



Parramatta  
Mission



uniting  
church  
in Australia,  
Synod of NSW & ACT

OUR NEWS

14th March 2021



## *Our Vision*

A Community  
Transforming  
Lives

## *Our Values*

Grace,  
Inclusion,  
Dignity, Faith  
and 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.

## **Reflection** **Lent 4B, 2021**

**Numbers 21:4-9**

**John 3: 14-21**

*Looking Up*

**Debie Thomas**

*Journey with Jesus*

What happened at the cross? How exactly did Jesus's crucifixion two thousand years ago secure salvation for humanity? Which "theology of atonement" is the "correct" one?

I spent many years agonizing over these questions. When the version of the atonement I was taught as a child fell apart for me (the version that says Jesus died as my "substitute," absorbing God's fury over my wickedness into his own body), I scrambled to enthrone a new one. As if this greatest of mysteries — this deep, holy well of love, grace, mercy, judgment, sinfulness, pain, death, and reconciliation — wouldn't hold and wouldn't work, unless I pinned it down and figured it out.

Thankfully, I no longer believe this. I know now that it's neither lazy nor wishy-washy to approach the cross with awe rather than analytical acumen. Not because my curiosity is wrong, but because all of our explanations of God's saving work are necessarily partial and incomplete. What the cross offers (if we can bear to receive it) is overabundance — a vast richness of meanings, approaches, angles, and truths. The gift God gives us at Calvary is the gift of contemplation — not the gift of perfect comprehension.

During this fourth week of Lent, our lectionary offers us one approach, one way of asking the question, "What happened at the cross?" Again, it's not an exclusive or exhaustive way. But it's a compelling way, as challenging as it is beautiful, and I'm grateful to have it as one option among many.

We find it via a pairing of stories — one from the Old Testament Book of Numbers, and one from the Gospel of John. In the Old Testament story, the Israelites, having lost patience yet again with the hardships of life in the desert, speak out against God and Moses. "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness?" they ask. "For there is no food and no water, and we detest this miserable food."

Their complaint is the final one in a long line of "murmurs" — murmurs that until this point in the post-Egypt narrative, God answers with compassionate, long-suffering care. When the Israelites complain that their drinking water is bitter, God instructs Moses to sweeten it. When they grumble about their hunger, God provides them with manna. When they cry out in thirst, God instructs Moses to strike a rock and produce abundant water. When they despair for lack of meat, God causes flocks of quail to fly into their camp.

This time, though, God's response to their complaining is not so benign. According to the text, God answers their "we-want-to-go-back-to-slavery" whine-fest by sending

poisonous serpents into their midst. The serpents bite them, and several of them die of the fiery, painful bites.

Yes, it's an inconvenient story that raises thorny questions about sin and judgment, and it's okay to wrestle with it. But for the purposes of approaching the cross and the atonement, I want to focus on what happens next. The people repent of their sin, and beg Moses to pray on their behalf. When Moses does so, God says, "Make a poisonous serpent, and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live."

As instructed, Moses makes a serpent of bronze, and sets it high on a pole. When the people who've been bitten look up at the serpent, their snakebites are healed, and they live.

Okay. Now fast forward several centuries, to the conversation John's Gospel records between Jesus and a Pharisee named Nicodemus. When Nicodemus approaches Jesus under cover of night to inquire about God, they enter into a long and bewildering dialogue about birth, light, Spirit, and belief. At one point in the conversation, though, Jesus refers back to the ancient story from Numbers which Nicodemus must know inside out, and says this: "Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life."

"Just as Moses lifted up the serpent, so must the Son of Man be lifted up." What an odd comparison, the loving, saving Messiah to the bronze replica of a poisonous snake. What does it mean?

I wonder if it means something about perspective. About seeing. About casting our eyes in a new and less comfortable direction. In the Old Testament story, God requires the Israelites to look up. To gaze without flinching at the monstrous thing their sin has conjured. It's the thing they have wrought, the thing they fear most, the thing that will surely kill them if God in God's mercy doesn't intervene and transform the instrument of pain and death into an instrument of healing and life. In order to be saved, the people have to confront the serpent — they have to look hard at what harms, poisons, breaks, and kills them.

