

OUR NEWS

8th January 2023

Our Vision

A Community Transforming Lives



Our Values

Grace,
Inclusion,
Dignity,
Faith and Hope

Congregational life at Westmead & Parramatta,
Hospitality Services at 175 Hotel and Wesley Apartments
Meals Plus Services providing for those in need across the
Parramatta LGA

Parramatta Mission acknowledges that all of our work takes
place on the land of traditional owners.

We pay respect to the original custodians of the land on
which we gather, and acknowledge their elders past and
present, and their emerging leaders.

WEEKLY REFLECTION
Christmas 2A • 2023
John 1. 1-5, 9-14

Rev Vladimir Korotkov

Love in all directions

1. The mis-direction of love, the fixed focus of human energy

There was a child who was seized by the idea "of running off, all the way to the end of the world". To search for the outer limits of our human world, to find meaning.

Without family and homeless, with no belongings, the child begins its single-minded pursuit.

On and on it ran, past many sights, but took no notice of them. On and on it ran, past many people, but took no notice of anyone. On and on it ran, until nightfall, but the child took no notice of the night. It gave heed neither to day nor night, neither to objects nor people, gave no heed to the sun and none to the moon, and every bit as little to do with the stars. Further and further it ran, neither frightened nor hungry, always with one thought in mind, the one notion – the notion, that is, of looking for the end of the world and running till it got there.

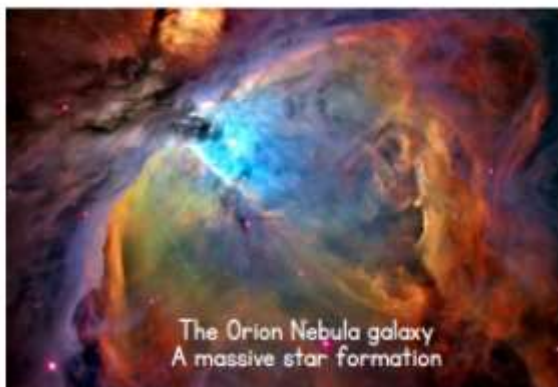
In the course of its wanderings, the child entertains various fantasies as to the nature of its goal:

On and on the child ran, imagining the end of the world first as a high wall, then an abyss, then as a beautiful green meadow, then as a lake, then as a polka-dot cloth, then as a thick, wide paste ... then simply pure air ... as a sea of bliss in which it could rock forever, then as nothing at all, or what it could not identify..."

The project doesn't go well. But after much searching, it is directed to a farmhouse called "End of the World". Arriving at the farmhouse, exhausted, the farmer's wife takes the child in. Upon waking, the child, who we now learn is a young girl, asks to stay, becomes a maid, and is accepted as a member of the clan, and never ran off again, for it felt at home".

In this story, written by the Swiss writer Robert Walser early in the 20th century, the girl represents each of us, and our communities, cultures and societies. She represents the way we can be shaped and driven by a single-minded idea, a cast-iron view of life; she represents how we may be alive to ideas and fantasies that then direct and drive our whole energy away from the midst of life; and she symbolises how our choices can keep us locked into a way of life, a culture that misdirects relationships and love.

In ancient Jewish thought, in Proverbs, in the book of Enoch, for example, Wisdom walks the streets, sits at the gates, moves in the midst of life, to distract people driven by their narrow views and isolated in their cultures, who misdirected love and life, pursuing some goal at the outer limits. To distract people and to create a relationship with Wisdom who was closely associated with God and God's Wisdom which was expressed in God's Word. And Wisdom was re-imagined as God's companion in creation.



2. The Gospel of John has no Christmas story like Matthew's or Luke's nativity stories!

The writer of John's Gospel takes up this Jewish thinking and the various images. As the New Testament scholar Bill Loader writes:

It makes sense to link together: the divine Law, the order of creation and Wisdom. It is like saying: here we see the real meaning of life, the principle which holds all things together, the way God intended things to be. ... John's gospel exploits the imagery to the full. It 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.

So that is why there is no Christmas story like Matthew's or Luke's nativity stories! There is no pregnant Mary and her partner Joseph without a place to stay. There are no angels, silent nights, shepherds or wise travellers from the east! There are different gifts and a different cast of characters!

Rather, the Gospel of John begins with a hymn celebrating the mystery of the incarnation, the coming of God into the world. Gail O'Day (John, New Interpreter's Bible) writes:

In the Prologue, the first-century community rejoices in these gifts and opens up that joy to any others who share in their confessions. The joyous witness of the Prologue is spoken by those whose own experience has been decisively marked by the incarnation; it is, in fact, the story of God [p. 524]

Francis J Moloney in his commentary on John puts it more profoundly! He writes that while the Word pre-exists the human story, the creative Word, the Logos, was with (pros) God, in an intimate relationship with God, turned toward God.

