

OUR NEWS

30th April 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
Easter 4C, 2022, John 10:22-30

Rev Vladimir Korotkov

Shepherding in life's wintry terrain

Throughout history humanity and societies face wintry terrains, dark times; where is God in these times?

Shepherding during the winters of ancient history



We meet John's Jesus in Jerusalem in the winter during the Jewish Festival of Dedication, Hanukkah.

Why do we have this story after the resurrection, in this fourth week of Easter? As I have proposed in the last weeks, our lives are always in process between Good Friday's and Easter new life. Between winter and summer. This story is set in the time of year when Israel is the rainy season. Winter begins in late October and lasts through March. There is rarely snow, but temperatures are cool to cold and rain systems move in from the north. The life of shepherds caring for their flocks was challenging. People can find themselves in the winter of their lives.

Hanukkah originated out of a dark time in Jewish history, when in 175 BCE the Syrian king Antiochus planned to colonise all the land from Syria to Egypt, which included Judea. "The Jewish people resisted him, but he found support among segments of the Jewish aristocracy and priesthood." Antiochus desecrated the Temple and ordered the Jews to abandon the Torah and publicly worship the Greek gods, colonising their society, culture and faith. People were persecuted and killed. In 164 BCE, Judas Maccabeus led a successful revolt against the Syrian forces. The Temple was rebuilt and refurbished, and it was rededicated. After this, the feast was celebrated yearly in winter as a thankful memory of God's presence and care. It was similar to the feast of Tabernacles, when Israel celebrated God's protection and care during its wilderness wandering in the Exodus.

This Festival of Lights which involves lighting of lamps celebrates the triumph of light over darkness, the shepherding nature of God and symbolised freedom from oppression, and the right to freely practice faith.

The writer of John's Gospel is aware of the winter of life, the dark times facing his early Christian communities in Asia Minor, around the end of the first century. It is evident in the Gospel that he is aware of the conflicts and divisions within the factions of the early church; of the clash and hostility with post-70s rabbinical Judaism; and of the challenge of living in a complex world comprising other religions, Hellenistic and Greek.

To shepherd the followers of Jesus, the writer of the Gospel retells the story of the historical Jesus to address all these challenges. This explains why this Gospel is so different to the other three. He presents this story of Jesus again through the story of the crucified-risen Christ - giving his life, shepherding, and confronting humanity with its blindness.

In our text in John 10, we also find a social and political edge. The image, winter, reflects the cold and hostility of some of the "Jews" who challenge Jesus identity and mission. In John's Gospel he is ejected from synagogues three times and later in this chapter they attempt to stone him. We have to reject the anti-Semitism that has infected the church over the centuries; it was only a particular group of Jewish aristocracy and religious leaders who opposed and persecuted Jesus.

Shepherding life's wintry terrains at all levels of life

In our story in John 10: 22-30, we need to ask why John's Jesus connects the image of Jesus as shepherd with the Messiah, the Christ, the One sent from God. Ezekiel 34 combines the two notions. He presents the shepherd messiah as the One who would treat people differently to the political leaders of his day. As William Loader reminds us:

"Shepherding was a big metaphor which could encompass the vision of the reign of God with the full range of political, social, and personal dimensions which that entails. It is much bigger than 'pastoral' care, understood often in a very limited sense without the wider dimensions."



If the Living Risen Spirit of Christ continues a shepherding presence in this larger way, we could say that this Spirit urges us to at shepherding holistically, at every level of life, inspiring us to work for the common good and to keep our political and institutional systems honest and genuine. This would certainly require a larger and more robust notion of God, Jesus and our growth towards more self. In last week's reading in John 21, the crucified-risen Jesus leads Peter in a journey of greater self-understanding, only in this way empowering him to shepherd others. Psychologically, interpreters suggest, the term "sheep" refers to that aspect of a person that instinctively is able to hear the shepherd's voice, and separate the truth from falsehood. The early church father, Origen, said that sheep represent our irrational and instinctual nature. This aspect of our psyche needs guidance, but also has the ability to separate the "true shepherd" from the false one.

