing youth ministry across NSW/ACT.
- We pray for the guests at the Bula Feeding Ministry and Meals Plus and our wonderful volunteers. We pray for those who are unable to meet because of rain or storms and for those who have been sleeping rough.

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Wider Work

- for the Chaplaincy at Westmead and the transition of the Team as people come and go - we pray especially for Sarah as she continues while others change
- UC leaders doing the DIGITAL MINISTRY training with Rev Amelia, learning how to use technology to hold communities together during COVID times.

For Our Combined Parramatta Mission Team

May God guide all our workers and volunteers to live out our values of grace, inclusion, dignity, faith and hope.

Rev Vladimir, Rev Mary, Rev Clive, Chaplain Sarah, Sunil, Robert, Coral, Rev Amelia, Rev Hyung Goo - and their families, as they support us to serve in mission.

We ask for God's help to bless the world. AMEN

Pastoral Contacts

Prayer Points may be sent to

wecare@parramattamission.org.au

For a conversation or to contact a Minister, please call

Parramatta Mission Reception (9am-3pm)

119 Macquarie Street Parramatta NSW 2150

9891 2277

Leigh Memorial Church

119 Macquarie Street Parramatta NSW 2150

9891 2277

Westmead Church

175 Hawkesbury Road Westmead NSW 2145

9891 9354

IN TIME OF PASTORAL NEED

Our three ministers, Amelia Koh-Butler, Clive Pearson and Vladimir Korotkov are available to each congregation and members and your friends; their contact details are listed below.

Rev Vladimir Korotkov (Interim Lead Minister) 0431 759 573

Rev Dr Amelia Koh-Butler 0427 955 157

Rev Dr Clive Pearson (Supply) 0409 523 024

YOU CAN ALSO CONTACT THESE PEOPLE FOR PASTORAL ISSUES

Rev Hyun Goo Jun (Korean Faith Community) 0433 320 588

Pr Sarah Bishop (Children's Hospital) 0429 912 943

Anare Vocea (Fijian Vakatawa) 0432 772 852

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