There is a dynamism in the relationship ... The author has chosen the Greek expression *ho logos* to hint, from the start, that from the intimacy of God a word will be spoken.

The Word and God existed in an intimate relationship! Yet this intimacy and dynamism was also turned outward beyond the relationship in a productive and creative expression of itself, though allowing the existence of not-self and different existence!

[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 ...

So what is expressed here is the mystery of love in all directions. Love within the dynamism of the divine being, which is turned outward into creation and human community, and offered as relationship, companionship and living in the midst of life.

3. Love in all directions

The gospel writer of John choose these images and themes to address the communities and readers and the challenges of his time.

The fourth Gospel was probably written at the turn of the first century in the cosmopolitan city of Ephesus in which diverse cultures and religions "rubbed shoulders ... often painfully", writes Francis Moloney.

He also adds that, "It was written in a place where Judaism, early Christianity, the complex religions of the Hellenistic and Greek world [engaged each other]". (Moloney, 5)

There are hints within the gospel that conflict existed between the many christian communities, and between Jews and Christians.

For the writer it was vital to share that Christ has come into the midst of life to offer his teaching, his life, to be light and life, bread and water offered in the midst of life. As Bill Loader has written so well:

To have a relationship of openness to Christ is to have a relationship of openness to God and share his (eternal) life. It is to be connected to what makes sense of reality, its 'logic', its *logos*. This is what the complex traditions

of Israel are finally all about. This relationship is defined in terms of love – love in all directions and that is true knowledge and true wisdom, grace and truth

Conclusion

What does it mean for us in 2023 to define our relationship with God, with Christ and the world we inhabit as “love in all directions”? Of being turned toward God and turned towards the midst of life and to the different to us?

As the writer of John reminds us:

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own home, and his own people received him not.

The churches were also unable to receive his teaching and live facing inward to its community and facing outward, even to those different to them. We are called to regularly to examine our life-journey, as individuals, families, as congregation, as culture, society, nation and the world. We are called to ensure we live love in all directions!

As I suggested through Robert Walser’s story about the girl, we and our culture can be narrowly shaped, looking inward ; we can be driven by a single-minded idea, a view of life, which influences how we live outwardly; we and our culture may be alive to ideas and fantasies that then direct and drive our whole energy away from the midst of life; and our choices can keep us locked into a way of life, a culture that misdirects relationships and love.

For Eric Santner, in his book “On the psychotheology of everyday life”, Walser’s story addresses the issue of the problem we have of inhabiting the midst, the middle of life, of being present to the fluid and mixed texture of everyday life. This insightful story of the young girl illustrates how we can be in flight away from the middle of life, while pursuing and more alive to an idea, to a fantasy that meaningful life can be found in the outer limits. “She seeks to occupy a place outside of life, beyond the limits of meaningful activity.” Santner draws upon the work of Sigmund Freud and a Jewish theologian and thinker, Franz Rosenzweig to rethink what it means to be genuinely open in the everyday to another human being, our community and our culture.

Freud discovered that we can only truly live in the midst of life when we recognise, uncover, and change those ideas and fantasies which keep us isolated from life.

John’s prologue hints that God’s Wisdom meets us in our world, not in the heavens. This Wisdom could be pictured as in Proverbs, walking the streets, waiting at the strategic points in city life, luring us into the life and story of Jesus which leads us into an transformative life of love in all directions.

Foster your faith this week

Is 42:1-9

Ps 29

Acts 10:34-43

Mt 3:13-17



Ordination

S E R V I C E

You are invited to the
Ordination of
Sam Sadrata

2:00 pm on Saturday January 7, 2023
At Leigh Memorial Uniting Church,
Parramatta.

Update on the PCUC Governance and Review Process

Just prior to Christmas, we received a message from Presbytery regarding the way forward for the PCUC governance review process, as PM and Northmead/Centenary move towards becoming one entity in July 2023.

Presbytery have been able to form a Consultation Team of Graham Long (former CEO of Wayside Chapel and a member of the last PM Life and Witness Team), Craig Corby (PNP Business Manager and former Business Manager of Wayside Chapel with Graham) and Jenny Stokes (A member of Sydney Presbytery with skills in town planning & Human Resources).

A Local Consultation Committee (3 representatives from each of the Church Councils, 2 VSAG representatives and Geoff Stevenson as Chair of PNP) will support this review and help implement the recommendations through the first half of 2023.

