

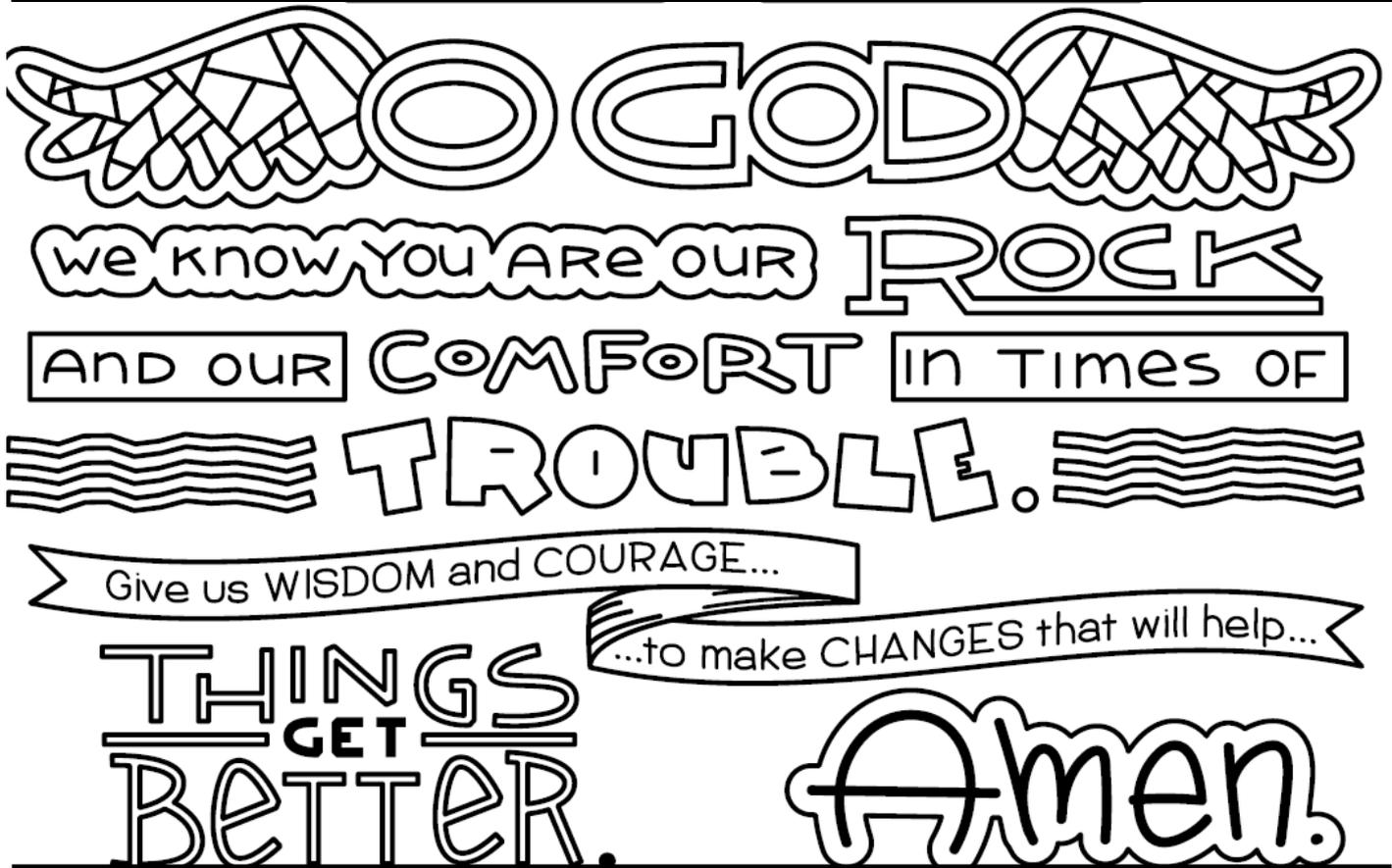


Parramatta  
Mission



uniting  
church  
in Australia,  
Synod of NSW & ACT

OUR NEWS  
6th December  
2020



**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.**

Hi to the Westmead, Fijian and Leigh Memorial congregations! I'm Paul Linossier and I chair the Parramatta Mission Implementation Board, which incorporates the work of the Board of the Community Care Network. Earlier this year and following a review of its work and future options, Parramatta Mission Church Council resolved to implement the "A Mission of the Congregations" model from July 2021. This includes the transfer of the government funded programs to another Uniting Church entity or structure which is better able to support and develop these services.