At the same time, there are others—"thieves and bandits"—who call us to turn over our lives to them. This is seductive because it seemingly spares us from the hard work of healthy development of our inner life and self-understanding, developing the values of openness, inclusion and freedom. Why work on your psychological independence when you can turn the job over to someone else? As Isaiah 6 cautions, we can live 'having eyes unseeing and ears unhearing'.

Those who do so can no longer hear the shepherd's voice. They are following their own "hired hand," i.e. they have subcontracted out the important psychological business of their own maturity. The sheep not only hear the true shepherd's voice, but they also follow as the true

shepherd leads the way into eternal life in the future, and abundant life--and mature psychology--right now.

Shepherding during the winters our lives



Psalm 23, a shepherding psalm, is the best known of the psalms. It is a shepherding psalm containing powerful images of God's unseen, companionship presence with us in life's most wintry moments. When Jesus uses this pastoral image in John 10, his commitment to shepherding gains force when we realise sheep grazed in the open, harsh, Judean hills, always vulnerable to predators. And winter added its challenges. Howard Wallace notes that in this psalm, the psalmist relates to God in a personal and intimate way, a trust that whatever life delivers, God accompanies us.

Rabbi Harold Kushner, author of *When bad things happen to good people*, shared in an interview that Psalm 23 is the answer to the question, "How do you live in a dangerous, unpredictable, frightening world?" What inspired him to write his book was the death of his son, who was 14 years old and was born with an incurable illness. He said: "Where did we find the strength and the ability to raise him, to comfort him when he was sick and scared, and ultimately to lose him? And the only answer is, when we used up all of our own strength and love and faith, there really is a God, and [God] replenishes your love and your strength and your faith."

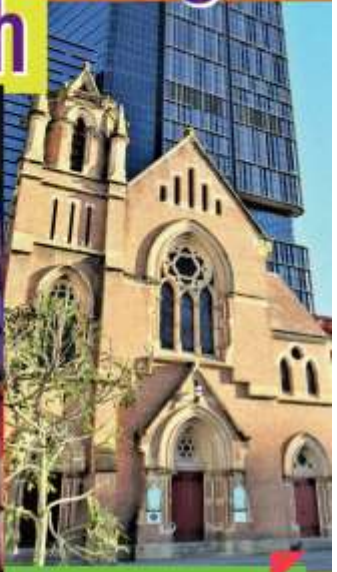
The Psalm inspired his faith. And in a true Rabbinical, dialectical fashion, inspired not just pious affirmation to trust God, but he implicitly suggests that when God shepherds you then you are truly empowered to shepherd and care for others.

On the one hand, he said,

"The role of God is not to explain and not to justify but to comfort, to find people when they are living in darkness, take them by the hand, and show them how to find their way into the sunlight again." Then, on the other hand, he deals with why people get stuck and guilty, and in this way, empowered by his own faith, he deals with the self, the inner life and anxieties of people in despair and resignation.

We can never separate theology (who God is and is at work), and psychology (who we are in our complexity), or politics (the ways we construct society for the good of all, equality and justice)! We are shepherded by the unseen yet present God, replenishing our love, faith and hope, opening our ears and eyes to replenish life abundantly at every level of life.

Parramatta City Uniting Church



Parramatta
Mission



uniting
church
in Australia
Part of the UCA

Celebrating the PCUC! Artwork by Ken Morgan (2022)

Leigh Memorial Congregation

REV GEOFF SMITH – INDUCTION

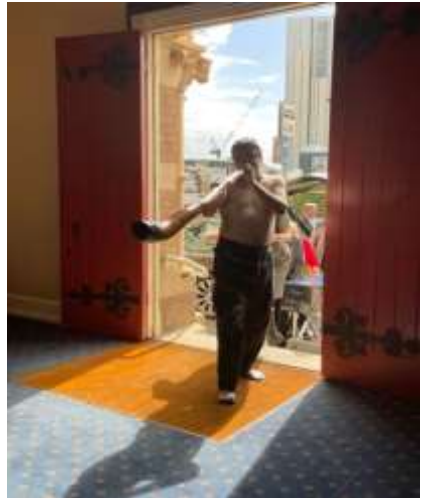


This **Sunday 30 April** there will be NO services held at Leigh Memorial Uniting Church. Instead, from 2.00pm, an Induction service for the PCUC's new Lead Minister, Geoff Smith (pictured at Leigh last month), will be taking place at the Centre for Ministry (Masons Drive, North Parramatta). It will be a combined PCUC service including all our worship communities – and will be followed by afternoon tea. ***Please bring a small plate of food to share*** & also speak with someone from our leaders' team or VSAG if you would like to attend

but aren't sure of transport or have any other queries. **NB:** The site is fully accessible and includes onsite and street parking. ***All are welcome & we look forward to seeing you there!***

