

PASTORAL LETTER

Rev. Graham Olsen

What a time we have been through! Covid19 has certainly let its presence be known. In the past eighteen months, life has been so very different from what most of us have experienced ever before. Many of the things we had taken for granted, were suddenly taken from us.

Perhaps the greatest struggle for a lot of us has been the loss of freedom in so many areas of our life. For example, the freedom to move around and visit family and friends; the freedom to shop; the freedom to have a hair cut; the freedom to farewell loved ones; the freedom to gather as God's people and worship together. Thankfully, things are changing and some of the freedoms we lost, are slowly being returned to us.

Throughout this time of lockdown our political leaders and social commentators have had much to say about freedom. In fact, without our permission, much of our freedom has been taken from us — to which there has been a wide variety of responses. In turning to God's Word we also see a message about freedom. In fact scripture reminds us that since the beginning of time, people have been searching for freedom. Over and over again throughout the Old Testament, God's people lost their physical freedom.

In reading the New Testament we find there too, a message about freedom. Through the life, death and resurrection

of Jesus, God acted to free us from the penalty of our sin and rebellion and the fruit of that in our daily life. In his letter to the Galatians, the Apostle Paul reminds us that 'it is for freedom that Christ has set us free'. (Galatians 5:1)

While this is true, it is also true that we have an enemy who is working against us and seeking every opportunity to take from us, the freedoms that are ours in Christ. The good news however, is that through the power of the risen Christ, we can overcome and retain what Christ has purchased for us. God however is not a puppeteer. We have a free will and can choose the path we walk. We can decide to submit to the Lordship of Jesus and embrace the path that will keep us in freedom or we can do that which is right in our own eyes. The path to freedom is before us, but the choice is ours.

Luke 4: 16-21

He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: 'The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.'

Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. He began by saying to them, 'Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.'

PRAYER

Gracious Father, thank-you that your word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. Thank you too for the freedom you have purchased for us in Christ.

In walking through these challenging times, we ask that your Holy Spirit would help us to walk in freedom by choosing your ways over our own.

We pray in the name of Christ our risen Lord. Amen.

GEORGES RIVER PRESBYTERY

georgesriver.uca.org.au

18 The Avenue,
Hurstville NSW 2220

02 9579 4682

admin.grp@nswact.uca.org.au



Highlights from the Presbytery

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT

The various committees of the Georges River Presbytery have continued to meet throughout October via zoom, working hard to maintain the life of the Presbytery and Congregations. One of the noticeable outcomes of having to work remotely is that committee members are feeling fatigued from having to do most of the work of the presbytery from home and via zoom. Please keep the staff of the Presbytery and committee members in your prayers as we transition into this new post lockdown life, with all its business and challenges.

Rather than giving a summary of the minutes from the various committee meetings, the update will give some highlights from across the Presbytery. If you would like a copy of the minutes, they are available on request from the Presbytery office.

We welcome the Rev Deok Hee Cho to the Presbytery as the minister at Kogarah Uniting Church. The induction service for Deok Hee will be held 14th November at 2pm at Kogarah.

Due to the ongoing COVID restrictions on worship services numbers are limited. However, there will be overflow seating in the foyer for those who would like to attend. RSVP to Dinah Roeper's email dmrsylvania@bigpond.com

We welcome the Somang Korean Congregation and the Galilee Campsie Korean Church as member churches of the Presbytery. Both churches are moving to the Presbytery due to the dissolution of the Korean Presbytery at the end of October 2021. We are looking forward to the life that these congregations will bring to the Presbytery. Please keep these congregations in your prayers.

The standing committee has co-opted two youth / young adult members to the presbytery following recommendations from Living Streams in Christ (LSiC) – the Youth / young adult committee of the presbytery. The co-option is in line with the mission, vision and strategic plan of the presbytery to invest in young leadership and to grow the presbytery young. The co-opted members are Sala Moala and Shynareigh Vaha. Please keep both of them in your prayers and make them feel welcome at our presbytery meetings.

IDEAS TO INSPIRE

Engadine Uniting Church - Meet the Candidates

Local government elections are scheduled for Saturday Dec 4th, and the Engadine congregation is holding a "Meet the Candidates" forum on Tuesday evening 16th November. This forum is for Ward D of the Sutherland Shire. The local candidates are really excited about the fact that we are doing this, maybe because not too many people ever get terribly excited about local government. If you would like to do something like this in your local area, then please get in touch with michael@engadineuniting.church to ask about how we are doing it.