In July 2020 Church Council appointed a new Implementation Board to drive the change program and to oversee the Community Care Network Services for 20/21. At our October Board meeting I was asked to prepare a regular update on our work for our Congregations.

The Board met on three occasions in October and November and considered extensive papers prepared by management, including a Clinical & Community Services Quality Framework, ten new Board Governance Policy Statements (both positioning us very well for upcoming accreditation reviews), quality and risk reports and initial ideas on how the core services of the 'new Parramatta Mission' (such as Wesley Apartments, Hotel 175 and Meals Plus) will take shape. We also looked carefully at the financial performance and were encouraged that at the present time we are forecasting a better than budget performance for the 20/21 financial year. We also reviewed a Transition Program Statement which sets out the roles of the key positions (Interim Lead Minister, CEO and Chair) and forums that are leading the current change program and we affirmed the increased collaboration witnessed between these people and groups.

As part of the transfer of the government funded programs to another Uniting Church entity, the Implementation Board has overseen collaborative and positive discussions with both Uniting NSW.ACT and Wesley Mission. During November the Board has reflected carefully on progress to date, the work remaining and the many uncertainties associated with 2020, including COVID 19, remote working, multiple building and financial challenges and the pressures associated with year end and the planned return to workplaces in 2021.

Accordingly, the Board has paused the process underway with Wesley Mission and entered into a period of reflection and discernment to digest and consider the learnings to date. During this time we will engage further with Uniting to ensure that we have the full range of options before the Implementation Board in February, ahead of providing advice to Church Council in March.

Our approach continues to ensure that the best interests of current and future clients and our committed and valued staff serving those clients are promoted and protected; and that the reputation of the Uniting Church with community and program funders as a trusted and reliable provider of quality client centric services is maintained.

You should be very proud of the work developed over the last decade or more! The day to day work of Parramatta Mission remains vital to the health of our communities and has continued unabated, notwithstanding the challenges posed by the pandemic, its consequences and the strategic review.

On behalf of the Implementation Board, I wish you and those close to you every blessing through the Christmas and the holiday period, a time to pause, reflect and renew for us all.

**Paul Linossier**  
**Implementation Board Chair**

## **Interim Lead Minister, Summary Report • Oct-Nov 2020**

Since starting in October, my role has been to work across the whole of PM - the community services sector and the congregations – as it continues through this transition period.

As Interim Lead Minister I have accompanied the community services sector leadership team in a supportive capacity; their work has been exemplary: in seeking to find the best new home for the services, facing “road bumps” and making strategic adjustments, and are now in a healthy, grounded discernment phase until Feb 2021.

My role is to be *both* an organisational consultant and the interim lead minister. As consultant, to observe the culture of each aspect of PM: by listening to lay leaders, the Combined Congregations Leaders Meeting (CCLM). Listening events were held with leaders from 1. each congregation, 2. combined leaders, large group, 3. combined leaders, small group. Listening regularly in various committee groups and one-on-one conversations.

In listening I have heard: that lay leaders want more involvement in what is happening, want greater communication and collaborative opportunities; but some lay people shared tiredness, and the immensity of the task; and much more work is needed to build up individual congregations and greater interdependence between them. The results of listening have been shared, and some issues are being addressed.

PM has experienced changes: the loss of three ministers, membership in Leigh is dropping, most community services are moving, the structures and culture are changing. Loss produces grief. Grief, individual and communal, generally has 5 phases: denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. We all do grief differently, as individual and cultures. The pastoral team and others are addressing grief as it emerges; let's all support each other.