Sometimes, it's hard to understand that the kind of love that will save us might "wound" us first. In this case, the Israelites have to see in the serpent the outworkings of their own failure to trust God — the God who delivered them from slavery, sustained them in the desert, and promised to guide them into the nourishing sweetness of a new homeland. They have to understand that their ongoing failure to trust in this God has stakes. It matters. What they need is not "belief" in the sense of intellectual assent to a set of abstract propositions about God — what they need is full-bodied, heart-and-soul confidence in God's goodness, presence, provision, and love.

Hence the bronze snake, which forces them to stare the poison down until they see in it the grief, the anger, the judgment, and the unending mercy of a God whose love is vast but tough, deep but demanding. It's a love that will heal but also expose truth — truth that hurts. It's a love that will deliver but at the same time invite a change in perspective, a shift in apprehension, a bitter but ultimately salvific "looking up."

What might this story of a serpent on a pole illuminate about the cross of Jesus? For those of us who struggle to reconcile the role of God's will in the death of God's Son, perhaps this story offers a way in. It was the will of God that Jesus declare and embody the coming of God's kingdom. A divine kingdom of peace, of restorative (not retributive) justice, of radical and universal love, grace, freedom, and hope. A kingdom without violence, without oppression, without exploitation, without greed. In short, a kingdom dramatically unlike the all-too-broken, all-too-human one Jesus was born into.

So why did Jesus die? He died because he unflinchingly fulfilled the will of God. He died because he exposed the ungracious sham at the heart of all human kingdoms, holding up a mirror that shocked his contemporaries and still shocks us at the deepest levels of our imaginations. In other words, he unveiled the poison, he showed us the snake, he revealed what our human kingdoms, left to themselves, will always become unless God in God's mercy delivers us. In the cross, we are forced to see what our refusal to love, our indifference to suffering, our craving for violence, our resistance to change, our hatred of difference, our addiction to judgment, and our fear of the Other must wreak. When the Son of Man is lifted up, we see with chilling and desperate clarity our need for a God who will take our most horrific instruments of death, and transform them, at great cost, for the purposes of resurrection.

The bronze snake of Moses's day was not magical. It was not meant to be idolized. Neither is the cross we contemplate during this Lenten season. But insofar as the cross invites us to look up, to reorient ourselves, and to depend wholly on God to bring life out of death, light out of shadow, and healing out of pain, then the cross functions as a sacrament. A means of grace. A path to the divine. It reminds us that "belief" is far more than a cognitive exercise. To believe in the power of the cross is to rely on Jesus for our very lives. It is to trust that the lifting up of the Son of Man is our only hope, our only "anti-venom," our only means of rescue.

The cross of Christ is a great mystery — and that is as it should be. Among many other things, it is a stunning paradox of sorrow and hope, judgment and mercy, despair and healing, brokenness and hope. It's okay not to understand — the invitation is to see. So look up. Don't be afraid. Don't refuse the pain. Don't turn away. Look up and be saved.

내 번째 사순절 주일 (4th Lent of Sunday) 2021년03월14일 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 10 장 통 34 장 전능와 오셔서

새 270 장 통 214 장 변함없는 주님의 사랑과

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

성경 봉독 (Scripture Reading) 하박국 3:1-6; 요한복음 14:6

말씀(Preaching)- 전현구 목사 주님의 길

봉헌 송(Offertory Hymn) 새 421 장 통 210 장 내가 예수 믿고서

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) 새502장 통 259장 너 시온아 이소식 전파하라 (1절)

축도 전현구 담임목사

QT나눔 & 성경공부  
오후4:00

수요기도회 : 오후 7시  
누가복음19:1-10

새벽기도회 : 오전 5시  
누가복음18:15-20:18

# Leigh Congregation

## **COME & JOIN US FOR WORSHIP @ LEIGH MEMORIAL!**

Please consult the weekly newsletters and emails for updates regarding in person + Zoom worship arrangements and special programming/services. For further information or assistance, please call 9891-2277. We look forward to seeing you SOON!

## **LENTEN STUDIES**

This year's studies, 'Interpreting the Way of the Cross' will be held in person with Rev. Clive on Saturday mornings in the Choir Vestry @ Leigh Memorial (20 & 27 March) and via Zoom on Wednesday evenings (17 & 24 March). Please see the newsletter for further information.