The proposed process is that Presbytery's Consultation Team will review the current governance and administrative structures of the existing five congregations (including missional activities) to:

- i. Assess their current administrative, governance and staffing functions and effectiveness;
- ii. Recommend to Presbytery what administrative, governance and staffing activities should be put in place to provide the most effective structure for PCUC from 1/7/2023;
- iii. Recommend to Presbytery a transitional process towards that structure; and
- iv. Recommend to Presbytery the proper arrangements to deal with any property affected.

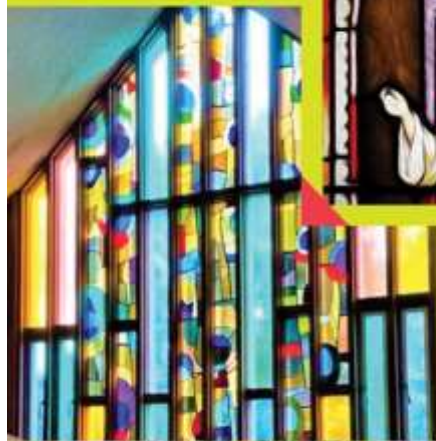
The recommendations will go to Presbytery as this is the body responsible for the processes of bringing our congregations together. Presbytery will receive the recommendations and work with the Consultation Team to implement them, along with the other formal procedures required.

Presbytery is awaiting communication from the Consultation Team regarding the timeline for the process which we anticipate will be completed fairly efficiently.

Further updates will be provided as matters are progressed.

David Norris
Chairperson, Parramatta Mission Council

Parramatta City Uniting Church



 Parramatta
Mission

 uniting
church
in Australia
Specialist Ministers ACT

Leigh Memorial Congregation

WORSHIP @ LEIGH MEMORIAL

We look forward to seeing you onsite or via Zoom this Sunday, **8 January** with **Rev John Barr** – commencing at 9.30am.

NB: January services will be combined with Leigh Fijian.



A SUMMER PRAYER

Long warm days...
The pace of life slows...
A time for picnics and rest in the shade...
God, help me to rest awhile
in the cooling shade of your presence.
Slow down my restless heart and
fill me with
gentle compassion for all your people.
- Author unknown

WORSHIP, JANUARY 2023

Saturday 7 January – 2.00pm at Leigh Memorial: The **Ordination of Sam Sadrata**, followed by a reception in the Fellowship Centre. All welcome.

8 January – 9.30am @ Leigh with Rev John

15 January – 9.30am @ Leigh with Pastor Fil

22 January – 9.30am @ Leigh with Rev John

29 January – PCUC Combined Service (venue to be advised)

PASTORAL MESSAGE

Our warm support remains with members in need of prayer, solace, healing and strength at this time, including Beverly, Mae, Lalaja & Jolame – and everyone who is unwell, needing additional support or receiving medical care. All are firmly in our hearts. Contact details for the pastoral team (Revs Vladimir & John and Pastors Fil & Sarah) are in the newsletter. The congregation leaders/worship team can be reached via LeighMemorialUniting@gmail.com

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED: AUSTRALIA DAY BALLOONS FUNDRAISER

If anyone is able to volunteer for the Mission's Hot Air Balloons fundraiser at Parramatta Park (early morning) on Australia Day – please have a chat to Robert Key or register directly with Jenny Fuda:

jenny.fuda@parramattamission.org.au



Westmead Congregation

Sharing the Hospitality of Jesus Christ

Sunday 8th January 2023, 09.30am On-site

Thank you to the Leader of Westmead Worship today, and a very warm welcome to any visitors who may be joining us for the service.

Last Sunday, we were very privileged to have Rev. Veitinia Waqabaca step in at short notice to lead us for the Holy Communion service. Thank you, Veitinia.

Rev. Veitinia asked the congregation to reflect on 2022 and consider the things they remembered of 2022 and what they were grateful for.

We are certainly grateful for the friendships we have shared in the congregations of the Parramatta City Uniting Church (PCUC), and we also remember and thank the Ministers who have shared God's word with us during 2022. We look forward to having a combined service on the 29th January, the venue to be announced.

DATES:

Thursday, 26th January 2023 - **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED:**

AUSTRALIA DAY BALLOONS FUNDRAISER

If anyone is able to volunteer for the Mission's Hot Air Balloons fundraiser at Parramatta Park on Australia Day – please have a chat to Robert Key or register directly with Jenny Fuda:
jenny.fuda@parramattamission.org.au

Sunday 29th January 2023 - Combined PCUC service (venue TBA).

ACTIVITIES YOU CAN JOIN

BIBLE STUDY: In Recess till February 2023, date TBC.