Good things are happening. The community services sector is progressing. The budget is looking healthy. The pastoral team of Amelia Koh-Butler and Clive Pearson, with the support of Sunil Baek and Sarah Bishop and other lay leaders, are working really well to create and run worship services, bible studies, Advent-Christmas liturgy and studies, and other forms of resourcing congregations, and deal with pastoral issues as they emerge.

As we enter Advent and Christmas, let us pause to rest, recuperate and celebrate our life together, the joy, hope and faith that God is always being born within our lives and our community, and the communities around us.

Let us pause until February 2021 when we re-enter our time of transition and transformation and continue to take new steps to shape the new Parramatta Mission.

**Vladimir Korotkov**



## From the Interim Lead Minister Advent 2B, 2020 • Mark 1: 1-8

Mark begins the beginning of the coming of Jesus within the world differently to the other Gospels. There is no birth story, no Mary or Elizabeth, no donkeys or ancestral origins.

Mark is far more radical. He begins when time and space were non-existent, from the *mysterium tremendum* (awe inspiring mystery); before the birth of the beauty and chaos of human language and social and cultural organisation and the play of power and the growth of the imbalances of power.

In Mark 1:1, the words, “The beginning of the gospel...” connect with the first words of Genesis, in the beginning God created life: now, John the Baptist just appears from the margins of society to open the pathway “for the renewal of the great Story of God’s creative activity in the world” (Ched Myers). In Bill Loader’s wonderful image, “John is a very good roadbuilder for advent: “Advent preparation is preparation for life”. Which means a different life we are living now!

This construction is “the road less travelled by” (Robert Frost); Mark will use the term throughout his Gospel as the journey which is “on the way”, “on the road”, following the way of Jesus. John prepares individuals, communities and societies for this advent of an alternative way of being: it can only start with “repentance for the forgiveness of sins”; but not as we Evangelicals narrow it to personal wrongs. In Luke’s version when the crowds ask John, “What then should we do?”, Luke gives examples: whoever has two cloaks or more food, share with others; tax collectors, be just and fair; and soldiers not to have power over others: repentance is about “turning away” from the way we create life around us which disempowers us and others; it is a social, cultural, economic way of living, sharing-equal-power together. This is a spirituality of being, holistic and organic.

The people of John’s time and culture did not find this spirituality of being in Jerusalem. In that urban space social and cultural power was unequally organised and shared. To prepare for the coming of new life and to be transformed and forgiven, people travelled to the margins, to the wilderness. Which implies, the human constructions that we create always seem to be taken over by people who rule over the lives of others, and do not share resources equally. Even the followers of Jesus, in their journey with Jesus in Mark’s Gospel, are seduced by power; they desire privilege, become exclusive, are the ones who know what others need, and are inclusive on their terms; and humbly, we should acknowledge, this can be us as the church today!

This “voice” Isaiah hears is beyond social and cultural constructions. The “voice” can only cleanse and renew from the uninhabited margins, the out-side-of-culture space, which is untainted and unspoiled by unequal human power and control. The French philosopher Derrida writes that voices from empty spaces precede human language, they unsettle what is known and fixed, upsetting conventional thinking and expression.

This Advent, are you able to find time and space to journey to the edges and margins of your “Jerusalem”, away from the culture you live in; of your family, your congregation, the culture of your birth? And at these margins, to hear the “voice” of the good news again, the Word of God, which is actually the story of Jesus and his followers in Mark? Can we set aside the next few weeks to look at ourselves through these stories, and examine how we express power, and where we feel powerless, at individual, social and cultural levels?

Then, like John the Baptist we will emerge from the wilderness with a word from God. It may be an unexpected and an unwelcome word, because it unsettles and calls for an preparation of a new life, which may challenge the way we live now! And God, who is creator is also a future God who seeks to lure humanity into more joyful and loving and peaceful and just ways of living with each other!

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**Vladimir Korotkov**

Below is invitation for your reference, this a brief on-line symposium that showcases some of our advanced work in the mental health field relating to the treatment of psychoses arising from developmental trauma.

It is work of international significance and we hope to secure funding for clinical research resulting in publications in prestigious medical journals.