Knit for Climate

Members of the Engadine congregation featured in a full-page story in the St George and Sutherland Leader 20th October, displaying some of the climate scarves they had knitted to craftily illustrate the warming planet. Other scarves were presented individually to Federal MPs and Senators with an invitation to wear them during Question Time on Thursday 21st October.



Georges River Presbytery Legend Richard Hanna

Richard is a well loved and respected member of the Lugarno Peakhurst congregation. He has contributed to the life of the church in so many different roles. He has been Presbytery Chairperson twice and also Presbytery Treasurer. Please read more on the GRP website

<https://georgesriver.uca.org.au/grp-legends/legend-richard-hanna/>



"Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain."

1 Corinthians 15:58

UPCOMING DATES

Material is required one week prior to meeting dates

PRC

2 November

Property Committee

4 November

Standing Committee

9 November

note: time change 1.30 pm

Presbytery Meeting

16 November

Forum on Affordable Rental Housing

Sydney Alliance is organising a local forum on Affordable Rental Housing on Tuesday 9th November.

What is Affordable Rental Housing?

In its simplest form, Affordable Rental Housing is any type of housing managed by a community housing provider and rented to the public at a below market rate (commonly 65- 80% of market rate). The only eligibility criteria is total household income (dependent on household size).

Local Candidates Forum

We're inviting candidates of the upcoming local council elections for the Sutherland Shire in December to make commitments to improve the availability of Affordable Rental Housing in our Local Government area.

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

We're looking for as many community members as possible to attend, showing that Sutherland Shire residents are concerned about housing for their communities that is affordable for:

- hospitality industry workers
- single parents
- healthcare and emergency workers
- service industry workers
- childcare workers
- Aged pensioners

Among many others

We hope to see you there,

Shane Slade

*Sutherland Alliance Representative
Dharawal Country*

To attend the online forum on Tuesday 9 November - 7PM
Please register via the link below

<https://events.humanitix.com/sutherland-local-candidates-forum>



Sydney Alliance

A coalition of union, faith and community organisations united in working for the "common good" of civil society in Sydney. We are a political, bi-partisan and not for profit organisation.

Living Streams in Christ (LSiC)

LSiC was established by the Georges River Presbytery in 2020. A group dedicated to the Mission of supporting, inspiring and giving a voice and platform for young people within our Presbytery under the Uniting Church of Australia.

LSiC has created a website where you can submit prayer request - "Pray for me" Also check out their Facebook and Instagram pages.


Pray for me

Providing an opportunity to unravel and have someone pray over your hardships, challenges, thoughts and prayer requests.


Reflection
Requests received: 7
Strengths: Providing this confidential platform, open to all, opportunity for young people to strengthen their relationship with God through prayer, access to Uniting Care Crisis support services.
Challenges: Awareness, well known, free website (limited content development)
Opportunities: Prayer Workshop run by Pastoral Care, response made available, Prayer Team gathering bi-monthly or quarter.
Next Steps: Better promotion, building the Prayer Team.




GRP LSiC Social Media

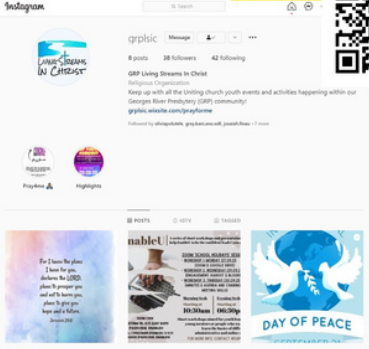


Facebook Page





Instagram Page



The Kogarah Storehouse

The Kogarah Storehouse provides free parcels of food for families and individuals who are struggling to make ends meet. Without this help these people and their families would most likely go hungry. The food parcels contain staple groceries plus fresh food.

Food parcels are available every Wednesday from 1pm – 3pm. A Centrelink card / ID card is required to be eligible.

Food parcel distribution will only be through appointment. Please **TEXT 0476 868 283 by Monday**. One of our team will get in touch with you and you will receive a message with the confirmation pick-up date and time.



SAVE THE DATE

Living Streams in Christ (LSiC) presents "Light It Up with LSiC". A night to sing and celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ.

Friday 17 December - 6.30pm

The evening is open to everyone.

More details to follow

"Believe in the light while you have the light, so that you may become children of light"
John 12:36

SUBMIT YOUR EVENT OR STORY

The presbytery is looking for good news stories to share and to inspire us. Do you have an event that is suitable for the presbytery to be involved with?

To submit an event or story please email to the presbytery office.

admin.grp@nswact.uca.org.au