PHOTOS – Mandy's farewell at Leigh Memorial

A Darug funeral for Meals Plus attendee, Mandy, was held at Leigh Memorial last Friday. It included a smoking ceremony and didgeridoo (pictured), with a casket hand-painted in vivid Aboriginal designs including the image of a possum, which is a Darug totem. Parramatta Mission's pastor and case worker Laurie Bessant led the service, which was also attended by representatives of other faiths and denominations, in addition to Meals Plus staff and volunteers – and members of the local community. Our continued prayers for Mandy's friends and loved ones – and for Paul and all those at Meals Plus who worked hard throughout last week to give Mandy a meaningful farewell.



WORSHIP ARRANGEMENTS: MAY

Sunday 7 May – Worship @ 9.30am – with Rev Geoff Smith, inc. Communion.

Sunday 14 May – Worship @ 9.30am – inc. Mothers' Day morning tea

Sundays 21 & 28 May – Worship @ 9.30am. Further details to be advised.

PASTORAL MESSAGE

Our thoughts and prayers remain with those in our worship community who are unwell at the present time or facing other challenges. Contact details for the ministry team (Rev Geoff Smith, Rev John, Pastor Fil & Pastor Sarah) are in the newsletter. Rev Vladimir is still on leave. For assistance from the leaders' team, please contact LeighMemorialUniting@gmail.com

LOST PROPERTY IN THE CHURCH

Members are reminded to check that they have their bags, glasses, Bibles, drink bottles, umbrellas, hats and other personal items with them when they depart the church. All lost property enquiries can be directed to the stewards. Thank you.

MEALS PLUS UPDATE



Parramatta Mission provides food and support services to assist the most vulnerable people in our community. This includes meals and emergency grocery assistance as well as onsite access to services to assist those who may be homeless, at risk of homelessness or facing crisis. Over the past few years, Meals Plus has also provided regular, free flu & COVID vaccination clinics onsite – including one this month. Each week, Meals Plus provides for people's basic needs

and works hard to support those who are homeless or disadvantaged. It also works to break the cycle of homelessness and poverty by providing quick solutions for people in need of emergency support. Meals Plus is open for breakfast and lunch from Monday to Friday. Between January and April this year, they've served 15, 534 meals. Other services include emergency food assistance, laundry and shower facilities, financial counselling, legal advice from visiting solicitors, housing advocacy, a Centrelink outreach service and referrals to accommodation services. It receives support from Centrelink, Financial Counsellors, Homeless Persons Legal Service, Housing NSW, Men2Home and other vital service providers. **Many thanks to everyone who regularly supports Meals Plus!** <https://www.parramattamission.org.au/donate/>

NEXT WEEK: 'UNITINGWORLD SUNDAY' – 7 MAY



UnitingWorld says the following: “We’re launching a new initiative called ‘UnitingWorld Sunday’ to help churches deepen relationships with our global partners and celebrate all that we do together. The funds you raise will make a big difference in the lives of our global neighbours!”

To acknowledge ‘UnitingWorld Sunday’, members of all our worship communities are invited to access various resources and/

or make a donation via the website on 7 May – or at any time in the coming weeks, as able.

For further information about the efforts of UnitingWorld in various global communities, please check the website: <https://donate.unitingworld.org.au/sunday/sunday-resources>.