The invitation list is very wide and has been pitched at very senior levels in the world of mental health, politics, business and philanthropy. Talk to your manager if you would like to join into this or perhaps see a recording of the session at a later date.

If you would like an insight into the most advanced state of this field of mental health care, led by PM and our partners, this would be of interest to you.

Its great to have clinicians of the calibre of A/Prof Roger Gurr on our team, good luck with the session Roger!

Mark Newton, A/CEO

## DEVELOPMENTAL TRAUMA, PSYCHOSIS AND NEUROFEEDBACK

Neuroscience guided assessment and treatment

The general public, leaders of public services and mental health clinicians need to understand the really important advances in treating our most difficult and expensive public health issue - *the effects of developmental trauma*, illustrated by its contribution to psychosis.

This online seminar will make clear the neuroscience behind safely healing developmental trauma.

JOIN US BY REGISTERING BELOW FOR THIS FREE ONLINE SEMINAR, INCLUDING ACCESS TO LATER RECORDINGS

9:00-9:20	Welcome and introduction - A/Prof Roger Gurr (Clinical Director, Early Psychosis, Western Sydney)
9:20-10:00	Developmental Trauma, Brain and Neuroscience Driven Therapeutic Strategies for Trauma Recovery - Ms Sejla Murdoch (Senior Psychologist, STARTTS)
10:00-10:05	Q&A, Discussion and Comfort Break - Ms Mirjana Askovic (Director, Australian NeuroFeedback Institute)
10:05-10:45	Clinical & Research Applications in Western Sydney – Dr Vivek Sharma (Neurofeedback Practitioner), Ms Mirjana Askovic (Director, Australian NeuroFeedback Institute), Mr Aydin Anic (Research Assistant)
10:45-11:00	Summary & Closure – A/Prof Roger Gurr (Clinical Director, Early Psychosis, Western Sydney)

**9 DECEMBER  
9 AM - 11 AM**  
**headspace  
EARLY PSYCHOSIS  
WESTERN SYDNEY**

This webinar will inform you about developments in neuroscience, that enable us to assess and treat brain dysregulation due to developmental trauma, which has been shown to be a major contributor to the development and severity of psychosis.

A pilot research case series is now commencing in the Early Psychosis program in Western Sydney, and we wish to share with you the scientific basis for this and our research plans.

**UNABLE TO ATTEND? REGISTER NOW FOR RECORDINGS**

THIS SERVICE HAS BEEN MADE POSSIBLE BY FUNDING FROM NEPEAN BLUE MOUNTAINS PRIMARY HEALTH NETWORK (NBMPHN). WENTWORTH HEALTHCARE IS THE PROVIDER OF NBMPHN.

 **TO REGISTER FOR THIS FREE EVENT PLEASE GO TO:**  
[HTTPS://BIT.LY/DEVTRAUMA](https://bit.ly/devtrauma)

 **Parramatta Mission**

**CONTACT:**  
headspace Mt Druitt  
55 NORTH PARADE  
MT DRUITT NSW 2770  
(02) 8881 2500

**SUPPORTED BY**  
 **ANFI** 

## **SUPPORT NEEDED: PM'S 'FESTIVAL OF CHRISTMAS'**

This year, PM won't be holding its usual, big lunch at Macquarie Street on Christmas Day, but will instead provide a series of meals and special activities for clients via a 'Festival of Christmas' (operating during Advent). Donation gift cards are also available for purchase through the PM website. The cards are a great idea and include those sponsoring shelter, essential groceries, hygiene packs and a month of meals for people in need in our community – and range in cost from \$17.00 to \$103.00. As there will be no Leigh Memorial 'Giving Tree' this year, members are encouraged to purchase the cards as a giving option. Those interested in Christmas volunteering at PM will need to call 9891-2277 ASAP. NB: The Christmas artwork by the children and teachers of Sunday School @ Leigh.