## **LENT EVENT 2021: LEARN, LIVE SIMPLY & GIVE...**

Members are invited to check the Uniting World website for information about this year's program, including suggestions re participation and donations. **NB: Lent Event** is about living more simply, learning from our global neighbours and choosing to make a difference in our own lives and the lives of others. Take up a Lent Event challenge in 2021 and be part of a movement to end poverty and injustice in our world! <https://donate.unitingworld.org.au/event/lent-event/home>



## **SYNOD CLIMATE CONFERENCE – CENTRE FOR MINISTRY**

On Sat. 20 March, this year's one day Synod Climate Conference will be held at the CFM (9am – 5pm). Registrations are via Eventbrite. To learn more, please see: <https://www.insights.uca.org.au/why-i-will-be-attending-the-future-direction-conference/>

## **PASTORAL CARE**

We continue to hold everyone in our warmest thoughts & prayers, including PM staff and congregation members who are unwell, grieving, separated from us, or otherwise in need of extra care at this time. Please note that Clive and Vladimir may be contacted for support as needed.

## **PARRAMATTA MISSION CHRISTMAS VIDEO**

Parramatta Mission's 'Festival of Christmas' in 2020 was a great source of encouragement to many at the end of a very tough year.  
See - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mdvxo-QNDmQ>

### ***Foster your faith this week***

*Jer 31:31-34*

*Ps 51:1-12 or Ps 119:9-16*

*Heb 5:5-10*

*Jn 12:20-33*

## **PASTORAL MESSAGE**

Oh give these clay feet wings to fly  
To touch the face of the stars  
Breathe life into this feeble heart  
Please remember me ...

***Loreena McKennitt***

## Synod Climate Action Conference - Future Directions



### **When:**

Saturday March 20, 9.00am – 5.00pm

### **Where:**

Centre for Ministry and on-line via Zoom

In 2019 the Synod meeting initiated the Synod Climate Action Strategy. The strategy grew from our church's long standing commitment to care for creation.

As a church we resolved to:

- Advocate to all levels of government for reduced greenhouse gas emissions
- Stand with young people in their concerns about climate change  
Work to reduce our emissions in all parts of the church

Since then five task groups have been working to bring the strategy to life in tangible ways.

In the wider world much is happening to re-focus attention on the need for decisive action on climate change: a change of government in the US; our major trading partners recently committing to net zero emissions by 2050; the next UN Climate Conference in Glasgow this November.

With the Synod meetings approaching it is timely to consider what our priorities should be in the next phase of the Climate Strategy. What actions will make a difference?

What can we as a church distinctively contribute to this movement for a safer climate future and flourishing world for all?

## What can you do?

If those questions stir you in some way, if you want to be part of answering them in thinking and action, then we would love to have you at the conference. There will be a range of speakers and workshops stimulating our reflection on issues like:

- Climate leadership and what types of action can achieve positive change
- Understanding what other climate actors are doing and where we connect
  - Faith, politics and living and voting our values
  - First Nation's perspectives on care for creation

What it will take to have an impact for our Pacific Island neighbours

Due to the changing nature of COVID restrictions physical places may be limited. We hope that many Uniting Church people, especially in regional and rural areas, will be able to participate via Zoom. Either way, please register early by going to:

<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/.../climate-action...>

We hope to see you there.

The Uniting Advocacy team on behalf of the Synod Climate Strategy.

**If you have any questions or would like more information please contact Jon O'Brien on 9407 3225 or [joobrien@uniting.org.au](mailto:joobrien@uniting.org.au)**

## Fijian Congregation

1. **Lotu ena sigatabu 14/03** : Na lotu ena sigatabu oqo ena veiqaravi tiko kina na tabagone.
2. **Lotu ena sigatabu 21/03** : Na lotu ena sigatabu mai oqo na veiqaravi tiko kina na matamasuamasu naba 3.
3. **Lesoni ena macawa mai oqo** – Tiko mai na Lekutu.21:4-9; Same. 107:1-3;17-22; Efeso. 2:1-10; Joni. 3:14-21.
4. Matamasumasu naba 1 sa na tekivu tiko na nomudou sota ena vakaraubuka oqo 12/03.
5. Ena qaravi tiko na KCO ena 20 – 21 ni vula oqo, Maji.