Foster your faith this week

Acts 2:42-47 Ps 23

1 Pt 2:19-25 Jn 10:1-10

시드니 조은 교회 Sydney Jo-Eun Church

23-16

부활후 두 번째 주일 (2nd Easter of Sunday) 2023년 04월 30일 오후 1시30분

개회 찬송 (Entrance Hymn) 왕이신 나의 하나님 다함께

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 27장 통 27장 빛나고 높은 보좌와 그 위에 앉으신

기도 (Prayer) 주기도문송 635 하늘에 계신 우리 아버지 다함께

성경 봉독 (Scripture Reading) 요한복음 3:1-13

말씀(Preaching)- 전현구 목사 신앙과 주술

봉헌 송(Offeratory Hymn) 새 260장 통 194장 우리를 죄에서 구하시려

나눔과 알림 (Announcement & Notices)

1. 시드니 조은교회에 오신 여러분을 주님의 이름으로 환영합니다.
3. '매일성경' 묵상과 '공동체성경읽기' 통독으로 말씀을 적용하며 매일 주님과 동행하는 삶 살아가시길 바랍니다
4. 어려움을 겪는 이웃들을 위해 함께 중보기도 해주시길 바랍니다.
5. 하나님의 기쁨인 전도사명에 동참하시길 부탁드립니다.

폐회찬송(Final Hymn) 새501장 통 255장 너 시은아 이소식 전파하라 (1절)

축도 전 현구 목사

QT나눔 & 성경공부
오후4:00수요기도회: 오후 7시
민수기 22:1-20새벽기도회: 오전 6시
민수기 21:1-23:26

Westmead Congregation



Sharing the Hospitality of Jesus Christ

Sunday, 30th April 2023 –

There will be NO service held at Westmead Church

Instead, today we will combine with other congregations of the Parramatta City Uniting Church's (PCUC), to witness Reverend Geoff Smith's induction as Minister of the Word and Team Leader.

This will take place at the Centre of Ministry, Masons Drive, North Parramatta, from 2.00pm.

Afternoon tea will be served following the service.

If you are able, a contribution of a plate of food for afternoon tea would be much appreciated.

We look forward to officially welcoming Rev. Geoff and sharing this service with all PCUC members.

Last Sunday Pastor Fil reflected on the story of "the road to Emmaus". "If we want to understand God, we must understand the stories in the Gospel" – there is an "importance of recognising Jesus. He is always with us, walking alongside us but it is up to us to recognise His presence". It is also important to share the Good News to others and to be His witnesses – we are called to abandon "attachments of this world" and to share Christ and follow Him. Thank you, Fil, for your message.

WESTMEAD WORSHIP LEADER 7th May: Pastor Sarah Bishop

BIBLE STUDY: Each Monday, 2.00pm

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



MORNING MEDITATION with Campfire in the Heart

Each weekday morning at 7.45-8.20am

Campfire in the Heart – Morning Prayers

Each weekday morning at 7.00-7.30am

DIARY DATES:



A bus trip is being planned for 17 May 2023.

Pastor Fil and Lorna are in the process of planning a bus trip for the Westmead congregation and interested PCUC members.

As yet, the details and destination are a work in progress and will be announced asap.

There are 13 seats available in the church bus, so if you would like to be included in an enjoyable day together please contact Lorna - 0408 365 478.

Saturday, 20th May 2023, 9.00am – 2.00pm

Market Day at Pitt Town Uniting Church, Bathurst Street, Pitt Town

The Market Day will be held to raise further funds for the building of freshwater wells in West Papua.



Leigh Fijian Congregation

- 1. Lotu ena macawa oqo 30/04:** Na lotu ena macawa mai oqo na lotu cokovata ni PCUC/PNP combine services. Na qaravi tiko kina na induction service vei na noda talatala vou ko Rev Geoff Smith. Na qaravi tiko na lotu ena Centre for Ministry (Mason Drive North Parramatta). Na lotu ena tekivu na 2pm.
- 2. Lotu ena macawa mai oqo 07/05:** Na lotu ena macawa mai oqo na qaravi tiko kina na lotu ni vulavou. Rau na vakaitavi tiko kina ko Rev Geoff Smith kei Pastor Filikesa Kamotu. Na veiqaravi tiko kina na soqosoqo ni mataveitokani. Vunau vakarau Pastor Filikesa Kamotu. Na qaravi tale tiko ga na sakaramede ni vakayakavi ni Turaga, rau na tuirara ni sakaramede ko Pastor Filikesa Kamotu kei Sikeli Duwai
- 3. Lesoni ni macawa oqo 24/04 – 30/04:** Cakacaka 2:42-47 Same 23 1 Pita 2:19-25 Joni 10:1-10
- 4. Lesoni ni macawa mai oqo 1/05 – 7/05:** Cakacaka 7:55-60 Same 31:1-5, 15-16 Pita 2:2-10 Joni 14:1-14
5. Vakavinavinaka levu na kena sa qaravi rawa na nodra KCO na matawilivola ni sigatabu. Vinaka vakalevu vei kemudou nai tubutubu dou a veitokoni tiko ena nodra keba.
6. Na sigatabu ni tina ena I ka 14 ni Me.