## **PARK CANCELLATION**

Although last Sunday's Combined Worship at Parramatta Park was cancelled due to the extreme weather, we will meet up again soon. Thank you to Rev. Amelia and everyone who worked hard in the preparation of the service and to those who were looking forward to attending. We trust that members are taking measures to look after themselves – plus family, friends, neighbours and anyone in need of extra care – as temperatures rise and bush fires become more likely in coming weeks.

## **DISCUSSION PAPER: RETURNING TO REGULAR WORSHIP**

The Mission Council and Pastoral Team have released an important discussion paper regarding requirements for a COVID-safe return to regular worship. Rev. Amelia has added some important points relating specifically to what will be required in our own churches. This paper will shortly be made available to members via email (if anyone needs a hard copy, please contact Coral, 9891-2277). Please contact Amelia for clarification of any issues as needed. Updates will be forthcoming.

## **ADVENT STUDIES**

Clive's online Advent studies program has commenced, but members are welcome to join at any time. Session details can be found in the newsletter.

## **PASTORAL CARE**

We hold all those who serve us on the Pastoral Team, CCLM, Mission Council and PM staff in our prayers, along with members who are grieving, unwell or in need of additional support during this challenging time in the lead-up to Christmas. Please let us know if you need an extra hand.

## **BURAGA ANNIVERSARY**

'Buraga' ('Arise') – our painting by Darug Custodian Aboriginal Corporation artist, Leanne Watson – was installed in the Leigh Memorial vestibule one year ago this week. The Burrumattagal people of the Darug nation lived on and/or visited our land on Macquarie Street and its surrounds for many thousands of years prior to British occupation. We continue to learn from their traditional custodianship and legacy of care for the land, and to pay

## Don't miss PNP's final F1RST SUNDAYS!

Click on the link to view live at 4.00 pm this Sunday 6/12 and take part in the live chat, or anytime afterwards to see the replay.

You don't have to be on Facebook to view – the link will open to anyone.

<https://www.facebook.com/events/2751026305163665/>

There'll be lots of stories from across the Presbytery, including reflection on how we have grown in our digital missional capacity through the pandemic, with the support of F1RST SUNDAYS, our PNP Community Facebook Group and digital mentoring.

SAVE THE DATE

BLUE CHRISTMAS 18TH DECEMBER

Further details to follow

## ***PASTORAL MESSAGE***

LIGHT ONE CANDLE FOR HOPE  
LIGHT ONE CANDLE FOR LOVE

## WESTMEAD Congregation

ZOOM:<https://uca-nswact.zoom.us/j/3958336709>

**TODAY, 6TH DECEMBER, 2020** there will be a CONGREGATION MEETING following the Zoom service. Westmead leaders would be encouraged if you are able to join us for this short meeting. It is most helpful if you are able to share your ideas and ask questions if you need to. We look forward to bringing you up to date with changes and slowly looking to getting back to worship in the coming months.

**ANGEL TREE** shopping has now been done, and parcels wrapped and ready to be delivered. Thank you to Lorna and Sue for organising this.

**ACCESS TO 175 HOTEL** is now back to normal from Hawkesbury Road following the completion of the light rail in this section of the road. A word of warning, enter the drive slowly as there is a new bump to the driveway.

How good it has been to be able to have a change of message on our noticeboard this week! Keep your eye on it, as there will be some changes keeping us all involved with this special time of year, the season of Advent. Thank you to Ian and Sue Dillon for keeping us informed.

There are 7 copies of With Love to the World still available, cost \$5. They are at reception at 175. If you need to have one delivered please contact Lorna and she will deliver to you.

Elders of Westmead Congregation are: KAREN BANFIELD (CHAIRPERSON), LORNA PORTER, BIJU CHAKO, MERE VULAONO (NO. 28), AND JAN ROBSON.

Pastoral Care contact person, and also contact person for Prayer Chain for Westmead Congregation is JAN ROBSON phone number 0418 438 901.

KAREN BANFIELD is contact person for Worship - 0488 101 469

LORNA PORTER is contact person for Administration and Finance - 0408 365 478

Please do not hesitate to call your Elder if you have any concerns during this Covid-19 time.