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

TAI CHI: In Recess and will recommence on Friday 27th January 2023.
10am - 11am, Friday at Uniting Westmead - \$10 per session.

ENQUIRIES:

Chairperson: Jan Robson: 0418 438 901

Administration &

Liturgy Co-ordinator: Lorna Porter: 0408 365 478

Prayer Chain Requests: Ruth Geggie 0430 271 205

Newsletter &

Technology: Cheryl Shyam: 0432 436 999

Technology: Alys Biju: E-mail: westmead.uca@gmail.com

Congratulations

A very proud and excited great-grandmother, Jan Robson, with number three great-grandchild, Leah, born 7 December 2022.

Congratulations to Jan and all her family on their next generation.



Number 2 great-grandchild -
Jan and dear little Archie, born 29 June 2022



Number 1 great-grandchild -
Hattie (Harriet), looking gorgeous and full of
character, born 21 September 2020



GOD IS LIGHT

IN HIM THERE IS NO DARKNESS AT ALL.

If we claim to have fellowship with him
and yet walk in the darkness, we lie
and do not live out the truth.

1 John 1:5-6

시드니 조은 교회 Sydney Jo-Eun Church

22-01

주현절 제2주제 (2nd Epiphany of Sunday) 2023년 01월 08일 오후 1시30분

개회 찬송 (Entrance Hymn) 예배를 위한 묵상

예배의 부름 (Calling) 인도자

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

사도신경 신앙고백 (The Apostle's Creed) 다함께

찬양/찬송 (Chorus & Hymns) 다함께

새 9장 **통 53장** 하늘에 가득 찬 영광의 하나님

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

성경 봉독 (Scripture Reading) **욥기 23:1-10**

말씀(Preaching)- 전현구 목사
하나님, 어디 계십니까?

봉헌 송(Offertory Hymn)

새 336장 **통 383장** 환탄과 꺾박 중에

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
오후 4:00

수요기도회 : 오후 7시
민수기 6:13-27

새벽기도회 : 오전 5시
민수기 5:11-8:26

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 uphold those who need healing at this time. Especially Lord watch over those and grant peace and ease from suffering for those nearing the end of their life's journey here on earth.
- For peace in war zones in the world and climate restoration efforts to be worked towards continually in the New Year.
- For those struggling with crises of homelessness, hunger, poverty, lack of drinking water and essential medicines – we pray for Your help in these areas of need. May aid become fully available.
- For Your Church to grow not just in a building but outside with neighbourly love.
- For those experiencing mental health issues - Lord we pray for Your love and Holy Spirit to encourage and guide them.
- For the downhearted, grief stricken, or lonely people – Let the warmth of Your love envelop and ease discomfort in these Your beloved.

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.

PM Korean Faith Community

- We pray for the Korean community in Western Sydney and for the revival of the church.
- We pray especially for Nak Su Baik, Kyeong Ok Hyeon (Those who are not in good health).

Prayer Points

PM Leigh Memorial

- We pray for congregation members, leaders and staff who are unwell, or having tests or procedures, and those experiencing anxiety surrounding work, study, family life or health. We particularly remember our members in need of additional support at this time, including those who are separated from their families or grieving. We also remember those within our congregations who are devoted carers to others in their family or within the community;
- We pray for wisdom and inspiration to infuse all current and forthcoming decision-making processes and actions by our dedicated ministers, leaders, managers and staff – and specifically pray for Paul and the team at Meals Plus, Cameron and his team at Westmead, the Bula Feeding ministry, and the life and witness of our fellow Parramatta Mission & Parramatta City Uniting Church congregations;
- We also pray for greater mutual respect, compassion and care within our local communities, and for the realisation of a community-wide spirit of inclusion and love for all people.

Wider Work

For our Combined Parramatta Mission Team

- May God guide all our staff and volunteers to live out our values of grace, inclusion, dignity, faith and hope;
- Rev. Vladimir, Rev. Hyun Goo, Chaplain Sarah, PMC Chairperson, David and Secretary Robert and all those who lead and serve.

Service & Zoom Information Combined

Leigh Memorial Congregation &

Leigh Fijian Congregation

Time: Sunday 10.00am on site & Zoom

<https://uca-nswact.zoom.us/j/5199089657>

Meeting ID: 519 908 9657

Westmead Congregation

Time: Sunday 9.30am on site

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 2277

IN TIME OF PASTORAL NEED

Please contact our minister Vladimir Korotkov for any pastoral needs.

Rev Vladimir Korotkov (Transition Minister)	0431 759 573
Rev John Barr	0457 879 099
Pastor Fil Kamotu	0404 552 915

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



Visit our website and blog www.parramattamission.org.au