Lolo kei Na masumasu - Veinanumi ena lolo kei na masumasu ena vei matai ni Vukelulu ena vei vula mai na 6am – 12pm se 6am – 6pm. Soli tu na galala ke o rawa ni qarava.

Veinanumi ena Masu : Kerei meda veinanumi tikoga ena veimasulaki vei ira na nodatou qase kei na vuvale ra sotava tiko na dredre ko Mereoni Kamotu, S Qata, Akisi Dovibua Baranski, Dia Allison. Ko ratou na veiliutaki tiko ena nodatou vavakoso vaka viti kei na veivuvale kece sara ena loma ni nodatou vavakoso. Na nodratou veiqaravi na Bula Feeding. Me nanumi na FNC ni tou na veiwaseitaka na veiqaravi kei na tolu na valelotu. Ena qaravi tiko na FNC ena Okotova ni yabaki mai oqo 2024.

Gadrevi na noda veinanumi ena masu vei ira na lewe ni vavakoso era mai sasa-ga kei na nanumi talega ni nodra vuvale mai Viti.

KCO (Kids Camp Out - Parramatta-Nepean Presbytery) at Wedderburn, 22 - 23 April



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

- For those who are unwell, those battling chronic illnesses, and those waiting for diagnosis – Lord we ask that Your love and care be with these. May You ease suffering and lead the medical team to the right care.
- For the homeless and those living in a day-to-day existence without food, proper clothing, and medicine – We ask that their needs become apparent to us and that they receive Your hope, care and love from people around them.
- For the war in Ukraine and in other parts of the world – we pray that Your peace begins to infiltrate, and that neighbourly love and empathy will stamp out suffering. We pray that poorer nations relying on resources from Ukraine, may begin to see resources arrive again.
- For those who have suddenly lost their jobs and for those who are in financial crises – We pray that Your hope will shine in their darkest moments and that they may be able to strive to go ahead with success.
- For countries suffering drought, famine and those where devastation has struck with extreme weather – we pray for aid to be able to be accessed and for Your help to be with those on the ground supplying aid.

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 members who are unwell, and those experiencing anxiety and grief.
- We prayerfully support those in our local communities who need additional care and support at this time, including people experiencing hunger, homelessness, addiction, family crisis and loneliness, in addition to those who assist them – such as devoted care-givers, nurses, doctors, community support teams and emergency workers;
- We pray for wisdom and inspiration to infuse all current and forthcoming decision-making processes and actions by our dedicated ministry team, leaders, managers and staff – and specifically pray for Paul and the team at Meals Plus, Cameron and the team at Westmead and for the life, witness and outreach work being conducted by our fellow Parramatta Mission & Parramatta City Uniting Church communities;
- We pray for greater mutual respect, compassion and peace throughout the world, and for the realisation of an international spirit of inclusion, acceptance 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 Geoff Smith, Rev. Vladimir, Rev. Hyun Goo, Chaplain Sarah, PMC Chairperson, David and Secretary Robert and all those who lead and serve.

Service Information

PCUC Combined Service

For all our worship communities

from 2.00pm

Induction service for the PCUC's new Lead Minister

Geoff Smith

at the Centre for Ministry (Masons Drive, North Parramatta).

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 Lead Minister Geoff Smith for any pastoral needs.

Rev Geoff Smith (Lead Minister)	0407 416 377
Rev Vladimir Korotkov (Transition Minister)	0431 759 573
Rev John Barr	0400 694 540
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



Parramatta Mission



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