We are continuing to support families at **Wesley Apartments**, supplying a voucher for their use and also welcome packs to new families on arrival.. Thank you for your continued support.

**Offerings** may be dropped off at reception at the 175 Motel between 9am and 3p.m. each week day, and they will be collected by Lorna for processing. **OR** offerings may be made electronically, details as follows:

**Account name: PM Direct Westmead BSB634634 Account number: 100046885**

**STAMPS.** Please keep collecting any stamps you may receive on your mail, especially with Christmas drawing near. The stamps need to be cut with a good border around them so as not to damage them. They will be collected and sent to the department of the church where they are sold and the proceeds are made good use of, for various needs

**DEEPENING FAITH AND RELATIONSHIPS with others.**

**WORSHIP: Sundays via zoom at 9.45am (link on top of Westmead page)**

**BIBLE STUDY via zoom each MONDAY at 2.00p.m. Zoom link will be sent.**

**FELLOWSHIP will occur occasionally. Your usual donations would be appreciated, and can be collected in the way collections are made at present.**

**OPEN DOOR, TIME OUT CAFE, PLAYGROUP ANDS TAI CHI, ARE ON HOLD AT PRESENT.**



## Send a Card that shows you care

Your gift this Christmas could make a real difference to the lives of those in need.

Many of us may not be able to celebrate with our families this year, or get to the shops. So these are a great way to give a meaningful gift. Each card represents a need for someone in our community - accommodation, food, essentials, or a gift

So why not give a gift with purpose!

Please visit our website to view our cards and purchase a gift that creates a lasting impression. You can opt to download a printable version or be sent an actual card to give as a gift. With your support we can ensure that everyone has the opportunity to enjoy Christmas this year – even though it may not be the one we had imagined.

Giving a meaningful gift sends a hopeful message that together we are a community transforming lives

Visit our online store today to purchase your cards in time for Christmas

[www.parramattamission.org.au/virtualgifts](http://www.parramattamission.org.au/virtualgifts)



대강절 제 2주일(2nd Advent of Sunday) 2020년12월06일 오후 1시30분

개회 찬송 (Entrance Hymn) 예배를 위한 묵상

예배의 부름 (Calling) 인도자

송영 (Gloria) **새 1 장** **통 1 장** 만복의 근원 하나님 다함께

사도신경 신앙고백 (The Apostle's Creed) ..... 다함께

찬양/찬송 (Chorus & Hymns) 다함께

**새 40장** **통 43 장** 찬송으로 보답할 수 없는

**새 270 장** **통 214 장** 변함없는 주님의 사랑과

기도 (Prayer) 주기도문송 **새 635장** 하늘에 계신 우리 아버지 다함께

성경 봉독 (Scripture Reading) **말라기 3:1-5; 로마서5:3-5**

말씀(Preaching)- 전현구 목사 내가 복사를 보내겠다

봉헌 송(Offeratory Hymn)

**새 105 장** **통 105장** 오랫동안 기다리던

나눔과 알림 (Announcement & Notices)

1. 전 세계가 전염병으로 힘들 때 주님과 동행하시는 성도가 됩시다.
2. '매일 성경' 말씀으로 주님과 교제의 시간(QT)을 갖고 적용하는 훈련을 합니다.
3. 말씀, 기도, 전도 생활로 하나님이 기뻐하시는 삶을 사는 성도님들이 되시기 바랍니다.

폐회찬송(Final Hymn)

**새 502장** **통 259장** 너 시온아 이소식 전파하라 (1절)

축도 전현구 담임목사

QT나눔 & 성경공부  
오후4:00

수요기도회 : 오후 7시  
역대하 29:20-36

새벽기도회 : 오전 5시  
역대하 28:16-31:21

## THOUGHTS IN OUR CHANGING TIMES Mary Pearson

December! This month holds so much, things that are about endings and things that are about new beginnings. December is full of different emotions and memories. For many, Christmas is the big thing, especially those who have young children in their family. But December is also the last month of the year, the ending of the school and university year. It can hold the promise of holidays and a change of routine for many. And all these things can be tinged with sadness and emptiness for those whose lives are no longer like that. Everyone is probably looking forward to turning the page on 2020 in the hope that it has been an aberration, that 2021 will be better. Certainly there won't be a presidential election in USA. The virus may still be there but there are real possibilities for a vaccine.