**Interpreting the Way of the Cross  
During a Season of Covid 19**

**Lenten Study 2021**

**two times, two modes.**

**Saturday mornings, 10:00 am to 11:30**  
20th and 27th March

On site in the choir vestry, Leigh Memorial

**Wednesday evenings, 7:00-8:00pm**  
17th and 24th March

On zoom, <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3602745736>

Every year in England the national church puts out a Lenten study. This year Sam Wells, the Dean of St. Martins-in-the Fields in the centre of London, has published *The Cross at the Heart of God*. That title is no surprise. The lectionary gospel for the year is the gospel of Mark. It turns upon a 'journey to the cross': along the way the disciples learn more about who this Jesus is and how he differs from their expectations.

This Lenten season we are able to reflect upon this journey in the light of the continuing presence and legacy of Covid 19. Throughout the past year we have been told what we can do and what we can't do. It has been a time of necessary compliance. The church has often had to respond to pandemics in the past. It has always sought to understand how the life of faith, the gospel, fits into this kind of situation. In our time the Pope and Rowan Williams, former Archbishop of Canterbury, have provided much helpful food for thought.

This study will combine the themes of Mark with how members of the church responded to their Covid 19 equivalent.

**WESTMEAD CONGREGATION**  
*Sharing the hospitality of Jesus Christ*  
**WORSHIP TODAY**

Join us for worship at 9.45am today. Rev Clive will bring the message.

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

**AND, ON SITE WORSHIP NEXT SUNDAY,  
21 MARCH AT 9.45AM**

**PASTORAL**

It is with great sadness that we received the news that Robyne Stalder's husband, Phil, died at the end of last week. Phil was 91 and had faced many health challenges over the last years of his life. He had been able to bounce back from many of these, and continued to enjoy trips and family visits until this past year. Our love and prayers have been with Robyne as she has cared for Phil, and continue to be with her as she grieves his loss.

**BIBLE STUDY**

Mondays 2.00pm - 3.30pm

Zoom: <https://uca-nswact.zoom.us/j/95043695512>

Members from all three congregations are warmly invited to participate.

Chaplain Sarah is with us Monday 15 March

Rev. Mary is with us Monday 22 March

Rev. Clive is with us Monday 29 March

ALL WELCOME!

**CHRISTIAN MEDITATION**

**Did you know?!**

Chaplain Sarah leads Christian Meditation sessions on zoom each Tuesday and Thursday morning. We start at the early bird time of 6.25am. Sessions are about 40 minutes in length, beginning with a brief reading followed by 25 minutes of meditation and ending with a prayer.

If you would like to come along, or would like more information about Christian Meditation, please contact [Sarah \(sarah@bluetardis.com.au, 0412 606 049\)](mailto:sarah@bluetardis.com.au) or [Karen \(karenb78@outlook.com, 0488 101 469\)](mailto:karenb78@outlook.com). There is also an excellent introductory video on the tradition and practice of Christian Meditation available on you tube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RvFneqPA8U8>

**ACCESS TO WESTMEAD SITE**

Access to 175 Hotel and the Chapel at Westmead is currently through the Queens Road gate. This will be the entry point and the exit point until the completion of this stage of the light rail construction. A traffic controller is stationed at the gate 24/7 to assist with entry and exit.

**LEADERS**

[Karen Banfield](#), worship & bible study, 0488 101 469

[Lorna Porter](#), finances & administration, 0408 365 478

[Jan Robson](#), pastoral matters & prayer chain, 0418 438 901

[Biju Chacko](#), 0420 275 396

[Mere Vulaono](#), No 28, 0448 137 067

[Alysa Biju](#), technology support, 0467 674 251

**YOUR WEEKLY OFFERING** can be made electronically: Account Name: PM DIRECT WESTMEAD, BSB 634634, Account number: 100046885



**COMBINED CONGREGATIONS LEADERS' MEETING WESTMEAD  
6 MARCH 2021**



# 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 all affected by the covid virus and those families who are losing loved ones in the battle.
- We also pray for the front line workers e.g. doctors, nurses, ambulance workers, police and the families of front line workers too.
- We pray especially for David and Eileen and their loved ones in South Africa.
- We pray for those going through illness and complete changes in their lives.
- We pray for all of our dear congregation members who are now in aged care and feeling quite isolated because of the Covid related restrictions.

## **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.

# Prayer Points

## **Wider Work**

We pray for Campbelltown Uniting Church.

## **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, Robert, Coral, 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

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## IN TIME OF PASTORAL NEED

Our two ministers, 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 Clive Pearson (Supply) 0409 523 024

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## 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