How do we make sense of December, especially this year? We have got through to this point. We have managed the changes and adaptations we have needed to make. If someone were to ask you what we most wanted, not especially for Christmas as a present, but more in response to what matters most for us and for our world this December, I wonder what you would say? Some might want things just to go back to the way things were before all this, because that felt reassuringly comfortable, in our imagination at least. We have all been changed, some in quite big ways, so going back might not be what we had hoped for. Some will hope for a world where people respect and care for one another and don't abuse or take advantage of the vulnerable. Some will hope for real action to care for the environment. Some will hope for leaders who reach out to build community, at home or internationally so that there can be talk of meaningful peace. Some will hope that angry talk may give way to an openness to listen and to learn. You might take time to think about what your wish list is at this time.

In the Church, our wish list is held within the four words that we reflect on week by week through Advent. They are marks of what our Christian living is about at this time as we prepare ourselves for the birth of Christ who will, once again embody the meaning of these four core values: hope, peace, love and joy. These are not just values that are somewhere out there beyond us. They are both a gift and a call for us in how we focus and shape our living. They are not soft values but are foundational things for living, as individuals, and as congregations and all places of faith. They are the things that help us sift through the demands of this last year and lead us on into whatever God has in store for us next, because they point us to Jesus. They are also things that remind us that Advent is not just a time of preparation for ourselves but also a time encompasses the yearning of people everywhere and the creation itself. Here is part of an Advent prayer from The Iona Community, slightly adapted:

*Remind us that Advent is not just for individuals,  
But for the world and everything in it;  
For cultures and nations and peoples;  
For justice and equality;  
And for enough care of the planet to make the hills sing with joy.*

*Remind us most of all, holy and gracious God,  
That Advent is about you and your reign over all things.  
Remind us of how you changed the history of the world;  
And hold time and space in your hands.*

## FIJIAN Congregation

1. Na lotu ena sigatabu mai oqo 13 ni Tiseba ena veiliutaki tiko kina na soqosoqo ni tabagone.
2. Nai ka tolu (3) ni wasewase ni vuli ena vola I Joni (Wase 11-17) ena qaravi tiko ena siga Lotulevu 10 ni Tiseba mai na 7pm – 8:15pm ena zoom.
3. **Veinanumi ena Masu:**

Kerei meda veinanumi tiko ga ena veimasulaki vei ira na nodatou qase Aqriu Rogoimuri, Vilikesa kei Mereoni Kamotu, S Qata, ratou na veiliutaki tiko ena nodatou vavakoso vaka viti kei na veivuvale kece sara ena loma ni nodatou vavakoso. Me nanumi tale tiko ena noda masu na veiqaravi ni Bula Feed.

# RETREAT YOURSELF #RY21

## 2021

**15/01/21**

Communal Friday Night  
Cook-Off™ (evening)

**16/01/21**

Worship, study, and a deeper  
encounter with God

## ENCOUNTER

How do we encounter God personally, locally, within our church and wider community, and as we grow as disciples?

Hybrid online/ local gathering

**REGISTRATION:**

**[nswact.uca.org.au/Ry21](https://nswact.uca.org.au/Ry21)**





PARRAMATTA MISSIONS YOUTH AND  
YOUNG ADULTS CHRISTMAS  
CELEBRATION

PLEASE COME AND JOIN US FOR AN EVENING OF  
FUN, FOOD AND FELLOWSHIP

FRIDAY 11<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2020

5:30 - 8:30PM

WESTMEAD CHURCH

ANY QUESTIONS CONTACT

OFA 0431007635

SAMANTHA 0423668043

# Advent!

**Zoom details:** <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3602745736>

Phone: 0409 523 024 (Clive).

Every Christmas Day it seems as if we finish the service with a reading of the prologue to John's Gospel (1:1-14) -and then sing, 'Joy to the world'!. Sound familiar? But. ....

What does this reading from John mean?

How does it fit in with the whole of John's Gospel?

And. ....

Why is this Gospel so different from the other 3 gospels?

This Advent we make ready for Christmas and the seasons beyond through a study of John's Gospel.

For purposes of preparation, why not read John right through from beginning to end. Come prepared!

Our studies will happen on-line at the following times:

**Saturday morning: 10am to 11:30 am**  
**19th December.**

All welcome

**Thursday evening: 7:00pm to 8:00 pm.**  
**10 and 17 December**

**Fijian.**

The 4 themes are:

John 1-5	The Divine Emigrant
John 6-11	The Sign
John 11-17	The Farewell
John 18-21	The Crucified and Risen Christ

## Mark 1:1-8

1 The beginning of the good news<sup>[a]</sup> of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.<sup>[b]</sup>

2 As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,<sup>[c]</sup>

“See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,<sup>[d]</sup>  
who will prepare your way;

3 the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord,  
make his paths straight.’”

4 John the baptizer appeared<sup>[e]</sup> in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. 5 And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. 6 Now John was clothed with camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. 7 He proclaimed, “The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. 8 I have baptized you with<sup>[f]</sup> water; but he will baptize you with<sup>[g]</sup> the Holy Spirit.”

Every time we read Scripture we embark on a cross-cultural journey. We cross time (anything from 2000 to 3000 years); we cross place and culture. We come to a land and society which did not know our languages and cultures. In most instances it did not even know our islands and continent existed. It is no wonder, then, that I sometimes say: pack your bags, grab your passport, leave behind all your mod cons, come with me and let’s imagine that we are inside a biblical story having to work out what on earth is going on. We become characters.

Imagine things in reverse. There you are—on zoom in an act of worship, in a meeting—or, on your smartphone talking to someone who will text you back in a minute with the latest Covid 19 update. Imagine you have driven to church and are now listening to an introit in Fijian.

And then into our rather odd world comes John the Baptist. Imagine the shock—his shock at us. Of course we have read about him in the past: we know all about his dress sense and his diet. We know all about his ministry of baptizing down by the Jordan—but now, here he is, besides the banks of the Parramatta River. We know all about his call to repentance and the forgiveness of sins: we hear variations of this same story prefaced by the words taken from Isaiah every year. John does not speak our language—and yet there he is, all the same, and there is a certain familiarity about him.

The reverse is not true: our daily concerns have to do with the virus, the easing (or not) of restrictions, shopping, what will we do for Christmas, whether to holiday or not; into this mix are the celebrations of finishing school waiting for results and for many managing their grief or unwellness.

And then there's the cricket! What would John the Baptist make of that pastime?

John's message of repentance and the forgiveness of sins is becoming progressively more alien in our society: it is a counter-cultural message. It is a language that can often take a back seat even in the church, though the gospel itself is repeatedly described as the forgiveness of sins. Perhaps we have become more aware of our rights, what is due to us, what we are entitled to; forgiveness presupposes something is not quite right, something is wrong.

In our society today our airwaves are taken up by politicians, celebrities, and (thankfully) scientists and experts. There is hardly a public baptizer to be seen anywhere, let alone down by the river.

I have been left wondering: as this year comes to a close what might the one whom John the Baptist was preparing the way for have to say to us. What might the advent of Christ Jesus into our current context mean for us? What is the good news we proclaim in a world tired of lockdowns, iso, and other words of the year? How do we make room for this familiar stranger who breaks into our cultures, our languages, our ways of being?

Clive Pearson

***Foster your faith this week***

*Is 61:1-4, 8-11*

*Ps 126 or Luke 1:46b-55*

*1 Thes 5:16-24*

*Jn 1:6-8, 19-28*

# Prayer Points

## ***The people of Parramatta Mission invite you to pray for***

### **Our Community**

- We pray for all HSC students as they continue exams this week, especially our HSC families and teachers
- 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.

### **Wider Work**

We pray for St Marys Uniting Church - Congregation

- 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](mailto: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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